

Teaching Ethics in the Creative Industries: A new theory of Creative Integrity¹

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Introduction

I teach an undergraduate ethics course in a faculty of business for students majoring in advertising, marketing and public relations. Despite the numerous cheerful jibes about the oxymoronic nature of my task, I take this project very seriously! Facilitating ethical discussion amongst the next generation of advertisers is something I regard as my very personal responsibility and opportunity to contribute to society. There are two clear challenges educators faces in an applied ethics class of students from creative industries like advertising. The first is the level of resistance that students bring to the subject based on misconceptions they hold about 'ethics', which create unresponsive personal narratives such as: 'caring about social justice will make me look like a communist!', or 'I can't make a difference', or 'I already have ethics!' The second challenge is the essential and contextual limits of traditional ethical theory. Although classical theories like deontology and consequentialism have something to contribute to generic business decision-making they are less effective in dealing with industries and professions that revolve around representation and the imaginary. In these spaces the traditional ethical agent is joined by another actor, the creative work, which is never rational and often embodies an Other universe in which Kant's Categorical Imperative struggles to make sense.

In this paper I will briefly outline the philosophical investigations I have been undertaking in order to construct an alternative theoretical framework for teaching ethics. I will map the connections between the philosophical literature on ethics and the philosophical literature on aesthetics, with a view to identifying what I shall call aesthetico-ethical theory. The aesthetico-ethical theory will constitute the groundwork for a new concept of creative integrity. Creative integrity offers us a more effective means of addressing the ethical challenges that face creative practitioners. I will outline my concept of creative integrity using the notions of autonomy, agency and authenticity, and offer a model of creative integrity that can be taken into the classroom, along with concluding references to pedagogical activities that draw on this concept of creative integrity.

Traditional ethical and aesthetic theories

Applied ethics courses typically depend on the classical ethical theories of deontology, consequentialism and virtue ethics. These three thematic hubs can also be seen in aesthetic theory, in the shape of the three aesthetic theories of formalism, functionalism and taste. Each aesthetic theory lends itself to a very specific ethical theory, and this connectivity will provide us with a basis for identifying the different types of aesthetico-ethical theory. For those who are unfamiliar with ethical theory I will now outline the three traditional ethical theories as well as the three aesthetic theories that mirror them (see Table 1).

Ethical theory	Deontology	Consequentialism	Virtue Ethics
Aesthetic theory	Formalism	Functionalism	Taste

Table 1: comparison between ethical theory and aesthetic theory

Deontology is a form of ethical reasoning that comes from *deon*, the Greek word for duty. Deontology focuses on following rules, duties and ethical principles such as rights, responsibilities and justice.

Deontology does not concern itself with achieving specific ends. It is focused exclusively on upholding moral ideals because it is the right thing to do. An action is right according to deontology because of its essential moral value, not because of any particular outcome it achieves. Deontology is focused on the intrinsic value of a moral law or principle, rather than its instrumental value. In contrast, consequentialism is a style of ethical reasoning that is concerned exclusively with achieving morally desirable outcomes. How this is done is not regarded as morally significant. Consequentialism is traditionally associated with the idea that the end justifies the means. The utilitarian driven to ensure the greatest happiness for the greatest number is a classical example of what constitutes a morally good end. Virtue ethics describes a way of doing ethics that originated with Aristotle. Unlike deontological and consequentialist theories where the focus is on actions and on decision-making, virtue ethics defines 'the Good' in terms of human flourishing and places emphasis on character building. With virtue ethics we explore ways to become a better person; a person with a virtuous disposition. We seek to cultivate morally virtuous qualities in ourselves.

The three ethical theories of deontology, consequentialism and virtue ethics can be mapped onto the three aesthetic theories of formalism, functionalism and taste. Each different aesthetic theory resonates with a style of ethical reasoning. Formalism is a deontological approach to aesthetics. Formalism, sometimes known as aesthetic proceduralism, autonomism or aestheticism, is a comparatively modern take on the nature of art or aesthetic objects. It argues that aesthetic objects are pure and autonomous. This sentiment is embodied in the ideal of 'art for art's sake'. According to Cooper, the arts should be "attended to solely as ends in themselves" and not because of some function that they might serve (Cooper 1992:162). From this we can see how formalism aligns itself with a particularly deontological ethic. Neither is concerned with function or consequence; neither defines itself in terms of an endpoint, but rather, in terms of intrinsic value or formal properties.

The second aesthetic theory is functionalism. Functionalism, with a long tradition dating back to Plato, understands art as having a transformative role to play in society. Rejecting the social impotency they associate with autonomous art, many philosophers and artists have argued that art and aesthetics can help us better understand our relationship to our world and empower us to make positive changes (Gablik 2002:141). I contend that the aesthetic theory of functionalism is strongly affiliated with the ethical theory of consequentialism. Both take an instrumental approach to their judgment of value or goodness. Both are focused on outcome or endpoints rather than any essential form or intrinsic value.

