

Empirical Relationships Between Beauty and Justice: Testing Scarry and Elaborating Danto

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Elaine Scarry (1999) proposes a correspondence between engagement with beauty and a sense of justice. Parallel to Scarry, Arthur Danto (2003) posits that 20th century artists avoided producing beautiful works because of an offended sense of justice. In Study 1, the relationship between justice reasoning (DIT2; Rest et al., 1999a) and engagement with beauty (Diessner et al., 2008) is examined; there is a significant raw correlation ($r = .23$; $p < .05$; $N = 132$), which reduced to a nonsignificant $r = .01$ when Openness to Experience was partialled out. Study 2 examines the relationship between fairness as a character strength (cf. Peterson & Seligman, 2004) and engagement with beauty, finding a raw $r = .35$, $p < .001$ ($N = 113$). After partialing out Openness to Experience the r is $.25$, significant at $p = .009$. Although there is no significant association between justice reasoning and engagement with beauty, when justice/fairness is viewed as a character strength, Scarry's hypothesis is empirically validated. Thus, justice-minded artists need not avoid beauty, as beautiful art may increase viewers' sensitivity to justice.

Keywords: beauty, justice, DIT, character strengths, trait fairness

In 1998 Elaine Scarry, Walter M. Cabot Professor of Aesthetics at Harvard University, offered her provocative Tanner Lectures on beauty and justice, at Yale University, which were later published by Princeton University Press as, *On Beauty and Being Just* (Scarry, 1999). In the first of this tiny text, entitled, "On Beauty and Being Wrong," Scarry provides background to understand her argument concerning beauty and justice. She emphasizes how easy it is to overlook beauty in the world and to believe something is not beautiful when it is, and thus be wrong. She goes on to observe that engagement with beauty leads to a love of conviction, which in its turn leads to a love of the search for truth; and truth is a necessary condition for justice (viz., p. 31, p. 53).

The second part of her lovely little tome, which directly addresses beauty and justice, is entitled, "On Beauty and Being Fair." Her argument, which is a bit elusive (Gitlin, 1999, p. 63; Nehamas, 2000; Paden, 2001), follows this line: we love beauty, thus we love symmetry, and thus we love justice. She invokes "justice as 'fairness,' using the widely accepted definition by John Rawls of fairness as a "symmetry of everyone's relations to each other" (Scarry, 1999, p. 93).

Scarry (1999) describes a political critique of beauty by noting that some critics contend that beauty attracts and holds our attention and thus distracts us from unethical social arrangements and thus makes us indifferent to acting on social justice. She argues against this view, making the case that beauty is innocent of these charges, at the very least; rather it is likely that beauty creates a pressure within us to rectify existing injustices. Scarry also connects beauty and justice linguistically (p. 91 ff), by creatively

exploring etymological links, across a variety of languages, of beauty as fairness (loveliness of countenance) and of justice as fairness (an ethical demand). As well, she links beauty and justice through the concept of "distribution"—beauty encourages the voluntary extension of one's gaze toward finding beauty distributed across our world, and this sets the conditions to be concerned with distributive justice. She goes on to argue that all three sites of beauty—the object, the perceiver, and the act of creation—all expose the pressure beauty exerts toward ethical equality.

What is the quality of Scarry's arguments about the relationship between beauty and justice? Although reviews of her text have been mixed (Gitlin, 1999; Paden, 2001), we find Nehamas' (2000) summary the most balanced and accurate. He asserts that "her book is a hymn to the love of beauty" analogous to Agathon's speech Plato's *Symposium* as "a hymn to the beauty of love. Both are fresh, eccentric, and uncompromising, and both leave you dazed—suspended between admiration and doubt, eager to praise and compelled to criticize" (p. 394).

We also feel admiration for and a desire to praise Scarry's thoughts on beauty and justice. As social scientists, however, we would like to postpone criticism of Scarry's ideas until we have collected and analyzed data relevant to the relationship between beauty and justice, which we do below.

Danto: The Fall and Rise of Beauty

Dickie (1997) argues that the decline of beauty, that is, the decline of its importance to philosophers of aesthetics and to art critics, began with the 18th century German and British philosophers who, frustrated with their inability to define beauty, and their recognition of other relevant aesthetic factors (the sublime, the picturesque, the aesthetic attitude, etc.), removed beauty from its central position in art and aesthetics. By the 20th century beauty was seldom mentioned by philosophers of aesthetics, and it began to be spurned by artists as well. Arthur

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Danto, Emeritus Johnsonian Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University, has undertaken to explain why many artists during the 20th century, especially those of the avant-garde, purposely avoided beauty in their creations (Danto, 1994, 2003). In the early 20th century, many socially conscious and radical artists purposefully avoided creating anything beautiful, and viewed a focus on beauty as naïve and irresponsible. Danto (1994; and cf. Higgins, 1996) notes that the art of the 20th century is an art of activism, indignation, and accusation. He believes that modern artists perceive beauty as consoling. Because of their sense of justice, modern (and post modern) artists do not want to console—they want to provoke and accuse. Danto notes that consolatory beauty in art is ethically inconsistent with the indignation necessary for accusatory art, and thus beauty had to be exiled. Focusing on the late 20th century, Scarry (1999) appears to agree, by arguing beauty has been banished from the humanities for the last two decades.

