articolo

The Ugliness of "Abortion Art"

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Introduction

A few years ago, art student Aliza Shvarts shocked the world with a proposal to present "abortion art" as part of her school project at Yale University. She allegedly inseminated herself with someone else's sperm for nine months and then took herbal drugs to induce miscarriages. The exhibit would have included video recordings of the forced miscarriages she had in her bathtub which would have been projected onto the gallery walls and onto a large cube wrapped in plastic sheeting lined with her blood from the miscarriages. After a public outrage, university officials stated that the student's work was not real, the "entire project is an art piece, a creative fiction designed to draw attention to the ambiguity surrounding the form and function of a woman's body." They threatened to ban the exhibit unless the artist would agree to attest that her project was a hoax and that no human blood was being used in the exhibition. However, Shvarts refused to recant and insisted that she had indeed tried to impregnate herself even though she could not ascertain her pregnancy. Her artwork was never shown in public.[1]

What is interesting about this case is the immediate and almost universal disgust that it generated. In today's liberal context, abortion is commonplace and hardly ever raises an eyebrow. Contemporary art has exalted what is crude and shocking to the extent that it has practically broken most cultural taboos.[2] Besides, it is not the first time that body substances (e.g., urine, feces, or blood) are used in works of art. For instance, British artist Tracey Emin has repeatedly used abortion as a subject of her art and left bloody stains on her installation called *My Bed*.[3] After all, Shvarts' pursuit is quite consonant with the thinking of many art schools and critics when she declared, "the goal of the project was to spark conversation and debate on the relationship between art and the human body" and, "I think that I'm creating a project that lives up to the standard of what art is supposed to be."[4]

So it is striking that Shvarts generated such widespread opposition in today's liberal context, forcing Yale to issue a clarification, reprimand its staff, and ban the exhibit. This article will attempt to analyze through the lens of aesthetics and bioethics some of the reasons for this reaction. First, we will look at the nature of this repulsion toward ugliness, both as an aesthetic experience, as a moral intuition and the relation between the two. Then we need to explore the relation between goodness, truth and beauty in traditional metaphysics and the difficulties posed by modernity. In this history, the emphasis on the object became replaced the subject, with serious consequences both in ethics and in aesthetics. Lastly, we will examine the problem of ugliness, which is paradoxically attractive as a false beauty.

Moral intuition and the aesthetic experience

The fact that Yale authorities responded with a public statement within hours of the news breaking is an indication how genuine this outburst of repugnance was. This reso-

nance points to the existence of an innate intuition that some important values were at stake. It indicated a natural gut-feeling of something ugly and evil that required a resolute veto. This doesn't always happen. There have been plenty of examples of sacrilegious art pieces, such as that of a crucified sperm or elephant dung used in depicting the Virgin Mary. These works have generated some protests, but they pass mostly unnoticed.[5] In spite of all the offensive art in vogue today, perhaps there is still a raw nerve pertaining to the values human life and sexuality that Shvarts has touched.

The intuition that something has gone awry is quite natural in the way people make aesthetical judgments as well as moral ones. Normally, viewing a breathtaking sunrise or listening to beautiful music will spontaneously generate in the person a sense of wonder and pleasure which is commonly known as the aesthetic experience. Opposite emotions are elicited when we encounter something dark, sinister or reprehensible. These experiences are closely paralleled in the moral life. There is an intuitive applause when we see goodness and heroic virtues, while disgust when we witness evil or wicked acts.

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Normally, we attach a certain value to these intuitions without explicitly understanding their rationale. This is evident in bioethics. Certain acts will spontaneously cause "moral repugnance," such as treating a human cadaver as a dead animal or a callous manipulation of the human embryo. If human embryos are no more than clumps of cells, as some claim, there should be no moral objection to their use in finding a cure for cancer, making money or producing lipsticks. Leon Kass calls this symbolic rationality the "wisdom of repugnance."[6] The repugnance factor is present even in secular views:

It is not an outlandish or brutally emotional reaction, as it may first appear to people. When we consider it closely, it turns out to be rooted in some deep-seated, general moral convictions about our relationships to the natural world and to our fellow humans.[7]

In spite of this, there are ethicists who believe that intuition does not count in the areas of ethics, just like taste is not universal in aesthetics. They believe that first impressions or the so called "yuck factor" are not well founded. People may have an aversion to something that may appear horrible, but they are not capable of giving a reasoned argument for this sensation. They feel that this initial horror will mitigate with time when they become accustomed to it. In this view, moral intuitions cannot be taken seriously in evaluating the morality of an act.[8]