The third aesthetic theory is taste. Eighteenth century empiricist David Hume argued that aesthetic pleasure has nothing to do with the aesthetic object in itself. His theories on aesthetics did not focus on either the essential qualities, or the function of an aesthetic object. Aesthetics, for Hume, is a matter of judgment of taste. A person, or as Hume put it, a "man of taste," possesses certain qualities that others do not (Shelley 2001:45). The man of taste, to quote Hume, is a "true judge;" the "ideal perceiver" (Shelley 2001:46). This taste judgment is the ideal response to the aesthetic object. It is the one I would have if I were my perceptually better self; if I did not possess perceptual flaws. There are significant commonalities between the man of taste and the virtuous man of ethical theory. Both approaches concentrate on analyzing what qualities are important for a person to possess and how to develop and maintain these qualities.

The concept of aesthetic sensibilities, or aesthetic attitude, also points to the relationship between virtue and taste. Aesthetic attitude describes a way of being in the presence of the aesthetic object, which is characterized most often by qualities such as disinterestedness, openness, receptivity, imagination and spirit (Cooper 1992:26). Also equated with the aesthetic mode of engagement are qualities such as respect, selflessness and reflection. To understand aesthetics in terms of the qualities that it cultivates in the person is comparable to virtue ethics. Theories around both taste and virtue focus their attention on the qualities and formation of an ideal subject.

Aesthetico-ethical theories

The three aesthetic theories of formalism, functionalism and taste, each lend themselves to a specifically deontological, consequentialist or virtue based approach to ethics. A search through the philosophical literature that explicitly addresses the relationship between ethics and aesthetics also reveals evidence of these three modes of connectivity. I will use the term *aesthetico-ethical theory* to describe the myriad of philosophical arguments and assumptions about the relationship between ethics and aesthetics. These aesthetico-ethical theories build on the distinct relational modes that connect deontology and formalism, consequentialism and functionalism and virtue with taste (see Table 2).

Ethical theory	Deontology	Consequentialism	Virtue Ethics
Aesthetic theory	Formalism	Functionalism	Taste
Aesthetico-ethical theory (philosophical literature that explicitly connects ethics and aesthetic)	?	?	?

Table 2: Towards an aesthetico-ethical theory.

There are three different types of aesthetico-ethical theory which could map onto the three themes we have already explored in relation to both ethical theory and aesthetic theory. I will refer to these three types of aesthetico-ethical theory, as essential, instrumental and existential (see Table 3). Essential connections made by philosophers between ethics and aesthetic, the Good and the Beautiful, are focused on form, essence and intrinsic value. The instrumental connection covers those relationships between ethics and aesthetics that focus on the ways in which aesthetic experience is instrumental in achieving socially and ethical responsible outcomes. What I am calling an ‘existential’ connection refers to those aesthetico-ethical theories which explore the intersection of being-ethical and being-creative. It also includes theories that emphasize the aesthetic qualities that ground the moral subject’s relations with themselves and the world.

Ethical theory	Deontology	Consequentialism	Virtue Ethics
Aesthetic theory	Formalism	Functionalism	Taste
Aesthetico-ethical theory (philosophical literature that explicitly connects ethics and aesthetic)	Essential Connection	Instrumental Connection	Existential Connection

Table 3: Aesthetico-ethical theory.

I will now give a brief outline of the essential, instrumental and existential connections before using these aesthetico-ethical theories to draw together a new theory of creative integrity.

The essential connection covers philosophies that make a claim of direct equivalency between ethics and aesthetics; a position that is powerfully demonstrated by Keats's declaration that 'Beauty is Truth'. It is also evident in Plato's idea of the Forms, in which the Good and the Beautiful are One². Claims about beauty as perfection, or harmony or freedom, or any reference to divine beauty, are making the ontological claim that the nature of beauty is essentially goodness. Pythagoras's discussion of beauty as perfect order is an example of direct equivalency, of the argument that the Beautiful *is* the Good (Armstrong 2004:32). The Essential connection also covers symbolic or analogical relationships between the Good and the Beautiful, e.g., the argument that the Good *is like* the Beautiful. Kant, for example, is notoriously well known for claiming that "the Beautiful is a symbol of morality" (Tauber 2006:25).

Wittgenstein's concept of 'family resemblance' also reflects another form of analogical equivalency. "Ethics and aesthetics are one", according to Wittgenstein (Stengel 2004:610) because they share a family resemblance. They are the same type of concept; they have the same character and they possess significant operational commonalities. They are both 'fuzzy', hard to define, hard to prove. Also recognizing this conceptual similarity, Kant pointed out that this essential connection between ethics and aesthetics could be utilized to improve peoples understanding of ethics.