Yet, at the beginning of this 21st century, there has been a call to bring beauty out of exile and back into art (Danto, 2003)—note the symposium for philosophers and art critics, in the last year of the 20th century, was entitled, “Beauty Matters” (viz., Eaton, 1999). Eaton argues that by the end of the 20th century there was a trend for aesthetic theorists and artists to believe once again that beauty does matter in art.

Danto (2003) states that from the 18th to early 20th century it was simply presumed that art should possess beauty. He traces the downfall of beauty to the Dada movement, which out of a sense of justice, objected to making anything beautiful for the pleasure of the social class that was responsible for the First World War. At the time of World War I artists were deeply unsettled by the West’s hypocrisy in believing itself to be highly civilized, yet creating and participating in the greatest carnage in history. Thus, beauty became suddenly politicized by socially conscious avant-garde artists in 1915, and abusing beauty was a way for them to dissociate themselves from a society for which they had great contempt.

This trend continued through the 20th century—Danto notes that the Whitney Biennial of 1993 was full of shocking works, that disturbed the viewers, but which demonstrated the commitment of American artists to addressing injustices of race, class, and gender. Danto appears sympathetic to this, implying that victimization is ugly, and thus to make such works beautiful would be artistically wrong.

Danto is at pains to show that beauty is not necessary in a work of art; but that nonetheless, beauty is a fully appropriate goal for artists whose creative works are internally congruent with a display of beauty. He describes the spontaneous appearance of improvised shrines throughout New York after the 9/11 attack, stating that this was evidence of a deeply ingrained need for beauty in human life:

I came to view that in writing about beauty as a philosopher, I was addressing the deepest kind of issue there is. Beauty is but one of an immense range of aesthetic qualities, and philosophical aesthetics has been paralyzed by focusing as narrowly on beauty as it has. But beauty is the only one of the aesthetic qualities that is also a virtue, like truth and goodness. It is not simply among the values we live by, but one of the values that defines what a fully human life means” (p. 14–15).

Is it necessary to avoid beauty to create a more just society? If Scarry is correct in saying that experiences of beauty correspond to an increased awareness of justice, then a conscious abandonment of beauty may backfire, unintentionally leading to further injustices. We agree with Danto, not all works of art need be beautiful; on the other hand, beauty need not be the enemy of justice.

The Importance of Beauty in the West

Beauty, since the dawn of Western civilization, has been one of the three ends of human being: truth, beauty, and the good (Plato, 1937/1892). Of course, in our post modern age, the words and concepts of *truth*, *beauty*, or *the good* have been kicked off the pedestal of divine Forms and deconstructed, whereas many intellectuals assume they remain in usage only among the naïve. Nonetheless, whether one believes truth, beauty and the good to be objective realities, or simply concepts used to gain power and oppress others, they continue to provoke and organize the thought of scholars, artists, and laypersons. In addition, close on the heels of these three big *ends* is the concept of justice. Justice is *the* prominent moral principle of Plato’s *Republic*—Socrates argues justice is the central principle for structuring the order of a city-state, as well as organizing the individual human psyche (Diessner, Frost, & Smith, 2004).

Many of the West’s most influential philosophers have argued for the fundamental importance of beauty: Thomas Aquinas (1260/1947; see Eco, 1988), Aristotle (ca. 340BCE/2002), Augustine (400/1964); Dewey (1934/1958), Ficino (1475/1964), (1835/1993), Kant (1790/1987), Plotinus, 250/1964, Santayana (1896/1961), and Schopenhauer (1819/1969). Philosophers have addressed both beauty in art and beauty in nature (Beardsley, 1975; Croce, 1902/1960; Hofstadter & Kuhns, 1964; Mothersill, 1984; Sheppard, 1987). Moral beauty (cf. Haidt, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2006; Haidt & Keltner, 2004; Keltner & Haidt, 2003), in the context of the beauty of human virtue has been emphasized by Aristotle. Aristotle (2002) argued that the *end* (the goal) of all virtues is beauty. Danto (2003) briefly refers to moral beauty as well (p. 55).

The Importance of Beauty Across Cultures

In beauty happily I walk.

With beauty before me I walk.

With beauty behind me I walk.

With beauty below me I walk.

With beauty above me I walk.

With beauty all around me I walk.

