True Beauty

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What is the nature of the concept BEAUTY*? Does it differ fundamentally from nearby concepts such as* PRETTINESS*? It is argued here that* BEAUTY*, but not* PRETTINESS*, is a dual-character concept. Across a number of contexts, it is proposed that* BEAUTY *has descriptive senses that refer to, inter alia, having intrinsically pleasing appearances, and a normative sense associated with deeply held values. This account is supported across two, pre-registered, studies (N=500) and by drawing on analysis of corpus data. It is suggested that this can help to explain why beauty, unlike prettiness, is thought to be deep in both the sense of being important and in the sense of being less closely tied to sensory surfaces.*

1. Introduction

The contrast between prettiness and beauty remains a surprisingly under-theorized topic, despite prettiness and beauty numbering among the main aesthetic properties (e.g. Bradley 1963). They are widely regarded as being descriptively similar (e.g. Leddy 2012), with both 'pretty' and 'beautiful' referring to intrinsically pleasing appearances, as well as appearances that are delicate and gentle. Yet, notwithstanding this similarity, beauty is regarded as deep and important whereas prettiness tends to be thought of as superficial and trivial (e.g. Leddy 2014).

How should the concepts of prettiness and beauty be understood in order to explain this state of affairs? In this paper, I develop an account of BEAUTY and PRETTINESS, and of the difference between them, arguing that BEAUTY, unlike PRETTINESS, is a dual-character concept in having both the aforementioned descriptive senses as well as a normative sense that is associated with cherished ideals and deeply held values.

My plan is as follows: in Section 2, I outline what dual-character concepts are, contrasting them with thick concepts. In Section 3, I flesh out my characterization of BEAUTY and PRETTINESS, and particularly my proposal that only the former is dual-character, tracing some of the most important implications of this proposal. In Section 4, I begin to put my proposal to the test, principally in the context of human beauty, and address some of the most pressing alternative explanations of the findings presented, before concluding in Section 5.

2. Dual-Character Concepts

What are dual-character concepts and how do they differ from similar kinds of concepts, such as thick concepts? Dual-character concepts—such as ARTIST, ART, MOTHER,

British Journal of Aesthetics https://doi.org/10.1093/aesthj/ayae024

HAPPINESS, SADNESS, HUMAN, MAN, COLLEAGUE, and SCIENTIST—are distinctive in having at least two kinds of senses[1]—one normative and one descriptive—which are each able to guide categorization. For example, in a descriptive sense, a scientist is someone who conducts experiments, analyses data, and constructs theories. But, in a normative sense, a scientist is someone who is committed to a *value or ideal*—namely, the pursuit of truth through observation. As a result, we might say that someone who conducts experiments, but refuses to revise their theories in light of their findings, is only 'technically speaking' a scientist (see Lakoff 1973), and we might call someone who does not know how to do experiments, but who is committed to the pursuit of truth through observation, a 'true scientist'. While there is some disagreement about how the descriptive and normative senses of dual-character concepts are related (see e.g. Leslie 2015; Del Pinal and Reuter 2017), perhaps the most popular general suggestion is that the descriptive sense typically *realizes* the normative sense (Knobe, Prasada and Newman 2013). A true scientist achieves the value of pursuing truth through observation *by*, for example, conducting experiments.

By contrast, other concepts—such as BUS DRIVER, GRAFFITI, ACQUAINTANCE, and TENNIS—only have descriptive criteria for their application, and do not have an associated value that allows linguistic expressions of these concepts to felicitously combine with the modifier 'true'. Someone is a bus driver just in case they drive buses; and while someone might be described as a '*good* bus driver' if they also care about their passengers and drive well, it would not sound natural to say that such a person is a 'true bus driver'[2] (works on dual-character concepts include Knobe, Prasada and Newman 2013; Del Pinal and Reuter 2017; Phillips et al. 2017; Liao, Meskin and Knobe 2020; and Guo, Dweck and Markman 2021; although see Phillips and Plunkett 2023 for criticisms).

The lexical items that express dual-character concepts tend to be understood in terms of polysemy: they are polysemous in the particular way they are—namely, in having a descriptive sense as well as a linked normative sense—because the concepts that gave rise to these lexical items, and which are expressed by them, are dual-character in nature (see e.g. Knobe, Prasada and Newman 2013; Leslie 2015).

Given that the concepts of central interest in this paper—namely, PRETTINESS and BEAUTY—have thick senses, as we will shortly see, it is important to note that dual-character concepts are distinct from thick concepts (such as COURAGEOUS and LEWD). While both kinds of concepts have a normative sense, and dual-character concepts can also be thick concepts, they differ in important ways (see e.g. Reuter 2018). In the case of thick concepts, the normative sense describes an evaluative attitude towards the concept's descriptive content and does not provide an independent basis for categorization. By contrast, in the case of dual-character concepts, the normative sense does not describe an evaluative attitude towards some content, but rather provides an independent basis for

1 It may be more accurate to talk about *criteria* in this context, but for ease, I will largely refer to senses.

2 Although, as Leslie (2015) notes, we can induce people to construct a normative dimension to purely descriptive concepts ad hoc by using the modifier 'true' (see also the discussion of standard-raising later).

categorization, which may itself also be the object of an evaluative attitude (indeed, when satisfied, it often will be).

Take the example of the thick concept COURAGEOUS. Courageousness is a particular way of being good—roughly, by facing risk or danger without concern for oneself in pursuit of a worthy cause. When we describe something as courageous, we are at least typically expressing a positive evaluation towards this descriptive content. But knowing that someone tends to be the object of others' positive attitudes is not enough to know that they are courageous; they could be the object of positive attitudes because they are, say, kind or attractive, rather than courageous.

By contrast, consider the dual-character concept FRIEND. The normative sense of FRIEND is something like 'being there for a person in times of need', and this is able to guide categorization in itself. Even if someone has not chosen to spend time with another person and does not enjoy their company (and any of the other features specified by the descriptive sense of FRIEND), they would nonetheless be a 'true friend' if they were there for the other person in a time of need.

With dual-character concepts now characterized, I turn to examine the nature of the concepts BEAUTY and PRETTINESS, make a proposal for how they might fit into this distinction, and trace some of the most important consequences of this.