Kant's observation draws us across a fine divide to our outline of the instrumental connection. The instrumental connection, which began with the ethical theory of consequentialism, can be used to classify those relationships between ethics and aesthetics that explore the direct moral impact that aesthetics has on the world. It focuses on theories which argue that aesthetic experience and the arts can facilitate the moral development of societies and individuals. This can include theories positing a broad concept of moral education through aesthetics. It can also cover theories which argue that aesthetic experience provides citizens with morally relevant knowledge or increase their moral motivation. Aristotle argued that tragic poetry in particular could provide "further moral education" (Pappas 2001:16) by giving viewers a deeper emotional and abstract understanding of morally significant truths. Although Kant would be the first to advocate the importance of reason, he also acknowledged that we are feeling beings and that in order for us to internalize moral knowledge we need to experience it at a sensible, lived, embodied level (Guyer 2006:225).

The existential connection between ethics and aesthetics represents theories of ethics that advocate either the subject's deliberate cultivation of aesthetic virtues, or explore the pre-rational, unintentional acquisition of aesthetic virtues. The first focuses on an aesthetic approach to being-moral. This is exemplified by Foucault's notion of an 'aesthetics of existence' (O'Leary 2002:1). Foucault re-conceptualizes ethics as a personal choice to understand oneself as a work of art. He wants us to see our lives as something to which we must give form, and re-form in an endless state of becoming. Leading a virtuous life is a question of style and requires a certain degree of artistic skill. For Foucault, an ethical life-style is an aesthetic project. The second type of existential connection focuses around the aesthetic virtues that we acquire through aesthetic experiences. Whilst they do not directly cause moral action they are human characteristics that are conducive to moral development and being-ethical. Aesthetic virtues include qualities like inner harmony, imagination, sympathy, understanding, openness and respect for difference.

Towards a new theory of Creative Integrity

In order to lay the philosophical foundations of our new theory of creative integrity we have journeyed through the ethical theory and the aesthetic theory to what I have called the aesthetico-ethical theory (see Table 4). Creative integrity offers us a way of responding to those ethical issues particular to the creative industries. It offers us a way into teaching ethics to students who will be employed at the intersection of commerce, creativity and mass communication.

Ethical theory	Deontology	Consequentialism	Virtue Ethics
Aesthetic theory	Formalism	Functionalism	Taste
Aesthetico-ethical theory	Essential Connection ↘	Instrumental Connection ↓	Existential Connection ↙
Theory of Creative Integrity			

Table 4: Towards a theory of creative-integrity.

Creative integrity, by definition as well as historical inclination, is a concept that embodies the theoretical connectivity between ethics and aesthetics. I will trace the ethically responsive historical interplay between creativity and integrity. I will also problematize the contemporary usage of creative integrity in order to reframe our understanding of creative integrity using the ideas of autonomy, agency and authenticity. This understanding of creative integrity will integrate all three styles of ethicality – deontology, consequentialism and virtue – by drawing on the three aesthetico-ethical theories identified earlier. Students, however, relate to the notion of creativity integrity as a virtue. They see it as a quality that is, or should be, a fundamental part of their being as artists, as well as the being of their art.

I will demonstrate that creative integrity, like a virtue, is a question of balance. To explore this focus on harmony I will position Aristotle’s ethics in dialogue with Schiller’s aesthetics. I will use these ethical and aesthetic theories of balance to construct a model of creative integrity that we can take into the classroom. I argue that the possibility of what I shall refer to as ‘response-able’³ advertising lies in finding harmony between the opposing values that characterized advertising’s early years. I also argue that teaching response-able advertising students will depend on enabling them to work through the tensions between their personal and professional values at the site of creative practice. Cultivating a sense of creative integrity is a process of self-reconstruction that allows students to negotiate the morally fractious intersection of creativity and industry.

Historical Tensions

The work of Michelle Bogart (1995) gives us an appreciation of the close but tumultuous relations between art and advertising. The rise of advertising represented a moment in history when the question of ‘What is art?’ went from being a philosophical topic with abstract ontological repercussions, to being an issue of professional significance with serious commercial implications. Bogart outlines the complicated relationship between ‘art-art’ and ‘advertising art’ (Bogart 1995:9) by tracing the demarcation debates raised by poster art, billboard art, the rise of magazine illustration, cover art, engraving, lithography and photography. Art became reproducible and advertising was collected and sold like art.