(Navajo/Diné prayer; Quoted in Jones, 1951, p. 12)

It appears that every culture has standards of beauty; beauty is a universal value (Haidt & Keltner, 2004; Washburn, 2006). There are at least two broadly influential sources for the importance of beauty across cultures. One is our evolutionary past: perceiving aspects of nature as beautiful appears to have adaptive or survival value (Averill, Stanat, & More, 1998; Etcoff, 2000; Richards, 1998). Another source can be found in the spiritual traditions and religions of humankind. Spirituality and religion have influenced beauty in art from ancient through modern times (cf. Mark Tobey in Dahl, 1984; Kandinsky, 1912/1947). The concept of beauty is

ubiquitous in the sacred texts of the world's religions, commonly embedded in the concept of glory. "Great beauty" is a direct synonym of "glory" (Gove, 1993, p. 967). Reference to beauty and glory are found in the Hindu *Bhagavad-Gita* (Arjuna & Krishna, ca. 3000BCE/2000); in the *Psalms* (King David, ca. 950BCE/n.d.) of Judaism; in the Buddhist *Dhammapada* (Buddha, ca. 300BCE/1993); in the Christian *Bible* (*John*, 1:14, KJV, ca. 50CE/n.d.); in Islam's *Qur'án* (Muhammad, ca. 630CE/2000); and in the Bahá'í writings (Bahá'u'lláh, 1935/1976).

Assessing Appreciation of and Engagement With Beauty

There is very little empirical work indexed by PsycINFO, ERIC, or SocINDEX on engagement with beauty, other than a wide variety of studies on issues of human physical/cosmetic beauty. One exception is Milton Rokeach's (1974) and his colleagues (cf. Mayton, 1993) work on human values. Rokeach framed a world of beauty as a human terminal value, and found that Americans considered it to be among the least important of values in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This finding by Rokeach parallels Danto's (2003) and Scarry's (1999) concerns about the lack of interest in beauty in philosophy and the humanities in the 20th century. Humanistic and existential psychologists have addressed the importance of beauty, but typically without a systematically empirical focus (Maslow, 1964, 1970; May, 1985).

Empirically oriented personality psychologists Costa and McCrae (1992), creators of the NEO-PI scale which measures the Five Factor Model of personality, have framed Openness to Aesthetics as a specific trait within the broader trait of Openness to Experience. Their Openness to Aesthetics facet scale measures appreciation for beauty in art. Research using this facet scale has established a wide variety of findings (Brown, Wise, & Costa, 1996; Griffin, & McDermott, 1998; Lusebrink, 1995; McCrae, 2007; Perrine, & Brodersen, 2005; Thompson, Brossart, & Carlozzi, 2002).

Studies using the Engagement with Beauty Scale (EBS; Diessner, Parsons, Solom, Frost, & Davidson, 2008), which has three subscales measuring engagement with natural beauty, artistic beauty and moral beauty, have shown that engagement with beauty has medium to high positive correlations with the traits of gratitude and spiritual transcendence and a low negative correlation with endorsement of materialistic values. A known-groups study demonstrated that the EBS Artistic Beauty subscale differentiated college students taking courses in the arts from those that were not. In a beauty intervention study (Diessner, Rust, Solom, Frost, & Parsons, 2006), it was shown that college students who participated in focused engagement with beauty exercises significantly increased their level of engagement with beauty. That study also demonstrated that engagement with beauty is significantly correlated with the trait of hope.

Cattron's (2008) study with the EBS found that engagement with beauty significantly correlates with mindfulness (a heightened state of being in the present) ($N = 134$; $r = .27$ total score, $p = .002$). He also showed that engagement with artistic beauty correlates higher with mindfulness ($r = .29$, $p = .001$), than do engagement with natural beauty ($r = .21$, $p < .02$) or moral beauty ($r = .18$, $p < .04$). International studies (Richel et al., 2008; Susnjic & Diessner, 2008) using translations of the EBS in Iran, Samoa, Germany, Cyprus, and Croatia, have shown it to maintain

fairly high internal consistency across translations (α s for total score from .85–.94). Such high alphas indicate that engagement with natural beauty (α s from .66–.85), with artistic beauty (α s from .73–.92), and with moral beauty (α s from .85–.92), are coherent and meaningful concepts in cultures from Europe, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and the South Pacific.

In the context of the positive psychology movement, Peterson and Seligman (2004) have developed the 240 item Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS), which provides a ranking of 24 character strengths. One such strength is labeled "appreciation of beauty and excellence," and it is measured by a 10-item subscale of the VIA-IS. A study by Peterson, Park, and Seligman (2006) shows that appreciation of beauty may be one of the most important and effective character strengths involved in gaining satisfaction with life after overcoming depression and other psychological disorders. Riddle and Michel-Riddle (2007) used the VIA-IS to study a small sample ($N = 21$) of male art therapists and art therapy students (they selected men as an unusual group, as the field is apparently 94% women). They found that the two highest ranked character strengths for this sample, of the 24 strengths measured on the VIA-IS, were "curiosity and interest in the world" and "appreciation of beauty and excellence." On a biological note, Steger, Hicks, Kashdan, Krueger, and Bouchard (2007), in a study using the VIA-IS with $N = 336$ twins, found that monozygotic twins showed a correlation of .56 with the appreciation of beauty and excellence subscale, but dizygotics had a correlation of .03. Such correlations were typical across all 24 VIA-IS character strengths, indicating levels of heritability that are characteristic for most personality traits.