An opposite position places too much emphasis on emotions as the sole determinant of ethical values. Non-cognitivism and emotivism hold that ethical statements (e.g., 'Do not kill innocent persons') are not assertive propositions—that is, they do not express factual claims or beliefs and therefore are neither true nor false (i.e., they are not *truth-apt*)—but express only emotions (e.g., 'Killing is yucky'). They maintain that it is the function of ethical discourse to express *feelings* of approval or disapproval, and to recommend similar *emotions* to others.[9]

These two extremes can be avoided if we can better grasp what is behind the aesthetic experience. The intuitive dimension of appreciating beauty can also shed some light on the nature of moral intuition.

Beauty, Truth and Honesty

The idea that Beauty is related to Truth and Goodness began in Greece, especially in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. Plotinus wrote an important treatise on Beauty in the *Enneads*, where he attributes the highest value to beauty, and especially moral beauty:

Beauty addresses itself chiefly to sight; but there is a beauty for the hearing too, as in certain combinations of words and in all kinds of music, for melodies and cadences are beautiful; and minds that lift themselves above the realm of sense to a higher order are aware of beauty in the conduct of life, in actions, in character, in the pursuits of the intellect; and there is the beauty of the virtues. What loftier beauty there may be… [10]

This metaphysical worldview was taken up variously in the writings of Christianity, and in particular summed up by Thomas Aquinas.[11] Alice Ramos in *Dynamic Transcendentals: Truth, Goodness and Beauty from a Thomistic Perspective*, explains our participation in the metaphysical and moral order, in ethics and in aesthetics. "Goodness and beauty are closely related; the splendor or beauty of virtuous acts which we behold may lead us to the experience of wonder, an experience which sets the philosopher, indeed every man, in search of the ultimate cause."[12] In this vision, the existence of objective truth, goodness and beauty is taken for granted. We are geared towards the pursuit of these transcendentals.[13] This vision comprises the notion of the "honest" good which means moral excellence, to reach out for this good in conformity with man's rational nature.[14] At one level, this effort can be attained through asceticism and leading a virtuous life. Only then can a person act with uprightness. At another level, a Christian believes that virtues are perfected with grace which sanctifies, and a life of virtue is exemplified in the actions of the saints. Ramos states, "The virtuous man, the morally good man, or the spiritually beautiful man will be for Aquinas the honest man."[15] Virtuous and saintly persons perceive the good intuitively, because they are honest toward reality and conform their lives according to their rational nature:

The discernment of the virtuous man is described as an intuitive judgment, such as the judgment of sense or as the discernment by the intellect of the first principles of speculative reason... The discernment is spontaneous because, as we have said, through the virtue man is in consonance with the good object, which has been perceived, known, as such, and has been immediately grasped as pleasing. When virtues orient affectivity, then the will delights in the good apprehended by the intellect: the will delights in the true good. This true good, the honestum, is the morally beautiful.[16]

Just as the virtuous person is beautiful because his inner life of passions and sentiments are ordered towards the good, the disordered person will lead a life that rejects the truth and acts dishonorably, not keeping with his dignity. He will experience sadness or despondency for his vices or addictions as well as shame and remorse for his behaviors and actions.[17]

The intuitive aesthetic appreciation of beauty or ugliness can therefore shed some light on the phenomenon of moral intuition. According to the Thomistic theory of knowledge, there is a correspondence of objective reality with the subjective reception of this truth. With epistemological realism, honest acceptance of objectivity of truth is a prerequisite. According to neo-Thomist James Mesa, the aesthetic plays an important role in our moral imagination. He gave an example of the conversion of Bernard Nathanson, who in his autobiography *The Hand of God* described the reasons why he stopped performing abortion after many years of not finding problem with it.[18] Nathanson wondered why he was unable to see the "shoddiness" of what he was engage in before. He recounted the fact that access to ultrasound technology allowed him to see for the first time the movements of the fetuses and thus their humanity. With the help of the senses, he connected for the first time with the objective reality of what he had been performing. This brought about his conversion. Mesa concluded that the senses are necessary to feed into the memory of the person. Through memory, the good and the beautiful are presented to the intellect and the will is thereby attracted to them. Memory which came through the senses is essential for both the moral and the aesthetic

imagination. In this Thomistic understanding, "The good pleases appetite whereas the beautiful gives pleasure in the mere apprehension. The apprehension of the moral good requires the assistance of properly ordered appetites but beauty does not." [19]

