The final section, Part VI: Historical Genealogies of Moral-Aesthetic Concepts traces the development of the ethical-aesthetic dialectic across three broadly-conceived historical periods: ancient, modern, and recent. Humberto Brito returns to Aristotle's *Poetics,* a text that has been foundational to debates about the delicate relationship between ethics and art since the beginning of Western philosophy. Martin Donougho provides the early modern example by examining the intellectual lineage of Shaftesbury, which he demonstrates descends from fifteenth-century Italian courtly traditions and continues through Kant, romanticism, and modernism. According to Donougho, "Aesthetic distinction" (325) is contingent on historical formations in which value and status were entangled. In "Fate, Philology, and Freud," Jules Brody discusses the etymology of words such as Fate, or counterparts like Necessity and Destiny. Stemming from Freud's understanding, Brody shows that Fate was an ethical paradigm for the ancients: "in inventing his deities, whatever their specific properties, man is saying that there are certain things he cannot have and certain things he may not do" (246). Brody's study thus concludes that "the ordering principle of human behavior is the acceptance and internalization of Necessity" (366). Together, these last three chapters point to some historical contingencies at play in the ethical-aesthetic distinction.

Fictional Characters, Real Problems is a valuable survey of perspectives for scholars in the humanities and social sciences, for philosophies of mind and language, or ethics, for literary scholars in English or comparative studies. This collection is of special interest to certain author-area studies, with its healthy samplings of Shakespeare, Jane Austen, and J.M. Coetzee. As a comparatist, I remain curious about ethical-aesthetic relations in the innumerable literatures of the world, and to observe whether, and the degree to which, those relations emerge cross-culturally. *Fictional Characters, Real Problem*s provides a worthwhile methodology for thinking about the relationship between moral philosophy and a literary work, inviting us to take account of what make-believe literature can do for the comportment of real people.

SIMONE MARIA PULEO
University of Connecticut

Commencing his detailed introduction which covers the overall rationale and thematic components of this collection of 18 essays, Garry L. Hagberg conducts a frightening thought experiment: consider, if you will, what would be lost if all of literature were to suddenly disappear. To borrow from Jane Austen, who figures prominently in some of the essays, a truth we might anticipate would be universally acknowledged is that, as Hagberg puts it, "a great deal more—indeed profoundly more—than mere opportunities for entertainment or diversion" (1) would be lost. Certainly, as Hagberg asserts, the magnitude and nature of what would be lost could not be briefly stated, and "the fact that any such attempt to encapsulate the content of the loss would of necessity fail is itself a measure of the depth and complexity of literature". (1) Hagberg capitalizes on the vacuum thus created by calling attention to the existence of a single "set of aspects" which, he says, constitutes "literature's ethical dimension" (1)—the realm explored by the 18 chapter contributors (including Hagberg himself).

Of course, as the thought experiment confirms, literature has a great many dimensions, but there is one other dimension which stands out as being of particular relevance here. In the

exceedingly complex annals of literary history, as is well documented, proponents of literature's ethical or moral dimension have often been deeply troubled by adherents of its apparently polar opposite: the aesthetic dimension (and vice-versa). Moreover, these dimensions have been known to turn out, on closer inspection, to be not merely in opposition but inextricably intertwined, operating along the lines of the age-old classical-romantic dialectic which is itself indicative of the close interrelation of philosophy and literature historically. It is not surprising, then, to discover that the aesthetic dimension is the next to materialize from the vacuum (albeit less directly), creating an ethical-aesthetic basis for Hagberg's differentiation of the collection from preceding debates in the critical field.

"Increasingly in recent years," Hagberg writes, "there have been helpful and illuminating discussions of the relation between literature and moral value, and a number of these have put forward general positions, often labeled [sic] with 'isms'—moralism (of strong, moderate, or weak varieties), autonomism, aestheticism (from a somewhat earlier era), etc.—concluding that ethical elements can, or cannot, be factored into aesthetic evaluation, that ethical values always, sometimes, or never trump aesthetic ones, that a work can be at one and the same time an aesthetic triumph and yet warrant moral condemnation, and so forth."(1) Hagberg's response is to proceed instead "with a different kind of philosophical aspiration: the project is to investigate a number of literary and philosophical cases—conceptually telling ones—that bring to light both the intricacy and the interwoven character of ethical-aesthetic relations and how they manifest themselves in literary art". (1) Ultimately, the "ocular" (1) approach and aim of the collection is to help provide, Hagberg says, "a vision or way of seeing ethical considerations as they are already inextricably intertwined, or indissolubly united with, multiple and diverse forms of literary expression… this collection investigates five fundamental aspects of the ethical content of literature and literary experience, put together so as to afford a complex and finely particularized vision of ethical content". (2)