Assessing a Sense of Justice

Psychologists have approached assessment of the human sense of justice primarily in two ways. One method has been to assess the ability to think and reason about justice, pioneered by Piaget, and elaborated extensively by Kohlberg (1984; Colby & Kohlberg, 1987; and cf. Gibbs et al., 1984) and Rest (1979; Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau, & Thoma, 1999b). The other approach is to view justice as a personality trait or as the character strength of fairness (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Lee & Ashton, 2004, 2007).

Kohlberg (1984), following the lead of Piaget, defined a six stage structural model of the development of the ability to reason with justice. In Kohlberg's methodology (Colby & Kohlberg, 1987), interviewers present moral dilemmas to subjects and ask them their solutions; their responses are recorded, transcribed and scored for stage level. James Rest (1979) developed a multiple choice format for assessing justice reasoning, the Defining Issues Test (DIT), which is based on Kohlberg's theory and presents subjects with moral dilemmas similar to the ones that Kohlberg used. The subjects read the dilemmas, and then mark their preferred choice of solutions. The choice of options, following the dilemmas on the DIT, represent Kohlberg's stages, and thus provide the researcher with a percentage score of how often the subjects selected principled level choices. With both Kohlberg's and Rest's approaches the individual's level of justice reasoning is determined. There is a large empirical track record, as well as theoretical arguments, concerning the relevance and meaningfulness of their research programs (Kohlberg, 1981, 1984; Rest et al., 1999b).

The personality approach to assessing a sense of justice views justice as the trait of fairness. The trait of fairness includes such attributes as being committed to fairness in social relations, being sensitized to issues of social and distributive justice, being trustworthy, being civic minded, honoring one's promises, not cheating, not stealing, following rules, and believing in equality and equity. The Values in Action Inventory of Strengths (VIA-IS; Peterson & Seligman, 2004) measures such a trait, which they call the character strength of fairness or equity. Likewise, Lee and Ashton (2004, 2007) have developed a facet scale which they named Justice, as one of the 24 personality facets measured by their HEXACO Personality Inventory (HEXACO-PI).

Purpose of the Present Studies

The main purpose of the two studies reported below is to examine whether or not there is empirical support for Scarry's argument that beauty and justice are related. Study 1 will examine whether there is a significant positive relationship between engagement with beauty and justice reasoning. Study 2 will examine whether there is a significant positive relationship between engagement with beauty and the character strength of fairness.

This appears to be fresh empirical territory—the PsycINFO, ERIC, and SocINDEX databases reveal no published empirical studies concerning the relationship between engagement with beauty and justice, other than related to issues of human physical/cosmetic beauty. For instance, Forbes, Collinsworth, Jobe, Braun, and Wise (2007) found that oppression/injustice and hostility toward women correlated with endorsement of Western physical beauty ideals; and Callan, Powell, and Ellard (2007) showed that participants judged the accidental death of an attractive woman as more tragic and unfair than the death of a less attractive woman (they also reviewed research relevant to injustice and beauty, such as physically attractive individuals being perceived as more qualified to obtain jobs, getting better health care services, receiving more lenient criminal sentences, and being offered help more often). However, it appears there are no published studies examining engagement with beauty in general (such as natural beauty, artistic beauty, or moral beauty) and its relationship to either justice reasoning or to the character strength of fairness. The two studies below remedy those lacunae.

Study 1: Engagement With Beauty and Justice Reasoning

The introduction to this study is contained in the above general introductory section.

Method

Participants

The participants were a convenience sample of $N = 132$ undergraduates at Lewis-Clark State College, in Lewiston, Idaho, recruited in Fall, 2007 from introductory, developmental and educational psychology classes. There was wide diversity of majors in those classes: 28% teacher education, 24% social science, 17% natural science, 17% humanities, 4% vo-tech, 4% undecided, and 6% nonreporting. The participants had a mean age of 22.4 ($SD = 7.15$; range 18–54); were 58% women; 3% African, 5% Asian,

75% Euro, 12% Latino, 3% marked "mixed," and 1% Native American.

Measures

Engagement with beauty scale. The EBS is a 14-item self-report scale describing various levels of cognitive and emotional engagement concerning natural, artistic, and moral beauty. Although there are other instruments that measure appreciation of beauty as a subscale, the EBS is the only scale extant that is devoted to measuring the trait of engagement with beauty.

The EBS uses a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "very unlike me" to "very much like me," on questions such as, "When perceiving beauty in nature I feel changes in my body, such as a lump in my throat, an expansion in my chest, faster heartbeat, or other bodily responses," "When perceiving beauty in a work of art I feel something like a spiritual experience, perhaps a sense of oneness or being united with the universe or a love of the entire world," and "When perceiving an act of moral beauty I find that I desire to become a better person" (Diessner et al., 2008).