According to Bogart, the first advertising-artists had generally been trained as art-artists and retained the professional and personal ideals and values of the fine art scene. Bogart refers to the romantic values of self-expression, freedom and the civic duties of art (Bogart 1995:8). These artists viewed the development of reproduction techniques and the rise of commercial publications and mass audiences as a democratic opportunity to provide all members of society with the moral and cultural benefits of aesthetic experience. It wasn’t the commercial aspects of being an artist that created the tensions between art and advertising. There was a long and generally unproblematic tradition of patronage and commission (Bogart 1995:10). Rather, the point of departure revolved around the artist’s loss of sense of self as an artist and a loss of control and trust in his audience (Bogart 1995:11). The cross-over generation of artists became disenchanting, and ultimately disenfranchised from the advertising art world, when they realized that their work was not intended to uplift the public, but merely to entertain. As Bogart puts it,

... service no longer meant producing a work that would stimulate and challenge both artist and public, but rather creating a facile image that catered to some client's perception of the lowest common denominator (Bogart 1995:11).

Arguably there was once a time when advertising more often understood itself as art. However, as advertising matured, fundamental differences became apparent and both art and advertising took cultural and institutional steps to affirm their separate identities. Advertising not only lost its will to identify as art, but also cast itself off from the vital mix of personal, professional and public values that art was offering.

Professional Tensions

In the advertising industry being professional about something has lost some of its original ethical imperative and has come to imply the need to leave your personal values and beliefs at home. There is a division of values – at work you need to be 'objective', i.e., put the interests of the company and the clients first. In advertising being professional means being dis-interested; being a pure mediator of the vision of the client, and producing a creative work that is empty of subjectivity, from which the creator is absent. The client has become the 'higher truth' which the advertising practitioner must simply channel, but ironically, with none of the individual righteousness and emotional commitment that came with this calling to be a 'vessel' in the age of Romanticism. The modern ideal of the artist is someone separated from society. The modern commercial artist is someone separated from their art/work.

There are two experiential modes traditionally associated with creative integrity. First, the artist is someone for whom creativity is a practice of pure self-expression with no accountability beyond their own beliefs and values – a 'personal truth' – which brings with it accusations of relativism. Second, the artist is a vessel through which divine truth is channeled. Today, for commercial artists in fields like advertising, the creative experience has been stripped of its ethical prescriptions and possibilities. With that external or objective 'truth' becoming lower rather than higher, more self-interested than sacred, and more material than metaphysical, the commercial artist is positioned as a vessel through which the client's interests are channeled with no source of accountability. The loss of a higher truth has not been replaced in this case with a personal truth. Professional creative practices, such as advertising, therefore risk being characterized by the fundamental absence of personal accountability and social responsibility.

There is a trend in modern advertising to equate creative integrity with originality and honesty. But there are a number of limitations operating within this understanding of creative integrity. The focus on honesty is due to the strong identification of creativity with imagination. We have come to understand imagination as a very individual experience, which inevitably leads to the exclusion and invisibility of collaborative art projects and contracted artistic practices such as advertising. This understanding of creativity as the imaginative expression of the individual subject has resulted in the essentially egoistic concept of originality becoming central to the artistic ideal. The idea of originality as a foundation for creative integrity buys into an elitist and socially unaccountable view of the master artist. The rise of commercial art practices, like advertising, broke the relationship between creative practice and self-expression. As a result creative integrity lost the ethical imperatives of personal accountability and agency and degenerated into the simple ethical principle that plagiarism is wrong. Creative integrity has been reduced to honesty.

The idea that creative integrity is about not representing the work of others as your own was evident in the responses of a large number of students when questioned about what creative integrity meant to them in the very first lecture.⁴ A number of students interpreted creative integrity as a demand for honest representation of the product or service; examples that were given were things like not depicting a product as bigger than it actually is, or imply it has features that it doesn't. However, it is clearly not sufficient to equate creative integrity with honesty because the legal and ethical demands for honesty are already firmly established in their own right. The understanding of creative integrity in current usage places no demands on the creative practitioner regarding personal accountability or social agency.

The history of ‘creativity’ and ‘integrity’

The richly textured history supporting a concept of creative integrity is characterized by the shifting and oppositional principles of artistic freedom and social responsibility. This can be traced back to the fact that freedom and responsibility have presented themselves in the individual histories of both creativity and of integrity. According to Aristotle, integrity is the art of living well by recreating in ourselves the perfect proportions of virtues over vices that characterize humans of moral and intellectual excellence (Puka 2005). There is a very long formalist tradition of defining beauty in terms of proportion. Like Foucault, who believed that living was an art and that morality was a question of style, Aristotle believed that our character was a sculpture, a constant work in progress, that called on us to integrate and balance those qualities necessary for us to live up to our full human potential. For Aristotle, the distinction between technical goodness (the skills associated with arts and crafts) and moral goodness was very blurry. In order to truly succeed at the art of living well you must necessarily incorporate a carefully attended montage of virtuous qualities.