3. BEAUTY and PRETTINESS: Related, but Fundamentally Distinct, Aesthetic Concepts?

BEAUTY and PRETTINESS are closely related concepts. Indeed, as Leddy (2014) observes, it may well be thought by many that 'the "pretty" is not distinctively different from the "aesthetically pleasing" or the "beautiful"'. Sibley (1968), for example, notes that 'pretty' is like 'lovely' in being a generic term of aesthetic praise; and Beardsley (1981) notes that 'beautiful' has a thin sense of referring to anything that is aesthetically valuable (see also Plato *c.*390/1931; Bradley 1963; Sparshott 1963; Zangwill 2001; Scruton 2009; Paris 2020; Doran 2023). This thin sense of both pretty and beautiful includes what have been called 'free beauties', and 'non-functional dependent beauties'. Free beauty and prettiness reside in appearances that please, free from the application of concepts, such as pleasing arrangements of shape and colour (see e.g. Kant 1790/2000). Non-functional dependent cases of beauty and prettiness reside in appearances that please in virtue of being seen as being a member of a category, although not in virtue of functional considerations: we may, for example, see a tree as beautiful or pretty insofar as the concept TREE organizes the array of colours and forms that make up the appearance of the tree into a pleasing arrangement, or insofar as its appearance approaches the prototype for a tree (see e.g. Kant 1790/2000 and Budd 2003).[3]

Moreover, both share at least one thicker sense too, which seems to reside in appearances that have the disposition to give rise to, *inter alia*, sympathy-like feelings of unity

3 We might add disinterested requirements in both cases here.

with their object and feelings of gentleness (see e.g. Burke 1757/1990; Kant 1764/2011; Wordsworth 1811–12/1974; Doran 2023). Prettiness is widely noted to reside in, for example, the delicate, and the diminutive, and is felt by some to be emasculating to appreciate, in part because of the feelings it tends to engender (Leddy 2012, 2014; Sparshott 1963). Similarly, beauty has also been noted to reside in, for example, the small and delicate, and to give rise to sympathy-like feelings (Burke 1757/1990; Kant 1764/2011; Doran 2023). Beauty and prettiness in this sense have been associated with the aesthetic excellence that is typical of women rather than men (Kant 1764/2011; Burke 1757/1990; and Leddy 2014). In fact, even today, to describe a man as 'not handsome' but 'beautiful' or 'pretty' is to suggest a feminine appearance, or to be ironic, or to intend to prick homophobic or misogynistic attitudes.

As in the case of the thin sense of beauty and prettiness, there can be non-functional dependent cases of prettiness and beauty in this thicker sense too. The self-same degree of roundness of the jaw could make for prettiness and beauty in the thicker sense in the case of a man's face, but handsomeness in the case of a woman's face. Here, the context (i.e. the gender of the person whose jaw it is) shifts the threshold of roundness that would make for prettiness and beauty in this sense.

Notwithstanding these shared descriptive senses, BEAUTY and PRETTINESS are not identical. Among these different senses, the thicker sense seems to be closer to the default sense of PRETTINESS, which does not seem to be the case for BEAUTY in most contexts (see e.g. Santayana 1896; Bradley 1963; Korsmeyer 2006).

Moreover, it has been common to distinguish 'beautiful' and 'pretty' in terms of the *degree* to which they express these descriptive properties (see e.g. Bradley 1963; Korsmeyer 2006). 'Beautiful' implies a high degree of the descriptive property it expresses, but 'pretty' has a much lower minimum threshold, and while it might seem to have no upper limit, pragmatically at least, 'pretty' often implies a lower maximum threshold than the minimum threshold for being beautiful. The response 'she's certainly pretty' to the question 'isn't she beautiful?' clearly implies that the person in question does not yet reach the threshold of the underlying property to be 'beautiful'. For this reason, prettiness has often been disparaged. As Leddy (2014) notes, it is common to hear that something is 'merely pretty'.

A more radical difference yet is that prettiness is often described as 'shallow', but beauty is described as 'deep'. Depth seems to be primarily intended in its metaphorical sense in this context, as referring to importance or significance, but at times also has intimations of its literal meaning of referring to spatial depth. It is common to hear prettiness spoken of as a property of mere *sensory surfaces* and *appearances*, and as *trivial*, and of beauty as somehow *reaching beyond appearances*, and as being *significant* or even *profound*. Sparshott (1963: 74), for example, speaks of pretty patterns and pieces of music, which are free from associations, and says that prettiness, unlike beauty, 'does not demand serious attention' (see also Bell 1914); and Leddy (2014) notes the frequency with which prettiness is said to be 'superficial'. Korsmeyer (2006: 53, 57) describes beauty as having 'profound dimensions', and as being, unlike prettiness, able to 'support meaning'. Indeed, G. E. Moore (1903/1922: 189) suggests that 'the enjoyment of beautiful objects', along

with the 'pleasures of human intercourse', are 'by far the most valuable things' and that the pursuit of these things 'is the rational ultimate end of human action' (see also, Plato *c*.370/2010; Nehamas 2007).

The difference in depth, in both senses, is present in Diotima's ladder in the *Symposium* (Plato *c*.370/2010) where it is suggested that appreciation of prettiness may lead to the cultivation of a sensitivity to *higher*, and *less obvious*, forms of beauty (see also Leopold 1949/1987 and Rolston 2002: 129, for contemporary versions of Diotima's ladder). And the difference in depth in the sense of importance, at least, seems to be the reason why the alleged avant-garde assault on 'beauty' was often not actually framed in terms of 'beauty', but rather in terms of 'prettiness' and the so-called 'retinal flutter' (see e.g. Danto 2003: XV, 78). Danto (1986: 13), for example, characterizes Marcel Duchamp as 'throwing off the bondage of *prettiness*' (my emphasis). Presumably, the avant-garde movement would have been seen as less noble if it had been thought of as having beauty in its cross hairs.

What explains the fact that beauty is thought to be deep whereas prettiness is thought to be shallow? This might seem mysterious from what I have said thus far. For, as we have just seen, beauty and prettiness clearly share a number of descriptive senses in common, and it is far from obvious how the other acknowledged differences between prettiness and beauty—such as the fact that 'beautiful' tends to express a greater degree of the properties that satisfy these senses—will always be able to account for these differences in depth. For example, a more pleasing arrangement of forms and colours is no less a mere appearance than a less pleasing arrangement of forms and colours, and so equally spatially shallow; and even if the former, but not the latter, might exceed the prevailing relevant standard, and so be described as 'significant', it would be difficult to satisfactorily account for the talk of beauty's *profound* and *life-enhancing* dimensions in this way.

With the foregoing in mind, I want to propose a further distinction between PRETTINESS and BEAUTY. Namely, that PRETTINESS is a descriptive concept, and is perception-dependent. BEAUTY, by contrast, is a dual-character concept, and in at least some contexts is not perception-dependent. In addition to the descriptive senses pointed out so far, something can be beautiful if it meets the relevant deeply held ideal or value, and in at least some contexts meeting this ideal or value can be done by things that are not perceptual.

In what follows, I provide evidence for this distinction between PRETTINESS and BEAUTY in a number of domains, and attempt to begin to characterize the normative sense of beauty in each, and the relation between the descriptive and normative senses. I then note some of the ways that this can explain how beauty can be *deeper* than prettiness, both spatially, and in terms of importance.