The EBS provides a total scale score and also has three subscales tapping engagement with natural beauty (four items), artistic beauty (four items), and moral beauty (six items). Studies of the EBS with an American sample ($N = 206$; 58% female) yielded a total score internal consistency of .91, and test-retest reliability of .79; EBS Natural Beauty subscale α of .80; Artistic Beauty subscale α from .88; and the EBS Moral Beauty subscale α from .89; test-retest reliability correlations ranged from .67 to .79 on the subscales. Factor analytic studies (EFA and CFA) and goodness of fit indices show the three subscales reasonably fit a 3-factor model (Diessner et al., 2008). International studies with translations of the EBS, in Iran, Samoa, Germany, Cyprus, and Croatia, have shown it to maintain fairly high internal consistency across translations (α s from .85–.94) and to have a similar factor structure across cultures (Richel et al., 2008; Susnjic & Diessner, 2008). A variety of concurrent and predictive studies have shown the promising validity of the EBS (Diessner et al., 2008, 2006). In this current study the EBS total score had a Cronbach's alpha of .88; the natural beauty subscale's was .75; artistic beauty .90; and the moral beauty subscale's alpha was .86.

Defining issues test-2. The revised Defining Issues Test (DIT2; Bebeau & Thoma, 2003) is a shortened, revised, and improved version of the original DIT (Rest, 1979). Both the DIT and DIT2 consist of several moral dilemmas, each of which is followed by multiple-choice questions that are keyed to Kohlberg's (1984) stages of justice reasoning. The results of the DIT produces a P-score, which is a percentage of items ranked as highly important by the participant, that are at the principled (postconventional) level of justice reasoning. The DIT2 offers a new score, the N2, which integrates the subject's P-score with the degree to which the subject rated lower stage items (personal interest items) below higher justice reasoning stage postconventional items. Both the DIT and DIT2 have a wide range of validity indices (Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 1999a; Rest et al., 1999b). The DIT2 has shown moderate internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha ranging from .65 (Crowson & DeBacker, 2008) to .81 (Rest et al., 1999a), for the N2 score. In our current study the alpha, for the $N = 132$ valid N2 scores, was .74.

NEO-PI-R. The NEO-PI-R (NEO Personality Inventory–Revised), self-report Form S (Costa & McCrae, 1992) is a classic measure in personality assessment, providing scores for each of the domains of the five-factor model theory of personality: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. These domain scores show internal consistency coefficients from .86 to .95. Multiyear test–retest reliability coefficients are in the range of .51 to .83; each domain has a variety of facet scales within them, with internal consistency coefficients ranging from .56 to .90. Costa and McCrae report a variety of validity studies relating the NEO-PI-R to other personality inventories and projective measures. For the domain that is of interest in our current study, Openness to Experience, Costa and McCrae report an alpha of .87, and for the Aesthetic facet scale a .76. In our current study, the Openness to Experience scale had an alpha of .84, and the Aesthetic facet scale’s alpha was .81.

Procedure

Half the subjects completed the EBS first, the other half the DIT2 first, to avoid sequencing effects. A week after taking the EBS and DIT2, $N = 111$ of these same subjects completed the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The participants were given course credit to complete the scales; the study was approved by the LCSC Human Subjects committee, and all APA ethical research standards were adhered to.

Design of Statistical Analysis

The two main variables under study, engagement with beauty as shown by total score on the EBS, and justice reasoning as shown by N2 score of the DIT2, will be correlated using a Pearson product–moment correlation. As the trait of openness is known to influence both appreciation of beauty, and justice reasoning, a partial correlation will be computed, controlling for Openness to Experience, as measured by the NEO-PI.

Results

EBS total score showed an $r = .18$ ($p < .05$) with the DIT2 N2 score; additionally, the DIT2 N2 score correlated with the EBS natural beauty subscale, $r = .20$ ($p < .03$), with the EBS artistic beauty subscale, $r = .18$ ($p < .05$), and with the EBS moral beauty subscale, $r = .05$ (*n.s.*). However, after partialing out the Openness to Experience factor of the NEO-PI-R ($N = 111$) the correlation dropped to a nonsignificant $r = .01$.

As a psychometric aside, the EBS total score showed a .69 correlation with the Aesthetic facet scale of the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992); and the EBS natural beauty subscale correlated .54, the EBS artistic beauty subscale .66, and the EBS moral beauty subscale .46 with the Aesthetics facet.

Discussion

Initially it appeared that Scarry’s hypothesis was somewhat vindicated by the positive and significant, though small, correlation between engagement with beauty and justice reasoning. However, the major trait, Openness to Experience is known to correlate with the endorsement of both appreciation of beauty and justice/equality; for example, political liberals score much higher on

Openness scales, and endorse appreciation of beauty and equality, much more than political conservatives (*viz.*, Haidt, 2007; Haidt & Graham, 2007). Therefore, it was deemed important to examine if there was any relationship between beauty and justice reasoning after partialing out the influence of Openness to Experience. After partialing out Openness, the correlation between engagement with beauty and justice reasoning dropped to .01, which is essentially no relationship at all. So, was Scarry wrong? The DIT2 specifically measures the ability to reason, in the Kohlbergian tradition, about justice-oriented issues. Perhaps, rather than reasoning ability, Scarry’s hypothesis is relevant to personality, to the trait of being fair, of being oriented to and cherishing justice. We decided to further test her hypothesis by examining the relationship between engagement with beauty and fairness as a character strength. Below, in Study 2, we do just that.