The concept of creativity is a modern phenomenon. It comes from the original concept of creation which, in the beginning, was entirely cosmological in nature (Negus 2004:1). Creation referred exclusively to the act of God creating the world. The Renaissance of the 16th century led to a humanist shift in the meaning and usage of the word (Negus 2004:2). The word that made man came to mean man-made⁵. Creativity began to develop beyond its divine origins. However, some of its metaphysical connotations are retained in the Romantic idea of the Muse, of art as something divinely inspired that flows through the artist from a higher place; that speaks through the artist. The artistic vision is transcendental; it reflects a beauty and truth of the highest order and, as such, affords deeper moral insight. This relegates the artist to a position of moral authority in the community. This is one of the historical sources of the connection between art and public service. The artistic vision is a unique and privileged perspective. The artist has been granted access to sacred knowledge and, therefore, has been granted a unique and privileged ability to respond. Being an artist is a calling and with it comes a response-ability to the greater good. Unfortunately increased cynicism, secularism and self-interest have worn down this association between artistic talent and social responsibility.

In recent times creative integrity has been understood in terms of artistic freedom. Appeals to creative integrity currently belong to the popular rhetoric surrounding the controversial actions of artists, directors and performers. At best, contemporary definitions of creative integrity refer to honesty and originality. At its worst, it has become a defence for bad taste. Ironically, the now anti-social and purist notion of ‘art-for-arts-sake’ was originally a political and value laden revolt against the increasingly untenable realities of materialism and consumer culture (Gablik 2004:32). The ethical principle that underlies the modernist concept of creative integrity is that of individual autonomy. Although the term creative integrity is itself an elegant reminder of the rich historical relationship between ethics and aesthetics, the moral connotations of this ideal have gradually leached away. We have been left with a definition that hides its self-interestedness and lack of accountability behind a discourse of freedom as individual right.

Creative Integrity as Autonomy, Agency and Authenticity: Reframing deontology

Table 5 below outlines a three part theory of creative integrity as autonomy, agency and authenticity, which draws on all three ethical traditions. These three facets of creative integrity have been developed by following the three approaches of deontology, consequentialism and virtue through from the ethical theory to the aesthetic theory to the aesthetico-ethical theories. The modern usage of the term creative integrity caricatures a deontological understanding of creative integrity as autonomy and artistic freedom. It is this modern understanding in particular that needs to be touched up and reframed in order to make creative industries, like advertising, more socially and ethically response-able.

Ethical theory	Deontology	Consequentialism	Virtue Ethics
Aesthetic theory	Formalism	Functionalism	Taste
Aesthetico-ethical theory	Essential Connection	Instrumental Connection	Existential Connection
A new theory of Creative Integrity	<i>Autonomy</i>	<i>Agency</i>	<i>Authenticity</i>
	Autonomy as ‘free and yet lawful’; Freedom as an expression of an essential pre-rational responsibility to the Other; Personal accountability; Creative practice as morally significant relationships. (the popular modern usage of creative integrity as ‘art for art’s sake’ and ‘artistic freedom’ would be located here as a form of liberty from constraint)	Socially responsive art. Art that is collaborative, respectful, relational. Art that seeks to make a difference by addressing issues like the environment or social justice.	Understanding creative practice as a form of self-expression. Seeing one’s artwork as an extension of Self. Art and creative practice that is true to one’s personal values.

Table 5: Creative Integrity understood in line with the aesthetico-ethical theories.

This deontological understanding of creative integrity which is currently in use, suffers from the disinterestedness associated with the aesthetic theory of Formalism. Formalism was not interested in the moral or social or political value of art – only in its own artistic value. This current understanding of creative integrity also suffers from the fact that we associate autonomy with freedom and we associate freedom with the absence of constraints (negative freedom).⁶ This conception of freedom and autonomy is focused on rights rather than responsibilities. Creative integrity has taken up the rallying cry of ‘art for art’s sake’ with none of its radical edge and all of its irresponsibility. However, at the Kantian intersection of ethics and aesthetics we also have access to an understanding of autonomy as positive freedom. Positive freedom, according to Kant, implies “independence through conformity to the alternative law that the will gives to itself” (Guyer 2005:227). Freedom is not lawless. Freedom is the capacity of the will to be a law unto itself (Guyer 2005:227). Rather than lawlessness and the lack of self-constraint we can understand autonomy and freedom as self-determination. There is no external governing body imposing rules or determining how one should behave. It is the self that imposes standards of behaviour and holds itself accountable to these standards. Kant gives us with a notion of autonomy as a kind of ‘self-regulation’ and personal accountability.