Focusing on the case of human beauty, where this aspect of the distinction between PRETTINESS and BEAUTY is clearest, it seems possible to describe someone who is not physically beautiful, but who is morally good, as 'truly beautiful' where it is not possible, I suggest, to describe such a person as 'truly pretty'. This distinction is latent in under-appreciated aspects of a wide range of writings on the aesthetics of humans. Kant (1764/2010: 43–44), for example, distinguishes between prettiness and beauty by saying that the former resides in non-moral goodness, whereas the latter comes where 'a tender heart and benevolent feeling' shine through appearance. Similarly, Wollstonecraft (1790/2010: 7–8) calls

'flowery diction' and elegant language 'pretty nothings' and 'caricatures of the real beauty of sensibility', by which she means the capacity for compassion and refined emotions (see also Higgins 2001: 104–05).

Indeed, the view that morally good dispositions—such as virtues—are beautiful was widespread among the Ancient Greeks and the British Moralists (e.g. Plato *c*.370/2010; Shaftesbury 1711/1999; Hutcheson 1726/2004; Smith 1759/2002) and has recently been revived among analytic aestheticians (see e.g. Gaut 2007; Paris 2017, 2018, 2020; Doran 2021, 2023, 2025, Forthcoming a, Forthcoming b). Most germane to the proposal laid out here, and as will be discussed later, Doran (2021) found in an experimental study that, for the vast majority of people, being morally good, even in the absence of physical beauty, was sufficient for the predication of beauty.

With this in mind, in the case of human beauty, the normative sense of beauty seems to be constituted principally by being morally good.[4] If this is right, then the structure of the concept BEAUTY as it applies to humans might depart from the proposal, outlined in Section 2, that the features picked out by the descriptive sense *realize* the features specified by the normative sense (Knobe, Prasada and Newman 2013). For physical beauty does not *realize* the moral goodness that satisfies the ideal that constitutes the normative sense; rather it seems to be able to be *expressive* of it. In support of this idea, we might note the propensity to depict morally evil people as ugly, and morally good people as beautiful, in the descriptive senses, in art (see e.g. Gottschall et al. 2007). Indeed, this propensity to see beauty as being expressive of moral goodness is not only present in Western aesthetic contexts, but also seems to be present in other aesthetic cultures. For the Yoruba, for example, people who are morally good but physically ugly, or physically beautiful but morally bad, are regarded as anomalous and described as 'awobowa' ('skin covers character') (Lawal 1974: 240–41).

A similar distinction seems to be present in the context of many other kinds of beauty and prettiness—including the beauty and prettiness of biotic nature, artefacts, and art—although the values or ideals associated with beauty in these contexts seem to vary somewhat and are more difficult to specify precisely. Moreover, it may be less clear that the normative sense is sufficient for categorization in the absence of being perceptually realized in these contexts.

In the case of artefacts, and biotic nature, the contrast of beauty and prettiness has been drawn most prominently around the notion of function. Giving voice to this distinction with respect to artefacts, Le Corbusier (1923/1931: 37), for example, advocates for a *functionally* beautiful architecture and says that merely decorative styles of architecture (such as Louis XIV, XV, XVI, and Gothic) 'are to architecture what a feather is on a woman's head: it is sometimes pretty, although not always; and never anything more'. And in the context of natural biotic beauty, Parsons and Carlson (2007: 122) suggest that the leopard's spots are 'pretty' in themselves, but can also be seen as *beautiful* when they are seen as helping to camouflage the animal, and thereby seen as fulfilling their

4 There may be other deeply held values in the context of human beauty. Gaut (2007) , for example, regards intelligence as beautiful.

proper function well. Indeed, following the lead of the Socrates of Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (*c*.370/2005) and of Plato's (*c*.370/1931) *The Hippias Major*, even merely having the capacity to achieve a function to a high degree, without exhibiting or expressing this *in appearance*, may be thought to be sufficient to be beautiful, at least in a certain sense.

In the case of artefacts, and biotic nature, then, the ideal or value that beauty aims at may be perceptually exhibiting the capacity to achieve the relevant *proper function* well, or perhaps just having the capacity to achieve it. But even here, considerations related to morality, or at least nobility, seem to play a role in homing in on just those cases where exhibiting, or merely having, the capacity to achieve a proper function well tends to be considered beautiful. Burke (1757/1990: 95), for example, notes that exhibiting fitness for function cannot be sufficient for beauty, otherwise a pig's small eyes and wedge-like snout (well-suited to rooting in the mud) would be beautiful. And, more recently, Paris (2020: 520) notes that such things as urinals, toilet seats, rubbish trucks, and torture instruments are fit for function (and indeed exhibit this in their appearance), but are not typically considered beautiful. In these cases, the relevant proper functions seem to be too prosaic or ignoble to be beautiful.

Here, the structure of the concept of beauty in play may conform better to Knobe, Prasada and Newman's (2013) proposal that the features that satisfy the descriptive senses typically *realize* the normative sense, in addition to the suggestion concerning expressiveness above. For many supporters of functional beauty, including Parsons and Carlson (2007: 4–5, 45–49), suggest that the beauty of artefacts and biotic nature lies in the way that their appearances exhibit that they achieve their proper functions well (i.e. they 'look fit'), and this may include the features that are beautiful in one of the descriptive senses it shares with prettiness (as in the case of the cheetah's spots).[5] It is important to note, however, that when such descriptively beautiful or pretty features are seen as realizing or expressing a function, it seems that the epithet 'pretty' gets selected against in favour of 'beautiful'.

In the case of artistic beauty, the distinction between prettiness and beauty is often drawn in terms of the latter's association with deep truth, moral value, and the

5 The view that mere achievement of function is sufficient might be controversial for some. As we have just seen, it has been suggested that in order for being fit to contribute to something's *aesthetic* value, it needs to show up in *appearances* somehow (see e.g. Scruton 1979: 40–41; Parsons and Carlson 2007: 4–5, 45–49). It might also be suggested that even the position espoused by the Socrates of *The Hippias Major* and the *Memorabilia* is not to be taken seriously: as Parsons and Carlson (2007: 15) note, in the face of a putative counterexample that involves achievement of a base proper function—a perfectly functional dung basket—Socrates 'cheekily' doubles down in insisting that it is indeed beautiful. With respect to the first suggestion, it is important to keep in mind that there only needs to be *a sense* in which things that achieve their (worthy) proper function to a high degree are beautiful, and that this may be a non-aesthetic sense of 'beauty'. Even for paradigmatic dual-character concepts, statements that express that only the normative sense applies typically only sound a *little* natural. With respect to the second suggestion, as we have already seen above, such counterexamples involving base functions afflict accounts of functional beauty generally, and may point to the need for an additional conceptual constraint, rather than providing a reason to jettison the idea of functional beauty (aesthetic or otherwise) altogether.

interconnection of the two. Korsmeyer (2006) notes that the pretty can be converted into the beautiful by being given moral and existential significance, and, as we have seen above, that beauty can have 'profound dimensions'. In §49 of the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant (1790/2000) notes that poetry can be pretty but lack soul. And in his wide-ranging overview of theories of beauty, E. F. Carritt (1932: 25–26) notes that Rembrandt's portraits of old men, Shakespeare's Lear, and Wordsworth's image of a beggar have all been claimed to be beautiful, despite not being 'pretty', and that it has been widely proposed that this may be because something 'is beautiful when it gives us some deeper insight than we naturally have into the nature of things of that kind' (1932: 26), or because 'beauty is the revelation of the true worth or value of things' (1932: 29), or because 'things have beauty only insofar as they speak to the heart and aspirations of man' (1932: 32). Carritt (1932: 41) adds that 'for many centuries it was almost universally held that it was the function of poetry and art, and indeed beauty in general, to make us better men, and that the truths which they gave us were the truths of morality'.[6] And these are not just Western ideas about beauty: in Japanese, the perception of beauty is thought to be able to give rise to a state called 'yūgen', in which one has the sense that one has met with a profound truth that lies beneath surface appearances and that tends to be accompanied by tears (see e.g. Scharfstein 2009: 427–28).

