Reviews), and the relationship between narrative, ontology, and deconstruction is not yet clarified.

In conclusion, the rising and falling of what has a history (see especially p. 170) still feels like a narrative movement toward the end of the volume, despite the paradoxical rejection of stories explored earlier in the text. The tension between narrative movement and philosophical abstraction is one noteworthy loose end of the book, although this could be a symptom of the formal limits of the seminar. Overall, and because of tensions like the one just mentioned (rather than in spite of them) *Heidegger: The Question of Being and History* is a fascinating look into a lecture course that was obviously formative in Derrida's career.

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Fictional Characters, Real Problems: The Search for Ethical Content in Literature

Connections between literature and ethics have been explored recently by aestheticians (e.g., Eileen John) and moral philosophers (e.g., Martha Nussbaum) and can be found throughout the history of philosophy, from Hegel's use of *Antigone* to explore conflicting duties to Plato's and Aristotle's ruminations on the moral effects of the representation of fictional characters. Further exploring these connections, this volume consists of 18 essays with 12 by philosophers and six by authors from other areas of the humanities, including English and French literature, drama, creative writing, law, and politics, suiting the interdisciplinary nature of the topic. The essays focus on five overlapping aspects of literature's ethical dimension: (i) the structure and formation of character and its place in moral psychology; (ii) the role played in ethics by a kind of perceptual understanding that editor Garry Hagberg calls 'poetic vision'; (iii) literature's contribution to the formation and self-understanding of readers' identities; (iv) the potential influence on moral development of engaging with literature; and (v) the historical precursors of contemporary discussions of this issue and the genealogies of central concepts.

Hagberg opens with an introduction outlining the book's structure and concerns and summarizing the central points of each essay, making it clear that the collection "investigate[s] a number of literary and philosophical cases ... that bring to light both the intricacy and the interwoven character of ethical-aesthetic relations and how they manifest themselves in literary art" (1). Philosophers with an entrenched 'analytic' mindset looking for hard-and-fast definitions or firmly asserted conclusions about literature's ethical nature or influence on moral psychology may be disappointed, since the direction taken by the collection's authors is, in Hagberg's terms, more 'ocular' than 'argumentative,' i.e., more concerned with providing ways of seeing ethical considerations as they occur in, or in relation to, particular literary works or literature as a medium than with 'isms' and bi-conditionals. In other words, the general direction of the thinking in the collection could be described as 'post-Wittgensteinian.' The ethical framework

most compatible with this direction is a neo-Aristotelian one and—while not every essay takes an explicitly virtue ethical position—the holistic approach to ethics in these essays is most at home there.

The collection begins with one of the two outstanding essays of the volume, Nora Hämäläinen's "Sophie, Antigone, Elizabeth—Rethinking Ethics by Reading Literature," which discusses three ways of using literature in moral philosophizing. The first is a 'thin' use in which a fictional event is extracted/abstracted from its narrative and the literary form in which it is situated, reducing it to a mere "philosopher's example" (18). The second is a 'thick' use in which a fictional text is mined for insights and perspectives that can inform a philosophical argument, but with the engagement with the text being substantial and taking into account literary form as well as content, thus not reducing its ethical import to any one of its situations, abstractly conceived. The third, 'open-ended' use doesn't subordinate literary works in the service of philosophical point-making, but allows literature to disclose the complexities of the "existential dimension" (24) of lived moral experience in ways that can enrich and orient moral philosophizing by clarifying and enhancing understanding of the phenomena under consideration. While the benefits of this open-ended approach and its difference from the thick use could be elaborated further, Hämäläinen outlines a promising third way of philosophically engaging with artworks that likely will extend to engagements with examples and practices in areas of philosophy beyond ethics.