We expected that the DIT2, a measure of moral/justice reasoning, would correlate higher with the EBS subscale of moral beauty engagement, than with the EBS’s artistic or natural beauty subscales. However, this was not the case—there was no significant relationship between moral/justice reasoning and engagement with moral beauty; but there were significant correlations between justice reasoning and engagement with both artistic beauty and with natural beauty. Could it be that persons with a high level of justice reasoning tend not to look for the inner beauty in others, but they do seek beauty in art and nature? Future research on this topic appears warranted.

In the original technical paper on the EBS (Diessner et al., 2008), concurrent validity between the NEO-PI-R Aesthetic facet scale (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and the EBS was not reported. Our data in this study show a correlation of .69 between the EBS total score and the Aesthetics facet scale; this correlation is high enough to indicate that the two scales may be measuring something quite similar, but low enough to show they are not measuring something identical. As the NEO-PI-R Aesthetic facet scale has eight items, of which 7.5 refer to art [music, dance, poetry, art], and half of a question refers to patterns in nature, and has no item concerning moral beauty, it is not surprising that the EBS engagement with art subscale correlates higher with the Aesthetic facet ($r = .66$) than do the natural beauty ($r = .54$) or moral beauty ($r = .46$) subscales of the EBS.

Study 2: Engagement With Beauty and the Trait of Fairness

There appear to be no published studies which examine the empirical relationship between measures of engagement with beauty and the trait (or character strength) of fairness. We predict a moderately high correlation between the EBS and the IPIP-VIA Fairness scale. To address discriminant validity, we will correlate two character strengths that we anticipate would have low, non-significant, correlations with the EBS—the IPIP-VIA Modesty/Humility scale and the IPIP-VIA Industry/Perseverance/Persistence scale. See the above general introductory section for background to this study.

Method

Participants

The participants were a convenience sample of $N = 120$ undergraduates at Lewis-Clark State College, in Lewiston, Idaho, re-

cruited from Spring, 2008 introductory, developmental and educational psychology classes. There was wide diversity of majors in those classes: 24% teacher education, 21.5% social sciences, 21.5% natural sciences, 19% humanities, 7.4% vo-tech, 5.8% undecided, and .8% left it blank. The participants had a mean age of 22.8 ($SD = 6.7$; range 17–55); and are 65% women; 4.1% Asian, 81.8% Euro, 3.3% Latino, 4.1% marked “mixed,” 3.3% Native American, 2.5% other, and .8% no response.

Measures

Engagement with beauty scale. See above, in Study 1, for a description of this scale. In this Study 2, the EBS showed Cronbach’s alphas of .89 for total score; .79 for the natural beauty subscale; .85 for the artistic beauty subscale; and .87 for the moral beauty subscale.

Defining issues test-2. See above, in Study 1, for a description of this test. In this current sample, with an $N = 42$, the Cronbach’s alpha was .80.

IPIP-FFM-Openness to Experience scale. Rather than use the expensive NEO-PI-R, to get results for a single domain scale (Openness to Experience), we used the International Personality Item Pool, Five Factor Model, 20 item Openness to Experience scale (Goldberg, 1999; Goldberg et al., 2006; <http://ipip.ori.org/>). Saucier and Goldberg (2002) report, with an $N = 501$ from a community sample, a corrected correlation of .92 between the 20-item Openness scale of the IPIP FFM measure and the NEO-PI-R Openness domain scale. They also report a coefficient alpha of .89 for this Openness scale, and in our current study, we found an alpha of .82.

IPIP-VIA fairness scale. This is a 9-item, Likert response, free-use scale from the IPIP site (Goldberg et al., 2006; <http://ipip.ori.org/>) that measures the trait-like character strength of “fairness” or equity, and has a reported Cronbach’s alpha of .70. In the study reported here, the scale had an alpha of .74. The IPIP-VIA fairness scale is an analogue scale of the fairness/equity subscale of Peterson and Seligman’s (2004) Values in Action scale (VIA). The IPIP-VIA fairness scale and the original VIA fairness scale contain items similar to, “I am committed to principles of justice and equality,” “I treat all people equally,” and “I believe that everyone should have a say.” Peterson and Seligman (2004) define the character strength of fairness by referring to an “individual’s treatment of other people in similar and identical ways—not letting one’s personal feelings or issues bias decisions about others,” and can refer to either a “radical equality of treatment or a more nuanced equity of treatment” (p. 361).