As promising as all of this sounds, however, quite how Hagberg arrives at and justifies his key set of "five fundamental aspects" is unclear, beyond his early reference to a single "set of aspects" in the context of the vacuum created by the thought experiment. The collection consists of six parts (containing three essays each), which are entitled respectively: Ways of Reading for Ethical Content; Matters of Character; Literature, Subjectivity, and Poetic Vision; Language, Dialogical Identity, and Self-Understanding; Patterns and Possibilities of Moral Growth; and Historical Genealogies of Moral-Aesthetic Concepts. Parts I to V are evidently the aspects he refers to, yet only within the summary of Part IV is there actual, explicit reference to this being an "aspect of the ethical content of literature" (6/7). Moreover, as such titles indicate, each of the five aspects is in fact multiple or multifaceted, thematically encompassing three essays which also contain particular aspects on their own individual terms. Potentially, this is a recipe for conceptual surfeit and confusion—for instance, there are also references to five elements in Valerie Wainwright's essay entitled "Emma's Extravagance: Jane Austen and the Character-Situation Debate" in Part II (the Five-Factor Model of personality); in Jeremy Wisnewski's essay entitled "The Moral Relevance of Literature and the Limits of Argument: Lessons from Heidegger, Aristotle, and Coetzee" in Part III (Aristotle's five modes of virtue in Book Z of *Nicomachean Ethics*: phronesis, techne, sophia, episteme and nous); and in Stephen Mulhall's essay entitled "Quartet: Wallace's Wittgenstein, Moran's Amis" in Part IV(the five sections of David Foster Wallace's "Octet"). While all of the essays, methodically and meticulously summarized by Hagberg upfront, duly explore and contribute to elucidation of ethical content, the lack of any intensely focused, thorough and cohesive discussion of the specific origins and nature of the core five aspects in

play, individually and collectively, severely hampers the prospect of the emergence of a holistic vision, despite Hagberg's valid and repeated attempts at fostering a sense of interrelatedness and unity by flagging factors linking back to issues in previous parts.

That said, the wide-ranging but closely investigative essays are generally excellent, covering many interesting topics (including truth and truthfulness, character development and moral growth, and selfhood and identity) as well as raising compelling questions (such as why do we care about fictional characters *as people* and does literature make us morally deeper, better persons?) that will undoubtedly appeal to philosophy and literature scholars alike. Indeed, this is a book which should perhaps not be judged by its cover and title, given that the interdisciplinary spirit of the collection might not be as readily evident to potential readers, at first sight, as it is to the editor and publisher. With such works as George Orwell's *Animal Farm* and William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, for instance, having appeared for decades on English Literature curricula at secondary school level internationally, it can hardly be suggested or claimed at advanced higher education level that there is anything particularly novel or special per se about considering fictional characters in terms of real-world problems (as important and rewarding as such considerations can be), or about searching for ethical content in literature which, in any case, need not extend very far or take very long, let alone require a sizeable search party. It is only after the predominantly philosophical rather than merely literary credentials of the contributors have been gleaned from the opening notes (including leading lights such as Richard Eldridge and Stephen Mulhall), and the distinctly philosophical inclination of the essays delineated by Hagberg in the introduction is appreciated, that the title and collection really take on the intended interdisciplinary charge and slant.