With this in mind, the ideal or value that beauty in art may be thought to aim at is to express or at least be expressive of truths of enduring human significance (which we might call profound or deep truths), particularly concerning moral values. Connectedly, one of the functions of beauty in art is not merely to *please*, but also to *elevate* and *inspire* in some manner.[7] As in the case of the beauty of artefacts and biotic nature, a similar structure to the one suggested by Knobe, Prasada and Newman (2013) seems likely to hold: meeting these values or ideals of, for example, expression or expressiveness of deep truth, particularly concerning moral matters, may be realized, at least in part, by the features that satisfy the descriptive senses of beauty pointed to above—in, for example, having intrinsically pleasing arrangements of form and colour. But sometimes they will not, as arguably occurs in the case of Rembrandt's old men, for example.

Moreover, and as noted by a number of commentators on beauty and prettiness, even where the kinds of properties that can make for beauty in the descriptive sense (and prettiness) play a role in realizing the normative sense of beauty in this context, they will

6 Carritt variously attributes these views to Plato, Plotinus, Aquinas, Hegel, Wordsworth, Ruskin, and Tolstoy, among others.

7 It is, however, especially important to note here that it is a feature of many dual-character concepts that it is often difficult to accurately specify their associated values or ideals without leaving something important out, and that we often hold a *placeholder* for aspects of certain concepts. With respect to specification difficulties, as Knobe, Prasada and Newman (2013) note, for example, the value associated with rock 'n' roll is difficult to fully articulate but seems to have something to do with youthful rebellion, among other things. And with respect to the idea that we often hold a placeholder for aspects of certain concepts, we may believe that gold has an essence, but have no idea that it is being made up of atoms that have seventy-nine protons. As such, in the case of the value or ideal associated with beauty in art (and in other domains), it seems likely that it may be difficult to specify the value or ideal precisely, and that we may carry a placeholder for this value.

often be attended by some difficulty or obscurity. Korsmeyer (2006: 55) notes that part of the process of transforming mere prettiness into beauty involves making the visual appearance 'more strenuous' to appreciate. And Bosanquet (1915) distinguishes between easy and difficult beauty (with the former seeming to approximate prettiness), noting that one way to transform easy beauty into difficult beauty is to add intricacy. Harmony of parts can make for beauty in the descriptive sense and prettiness, but when the sum or complexity of parts to be harmonized grows too great, such that it becomes difficult to unify, or eludes full unification, it can become expressive of something profound, and the epithet 'beautiful' becomes selected for over 'pretty'.[8]

A final thing to say in connection with this issue, although I do not want to insist on this, is that if the *ideas* expressed by some works—particularly those that meditate on the human condition—could be articulated (despite the heresy of paraphrase, Brooks 1947), then it is not implausible that these would be regarded as beautiful in themselves, at least in a certain sense.

In sum, across many of the contexts in which it occurs, BEAUTY, although not PRETTINESS, seems to be associated with the achievement of our most deeply held values and cherished ideals, such as goodness (both moral goodness and noble usefulness) and profound truth.[9]

Finally, it is important to emphasize *some* of the ways in which the characterization of PRETTINESS and BEAUTY offered here can help to vindicate our propensity to think of beauty as being deeper than prettiness in both the spatial and valuational sense.

With the spatial sense of depth in mind, one consequence of this proposal is that it explains why, in some cases, beauty can be *literally* deeper than prettiness. When someone is beautiful because they are morally good, the beauty resides in the way they are inside, and they would remain beautiful even if they never had the opportunity to express this through their actions (and thereby make this perceivable). But such a person could not be pretty for this reason. So beauty, unlike prettiness, is able to fully transcend appearances in this context, to reside in entities that are located (if they are located anywhere) literally deeper inside people than their sensory surfaces. Moreover, this shows that there is an additional kind of dependent beauty that has not been recognized as such to date. In

8 Indeed, with respect to the puzzle, mentioned earlier, of how a mere difference in degree of some of the properties that can make for beauty (in the descriptive senses) and prettiness could account for the difference in how they are valued, this suggests a way in which this might happen, in addition to the one mentioned earlier: in having greater intricacy or complexity, beautiful objects may display *greater unity* than pretty objects, and in so doing be expressive of significance.

9 This is not intended to be exhaustive. The concept of beauty may also be dual-character in other domains too. For example, in the domain of mathematics, one reason that proofs and theorems seem to be thought to be beautiful, when indeed they are, is that they express deep truths. G. H. Hardy's (1940/1992) six criteria for beauty in mathematics include 'depth' and 'significance', and in a recent experimental study on the aesthetic judgements of mathematicians, 'ingenious', 'inspired', 'enlightening', 'deep' and 'insightful' numbered among the adjectives most strongly associated with judgements of beauty (Inglis and Aberdein 2015). So, there may be a dual-character concept of beauty in operation here that is similar to the concept in play in the context of artistic beauty. Thanks to a reviewer for this journal for suggesting that I consider mathematical beauty.

addition to functional dependent beauty and non-functional dependent beauty—which are both discussed above, and which may be thought to be realized by perceptual properties at least in part—there are *non-perception-dependent dependent beauties*. Correct appreciation of the beauty of the moral goodness of a person is dependent on the correct application of moral concepts, but it is not dependent, even in part, on perceptual properties. Beauty is not, as the proverb goes, 'only skin deep'.

With the valuational sense of 'depth' in mind, another advantage of this proposal is that it explains how beauty can be significant and important, even profound, whereas prettiness cannot. Beauty, in being able to reside in things that realize, express, or are expressive of our cherished ideals and deeply held values, is regarded as *important*. Poor prettiness, in contrast, in not being able to reach beyond appearances to these ideals and values, is not.