If we accept the Thomistic outlook, we can appreciate the widespread instinctive repulsion against the "abortion art" of Shvarts. In contrast to Nathanson, she was unable to see the grotesqueness of her "art" as well as the disorder of her actions. She did not perceive the beauty or sacredness of human life and human sexuality, possibly because she was affected by her own background, passion and egoism. When reason is influenced by a passion and evil inclination, reason can become obscured that it does not see clearly. On the words of Ramos, Shvarts was not "honest" with reality.[20] The immediate condemnation from prolife groups is understandable since abortion is the taking of human life. That which is immoral is ugly, and it would be doubly horrendous to glorify it in art.

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This case demonstrates another facet of the abortion debate. There is an attempt to hide the reality of abortion, by replacing "honesty" with ambiguities. Abortion advocates do not want to show the bloody part of this reality, and ban the images of mutilated body parts which are paradoxically taboos in an age where every obscenity is in open display. While pro-abortion groups try to make abortion into a private, hidden, and sterile affair, Shvarts purposely wished to highlight this ambiguity when she wrote, "Because the miscarriages coincide with the expected date of menstruation (the 28th day of my cycle), it remains ambiguous whether the there [sic] was ever a fertilized ovum or not. The reality of the pregnancy, both for myself and for the audience, is a matter of reading."[21] Perhaps for this reason, even pro-choice groups were unhappy about an exhibit that would have shown the bloodiness of abortion. For example, a spokesperson for NARAL Pro-Choice America called it "offensive and insensitive to the women who have suffered the heartbreak of miscarriage," but refrained from referring to it as abortion.[22] That being said, there were those who failed to see the hideousness of her art project:

Brown University bioethicist and abortion advocate Jacob M. Appel wrote in the *Washington Post* that "the history of great art is one of controversy and outrage" and that Shvarts was "an imaginative and worthy heir to Manet and Marcel Duchamp." Shvarts' announcement of the art project was also hailed by science fiction author Charles Stross as the "most inspired publicity-stunt debut in the art world since Damien Hirst." Warren Ellis concurred, claiming that Shvarts "might be the first 'great' conceptual artist of the internet age." [23]

This failure is due to a deeper problem of aesthetics and metaphysics at different levels. Thomistic metaphysics and theory of knowledge has been challenged by empiricism and idealism since the Enlightenment. There is no longer an easy acceptance of objective truth, causality, and the intrinsic link between truth, goodness and beauty. As we shall see, this problem is philosophical and has tremendous implication for the moral and aesthetic orders.

Subjective taste, genius, and ideology

Space does not permit us to enter into the details of this change in philosophical perspective with modernity. Suffice to say that scholastic philosophy was discarded in favor of a focus on the subjective self rather than on the reality of the object. Separation of the order of beauty from that of morality began with Kant. This was furthered by the

thoughts of Baudelaire and Nietzsche who proposed that the beautiful need not be moral, while Kierkegaard and Oscar Wilde attested that the aesthetic way of life is opposed to a life of virtue.[24]

Kant's *Critique of Judgment* is responsible for the separation of aesthetics from human knowledge (in the *Critique of Pure Reason*) and morality (in the *Critique of Practical Reason*). That is, pleasures derived from aesthetic appreciation of beauty are purely subjective, severed from the beautiful object in itself. Even though subjective judgment is separated from objective beauty, Kant believes that this particular pleasure is universally communicable since the faculties are the same in all rational beings. Later on, even this universality is challenged and thus the aesthetic experience became totally self-referential and individualistic.[25]

Once beauty is removed from truth and aesthetics from the virtues, we can understand why contemporary art is often unintelligible and offensive

Along with the independence of beauty from truth and goodness, Kant conjectured that the beautiful is a result of human creativity and freedom. He introduced the concept of an artist as a "genius" into the formulation of the aesthetics. Beauty is no longer sought in art, but the creative genius of the artist becomes the standard of judgment. Subsequently, truth was of no longer of interest to the artist or the critic, and hedonistic lifestyles became fashionable. Oscar Wilde provided an example of this Bohemian lifestyle common in art circles. He upheld the banner of "Art for Art's Sake," and subjected everything, including morality, under the criteria of beauty. Soon, art embraced deconstructionism and hedonism as a protest against anything absolute and authoritarian. For Wilde, "in art there is no such a thing as universal truth." "Lying, the telling of beautiful untrue things, is the proper aim of art." He went so far to state that, "All art is immoral." [26] He prefaced *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with these words:

The moral life of man forms part of the subject matter of the artist, but the morality of art consists in the perfect use of an imperfect medium. No artist desires to prove anything. Even things that are true can be proved. No artist has ethical sympathies. An ethical sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style. No artist is ever morbid. The artist can express everything. Thought and language are to the artist materials for an art. Vice and virtue are to the artist materials for an art.[27]

Once beauty is removed from truth and aesthetics from the virtues, we can understand why contemporary art is often unintelligible and offensive.[28] In some way, nihilism, deconstructionism and hedonism are not just found in philosophy of art, but are quite common in bioethics today.[29] No wonder the project of Shvarts received supporters both in the art and the bioethics world.

With an emphasis on Art for Art's Sake, artistic taste becomes totally dependent on the artist and independent of the merit of the artwork. Taste was considered a special way of knowledge which for the Ancients anticipated and prepared the way for reason. According to Gadamer, in the area of morality, taste is related to prudential judgment and can be connected to the ethics of measure in Plato or the ethics of the mean in Aristotle.[30] As we have seen, this notion of artistic taste is very akin to moral intuition. Roger Scruton argues that artistic taste needs to be objective in some way. Otherwise, there would be no place for the art critics, no need for art galleries, and no auctions of masterpieces that sells for millions.[31] In this sense, we can argue that Shvarts work was in bad taste precisely because it was vulgar and too self-centered. Scruton writes,

Genuine art also entertains us; but it does so by creating distance between us and the scenes that it portrays: a distance sufficient

to engender disinterested sympathy for the characters, rather than vicarious emotions of our own.[32]

The spectator needs a space to distance herself from the artist in seeing the artwork. In this sense, Shvarts' self-referential portrayal destroyed the aesthetic distance that should be present in art. It is akin to graffiti art which is often too individualistic to be identified with sharable sentiments. This could further explain why there was immediate rejection of her "abortion art" precisely because it was "her" attempted "abortion" the viewer is confronted with.

Scruton and others have also remarked that art should not become an instrument of ideology. We have seen how Marxism and Nazism have used art as a form of propaganda. And most people now see these art forms as cheap and grotesque. We can also see this instrumentalization in today's secular, media-crazed, and materialist arena where art is for sale to the highest bidder.[33] In a way, there is some truth in the Art of Art's Sake movement that sought to prevent art from being used as a product. Scruton speaks of the disinterested nature of art that is at the same time "purposive without purpose."[34] When Shvarts said, "I believe strongly that art should be a medium for politics and ideologies, not just a commodity," she has ironically fallen into the trap that only cheapened her artistic endeavor.[35]

The good, the bad and the ugly

There is one last objection that we need to address. Isn't ugliness a more "honest" reflection of the world we live in, where we face death and tragedy all the time? In that case, is it not the function of art to provoke the viewers by depicting ugliness so as to disturb us, to shock us and thereby make us think? Thus, art can be ambiguous in its treatment of beauty.[36] For instance, Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ* generated much controversy because he depicted with gruesome details the suffering of the Man-God in this cinematographic rendition of a popular theme in religious art. People debated whether the film was beautiful or hideous. Joseph Ratzinger, before he became Pope, also elucidated this ambiguity of beauty and ugliness in Christ. He wondered, "Implicit here is the more radical question of whether beauty is true or whether it is not ugliness that leads us to the deepest truth of reality."[37] He alluded to the writings of Plato to demonstrate that beauty should entail the pain of discontent:

In a Platonic sense, we could say that the arrow of nostalgia pierces man, wounds him and in this way gives him wings, lifts him upwards towards the transcendent. In his discourse in the Symposium, Aristophanes says that lovers do not know what they really want from each other. From the search for what is more than their pleasure, it is obvious that the souls of both are thirsting for something other than amorous pleasure. But the heart cannot express this "other" thing, "it has only a vague perception of what it truly wants and wonders about it as an enigma."[38]