While the hallmark and appeal of the collection is therefore its strong emphasis on philosophical concerns in relation to literature, potential readers should be forewarned, however, that the presiding critical focus on the ethical dimension, primarily, means there are inherent limitations in regard to selection and treatment (including of the aesthetic dimension) of literary case studies. It is not that the range of literary examples is too small—in fact, there are plenty of excellent choices (including Jane Austen, André Breton, Charlotte Brontë, Joyce Carol Oates, J.M. Coetzee, E.M. Forster and Shakespeare), as with the philosophical sources (including Aristotle, Hegel, Heidegger, Kant, Plato, Socrates and Wittgenstein). Nor is it the case that the intertwinement of the ethical and aesthetic is fundamentally underappreciated—quite the reverse. Hagberg is at pains in the introduction to convey that "the binding of aesthetics to ethics does not join at a single seam" (2) and that for "a subject as complex and intricate as ethics, then put together with a concept as multifarious and wide-ranging as literature (and where we on investigation discover the two to be not put together, but indeed already intertwined down to the level of the finest detail), the danger of desensitizing oversimplification is everywhere". (11) Nevertheless, if there is a major criticism to be levelled at this collection, it is that an understandable lop-sidedness symptomatic of the critical leaning towards the ethical dimension can, at times, greatly undermine itself.

A glaring deficiency, for instance, is that the generous range of literary examples scrutinized does not include, or feature reference to, some of the key figures of nineteenth-century Aestheticism and/or Decadence whose theories and works do intersect with the key ethical concerns of the collection. Austen, Coetzee and Shakespeare are recurring presences—all well and good—but when Hagberg reports, for instance, that in Alan Goldman's essay entitled "Moral Development in *Pride and Prejudice*" in Part V, we see that literary depiction "is not only that: it is also an occasion for moral self-reflection" (8), or when Hagberg reflects that "certain literary works show us how to be good (or bad)" and "literature, as [Mitchell S.] Green argues [in "Learning

To Be Good (or Bad) in (or Through) Literature" in Part V], can contribute to moral development or degeneracy in its readers" (9), it is surely a critical imbalance to neglect to mention or engage with the likes of Oscar Wilde and Walter Pater, among others, from those key periods. Astonishingly, such figures are also absent from Part VI: Historical Genealogies of Moral-Aesthetic Concepts, where the Victorian/Aestheticism and Decadence periods are not even explicitly mentioned concerning the lineage traced in Martin Donougho's essay entitled "Shaftesbury as Virtuoso: Or, the Birth of Aesthetics Out of a Spirit of Civility" which runs from "fifteenth-century Italian court society through various figures and cultural fields up to Kant, Romanticism, and into modernism". (10) To his credit, Hagberg does state in the introduction that the collection differs markedly from while also being meant in part as a contribution to preceding debates [including regarding "aestheticism (from a somewhat earlier era)"], and is far from exhaustive. Still, to adapt a famous quotation from *The Importance of Being Earnest* to the absence of Pater and Wilde: "To lose one… may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness."

JARON MURPHY
D.Phil., University of Oxford

WITTGENSTEIN ON AESTHETIC UNDERSTANDING. By Garry L. Hagberg (Ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. 394 p.

This book collects twelve essays concerning Wittgenstein's treatment of aesthetic understanding, broadly construed. Essays discussing very specific issues coexist alongside contributions targeting general aspects of Wittgenstein's view of aesthetic understanding and experience.

The book is divided into four parts. The first concerns the aesthetic dimension of Wittgenstein's work, while the remaining three parts deal with literature, music, and the connection between the experience of art and that of persons.

While most contributions are authored by philosophers, the book also includes essays written by English literature scholars. This interdisciplinary approach is welcome, and it shows that Wittgenstein's writings are able to foster a cooperation between philosophers and other scholars in the humanities – a cooperation that is often missing.

An example of this is provided by the essay by Robert Chodat, who attempts to apply a Wittgensteinian anti-essentialist argument to the concept of narrative. In doing this, Chodat rekindles a proposal that was already advanced with regard to art in general, namely that no rigorous definition of it is possible, and that in fact any attempt to formulate one may be seriously misleading.

When it comes to the scope of Wittgenstein's writings that are discussed, the focus is mainly on the philosopher's late production. An exception is represented by the opening essay, in which William Day reconstructs the Wittgensteinian notion of grammar from the *Tractatus* until his late writings, arguing that aesthetic understanding is paradigmatic of the way philosophical grammar works.

Various essays deal with music: in addition to the three essays contained in Part III, devoted to musical understanding, Garry L. Hagberg's chapter also discusses music extensively. This is