IPIP-VIA modesty/humility scale. This is a 9-item, Likert response, free-use scale from the IPIP site (Goldberg et al., 2006; <http://ipip.ori.org/>) that measures the trait-like character strength of modesty and humility, and has a reported Cronbach’s alpha of .70. In the study reported here, the scale had an alpha of .68. The IPIP-VIA modesty/humility scale is an analogue scale of the modesty/humility subscale of Peterson and Seligman’s (2004) Values in Action scale (VIA). Although there is little empirical validity evidence published concerning this specific subscale, a variety of studies are showing the VIA’s promising validity (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004, 2006; Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2006).

IPIP-VIA industry/perseverance/persistence scale. This is an 8-item, Likert response, free-use scale from the IPIP site (Goldberg et al., 2006; <http://ipip.ori.org/>) that measures the trait-like character strength of industry, perseverance, and persistence, and has a reported Cronbach’s alpha of .81. In the study reported here, the scale had an alpha of .74. The IPIP-VIA industry/perseverance/persistence scale is an analogue scale of the industry/perseverance/persistence subscale of Peterson and Seligman’s (2004) Values in Action scale (VIA). Although there is little empirical validity evidence published concerning this specific subscale, a variety of studies are showing the VIA’s promising validity (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004, 2006; Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2006).

Procedure

The EBS, IPIP-VIA Fairness scale, IPIP-Openness to Experience Scale, and a political affiliation measure (which will not be reported on in this study) were randomly ordered into packets (to prevent any sequencing effect) and completed by the participants during class time. A subset of $N = 42$ then completed the DIT2 two weeks later. Four weeks after that $N = 91$ of the original subjects completed the IPIP-VIA Modesty/Humility scale and the IPIP-VIA Industry/Perseverance/Persistence scale; half the subjects completed the Modesty scale first, the other half the Industry scale, to prevent sequencing effects. The participants were given course credit to complete the scales; the study was approved by the LCSC Human Subjects committee, and all APA ethical research standards were adhered to.

Design of Statistical Analysis

The two main variables in Study 2, engagement with beauty as shown by total score on the EBS, and the character strength of fairness, as measured by the IPIP-VIA Fairness scale, will be correlated using a Pearson product–moment correlation. As the trait of openness is known to influence both appreciation of beauty, and endorsement of justice, a partial correlation will be computed, controlling for Openness to Experience. To examine whether a positive response style could account for finding a relationship between engagement with beauty and the character strength of fairness (i.e., someone who indiscriminately endorses any and all character strengths), we will correlate two other character strengths—modesty/humility and industry/perseverance—with the EBS, as measured by the IPIP-VIA Modesty/Humility and the IPIP-VIA Industry/Perseverance/Persistence scales.

Results

The correlation between the EBS total score and the IPIP-VIA Fairness scale was $r = .35, p < .001$ ($N = 113$); after partialing out Openness to Experience the r dropped to .25, but was still significant at $p = .009$. The three EBS subscales all showed significant correlations with the IPIP-IVA Fairness scale: natural beauty $r = .32$ ($p = .001$); artistic beauty $r = .29$ ($p = .002$); moral beauty $r = .24$ ($p = .01$). However, after partialing out Openness to Experience, only the engagement with natural beauty subscale retained statistical significance: natural beauty $r = .22$ ($p = .02$); artistic beauty $r = .18$ ($p = .06$); moral beauty $r = .17$ ($p = .07$).

The EBS total score showed a statistically nonsignificant r of .07 ($p = .50$; $N = 91$) with the IPIP-VIA Modesty/Humility scale; and likewise with the IPIP-VIA Industry/Perseverance/Persistence scale, $r = .15$ ($p = .16$; $N = 90$).

The correlation between the DIT2 N2 score and the EBS, for an $N = 42$ subsample, was .37 ($p < .02$); but after partialing out Openness to Experience, the r dropped to a statistically nonsignificant .26 ($p = .10$). The correlation between the DIT N2 score and the IPIP-VIA Fairness scale was a nonsignificant .13 ($p = .40$).

Discussion of Study 2

Scarry (1999) may be right. If her hypothesis about the connection between beauty and justice is referring to the personality trait of being fair, then these data support her argument. The .35 correlation between the EBS and the IPIP-VIA fairness scale is medium-sized and significant; and even after partialing out the Openness factor, the relatively small correlation of .25 remains significant ($p = .009$). Thus, there does appear to be a small relationship between engagement with beauty and the character strength of fairness.

Although the correlation between justice reasoning, as measured by the DIT2, and engagement with beauty, was higher in Study 2 than Study 1 (.37 vs. .18), after partialing out the broad trait of Openness to Experience, it was not statistically significant. Therefore, we tentatively conclude that justice reasoning and engagement with beauty are unrelated. To be confident that people scoring high on the EBS are not simply positive people in general, who tend to endorse character strengths in general, we also administered to IPIP-VIA subscales that measure modesty/humility and industry/perseverance. We hypothesized that these two traits are unrelated to engagement with beauty, and the data supports that; both had very low nonsignificant correlations with the EBS total score. This indicates that those scoring high on engagement with beauty do not indiscriminately score high across a range of desirable character strengths. It adds discriminant validity to the claim that fairness as a character strength has a meaningful relationship with engagement with beauty.