As we have seen, the epithet 'prettiness' can be applied to cases of aesthetic goodness that are determined in part by some kinds of non-perceptual content, such as kinds. For example, the self-same degree of roundness may make for prettiness in the context of a man's face, whereas it would not in the context of a woman's face. But where an aesthetic goodness is determined, at least in part, by other kinds of non-perceptual content, such as expressing or being expressive of deeply held values and cherished ideals, the epithet 'prettiness' is selected against in favour of 'beauty'. It is for this reason that there are cases of functional dependent beauty, but not cases of functional dependent prettiness, and that much of the art that is most treasured is beautiful, and rarely merely pretty.

This is not to say that the pretty cannot be valued, at least to some extent, or be subject to ideals. Prettiness is often pleasing, and when it is, it will often be valued to that extent. And we can, for example, contest which descriptive features should be considered aesthetically appealing, or, say, delicate. But importantly, prettiness is *limited* to certain kinds of appearances, namely, those that have free beauty, non-functional dependent beauty, and beauty in the thicker sense outlined above. Unlike beautiful things, merely pretty things cannot reach beyond appearances by, for example, expressing or being expressive of our deepest values—they lack the intentionality that beautiful things can possess. For this reason, even when pretty things please, they may be found to please too easily or superficially, or come to pall, and be disvalued for these reasons (cf. Hume 1757). And, moreover, even when the aforementioned kinds of appearances please, and *are* valued to that extent, they simply do not tend to be regarded as all that important. For example, Guo, Dweck and Markman (2021) found evidence that even people's concept of the *ideal* woman—which is as likely as any to valorize appearances (in one of the descriptive senses of beauty and prettiness) given the considerable emphasis placed on them for that gender (see e.g. Widdows 2018)—ranks appearances lower than moral character (thankfully).[10]

10 It might also be suggested that ideals can come to bear on prettiness in another way. According to what I have said above, appearances of prototypical things can be seen as 'pretty' to that extent. But, it might be pointed out, prototypes not only reflect the exemplars of the relevant category that are experienced most often, but also those which tend to meet the category's function—that is, an ideal or value (Hogan 2017; Doran 2020). The prototype of a diet food is lettuce, not only because it is the most eaten diet food, but also because it tends to be good for losing weight. With this in mind, it might be suggested that the distinction drawn between beauty and prettiness

There is surely more that could be said here, especially concerning how beautiful appearances can be expressive of deep values, and therefore profound,[11] but enough has been said to sketch the main contours of the proposal. I turn now to put the central idea expressed above—namely that BEAUTY but not PRETTINESS is a dual-character concept—to the test, particularly in the context of human beauty, where the distinction is clearest.

4. Beginning to Put the Proposal to the Test

There are thought to be two main kinds of tests to establish that a given concept is dual-character. As we have already previewed in Section 2, the first test is that the lexical items expressing dual-character concepts can felicitously take the modifier 'true' for competent speakers of English (the 'True-Modifier Test'). The second is that the lexical items expressing dual-character concepts sound acceptable to competent speakers in statements that aim to express that only one sense of the concept in question applies (the 'Two-Senses Test'). In the following, based on these tests, I present findings from corpuses of English, together with the results of two experimental studies, to test whether the folk's concept of beauty, but not prettiness, is indeed dual-character, at least in some contexts.

The background theories underlying the use of acceptability judgements and corpus analyses are complex (and indeed hotly contested by linguists and philosophers), and a discussion of this is well outside of the scope of this article (for a philosophical discussion of the use of linguistic intuitions, see Schindler, Drożdżowicz and Brøcker 2020). But the basic idea motivating the use of these kinds of linguistic data in this context seems to be as follows. The meaning of our concepts gets encoded in language, albeit imperfectly. As a

collapses after all. It seems, however, that when the aesthetically good reaches beyond appearances to (worthy) ideals, the epithet 'pretty' tends to be selected against in favour of 'beautiful'.

11 Of relevance to the discussion here is the puzzle of how certain works of art—and particularly works of instrumental music—can be profound. Kivy (1990), for example, who is credited with originally formulating the puzzle, denies that works of instrumental music can be profound on the grounds that they are not *about* anything at all, let alone anything profound. Most solutions have attempted to explain the way that instrumental music can be 'about' matters of enduring human significance by appealing to weaker notions of 'aboutness' such as intimation and exemplification (see e.g. Levinson 1992; Davies 2002; Ridley 2004; Dodd 2014), although Nanay (2021) takes a different approach in suggesting that profundity is a matter of actively challenging any straightforward interpretative activity. In some cases of beauty, such as cases where someone is beautiful because they are morally good, or where a novel is beautiful because it expresses a deep moral truth, it is far from clear that the same kind of puzzle crops up, since the beauty in these cases actually lies in something of enduring human significance. In other cases, however, such as non-representational artworks that are beautiful in merely being *expressive* of deep truths, a similar puzzle crops up, for how can non-representational works be expressive of anything, let alone deep truths? I have already suggested some of the resources available to resolve this puzzle in existing discussions of the contrast between prettiness and beauty, such as Korsmeyer (2006) and Bosanquet's (1915) suggestions concerning obscurity and intricacy (which find echoes in Nanay's account of profundity). Nonetheless, the other works on profundity in art mentioned above promise other resources, which I must leave for another occasion to explore for reasons of space. Thanks to a reviewer for this journal for encouraging me to think further about this literature.

result, examining the patterns of use and acceptability judgements of locutions involving the lexical items that express the concepts of interest by people who have mastered the relevant language can provide a window into the nature of the concepts expressed. And since only those people who have acquired a language as their first language tend to achieve mastery of the language (see e.g. Birdsong 1992), the use and acceptability judgements of those language users will be most useful.

4.1 Study 1—The 'True-Modifier Test'

The first way to investigate whether a given concept is a dual-character concept is to see if it felicitously combines with the modifier 'true' (this method is utilized by e.g. Knobe, Prasada and Newman 2013; Del Pinal and Reuter 2017; and Liao, Meskin and Knobe 2020, among others). One important way of doing this is to examine certain corpuses of English, such as the British National Corpus (BNC) and Corpus of American English (COCA), which are extremely large and representative collections of samples of written and spoken English. Using such corpuses, we can see if speakers of English tend to combine the 'true' modifier with 'beauty' and 'prettiness' in *natural communicative settings*, free from the potentially warping artificiality that comes from, for example, eliciting meta-linguistic 'acceptability' intuitions about isolated locutions administered in a formal research setting (see e.g. Barlow and Kemmer 2002).

In the COCA (which contains one billion words), there are 168 occurrences of 'true beauty' of 45,333 instances of the word 'beauty' (0.37 per cent of occurrences), and in the BNC (which contains 100 million words), there are thirteen occurrences of 'true beauty' of 4,055 occurrences of the word 'beauty' (0.32 per cent of occurrences). By contrast, there are no instances of 'true prettiness' in either the COCA or the BNC. This provides some evidence that 'beauty' is able to felicitously take the modifier 'true', and so may be a dual-character concept, but does not constitute strong evidence in favour of the idea that prettiness cannot felicitously take the modifier 'true'. For 'prettiness' occurs just 178 times in the COCA and forty-eight times in the BNC. And so supposing that 'true prettiness' is a felicitous construction that is used at the same rate as 'true beauty', it would not be all that surprising to find no such occurrences in samples of this size.[12] Indeed, generally, corpus methods are thought to be limited in their usefulness where samples of the lexical item (or construction) of interest are too small (see e.g. Den Dikken et al. 2007).