Ratzinger is quick to point out, and Scruton agrees, this ambiguity of what is beautiful should not be confused with false beauty. Today, we are often faced with counterfeits of beauty in the guise of these nostalgic wounds.[39] As Orthodox writer Paul Evdokimov states, "God is not the only one who 'clothes himself in Beauty.' Evil imitates him in this respect and thus makes beauty a profoundly ambiguous quality."[40]

We have seen in "abortion art" this manipulation of ambiguity by presenting the public a misleading beauty. This intrinsic ambivalence is mostly exploited under the sensual aspect and concentrated solely in the human body, as reflected in the world of soap operas, Satanic music, advertising, sleazy fashion, or internet porn. Erotic images are created to tempt us—to seek possession and passing gratification rather than becoming open to others. Ratzinger warned:

A beauty that is deceptive and false, a dazzling beauty that does not bring human beings out of themselves to open them to the ecstasy of rising to the heights, but indeed

locks them entirely into themselves. Such beauty does not reawaken a longing for the Ineffable, readiness for sacrifice, the abandonment of self, but instead stirs up the desire, the will for power, possession and pleasure.

As we have seen earlier, true beauty must be grounded in truth and reason, or risk being deformed. The beautiful is a superior form of knowledge that arouses human beings to the real greatness of the truth. While a person who leads a disordered life will also deform their sense of beauty. As Aquinas says, "Those things which are less than what they hold to be, are for that very reason ugly."[41]

As modern art continues its trajectory towards the self-referential aesthetic experience of the genius at the expense of objective beauty, Scruton observes a progressive swing toward the exaltation of the ugly in the art of desecration:

In spite of the ugliness of desecrated art, is it possible that it is a hidden acknowl-edgement of something sacred

More recent art cultivates a posture of transgression, matching the ugliness of the things it portrays with an ugliness of its own. Beauty is downgraded as something too sweet, too escapist and too far from realities to deserve our undeceived attention. Qualities that previously denoted aesthetic failure are now cited as marks of success; while the pursuit of beauty is often regarded as retreat from the real task of artistic creation, which is to challenge comforting illusions and to show life as it is.[42]

Since artists have run out of ideas in their sacrilegious themes, they now turn to the subjects of the human body as a realm of exploration. Shvarts' ignoble attempt fell into this latter category. It is worthwhile to compare the relatively unknown Shvarts with Tracey Emin who enjoys greater fame. Emin is shockingly frank about her personal life which she depicted in her artworks. Much of her work borders on obscenity, as we can deduce from the many vulgar titles that are not fit for printing. Several of her works relate to the traumatic experience of abortion, as is evident from the title of her work *Ripped Up. Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963-1995* showed a tent studded with names of those she shared her bed, including those of her aborted twins.[43] In both the cases of Shvarts and Emin, there is a purposeful focus to desecrate the human form through art. Scruton describes this phenomenon:

The human form is sacred for us because it bears the stamp of our embodiment. The willful desecration of the human form, either through the pornography of sex or the pornography of death and violence, has become, for many people, a kind of compulsion. And this desecration, which spoils the experience of freedom, is also a denial of love. It is an attempt to remake the world as though love were no longer a part of it. And that, surely, is what is the most important characteristic of the postmodern culture… it is a loveless culture, which is afraid of beauty because it is disturbed by love.[44]

If Scruton is correct, these artists were trying to make a statement to society about their misery, their discontent, and their anguish using the ambiguous medium of art. Deep beneath the apparent ugliness, there is a hidden yearning for the absolute, for truth, goodness and beauty. It is a cry of against the inhumanity and impersonality of postmodern life, expressively depicted in *The Scream* of Edvard Munch. Scruton believes that the liberal culture is accurately represented in Tracey Emin's bed:

It is a culture of emotional chaos and random affections, in which traditional loyalties play no part… Unable to identify with a country or a way of life, educated by a curriculum of multicultural fairy tales, and learning in art school that you find your place in the world through transgression, and through putting the self on display, she has had the good sense to be a publicly visible and authentic mess.[45]

Conclusion

To end on a positive (and need I say, beautiful) note, Pope John Paul II wrote in the *Letter to Artists* that, "All men and women are entrusted with the task of crafting their own life: in a certain sense, they are to make of it a work of art, a masterpiece."[46] Similarly, Benedict XVI believes that the way of beauty, the "via pulchritudinis" would be a worthwhile approach to help modern man rediscover meaning, to find the invisible in the visible, where human creativity can become a reflection of the Creator's activity.[47] Hence, all is not lost.