Despite the fact that the modern understanding of autonomy is one that tends to reject accountability, the history of creativity and integrity do offer us a concept of accountability that was autonomously or internally regulated as distinct from externally regulated. Artists would once have spoken about a higher truth, gleaned at a very personal level, to which they knew they must be true. We can, therefore, replace our old understanding of autonomy as lawless, irresponsible freedom with an understanding of autonomy as personal accountability. Autonomy tends to privilege an understanding of self that is independent as distinct from interdependent. Although independence is ethically valuable, a theory of creative integrity that will help students become more ethically and socially response-able creative professionals will need to incorporate that independence into a broader focus on relationality. By this I mean that social response-ability relies on an understanding of oneself as part of a community which is affected, either positively or negatively, by the actions of the individuals in that community.

I contend that in order to produce a new socially responsible theory of creative integrity we need to replace the deontological notion of creative integrity that is currently in usage with alternative deontological readings of creative integrity. One alternative version explores the idea of *autonomy* as personal accountability. Another deontological foundation we can draw upon is W.D Ross's idea of 'morally significant relationships' (Ross 1930:19). Developed in his work *The Right and the Good*, Scottish philosopher W.D. Ross argues that we have seven *prima facie* duties to all of humanity. However, we also have duties that grow out of specific relationships we form with other. He called these relationships that produce additional responsibilities, morally significant relationships.

It is possible to understand this new theory of creative integrity in these terms as a series of morally significant relationships between artist, art and world. An ethical theory for the creative industries will not focus on the artist as an independent moral subject. The moral agent that creative integrity constructs is relational and integrated. Creative integrity demands a process of self-identification that challenges the traditional ideals of art, and artist, as separate from society; of the isolated and aloof artist whose critical distance has degenerated into disassociation. Creative integrity also calls for an understanding of the artist as a series of relationships between one's self, one's art and one's world.

The first morally significant relationship within this emerging concept of creative integrity is between the artist and society. The artist recognizes themselves⁷ as part of a broader community; they assume the values and interests of society as their own; they conceptualize responsibility collectively. The second morally significant relationship is between the artist and their art. The artist with creative integrity not only understands themselves as a part of society, they understand their art as a part of themselves; as an extension of self. An artist with creative integrity will not separate themselves from their work of art. An artist with creative integrity will not compromise themselves by producing artworks that are not a genuine reflection of their personal values. In a commercial context this means rejecting the myth of objectivity and value-free design, and the corresponding ideal of the artist as neutral, passive mediator of the client's wishes (McCoy in Heller et al, 2003:5).

This leads into the third morally significant relationship which is the relationship between the artwork and society. The artist with creativity integrity takes responsibility for the impact that their art has on the world. They are accountable for their art as it enters the social context and interacts with others. It is an extension of themselves. They recognize their art as part of society, and they embrace the response-ability that necessarily accompanies the worldliness of the work of art. They fully equip their artwork with its own ability to engage in ethical dialogue with the world it will both encounter and create. A person with creative integrity produces art that reflects their personal values and embodies their commitment to the public interest. They recognize the essentially moral dimension of creativity. The act of creation, like a divine command necessarily engenders responsibility: a person with creative integrity is driven by the knowledge

that their creative abilities and art work are the most authentic way that they can respond to the call for social change.

This new theory of creative integrity will also incorporate a consequentialist notion of creative integrity as *agency*, that is, as the ability to take social action and a will towards social change. This idea of creative integrity as a kind of social agency leads on from the consequentialist aesthetico-ethical theory that art and aesthetic experience could have a morally positive impact on society. Agency incorporates the idea of Creative Social Response-ability. Response-ability is an attempt to reframe our understanding of response-ability as an ‘ability to respond’. Rather than focusing on response-ability as a burdensome duty, the neglect of which exposes us to blame, response-ability is about our unique ability to make a positive contribution. It is about understanding ethics as an opportunity for creativity, rather than a limit or constraint on one’s personal and professional creativity. Response-ability comes with all the personal and professional imperatives that ‘creative ability’ has, ie, a drive for excellence, to rise to challenges, to push oneself to be better, to actualize one’s full capacity and perform to the best of one’s abilities.

Finally, our new theory of creative integrity will include the virtue ethics notion of creative integrity as *authenticity*, in which we understand authenticity as being genuinely aware of and committed to one’s personal values. Although authenticity has a strong continental philosophical heritage, as demonstrated by Heidegger and Sartre, students outside of philosophy classrooms relate meaningfully to the epistemologically unproblematized notion of authenticity as ‘being true to oneself’. Young makes the distinction, in his work on the aesthetics of music, between historical authenticity and personal authenticity (Young 2001:384) In both cases it is a question of fidelity, either to the past and the composer’s original intentions and historical context, or to one’s own individual creative interpretation and aesthetic responses (Young 2001:385). A better understanding of how creative integrity as authenticity can contribute to teaching ethics in the creative industries could begin by exploring the ethical dimensions of aesthetic fidelity.