It might also be suggested that, even if 'true beauty' but not 'true prettiness' is shown to occur in natural language, this may simply be a matter of the fact that the default sense of beauty is closer to the thin senses outlined in Section 3 than prettiness, rather than suggesting that one is a dual-character concept. Reuter, Baumgartner and Willemsen (2023) recently found evidence that 'truly' and 'really' (which are like the 'true' modifier in some ways) function to highlight or intensify the evaluative aspects of thick adjectives, and

12 One would expect one use of 'true prettiness' in every 313 occurrences of 'prettiness' in the BNC, and one use in every 270 occurrences of 'prettiness' in the COCA.

that they tend to select for thin terms more than thick terms (although the pattern was less clear for non-moral adjectives, as is the subject of this paper).

One consideration that speaks against such a possibility from the outset is that even lexical items that express concepts whose default sense is clearly as thick as PRETTINESS seem to be able to felicitously combine with 'true', suggesting that the linguistic behaviour in question is not merely a matter of thickness. By default, the concepts expressed by 'elegance' and 'gracefulness' are thick but, unlike 'prettiness', they seem to felicitously combine with the modifier 'true'. There are six occurrences of 'true elegance' in the COCA (from 2,993 occurrences, accounting for 0.20 per cent of all occurrences). And while there are no occurrences of 'true gracefulness' in either the COCA or the BNC, this might be due in part to the fact that there seems to be an awkwardness to some nouns with the suffix '-ness'[13] (a misfortune that 'gracefulness' may share with 'prettiness'), and also to the fact that there is another noun which is semantically close to gracefulness—namely 'grace', where 'grace' has additional meanings of divine kindness ('the grace of god'), or of a courteous or fair disposition ('she had the good grace to apologize'), and so may be more readily used to communicate the normative sense of gracefulness, if it exists.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given what I have said in Section 3, part of the reason why these determinates of BEAUTY, but not PRETTINESS, are able to do this, I suggest, is that they are associated with a moral value or with nobility, and so have a normative sense too. We can describe someone as elegant and graceful not only for having a smooth, simple, well-integrated *appearance*, but also when they display dignity, class, and elevation. We can say, for example, that someone accepts defeat (as well as victory) 'gracefully'.

Notwithstanding this initial support for the proposal from corpus evidence, given the limitations I have pointed to above—such as the low frequency of 'prettiness' generally and the absence of occurrences of 'true gracefulness' in corpuses of English—it would be helpful to also establish competent English speakers' judgements with respect to whether 'beauty', 'prettiness', 'gracefulness', and 'elegance' can take the modifier 'true'.

Examining the acceptability of highly controlled sets of constructions—where 'beauty', 'prettiness', 'gracefulness', and 'elegance' are modified by 'true'—can help to establish whether these constructions are not merely not used, but are actually incorrect given the nature of the concepts they express and the functions of the 'true' modifier (see e.g. Ferreira 2005).[14] In this context, it is better to rely on the judgements of a large number of people (as has also been done in drawing on corpus data) rather than my own judgements. First, individuals are subject to err, and so taking the judgements of a large number of people helps to arrive at a more accurate estimate of the true acceptability values, as given by the meaning of the relevant concepts (linguists commonly distinguish

13 Consider the monstrosity 'nebulousness'.

14 However, it should be noted that whether such acceptability judgements reflect correct or incorrect usage, rather than mere usage, is controversial. Some, such as Labov (1996), think that such judgements may merely reflect frequency of use; while others, such as the later Wittgenstein (1953), reject the use-meaning distinction altogether. These are not issues I can wade into here to any great extent. It is, however, clear that acceptability studies can at least *help* us in this context.

between performance and competence here, following Chomsky 1965). Second, my own judgements may be contaminated by the dual-character proposal I am trying to test, and so would not clearly provide independent support for that proposal. For discussions of some of the sources of error in people's linguistic intuitions, and the problem of the theory-ladenness of researchers relying on their own linguistic intuitions, see for example Schütze (1996) and Featherston (2007).

Method: In a within-subjects design, participants rated 'that is true beauty', 'that is true prettiness', 'that is true elegance', and 'that is true gracefulness' on a 7-point scale, anchored at '1—Sounds weird' and '7—Sounds natural'. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the University of Barcelona, and the study was pre-registered (https://aspredicted.org/MFZ_3W5). A gender-balanced sample of 250 participants from across the US for whom English was their first language were invited to take part (a sample size justification, and further details about the design, are provided in the *Supplementary Materials* on the OSF page for this article: https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/N3C8Q). Seven participants failed the attention check, leaving a final sample of 243 (Mean age=39, SD=14; 49% Women, 50% Men, 1% Other).

Results: All analyses were as per the pre-registration. The outcome variables were not normally distributed, but as ANOVA tends to be robust against such violations with sufficiently large sample sizes (such as this), a one-way repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted, with the aesthetic lexical items as a factor ('elegance', 'beauty', 'gracefulness', and 'prettiness') and naturalness/weirdness as the dependent measure. Mauchly's test of sphericity was significant, indicating that there was not homogeneity of variance between aesthetic lexical items, and so a Greenhouse-Geisser correction was applied. There was a significant effect of aesthetic lexical item on ratings of naturalness ($F(2.61, 631.18)=367.49$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=.60$). Pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni corrections to control the false positive rate indicated that the naturalness of the true-modifier statements for *all lexical items* were significantly different from one another. Crucially for my purposes here, 'true'-modifier statements with 'gracefulness', 'elegance', and 'beauty' were all significantly more natural sounding than the 'true'-modifier statement with 'prettiness' (Beauty vs. Prettiness, $t(242)=28.16$, two-sided, $p<.001$, Cohen's $d=1.81$; Elegance vs. Prettiness, $t(242)=24.74$, two-sided, $p<.001$, $d=1.59$; Gracefulness vs. Prettiness, $t(242)=14.82$, two-sided, $p<.001$, $d=.95$). Moreover, the means for the 'true'-modifier statements for 'beauty', 'elegance', and 'gracefulness' were above the midpoint, and their confidence intervals did not include the midpoint, indicating that they all sounded natural on average (Mean-Beauty=6.23 (SD=1.22), M-Elegance=5.88 (SD=1.31), M-Gracefulness=4.67 (SD=1.64)). By contrast, the mean for the 'true'-modifier statement for 'prettiness' was below the midpoint, and its confidence intervals did not include the midpoint, indicating that this statement sounded weird on average (M-Prettiness=2.67 (SD=1.62), see Graph 1.).