The other standout is Hagberg's own contribution, "Othello's Paradox: The Place of Character in Literary Experience," which nicely explains how *characterization*—i.e., the form/structure of the presentation and reception of fictional characters—itself has moral import beyond the moral 'content' of characters' aims and actions. Other noteworthy essays are: Noël Carroll's "Character, Social Information, and the Challenge of Psychology," which demonstrates how recent situationist scepticism about personal 'character,' even if admitted for the sake of argument, does not entail that fictions cannot offer moral-psychological and cognitive benefits through their portrayal of consistent character-types; J. Jeremy Wisnewski's "The Moral Relevance of Literature and the Limits of Argument," which shows how Heidegger and Aristotle offer resources for re-conceiving moral philosophy that are echoed in the literature of J.M. Coetzee; and Daniel Brudney's "The Breadth of Moral Character," which argues convincingly that Kantian practical reason is insufficient for properly grasping ethical situations and avoiding moral 'aspect-blindness.'

One weakness of the collection is its final section, purporting to deal with "Historical Genealogies of Moral-Aesthetic Concepts" (303). While the three essays therein—Humberto Brito's "In Praise of Aristotle's *Poetics*," Martin Donougho's "Shaftsbury as Virtuoso," and Jules Brody's "Fate, Philology, Freud"—are interesting in their own right, they are not as clearly related to the theme of the collection. Another, albeit small, gripe is that, after Hämäläinen's opening essay, subsequent contributions offering 'thick' uses of particular works of literature—e.g., Valerie Wainwright's on *Emma*, Anthony Gash's on *Hamlet*, Richard Dawson's on *Persuasion*, and Alan Goldman's on *Pride and Prejudice*—are less stimulating than they otherwise might have been in light of Hämäläinen's 'open-ended' approach. (It should be noted that Robert Pierce's and Wisnewski's contributions on *Hamlet* and Coetzee's *Disgrace*, respectively, tend more towards this open-ended approach.)

While few readers will find every essay to be equally useful, the collection has offerings that will be highly rewarding to those interested in moral philosophy (especially virtue

ethics), philosophy of literature and aesthetics more generally, and metaphilosophy (for certain essays' exemplification of an 'ocular,' post-Wittgensteinian alternative to more common approaches to philosophizing, and for the collection's relevance to considerations of the use of thought experiments in philosophy). It will also appeal to those outside of philosophy with interests in literature in general, or the particular literary works and authors discussed, especially Jane Austin and Coetzee. It is whole-heartedly recommended for readers with these interests.

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The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant
ROBERT DORAN

Robert Doran's *The Theory of the Sublime from Longinus to Kant* traces the development of the concept from its first recorded mention in the Greek fragment *Peri hypsous* (*On the Sublime*)—dated to either the first or third century and attributed to 'Longinus'—through to its role in Kant's philosophy. Because of his project's scope, Doran's discussion is necessarily selective in the authors on whom he focuses. The most attention is paid to Kant, whose concept of the sublime takes up the final third of the book. The first two chapters cover Longinus, with Nicolas Boileau, John Dennis and Edmund Burke—three thinkers positioned as playing central roles in transmitting Longinus's ideas to the modern age and furthering their development—getting a chapter each.

Doran's main thesis is that the concept of the sublime operates as a secular analogue to religious transcendence, allowing a mystical or quasi-religious dimension into art, rhetoric and experiences of nature, as well as allowing an aesthetic dimension into the communication of religious ideas. A second thesis of Doran's, which is underdeveloped and not as plausibly argued, is that the eighteenth century idea of the sublime is connected to the adoption of aristocratic values by the new bourgeois class, as it allowed the bourgeoisie to experience a nobility of mind and to think of themselves as 'elevated.' The first thesis is plausible for the modern iteration of the sublime, which was largely a reaction against both neoclassicism in theories of 'taste' and a scientific/mechanistic world-picture that left little room for wonder, especially in experiences of nature. However, it is not as immediately plausible as a reading of *Peri hypsous*, which predates modern science and the accompanying 'disenchantment of the world' and where much of the focus is on sublimity in rhetoric and literature. This remains a problem for Doran's thesis even if one rejects the interpretation that *Peri hypsous* is *merely* a rhetorical treatise.

In order to read Longinus as the first secularizer of a predominantly religious notion of transcendence, Doran claims a substantial connection between (i) the nobility or elevation of the minds of the speaker or author who is able to employ the 'grand style,' and the reader or listener who is able to register the sublimity of mind expressed in their words, and (ii) Longinus's remarks on nature's grandeur and on sublimity of mind raising one "towards the spiritual greatness of god" (85). Doran's argument that Longinus's