Creative Integrity as Harmony

When it comes to teaching ethics it is helpful to give students a means of understanding and negotiating the ethical tensions that will be operating in their professional creative practice. It is useful to think of creative integrity as an ethically and aesthetically balanced approach to being creative. I will therefore sketch a preliminary model of creative integrity that positions creative integrity as the harmony between two extreme and conflicting ways of going about professional creative practice. These two extreme positions represent the ethical and aesthetic weaknesses of professional creative practice. They are both necessarily irresponsible. This model, although in its early stages, is intended to assist students in identifying ethically problematic behaviours and beliefs in themselves, in others, and in the artwork. It will also give students a sense of how their creative integrity is compromised and in what direction they need to move in order to achieve a more ethically response-able approach to their creative practices. As part of the theoretical lead up to this classroom model of creative integrity I will use Aristotle’s ‘doctrine of the mean’ and Schiller’s (1794) dualistic theory of aesthetics to discuss the value of balance and harmony as a way of responding to ethical challenges in the creative industries and flourishing as a creative practitioner.

According to Aristotle, a virtue sits mid-way between two vices; two extremes, the excess and the deficit. Aristotle called this the doctrine of the mean which is indicative of Aristotle’s emphasis on achieving balance in our character and lifestyle. Aristotle espoused four primary virtues – courage, temperance, justice and prudence – that a person must foster in themselves in order to live a flourishing existence, ie., in order to live up to their potential as a human being. Courage, for example, is achieved when we find a balance between the juxtaposed weaknesses with which a man may struggle, namely cowardice and rashness (Harrison 2001:48-59). Living well, for Aristotle, was about cultivating these virtues.

Schiller (1794) offers us the possibility of an aesthetic version of this theory. There is a strong Aristotelian theme of harmony and balance running through Schiller. According to Boos, in his work on

Schiller, 'Beauty represents the unity of universal and particular, duty and inclination, reason and feeling, and spirit and nature' (Boos 2002:16). For Schiller, the ideal person is one who has achieved harmony between his spiritual and sensuous forces (Schiller, letter 17). By this he means that humans suffer from either: (1) an unhealthy singularity of purpose; a one-directional intensity that leaves the subject unbalanced, or (2) a failure to throw oneself forward in any direction. Schiller argues that the Beautiful "makes a man a whole, complete in himself" (letter 17). Beauty does this by responding to the particular mode of imbalance in the individual. The Beautiful is able to make the apathetic man more invigorated and the obsessed man more open: "Only the well tempered equilibrium these forces...can produce happy and accomplished men" (letter 6).

A number of critiques of the connection between ethics and aesthetics have been based on the claim that beauty tends to degenerate into either apathy or obsession. Both Scarry (1999) and Hepburn (2001) explore this line of criticism. However none of these commentators considers beauty's ability to pull back in the other direction. Beauty can have either an invigorating, energizing effect or a calming, melting effect – which ever is necessary for balance. Beauty for Schiller has a self-regulating capacity. Schiller is implying that the form of beauty is essentially noble and that an artist attempting to avoid the corruption that accompanies art directed by "necessity and fortune" should "raise his eyes to his own dignity" and the possibility of his art form (letter 9). In Schiller's musings we can see traces of the theory of Creative Integrity outlined here as the site of response-able advertising practice. Advertising can become response-able by focusing on the creative side of its nature. In this reading of Schiller, artistic dignity calls for a "union of the possible and of the necessary" (letter 9) which comes as a call on the advertising artist to seek out the essential ability-to-respond to society's needs, as well as its wants, that their artwork historically and naturally possesses.

He will, indeed, receive his matter from the present time, but he will borrow the form from a nobler time and even beyond all time, from the essential, absolute immutable unity...Truth continues to live in illusion...Let him stamp illusion and truth with the effigy of this ideal...(letter 9)

Schiller would even seem to acknowledge that the advertising artist and their work's unique ability to respond to the greater good of society lies in their aesthetic impact. Society is more responsive to appeals to the heart than the head (letter 8). Faced with the apathetic masses of his time, Schiller notes that

[t]heir taste is purer than their heart, and it is by their taste you must lay hold...In vain will you combat their maxims, in vain will you condemn their actions; but you can try your moulding hand on their leisure...Surround them with great, noble and ingenious forms. (letter 9)

A preliminary model of creative integrity

Table 6 represents a model of creative integrity designed for students in advertising to understanding the ethical tensions in their creative practice. It is based on Aristotle's doctrine of the mean. It is my intention to explore the pedagogical utility of this ethical construct in my next teaching cycle.