Discussion: Taking the findings from the corpus analyses and the results of the experimental study together, the concept expressed by 'beauty', but not 'prettiness', conforms to the pattern that would be expected for a dual-character concept. Moreover, this cannot be exhaustively explained in terms of 'beauty' preferentially selecting for one of the thinner senses that it shares with 'prettiness', since the lexical items that express thick

Graph 1. Mean naturalness/weirdness of the 'true'-modifier statements, where 1 is 'Sounds weird', 7 is 'Sounds natural', the dotted line marks the midpoint, and error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals

determinates of beauty—such as 'elegance' and 'gracefulness'—can felicitously combine with the 'true' modifier. The reason for this, I suggest, is that these determinates also have an associated value and ideal, as beauty does. Nor can the weirdness of 'true prettiness' be accounted for in terms of any awkwardness that may stem from the suffix '-ness' since 'true gracefulness' was found to sound natural. Since the design of the experimental study does not specify the domain to which the given aesthetic concept applies (although it rules out people themselves, who do not tend to be referred to with 'that'), this study suggests that BEAUTY may be a dual-character concept in at least one domain, and that PRETTINESS is not a dual-character concept, at least in non-personal domains.

4.2 Study 2—The 'Two-Senses Test'

Notwithstanding this support for the thesis proposed here, the 'True-Modifier' test suffers from some limitations. For the 'true' modifier does not only function to select for the normative dimension of a concept (if indeed it has one). It can also be used to raise standards (or intensify), as when we might say 'now, *that's* a true cookie' to restrict the descriptive features that cookies should meet to count as cookies (without harbouring a dual-character concept of a cookie) (Simon-Vandenbergen and Taverniers 2014; Leslie 2015; and Reuter 2018). This may be particularly worrying in the case of prettiness, for reasons we have seen in Section 3. For, at least pragmatically, 'pretty' may express a low level of the underlying property, and so it may not seem to make sense to standard-raise or intensify in the context of prettiness.

Less worryingly in the present context, but still notable, the 'true' modifier can also be used to express that something has many of the prototypical descriptive features of a concept, as when we might say that 'a sparrow is a true bird', in contrast to a penguin, which might only be said to be a bird 'technically speaking' (Lakoff 1973; Simon-Vandenbergen

and Taverniers 2014). Finally, the 'true' modifier can also be used to select for authenticity (Newman and Bloom 2012; Simon-Vandenbergen and Taverniers 2014), as when we say 'that's a true Picasso' to say that something has the descriptive feature of being painted by Picasso (without believing that this painting meets the ideal that Picasso was aiming at, if indeed such an ideal exists).

To begin to address the worry that the results of Section 4.1 could reflect these alternative uses of the 'true' modifier, and particularly standard-raising and prototypicality,[15] we can turn to the second method of establishing whether a concept is dual-character: the 'Two-Senses Test' (utilized by e.g. Knobe, Prasada and Newman 2013; Liao, Meskin and Knobe 2020; and Guo, Dweck, and Markman 2021, among others).[16] Consider the following two sets of sentences (for 'pretty' and 'beautiful' respectively in each case):

(1) *Ultimately Member*

"There is a sense in which she is clearly not pretty/beautiful (a), but ultimately, when you think about what it really means to be pretty/beautiful, you'd have to say that there is a sense in which she is pretty/beautiful after all (b)."

(2) *Ultimately Non-Member*

"There is a sense in which she is clearly pretty/beautiful (a), but ultimately, when you think about what it really means to be pretty/beautiful, you'd have to say that there is a sense in which she is not pretty/beautiful after all (b)."

In the case of each pair, the (a) clauses are thought to target the descriptive senses of the concepts expressed, and the (b) clauses are thought to target the normative senses of the concepts expressed (if they exist). As such, if a concept has at least one normative and descriptive sense (i.e. it is a dual-character concept) then both (1) and (2) should be felicitous. By contrast, if a concept does not have a normative sense (i.e. it is not a dual-character concept), then (1) and (2) should not be felicitous.

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15 These alternatives seem the most likely in this context. While it seems possible to describe something as 'truly pretty' or 'truly beautiful' in the authenticity sense—imagine, for example, something that merely looks pretty or beautiful from a distance, but not up close—the locutions used in Study 1 would not tend to be used in these contexts.

16 One might wonder why the 'true' modifier has all of these usages, especially given that they can dissociate in the ways suggested above. One possibility is that where an instance satisfies the normative sense, it will also tend to satisfy the other meanings of the 'true' modifier. Since the normative sense is generally thought to be what the descriptive sense aims at, those instances where the normative sense is satisfied are likely to be those that will most often be the target of attempts to standard-raise and intensify. And since prototypes tend to be weighted towards the functional instances of the kind in question (see e.g. Hogan 2017), it is plausible that the most prototypical will be those where the normative sense is satisfied. The same seems likely to be true in the case of beauty, *mutatis mutandis*. Indeed, we seem to both pick out the normative sense *and* standard-raise when we say things like 'true beauty is on the inside, and that's what counts'.

So how felicitous are these sentences? I suggest that both sentences (1) and (2) are felicitous for 'beautiful', but neither are felicitous for 'pretty', which would suggest that BEAUTIFUL but not PRETTY is a dual-character concept, at least in the context of human beauty (or perhaps just in the context of the beauty of women[17]). But, for reasons noted in Section 4.1, we are better to consult a large number of competent speakers of English, rather than relying on my judgements in this case, and so a second study was conducted.

Methods: In a within-subjects design, participants were presented with both the ultimately member and ultimately non-member statements with both 'pretty' and 'beautiful' (further details are provided in the *Supplementary Materials*) and were asked to rate these statements on a scale that ran from 1–7 (anchored at '1—Sounds weird' and '7—Sounds natural'). This study was pre-registered (https://aspredicted.org/DCM_YMJ). A gender-balanced sample of 250 participants from across the US for whom English was their first language were invited to take part, and four were excluded for failing the attention check, leaving a final sample of 246 (Mean age=38 (SD=13), 49% Women, 50% Men, 1% Other).

