to 'all normal persons'; even if all human beings at all times responded to beautiful objects in the way that you describe, to call an object beautiful would still mean something more than that.

In what, then, does the objectivity of æsthetic judgments consist? The question cannot be pursued here, but I may perhaps mention that feature of them which it appears most urgent to recognize as fundamental, if æsthetics is ever to be systematized as a branch of philosophy. Whenever an æsthetic proposition is true, a true ethical proposition seems to be implied; for whenever an object is beautiful, it seems true that the contemplation of it with the appropriate emotion would be one of those things of which the existence adds to the sum of intrinsic value in the universe. The investigation of the relation between these two kinds of propositions seems to me the most pressing of the tasks awaiting the student of æsthetics, and it would be fortunate if a writer of Vernon Lee's ability could be persuaded to undertake it.

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DIE THEORIE DES WAHREN INTERESSES UND IHRE RECHTLICHE UND POLITISCHE BEDEUTUNG. By Leonard Nelson. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1913. Pp. 31.

This little pamphlet is one of the essays of the Friesian school, and is by an author whose other contributions on various philosophical subjects to the same series are well known. The problem described is the follwing: We ourselves and other people often have interests that conflict, and it is an ethical problem to decide on what principles the choice is to be made of which are to be fulfilled and which neglected. It is clear that the principle is not that the strongest must always be chosen; it is not our duty to allow people to steal our watches merely because their desire for them is stronger than our own. And even where neither of the conflicting interests is a criminal desire, it often happens that it is our duty to fulfil the weaker desire which is more valuable to the neglect of the stronger which is less so. Again there is the case of people whose desire is based on an erroneous belief about matters of fact. If we cannot alter this belief by argument, and if we judge that the fulfilment

of their desire would be bad for them, it may be our duty forcibly to prevent their fulfilling it.

The author thinks that there is a paradox about this because the moral law tells us to treat other people's interests as if they were our own, and we treat our own interests solely with reference to their strength. He thinks that there is no special difficulty in dealing with criminal interests, on the ground that the moral law cannot order you to help people to break the moral law. Similarly there is no special difficulty about desires based on erroneous information about facts, because they are contrary to desires in the deluded person which are actually stronger. (The point here seems to be that if we know that eating certain oysters will give a man typhoid, and he refuses to believe it, still his wish to eat the oysters is *as a matter of fact* incompatible with his wish to preserve his life, though he does not know this; and the latter desire is the stronger of the two.) But a real difficulty is supposed to arise in the remaining set of cases, where both of the conflicting interests have value, and what really is the weaker is preferred to the stronger.

Just as the strength of the interests is not the sole ground of preference, so their value is not the sole ground, and the first problem is how such heterogeneous things as strength and value can be compared. The second is the one already mentioned about the compatibility with the moral law of a choice on any ground other than relative strength. Nelson's solution is to say that the weight to be attached to the factor of value is the strength that that interest would have for a consciousness which was (*a*) completely enlightened and (*b*) prefers always what it sees to be more to what it sees to be less valuable. And the moral law, I take it, is supposed to say, not that we must treat other people's interests as if they were our own, but as this enlightened consciousness would treat them if they were *its* own.

It seems to me that there are here two criticisms to be made. In the first place, what advantage is there in introducing this hypothetical consciousness? It gives us no general rules for balancing the factor of strength against that of value, for we do not know what strength an interest of given value would have for such a consciousness. If anything can be gained from the conception, it seems to be something contrary to what Nelson has already asserted. For the postulate that this consciousness always prefers what it sees to be more to what it sees to

be less valuable must surely mean that, whatever the relative strength, it always decides solely on grounds of relative value. This leaves indeed no problem for *it*, because there value and strength never conflict; but it does not tell us what other people ought to do in whom value and strength do conflict. If it tells us anything, it is that value should be the sole deciding ground; yet this I understand Nelson to have denied. The other point to notice is that the necessity of introducing a hypothetical consciousness shows the uselessness of taking anything like the Golden Rule as *the* moral law. To treat other people as you would like to be treated yourself is all very well as an antidote to selfishness, and selfishness is no doubt the root of the greater part of vice. But this rule is not the whole of morality, for if I like people to make me drunk, this will not prove that I ought to make other people drunk.

Nelson argues that we can quite well have interests of which we are not aware, and that the value of interests is not a thing that can be judged in abstraction but must be judged by reference to the whole life of which they form parts. Hence the necessity of determining wherein the value of life lies. He argues that our judgment on such a point is æsthetic in character, and hence, on the rather precarious authority of a dictum of Schiller's, concludes (p. 20) that the ideal of life for the individual is that of culture or rational self-determination. Correlated with this is the duty of society to do nothing to limit our opportunities for culture. The argument here does not seem to me strong, but incidentally Nelson disposes of two very silly dicta about æsthetics. One is that there is no demand that the object of æsthetic admiration should exist, as there is that good conduct should be realized; the other is that æsthetic contemplation is in some special sense disinterested. He answers with perfect cogency that the *physical* existence of beautiful objects is not a demand of æsthetics, but that their existence as sensible objects of perception is. Similarly æsthetic contemplation is disinterested only in the sense that it does not demand actual physical possession of the object admired, and not in the sense that it does not demand that it shall continue to exist and to be capable of being contemplated.

Our duty toward others is to remove obstacles to their self-development; not, of course, to 'self-develop' them, for this is impossible. And, since what is relevant is their interests and not

their awareness of them, it is our duty to help them in their self-development whether they know that this is what they want or not. All people capable of any self-determination and development have the same right to the external means to it; and this right is inalienable, whether they are prepared to give it up or not. Nelson argues that in any actual society the ideals of freedom and of equality may conflict, and that then it is freedom that must give way. I am not sure that I follow his reasoning, but it appears to be as follows: The moral law demands equality for all ends, and any infringement of the moral law is infinitely worse than any particular evil state that may exist. Now if people were not completely free, the worst that would happen would be that none of them are in quite the best state; but if there be any inequality of treatment, the total state of the society is infinitely bad. This *may,* of course, be true, and it is hardly fair to expect in a short pamphlet like this a discussion of that most difficult of ethical problems, whether no amount of good produced is ever commensurate with the evil involved in treating any person even partially as a mere means; but to answer it in Nelson's sense is to make a very sweeping assertion.

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Plato: Moral and Political Ideals. By Adela Marion Adam, M.A. Cambridge: At the University Press, 1913. [The Cambridge Manuals of Science and Literature.] Pp. vii, 159.

In this admirable little book Mrs. Adam has achieved a difficult task, *viz.,* "an account of what Plato did in the moral and political sphere," necessarily,—since it was to be "intelligible to the plain man,"—in abstraction from his metaphysical background. The philosophic purist who may object to the separation, as giving an inevitably defective view, will not be heard in our pragmatist age, since whether or not Plato is Plato when deprived of his dialectic, there can be no doubt that the plain man will benefit by an introduction to these moral and political truths. And in Mrs. Adam's skillful treatment, as much of the Platonic philosophy as can be readily introduced is presented with limpid clearness, and without sacrifice of essentials.