EXCESS (ethical weakness)	CREATIVE INTEGRITY (ethical approach to creative practice)	DEFICIT (ethical weakness)
Anything justifiable in the name of artistic freedom. Pure autonomy precludes ethical consideration of impact on society.	AUTONOMY Self-discipline 'Free and yet lawful'	No creative freedom or voice. Artist acts merely as a mediator of someone else's vision/ interests.
Preoccupation with either the message or the aesthetic, to the detriment of the other, leading to compromised response-ability.	AGENCY Creative Social Response-ability	Purposelessness or disconnectedness. Artist separated from society. Creative work is out of touch with the social environment it impacts. It seeks no positive transformative role in society.
Failure of the creative work to speak to others, or establish its own ethical dialogue with the world.	AUTHENTICITY Creative practices reflect artist's personal values	Artist's creative work violates their personal values

Table 6: A model of creative integrity

Before concluding I would like to briefly introduce a couple of the ways that I have translated the idea of creative integrity into pedagogical activities. One of the lectures given in my advertising, marketing and PR ethics class⁸ requires students to produce a campaign for a new government policy which they find morally reprehensible, such as the 'White Australia' immigration policy or the introduction of capital punishment. Rather than debate the rightness or wrongness of the topic or the task, students are simply expected to put coloured pen to paper in the name of something they find distasteful or offensive. The sheer lived experience of applying their creative skills to this end becomes the stimulus material for later discussion that never fails to surprise me with its honesty and humility and fresh commitment. The students explore their emotional and creative responses to the task, without teacher intervention to suggest that taking on such a project is unethical. The majority of students in the class conclude that not only is the policy unethical, but more importantly, that their ability to respond creatively is compromised. They understand phenomenologically that their personal values are an essential part of their creativity. This is an important aspect of the art of living and working with creative integrity

The assessment in this subject includes a socially response-able art exhibition. In small groups, students are encouraged to choose a social or environmental issue that they have some interest in and create a collaborative artwork that requires audience participation. At the end of the semester we hold an art exhibition so that students can actually have the experience of engaging in a dialogue with their community on issues they think are important. Exhibiting their artwork gives them the opportunity to speak with their community and to see their community responding and engaging. Their art becomes a meeting point, a communal site, a possibility of mutual communication. The students come away from the exhibition with a renewed sense that they really can make a difference through their creative practice. Recognizing one's creative social response-ability is another important facet of creative integrity.

Conclusion

This has been a very brief foray into the nature and response-ability of creative integrity as a new theoretical framework for teaching ethics in creative industries such as advertising. This understanding of creative integrity draws on the traditional ethical theories of deontology, consequentialism and virtue ethics. Exploring the philosophical relationships between ethics and aesthetics enabled the construction the aesthetico-ethical categories of essentialist, instrumentalist and existential connectivity. These categories provided the foundation for an integrated notion of creative integrity as autonomy, agency and authenticity. Although significant mapping needs to be done, this paper outlines a preliminary teaching model of creative integrity based on autonomy, agency and authenticity. It also overviews the classroom application of creative integrity in the form of specific lecture content and assessment.

Ultimately, this research is driven by the contention that students in the creative industries have a particular predisposition towards ethicality that is intimately related to their artistic passion and commitment to aesthetics. The theory and practice of creative integrity outlined in this paper is designed to compliment the student's instinctive ethical style rather than leave the burgeoning question of ethics in the creative industries to classical debates about rights or increased regulation.

Notes

- 1 Part of this paper, which appears here in modified form, was presented at the 'New Directions in the Humanities' conference, Paris, July 2007, and has been accepted for publication in the *International Journal of the Humanities*. The ideas presented here have been extended and are part of a larger research project.
- 2 See Plato's *Republic*
- 3 This understanding can be loosely attributed to the work of Emmanuel Levinas on the ethics of responsibility (Hutchens 2004:18). Levinas understood ethics as a pre-ontological, pre-rational responsibility to the Other, rather than a set of rules or totalizing principles from which an autonomous subject has the freedom to choose. Mikhail Bakhtin's work on ethics in *Towards a Philosophy of the Act* provides us with, shall we say, a more positive dimension to responsibility, or answerability, as the unique and actual ability of each individual subject to act in a specific context (1993:40-42). In this pedagogical context, the concept of response-ability as the subject's unique ability to respond to the Other, is designed to ameliorate students' beliefs that they can't 'make a difference' and that responsibility is all about the burden of rules and regulations.
- 4 In the first lecture of semester, prior to any ethics content, students are asked to answer an open-ended question about what creative integrity means to them. In week 12 of the semester students have to again answer this question as part of the reflective journaling assessment in this course. The contrast between their answers from the beginning to the end of the course is significant.
- 5 I have deliberately used this non-inclusive language to represent the original patriarchal usage of this concept.
- 6 For more on the notion of freedom as the absence of constraints (negative freedom) in relation to positive freedom, see Berlin (1969).
- 7 The 'artist' will deliberately be referred to using the plural form 'their', in order to avoid gender specificity.
- 8 AMB 231: Marketing Communication Regulations and Ethics. Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia.

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