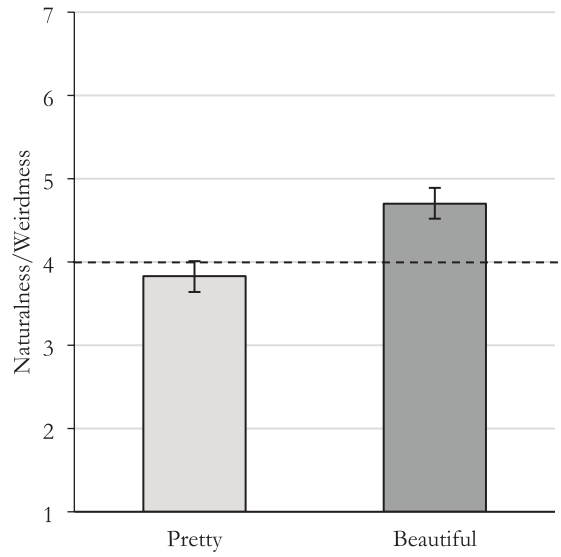
Results: As per the pre-registration, a 2 x 2 repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted, with aesthetic lexical item ('beautiful' vs 'pretty') and type of statement (ultimately member vs ultimately non-member) as factors, and naturalness as the dependent variable. As predicted, there was only a main effect of aesthetic lexical item ($F(1, 245)=66.87$, $p<.001$, $\eta^2=0.21$), with the sentences with 'beautiful' being judged to be more natural sounding than the sentences with 'pretty'. Moreover, and crucially, the mean for the 'beautiful' statements was above the midpoint, and its 95% confidence intervals did not include it (Mean-Beautiful=4.70 (SD=1.49)); and the mean for the 'pretty' statements was below the midpoint, although its 95% confidence intervals included the midpoint at the very upper limit (Mean-Pretty=3.83 (SD=1.44), see Graph 2). Since a value can be significantly different from the midpoint even when the 95% confidence intervals include it (see e.g. Schenker and Gentleman 2001), a one-sample t-test was conducted to see if the mean value for the prettiness statements was indeed significantly lower than the midpoint, and revealed that it was ($t(245)=-1.90$, $p<.05$, one-tailed, Cohen's $d=-0.12$).[18]

Discussion: The results of this study provide further support for the proposal, specifically in the context of human beauty. Since statements of the kind (1) and (2) seem to be felicitous for 'beautiful', but not for 'pretty', this suggests that BEAUTIFUL has descriptive and normative senses, and is a dual-character concept, but PRETTY only has descriptive senses, and is not a dual-character concept.

Turning to the limitations of the 'True-Modifier test', this method helps to deal with the possibility that standard-raising and prototypicality, in particular, might exhaustively

17 A woman was selected as the object of the judgement here, given that the thicker descriptive sense of pretty and beautiful is associated with women. But I do not think there is any reason to think that the same would not be true if a man were selected.

18 Thanks to Sam Liao for suggesting this additional analysis. Although there was no main effect of statement type or interaction between statement type and aesthetic concept, individual means for each measure are reported in the *Supplementary Materials*.



Graph 2. Mean naturalness/weirdness of the 'pretty' and 'beautiful' two-senses statements, where error bars indicate 95% confidence intervals

explain the results of the 'True-Modifier Test'. If the felicity of 'true beauty' reflected mere standard-raising, for example, then the descriptive criteria for applying the concept can hold to different degrees, and 'true beauty' refers to the meeting of a higher threshold of those criteria. On this picture, the 'true' cases of beauty would be a subset of the non-standard-raised set of beauties. And the same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, for prototypicality: if the felicity of the 'true' modifier reflected mere prototypicality, then some cases that meet the descriptive criteria would be more prototypical than others. On this picture too, the 'true' cases would reflect a subset of the set of descriptive beauties.

The results of the method deployed here seem to speak against such possibilities, as the two senses are fully dissociable. The person in the ultimately non-member statement appears to have none of the features that satisfy the descriptive sense, and so they are not part of the set of beauties in the descriptive sense, and yet they are accepted to be beautiful (see Knobe, Prasada and Newman 2013 and Leslie 2015 for discussion of this benefit).

Given that the two acknowledged approaches to test whether a concept is a dual-character concept seem to be satisfied for BEAUTY but not for PRETTINESS, at least in certain contexts, and that this evidence is robust against alternative explanations, I suggest that we should accept the foundational proposal made in Section 3.

At this point, it might be noted that even if the two tests that are reported here provide good evidence that BEAUTY, but not PRETTINESS, has both normative and descriptive senses, it does not provide evidence of the nature of the normative senses proposed in Section 3. That is quite so, and this was an intentional feature of these tests. The formulations of the tests reported here do not specify what the putative normative senses might be, but rather invite the participants to fill in whatever they take the normative

senses to be (if, indeed, they exist). As such, a 'weird' result is good evidence that there is no such normative sense, and a 'natural' response is good evidence that there *is* such a normative sense, but it does not tell you what it is. By contrast, on formulations that do specify putative values, while a 'natural' result is good evidence that the relevant concept has a normative sense, and indeed, the putative normative sense specified, a 'weird' result is not good evidence that the relevant concept does not have a normative sense. It could have such a sense, it just might not be the one specified. As such, as a first step in providing evidence for the foundational proposal laid out in Section 3—that BEAUTY is a dual-character concept, but PRETTINESS is not—the formulations offered here are more appropriate.

Moreover, with respect to the question of what the normative sense of beauty might be, as briefly noted earlier, a form of the 'Two-Senses Test' that attempts to specify the nature of the normative sense of human beauty has already been conducted. Doran (2021, Study 5) presented participants with someone who was physically unattractive but morally good, and asked whether they could really be described as 'beautiful', and found that the vast majority of people (86 per cent) thought that this was the case. As such, there is already good evidence for the additional proposal that the normative sense of BEAUTY includes being morally good in the context of human beauty.

5. Conclusion

In this article, I have proposed that, across a number of domains, the concept BEAUTY (and perhaps a subset of its determinates, such as ELEGANCE and GRACEFULNESS) has both descriptive and normative senses, and so is a dual-character concept, whereas PRETTINESS only has descriptive senses, and so is not a dual-character concept. This, I suggest, is key to understanding why beauty occupies a central place in our lives, while prettiness does not, and casts light on how rigidly these properties are tied to appearances.

As this is the first work to address this issue, a number of questions and issues naturally remain, and here I outline just a couple of the most salient concerning further empirical work. Clearly, further work is warranted to more explicitly test the idea that BEAUTY is a dual-character concept in all of the domains proposed in Section 3 (among others), and that the values or ideals proposed in Section 3 number among the criteria that make up its normative sense. Moreover, while this work has focused on the folk concept of BEAUTY and PRETTINESS, based on linguistic data provided by competent speakers of English, it would be interesting to see if the same results would hold in other languages, and for those with expertise in philosophical aesthetics. If the findings reported here reflect a robust feature of our concepts of beauty and prettiness, and do not reflect an error, then we might expect that this should show up across languages, and among those with expertise in aesthetics.

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Acknowledgements

Thanks to two anonymous referees for this journal for their helpful comments on the paper, the editors of this journal, Sam Liao, and audiences at the Institut Jean Nicod's Prisme Seminar, the American Society of Aesthetics Annual Conference 2023, and the UEA Experimental Philosophy Group Seminar.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Funding

This research was supported by grants CEX2021-001169-M (funded by MCIN/AEI/10.13039/501100011033), RYC2023-045407-I, and PID2023-150569NB-I00 from the Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación de España; a María Zambrano Fellowship from the European Union—NextGenerationEU; and grant TRT-2021-10448 from the Templeton Religion Trust.

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