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AESTHETIC PRACTICES AND NORMATIVITY

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Abstract: What should we do, aesthetically speaking, and why? Any adequate theory of aesthetic normativity must distinguish reasons internal and external to aesthetic practices. This structural distinction is necessary in order to reconcile our interest in aesthetic correctness with our interest in aesthetic value. I consider three case studies—score compliance in musical performance, the look of a mowed lawn, and literary interpretation—to show that facts about the correct actions to perform and the correct attitudes to have are explained by norms internal to a practice. Practice-internal norms, however, cannot settle the distinct question of which practices we have reason to opt into. When it comes to the source of aesthetic normativity—in virtue of what aesthetic value is genuinely reason-giving—I argue that existing accounts, which appeal to pleasure or achievement, are inadequate. The only practice-external aesthetic requirement is a generic one to opt into at least some aesthetic practices.

The aesthetic, everyone agrees, is a domain of value. Standards of taste, judgments of beauty, critical verdicts, and appreciative acts all make reference to the basic evaluative properties of goodness and badness, along with more determinate evaluative properties such as the garish, the gaudy, and the graceful. This marks a contrast with the moral domain, where it is highly contested whether evaluative or normative properties have explanatory primacy. On one understanding, the debate between consequentialists and deontologists just turns on whether moral rightness reduces to the promotion of some independently specified value, or whether there is some sense to be made of moral requirements that do not, say, maximize aggregate welfare.

In recent years, there has been growing interest in aesthetic normativity: the norms, reasons, and obligations to which the aesthetic domain gives rise. At first glance, this may seem surprising, given the long-standing association of the aesthetic with freedom from rules and norms.[1] Yet it seems clear that there are aesthetic norms: standards of correctness governing aesthetic actions and attitudes. There are better and

[1] Kant (1790/2000) holds that "there can be no rule in accordance with which someone could be compelled to acknowledge something as beautiful" (p. 101). Schiller (1795/1967) writes, "With beauty man shall *only play*, and it is *with beauty only* that he shall play" (p. 107). The expression theory of art developed by Croce and Collingwood argued that art based on rules is purely mechanical and cannot express the artist's personality and emotions. But see Beiser (2009) for discussion of the opposed aesthetic rationalist position, which emphasizes the need for aesthetic rules in artistic creation and criticism.

worse ways to make, and to appreciate, a Renaissance sculpture, a cappuccino, an EDM song, an Instagram photo, a crossword puzzle, a noir film, and so forth. Aesthetic norms, however, cannot be explained in terms of evaluative considerations alone. Or so I will argue.[2]

This paper has two parts. In the first, I introduce a puzzle about reconciling our interest in aesthetic correctness—in getting things right aesthetically—with our interest in aesthetic value—in getting something aesthetically good. I claim that we best solve the puzzle by appealing to the existence of a social practice, which issues requirements governing aesthetic actions and attitudes. Such requirements are, for practitioners, inescapable: practitioners, as such, are subject to criticism when they violate them. But I also want to show that, even though some of those practice-internal requirements are not grounded directly in the promotion of aesthetic value, they can be *indirectly* grounded in the aesthetic value promoted by the practice as a whole. I discuss three examples that illustrate this structure: score compliance in musical performance, the look of a mowed lawn, and literary interpretation. These examples show that facts about the correct actions to perform, and the correct attitudes to have, are explained by norms internal to an aesthetic practice, not all of which are evaluative norms. This invites the distinct question of which practices we have reason to opt into: which of the correct actions are the actions that we have reason to perform.[3]

In the second part of the paper, therefore, I consider the question of whether there are any practice-external aesthetic requirements. This question can be answered by investigating the source of aesthetic normativity: in virtue of what, in general, aesthetic value is genuinely reason-giving. I present objections to the two positive answers defended in the literature to date—pleasure (as the hedonist claims) and achievement (as the network theorist claims)—as well as to a possible answer that appeals to moral value. Such answers to the source question entail, implausibly, that there are *specific* practice-external requirements, which can ground rankings of particular aesthetic practices that all

[2] Wallace (2019, pp. 26–27) seems to think that aesthetic reasons can be understood only as evaluative. Aesthetic reasons, on this view, are what Dancy (2004) calls enticing reasons: they take us to 'bests' rather than to 'oughts'. My examples show that this is false, at least at the level of what I will call practice-internal reasons.