In spite of the ugliness of desecrated art, is it possible that it is a hidden acknowledgement of something sacred. Gianfranco Ravasi is hopeful in this engagement with the artists because to desecrate means there is something sacred out there. Hence, it opens the door to dialogue and the search for the absolute.[48] In bioethics, we see a similar discontent with nihilism and an openness to search for something universal in human rights, justice and the common good.[49]

In a world of technology and globalization, art can help us look at reality with new eyes. As art historian Rodolfo Papa observed, "That which the technological and consumerist man has lost, during the last century, is wonder."[50] Wonder is possible for the modern man when he discovers the need for leisure, to not worry about the pressures of appointments and lack of time. Artistic pursuits are precisely "useless" that it sets us free from the chains of activism and utilitarianism.[51] Art can become playful again and serves that "purposiveness without purpose."[52] In this age of hopelessness, Benedict XVI poses this rhetorical question, "What is capable of restoring enthusiasm and confidence, what can encourage the human spirit to rediscover its path, to raise its eyes to the horizon, to dream of a life worthy of its vocation—if not beauty?"[53]

Last but not least, in the face of eroticism and desecration of life, there is a deep yearning for authentic love. Ramos holds that even a nonvirtuous person can see the beauty of a good act.[54] And indeed, who would not be moved by Mother Teresa of Calcutta holding a child with infinite tenderness close to her heart, or the head of a dying person between her hands? In spite of all her wrinkles, is this not glorious sight of redeemed beauty? As von Balthasar, the theologian of beauty, once remarked,

Beauty is the word with which we shall begin. Beauty is the last word that the thinking intellect dares to speak…We can be sure that whoever sneers at her name as if she were the ornament of a bourgeois past—whether he admits it or not—can no longer pray and soon will no longer be able to love.[55]

NOTE

[1] See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yale_student_abortion_art_controversy; C. Donaldson-Evans, "Yale Student Insists Abortion Art Project Is Real, Despite University's Claims of 'Creative Fiction'," (April 18, 2008) in: http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,351730,00.html.

[2] See for instance, "Turner Prize 2013: The public will question whether this is art, judge admits," in http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/turner-prize/10017755/Turner-Prize-2013-The-public-will-question-whether-this-is-art-judge-admits.htm.

[3] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tracey_Emin.

[4] M. Powers, "For senior, abortion a medium for art, political discourse", *Yale Daily News*, (April 17, 2008).

[5] See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Ofili; A. Tornielli, "L'arte che dissacra cerca ancora l'assoluto," in *Il Giornale*, (26 May, 2010), http://www.il-giornale.it/news/l-arte-che-dissacra-cerca-ancora-l-assoluto.html.

[6] See L. R. Kass, "The Wisdom of Repugnance: Why We Should Ban the Cloning of Humans", *The New Republic,* 216 (1997), 17-26.

[7] G. E. Kaebnick, "On genetic engineering and the idea of the sacred: a secular argument", *St Thomas Law Review,* 4 (2001), 863-876 at 876.

[8] T. Peters, "A theological argument for chimeras", in *Nature Reports* (14 June, 2007). Http://www.nature.com/stemcells/2007/0706/070614/full/stemcells.2007.31.html.

[9] MacIntyre traces the origin of emotivism to Hume, C.L. Stevenson, and G.E. Moore. It was at the turn of the last century that Moore's *Principia Ethica* became popular in the Anglo analytical philosophical circle, and exerted influence in subsequent generations of thinker including Hare, Rawls, Gert and

Gewirth. Even the extremist Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, Sartre's Existentialist-Marxist philosophy and Weber's bureaucratic society conceded to the substance of emotivism. See A. C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, Duckworth, London 1984, 22.

[10] Plotinus, *Enneads*, Sixth Tractate on Beauty, 1. Http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/p/plotinus/p72e/part1.6.html.

[11] For e.g., see Pope Benedict XVI, "Pope Says True Beauty Linked to Truth," in *Zenit News Agency*, (November 25, 2008). Http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/pope-says-true-beauty-linked-to-truth; Id., "Benedict XVI's Q-and-A En Route to Spain," in *Zenit News Agency* (November 7, 2010). Http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/benedict-xvi-s-q-and-a-en-route-to-spain.

