SKORIN-KAPOV, Jadranka. *The Intertwining of Aesthetics and Ethics: Exceeding of Expectations, Ecstasy, Sublimity.* Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2016. 236 pp. Cloth, $85.00—Rather than simply showing that aesthetics and ethics have some overlap or similarities, Jadranka Skorin-Kapov makes the stronger claim that both branches have a common experiential ground. Through an extensive survey (with dense exposition) of many figures from modern and contemporary philosophy, she concludes that sublimity is that ground.

The experiential environment is found in both art and nature, and, following Dewey, Skorin-Kapov argues that to understand experience, one must look to aesthetic experience. Uniting two historical and divergent perspectives, she holds that both art and nature provide the properly aesthetic experience, which she defines as the exceeding of expectations. In other words, the necessary element of surprise in each aesthetic experience can be found in art and nature as they provide the appropriate experiential context, and neither is more primary with regard to an aesthetic experience. Through a careful exploration of Kant, Hegel, Goethe, Gadamer, and Adorno, Skorin-Kapov presents different positions about the primacy of art or nature with regard to the aesthetic. For instance, Kant favors nature, while Hegel gives primacy to works of art. Skorin-Kapov shows that different types of art have correlates in nature. As an example, sculpture would be the counterpart of a rock formation. They relate because we can experience them in similar ways; we can walk around a sculpture as we can a rock formation. This unites the aesthetic experience we can have in art and nature. She turns to Kant's notion of the sublime, which she claims—contentiously, I should add—can extend to cover experiences of art along with nature. The sublime, says Skorin-Kapov, is more about one's response (spirit of the spectator) to nature, not the natural object itself. She then claims that someone's response to a work of art could also be sublime. Thus, sublimity provides the most proper aesthetic experience for both art and nature.

Fundamental to aesthetic experience, Skorin-Kapov discusses authenticity as a governing force of expectation, and therefore the aesthetic. She begins by explaining that the possibility for authenticity according to Heidegger is the fact of death. She flips this around, however, to show that the beginning is just as important as any finality. This becomes the key for her notion of expectation. Once something happens, a person can no longer have expectations about what is going to happen. Expectations are, therefore, crucial because an aesthetic experience occurs when those expectations are surpassed.

In chapter 3, "Experience and Art," the focus turns to art solely. Since Skorin-Kapov argued compellingly that neither art nor nature is primary for an aesthetic experience, it is a little curious why she would have a chapter on art without a similar discussion of nature. Presumably, the idea is that art is experienced differently than nature, even though both are aesthetic. Without explanation, however, she does not have a developed section on experience and nature. She holds a view—many in

recent philosophy would dispute—that art necessarily involves the aesthetic. Something is not art, if it is ugly.

According to Gadamer, art is understood by means of interpretation, which is historical, rather than analysis, the common tool for the sciences. Jauss, Gadamer's former student, suggests three categories of aesthetic praxis: production, reception, and communication. They all pertain to aesthetic pleasure, which arises in part by our interpretation and reflection. Our experience of art changes according to our changed horizon of expectations; and this is what forms new cultural and social norms. Instead of just talking about the concept of art, Skorin-Kapov uses Jauss's view to consider the work of a contemporary artist, Gabriel Orozco. She shows how in his work expectations were produced, changed, and challenged as different horizons interacted.

The fourth chapter is where Skorin-Kapov develops her view of the relationship between aesthetics and ethics. The sublime produces wonder, which in turn, she claims, produces respect. As the sublime points to something beyond our physical existence, it grounds ethics and aesthetics in a similar manner. The main difference is that in the context of aesthetics, the sublime does not provoke one to action—and it is not supposed to. In the ethical context, the sublime—producing respect for others—ought to lead to action. Most philosophers in the past have connected the good in ethics with the beautiful in aesthetics. Skorin-Kapov, however, gives more weight to the sublime as the major foundation for ethics and aesthetics. And this idea is the most notable contribution in her book.

She ends her book with a chapter on laughter, which might seem unexpected. However, the comical can be a link between art and morality. When we consider her notion of the exceeding of expectations as the ground for aesthetic experience, then the surprise encountered in humor seems to fit into the discussion more seamlessly. Humor arises through the work of art, which necessarily involves, in her view, an aesthetic component. Citing Tolstoy, she asserts that people are happy in similar ways, even though they are sad in very individual ways. The happiness arising from laughter brings people into an ethical context, further demonstrating the intertwining of the aesthetical and the ethical.

While Skorin-Kapov examines a plethora of philosophers (from Plato to Adorno), it could be a mistake, though unfortunately a common one, to disregard the medieval period altogether. She mentions St. Augustine at one point concerning expectation. It might have been helpful for her to provide at least a short explanation of his contribution, even if to dismiss it quickly. Overall, she has offered an invaluable contribution to aesthetics and an impressive discussion of philosophers and concepts that are not always discussed in the same volume.—Michael Spicher, *Boston University*