[3] I borrow the terminology of 'correct actions' from Maguire & Woods (2020), and the terminology of a normative standard's being 'inescapable' from Foot (1972). And I understand aesthetic 'requirements' in a minimal sense, as what one aesthetically should do, on the balance of aesthetic reasons, and is thereby criticizable for not doing. I am not here committed to the further claims that aesthetic requirements are directed obligations, or entail serious sanctions when breached, or generate aesthetic dilemmas (cf. Whiting, 2020); I defend a view about how such heavy-duty aesthetic obligations might be grounded in Kubala (2018).

agents are required to participate in. I then argue, more positively, that either there is no single source of aesthetic normativity—hence no one value that rationalizes aesthetic practice-choice—or there is no source at all, because a certain kind of primitivism is true. On either view, the only practice-external aesthetic requirement is a *generic* one to opt into at least some aesthetic practices.

A few clarifications are in order. In helping myself to a notion of aesthetic value properties, I take no stand here on what aesthetic value *is*, and in particular whether some form of experientialism about aesthetic value is true, or whether objects have aesthetic value independently of the value of the experiences they afford.[4] And since I follow standard practice in understanding a reason as a favoring consideration, I will use the term 'aesthetic' to modify both theoretical reasons for belief and other doxastic attitudes, and practical reasons for intention and action.[5] And I have no interest here in sorting out the metaphysics of aesthetic value or reasons.[6]

An appeal to social practices is familiar from the philosophy of art, and in particular from institutionalist approaches to the definition of art.[7] But here I will understand artistic practices as a subset of the larger class of aesthetic practices, because there are many aesthetic practices that aren't of the arts.[8] Even a suitably expanded conception of the artistic, one that includes tattoo making and landscape gardening, typically does not extend to bird watching, tea drinking, interior design, and other elements of the everyday aesthetic. But all these practices attribute aesthetic value properties to objects. Since there is no consensus about what makes a property aesthetic, I follow Dominic McIver Lopes (2018, p. 46) in holding that we can make do with paradigm cases. Aesthetic value properties are those that appear on lists such as Frank

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[4] For defenses of experientialism, see, e.g., Beardsley (1979), Mothersill (1984), Levinson (2002), Goldman (2006), and Stecker (2019). For defenses of the object theory, see, e.g., Sharpe (2000), Shelley (2010), and Lopes (2018).

[5] Even those who want to restrict the proper usage of the term 'aesthetic' to modifying reasons only for appreciation, narrowly construed, are happy to extend the term to reasons for belief and action in a derivative sense (e.g., Gorodeisky & Marcus, 2018).

[6] A practice-based approach might seem to lend itself to anti-realism about aesthetic value, but "the claim that the practice is socially constructed does not entail that that which justifies the practice is socially constructed" (Nieswandt, 2019, p. 24). Furthermore, one motivation for a practice-based account of normativity in general is to carve a middle path between objectivism and subjectivism (Manne, 2013). For the purposes of this paper, I do assume the metaphysical view that determinate aesthetic values exist only within practices, though the view needs some care to be developed properly. See Raz (2003) for general discussion of the dependence of value on social practices.

[7] See, e.g., Danto (1964), Dickie (1974), and Davies (2004).

[8] I would also deny that there are artistic practices that are not also aesthetic practices. Even conceptual art, on my view, is an aesthetic practice, in virtue of attributing aesthetic value properties to artworks. Thus I deny that aesthetic value properties have a necessary connection to sensory perception.

Sibley's (1959): "unified, balanced, integrated, lifeless, serene, somber, dynamic, powerful, vivid, delicate, moving, trite, sentimental, tragic" (p. 421).[9] Just as a painting or film can be lifeless or powerful, so can the plumage on a bird or the tile arrangement on a kitchen floor.[10] My overarching concerns here are not with metaphysics or demarcation, but with the *structure* of aesthetic normativity and the normative *source* of its authority.