[12] A. M. Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty form a Thomistic Perspective*, CUA Press, Washington, D.C. 2012, 4.

[13] Transcendental not in the Kantian sense, but according to Aristotle and St. Thomas, are that which is interchangeable with Being in the metaphysical sense. Oneness, truth, goodness and beauty are the traditionally considered transcedentals.

[14] See A. M. Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals,* op. cit., 181.

[15] *Ibid.,* 183, cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q.145, aa.1-2.

[16] See A. M. Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals,* 203.

[17] See *ibid.,* 147-180.

[18] B. Nathanson, *The Hand of God: A Journey from Death to Life by the Abortion Doctor Who Changed His Mind*, H. Regnery, Chicago 1996.

[19] J. P. Mesas, "The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: The Aesthetic in Moral Imagination," in A. M. Ramos (ed.), *Beauty, Art and the Polis*, CUA Press, Washington, DC 2000, 237-244 at 243.

[20] See A. M. Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals,* op. cit., 199.

[21] *Ibid*.

[22] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aliza_Shvarts.

[23] *Ibid*.

[24] See R. Scruton, *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction*, OUP, New York 2011.

[25] See *ibid*., 22-28, A. M. Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals,* op. cit., 216-219.

[26] See *ibid.,* 221.

[27] O. Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 1891edition with Preface, in www.gutenberg.org.

[28] A. M. Ramos, "Hunger for beauty," in *Mercator Net*, (14 October, 2008).

[29] See J. Tham, "The Secularization of Bioethics," in *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly,* 8/2 (2008), 443-454.

[30] A. M. Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals,* op. cit., 218.

[31] See R. Scruton, *Beauty*, op. cit., 82-85.

[32] *Ibid*., 86.

[33] See *ibid*., 52-53; A. Rouco Varela, "La belleza frente a la ideología laicista," in *Humanitas,* 11/44 (2006). Http://www.humanitas.cl/html/biblioteca/articulos/d0496.html.

[34] See R. Scruton, *Beauty*, op. cit., 66.

[35] M. Powers, "For senior, abortion a medium for art, political discourse", op. cit.

[36] Benedict XVI, "Dear Artists, You are the Custodians of Beauty," (21 November, 2009). Http://chiesa.espresso.repubblica.it/articolo/1341070?eng=y.

[37] J. Ratzinger, "The Beauty and the Truth of Christ," in *L'Osservatore Romano*, (6 November, 2002), 6. Http://www.ewtn.com/library/theology/ratzbeau.htm.

[38] *Ibid*.

[39] See R. Scruton, *Beauty*, op. cit., 4.

[40] P. Evdokimov, *The Art of the Icon: a theology of beauty*, Oakwood Publications, Redondo Beach, CA 1993, 38.

[41] See A. M. Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals,* op. cit., 196. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q.39, a.8, resp.

[42] See R. Scruton, *Beauty*, op. cit., 140.

[43] See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tracey_Emin

[44] See R. Scruton, *Beauty*, op. cit., 148.

[45] Id., "On Defending Beauty," in *The American Spectator*, (May, 2010). Http://spectator.org/archives/2010/05/17/on-defending-beauty.

[46] John Paul II, *Letter to the Artists,* (1999), n. 2.

[47] See Benedict XVI, "On Beauty as a Way to God," in *Zenit News Agency* (31 August, 2011). Http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/on-beauty-as-a-way-to-god; Id., "Dear Artists, You are the Custodians of Beauty."

[48] See A. Tornielli, "L'arte che dissacra cerca ancora l'assoluto," op. cit.

[49] See J. Tham, "Natural Law and Global Bioethics," in *Studia Bioethica,* 4.3 (2011), 7-16.

[50] R. Papa, "Rediscovering the Soul of Art," *Zenit News Agency,* (4 May, 2007) in: Http://www.zenit.org/en/articles/rediscovering-the-soul-of-art.

[51] See J. L. Roccasalvo, "Beauty and the Sacred," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review,* 108 (2008), 68-75.

[52] See R. Scruton, *Beauty*, op. cit., 66, 107-108.

[53] See Benedict XVI, "Dear Artists, You are the Custodians of Beauty," op. cit.

[54] See A. M. Ramos, *Dynamic Transcendentals,* op. cit., 147-180.

[55] Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord, I: Seeing the Form,* Ignatius, San Francisco 1982, 18.