General Discussion

What is the difference between justice reasoning and the personality trait of fairness? Justice reasoning, as measured by Kohlberg (1984) and Rest (1979), has its roots in Jean Piaget's paradigmatic approach to psychology. This approach, typically called cognitive-development in English language textbooks, was referred to by Piaget as genetic epistemology. The emphasis in justice reasoning is upon cognition, logic, and reason. Traits, however, are not focused on our reasoning ability, but rather are dispositions to feel and to act. A trait is a way of being. The ability to reason and the disposition to feel and act are two different things. On the other hand, we believe in a unified psyche, in which the fundamental abilities to think, emote and will, are in constant dynamic interaction, and are inseparable (Diessner, 2001; Diessner et al., 2004). Nonetheless, reasoning can be differentiated from feelings and action. Traits are ontologically closer to the core of human being than is thinking or reasoning. Heidegger trumped Descartes in arguing that ontology must precede epistemology—existence is logically before thinking. The major finding in the two

studies presented here is that engagement with beauty is significantly related to the trait of fairness, but not related to justice reasoning. Engagement with beauty appears more closely related to emotions, feelings, and patterns of behavior, than it is to reasoning. Therefore, to the degree that Elaine Scarry views justice as the trait of fairness more than as an ability to reason about fairness, the data in these studies support her argument. She does appear to view justice as something like a trait, as she emphasizes motivation toward justice, and specifically that engagement with beauty leads to "attention to justice" (1999, p. 86). Again, we are not encouraging an artificial separation between thinking and feeling, or between reasoning and traits, no doubt they interpenetrate in vivo. Sherblom (2004) must think so, as he emphasizes the moral reasoning aspect of the character strength of fairness.

These studies have important implications concerning the role of beauty for 21st century artists. As Danto (2003) has described, Western artists, especially the avant-garde, spurned beauty based on their own notions of justice. The artists reasoned (or felt or intuited) that purposefully producing works of beauty was to cater to a bourgeois class that was destroying our world both socially and materially, and to offer beauty to the public was placating forces of evil. Producing works that shocked and confused was a form of justice-activism among artists. Danto concludes, however, that beauty still has its place; he makes it clear that art can be created that is not beautiful and still have artistic merit. However, he also emphasizes that the goal of beauty in a work of art is perfectly acceptable, and not necessarily socially irresponsible on the part of the artist.

The findings in our studies here—that engagement with beauty and fairness as a personality trait are significantly correlated—implies that when artists create works of beauty they may be enhancing the viewing public's development of the trait of fairness, especially when that beauty is internally appropriate to the subject matter of the painting (viz., Danto, chapter 4, "Internal and External Beauty," 2003). There certainly is ugliness in injustice, and thus Danto would support the idea that when painting about issues of injustice, it is perfectly appropriate to paint a nonbeautiful painting. On the other hand, Danto would also agree that a wide range of issues can be appropriately portrayed with beauty without artists compromising their integrity or setting aside their social consciousness. Danto uses the Vietnam War Memorial, designed by Maya Lin, as an example—the memorial is about "healing," and the beauty that is internal to it supports that meaning.

That beauty and justice go hand-in-hand indicates that an art education that encourages the creation of beauty does not work against creating a sense of justice in art students. In fact, it implies that art teachers who emphasize the creation of beauty in works of art may actually be setting the conditions for their students to further develop their sense of justice, fairness, and equality. It also implies that observers of beauty in art (as well as observers of natural beauty, and human inner beauty) will have their character strength of fairness reinforced and encouraged. We are not stating that simply increasing one's engagement with beauty is sufficient to create justice—Howard Gardner (1999) has pointed out that the Nazis valued beautiful works of art, but nonetheless were one of the worst perpetrators of injustice in the history of our planet. However, as it seems likely that most events, processes, and occurrences are multicausal, beauty may at least be *one* of the

forces of the universe that move us toward social justice and intra- and interpersonal fairness.

The studies reported here are simple correlational studies; they are preliminary studies examining whether there is any empirical support for Scarry's argument that engagement with beauty is related to the disposition to act justly. Future experimental designs that could determine causality (does beauty cause justice, or justice cause beauty?), or structural equation modeling to examine causal pathways, are warranted. Science, including psychological social science, requires replication, and the external validity of the findings in the studies reported here would be enhanced by studying participants in a wider range of ethnic and geographical diversity.

We will end this paper with the end of Danto's *Abuse of Beauty* (2003); the last three sentences of that book are:

Beauty is an option for art and not a necessary condition. But it is not an option for life. It is a necessary condition for life as we would want to live it. That is why beauty, unlike the other aesthetic qualities, the sublime included, is a value (p. 160).

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Received September 20, 2008

Revision received November 10, 2008

Accepted November 10, 2008 ■