I. **Aesthetic Practices**

By a practice, I mean a social practice: a shared form of activity partially constituted by norms that govern roles, actions, and attitudes.[11] Those norms can be more or less stringent: they might consist in strict permissions and forbiddings, as in the law, or they might instead supervene on a loose collection of favorings and disfavorings, as in the norms governing how to dance at weddings. And they can be more or less explicit: a legal system is to a large degree codified, whereas wedding dance norms are largely implicit. As Jack Woods (2018) emphasizes, practice norms can even be "entirely particularistic, having no explicit rules or aims, but where we have a sense of which things are favored, disfavored, forbidden, and permitted" (p. 211).[12] The point is that the norms of a practice help to make it the practice that it is, thereby distinguishing it from other practices. If you're making a combination of flour, yeast, water, and salt, then the norm to

[9] Others who are happy to theorize aesthetic normativity without a full account of what makes aesthetic value aesthetic include McGonigal (2018) and Nguyen (2019). There are, admittedly, limits to this approach, limits that become particularly pressing for the hybrid-source account that I will go on to endorse, because some demarcation of the aesthetic will be necessary in order to unify the multiple sources as sources of *aesthetic* normativity.

[10] I should note the availability of a rival approach to demarcating the aesthetic domain, not in terms of a distinctive class of properties, but in terms of a distinctive response to objects. On this rival view, what makes a reason aesthetic rather than, say, moral is not a property in its content but the kind of attitude it normatively supports. Notable accounts of such an attitude include Kant's (1790/2000) disinterested pleasure, Stolnitz's (1960) aesthetic attitude of disinterest and sympathy, and, recently, Gorodeisky's (2019) view of aesthetic judgment as aesthetic pleasure. But even Gorodeisky helps herself to a notion of aesthetic *properties* separate from her account of aesthetic value, although the only thing that unifies the aesthetic properties, according to her, is that they can all be the appropriate objects of aesthetic pleasure.

[11] Although I appeal to this broadly Rawlsian understanding, there are rival accounts in the literature. Like Rawls (1955), MacIntyre (2007) emphasizes the cooperative and normative elements of practices, but narrows the extension of the term by adding a perfectionist element: "human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are extended" (p. 187). Brennan, Eriksson, Goodin, and Southwood (2013) broaden the extension of the term by calling a social practice "a regularity in behavior . . . that is explained, in part, by the presence within the group of pro-attitudes . . . towards the relevant behavior that are a matter of common knowledge" (p. 16), but the idea of a mere social regularity fails to capture the normative elements that are partially constitutive of a practice in my sense.

[12] I am grateful to an anonymous referee for pushing me to clarify that the connection between practices and norms might be made compatible with particularism about aesthetic value.

give it a crusty exterior is part of what makes your activity count as bread-making rather than cake-baking.[13]

What makes a practice an *aesthetic* practice? I propose two individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions. The first is that a practice is aesthetic only if it attributes aesthetic value properties to the objects it concerns. This condition is well illustrated by canonically artistic practices, where the aesthetic value properties of an artwork depend not only on its non-aesthetic descriptive properties, but on the category into which it falls (Walton, 1970). Thus, there can be a change in aesthetic value without a change in descriptive properties, just by changing the category in which an artwork is assessed. If I'm looking at a painting, the exact same brushstroke might be 'muted' when assessed in the practice of German expressionist painting but 'shocking' in the practice of American minimalism. Furthermore, the same 'mutedness' of a brushstroke might be an aesthetic merit in American Tonalist painting, but an aesthetic demerit in the tradition of Pop art. And again, the norm that promotes muted brushstrokes is part of what makes a practice one of American Tonalism rather than Pop art.

The second condition is that a practice is aesthetic only if it constitutively aims at some aesthetic value, or set of aesthetic values. The aim or purpose of the practice has to be something aesthetic. This is intended to rule out non-aesthetic practices that merely happen to attribute aesthetic value properties to objects. The North Korean ideology of *Juche* may evaluate certain children as appearing 'pure' in virtue of their aesthetic properties, but *Juche* is a political practice, one that aims at promoting the cult of the Kims, rather than a distinctively aesthetic one.[14] Pop art, on the other hand, aims at a certain loud, stylized visual engagement with American commercialism; that aesthetic value goes toward making it the practice that it is.

My main argument for appealing to practices is that doing so is the best way to solve a puzzle about justification. I assume that, whatever the correct account of aesthetic value turns out to be, our aesthetic actions will be rational only if they are related in the right way to that value.[15] In other words, aesthetic actions are at least partially rationalized by aesthetic value. But it seems that our interest in getting things right—in making correct aesthetic judgments and performing the correct aesthetic actions—sometimes comes into conflict with our interest in getting something good—in appreciating, creating, or displaying something of positive aesthetic value. Cases where

[13] I borrow the example from King (2020, p. 100).
[14] Thanks to Antonia Peacocke for the memorable example.
[15] As Davies (2006) notes, we approach the aesthetic in general "as value-seekers, though this is not to say that we anticipate finding value inevitably" (p. 241). This is true of appreciators as well as creators.

getting things right has nothing (else) to do with getting something of value are not difficult to identify. You might go to the movies and try to figure out just what was going on with the convoluted plot of that awful mystery thriller. You might play an addictive low-graphics video game and spend hours trying to find the key that takes you to the next level. You might fuss over just the right angle at which to hang the hideous painting you inherited from a relative. Given the apparent inability to appeal to aesthetic value in these cases, is there something else that justifies or rationalizes such actions? Here are three case studies that suggest the answer is yes.

1.1 Score compliance

The first case study is an artistic one. In "Why Play the Notes?", Guy Rohrbaugh (2020) observes that to play the notes is to get things right in musical performance. Everyone agrees that performers should play the notes: they have reasons to comply with the score. But why does the fact that *that* note is in the score constitute a requirement for a performer to play it? Without an answer to that question, one that connects the norm of score compliance to a distinct source of reasons, the very fact of score compliance can look like an irrational fetish.

The main argument I take from Rohrbaugh is that it's not the case that performers comply with the score as a means to realizing its aesthetic value. An instrumental answer to the question might look plausible at first glance. After all, I play each note in a Chopin étude not for its own sake, but for the sake of playing the work as a whole. This looks like a paradigmatic case of a (non-causal) instrumental connection: I play the notes as a (constitutive) means to performing the work. What more do we want?

According to Rohrbaugh, the instrumental answer is true as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough, since it gives performers reasons for minimal compliance only. Assuming we reject a demanding view like Nelson Goodman's (1976), on which perfect accuracy is required for score compliance, then there will always be the possibility that a performer complies with the score even though they don't actually play all the notes. There is a range of less demanding views that could substitute for Goodman's, so let's stipulate that as long as a competent listener can recognize the piece, then the performer has complied with the score. As it turns out, though, plenty of competent listeners do not recognize when performers make mistakes, particularly in densely textured orchestral works or intricate solo piano pieces. But clearly performers are still required to play all the notes, even if something less than all the notes is sufficient for score compliance. So the instrumental answer doesn't account for the full strength of reasons to comply.

The explanation of why not gives us the basis of a second objection, which is that all instrumental value is derivative value: we have reason to take the means only when we have reason to take the ends. But performers don't treat score compliance as instrumentally transmitted in this way; that would imply that they have reason to play the notes only when a piece has aesthetic value, and that the worse the piece is, the less reason they have to comply with its score. But performers don't treat their reasons for compliance as varying in weight with the aesthetic value of the work. No matter its aesthetic value, they're subject to a requirement to play all the notes. As Rohrbaugh (2020) puts it, our reasons for compliance "turn out to have a surprising deontological character. … We think that these reasons have force even when we think that we could do better, and they retain their force, tellingly, even when we are playing what is absolutely terrible" (p. 86).[16]

As I would diagnose the problem, the instrumental answer implies a picture on which all of our reasons flow from *evaluative* norms: standards of correctness that refer directly, and only, to considerations of aesthetic value. It's true that many, maybe most, of our practice-internal aesthetic reasons are directly evaluative, or value-based: a musical performer can try a new bit of phrasing, or experiment with tempo, in a way that aims squarely at enhancing the aesthetic value of the performance. But a performer's reasons to play the notes don't have this character. In playing the notes, they cannot be motivated directly by thoughts of aesthetic value, but instead by a disposition to follow the norms of the practice, regardless of aesthetic value.[17]

Why not? The answer is easiest to see with examples of the aesthetically bad, since they show how correctness-based reasons can come apart from aesthetic value-based reasons. I used to play the harpsichord and adored some thorny fugue-like pieces by Thomas Tallis. Like many Baroque keyboard works, some of Tallis' end on what's called the Picardy third: a final major chord coming at the end of a piece that's entirely in a minor key. I hate the Picardy third: it's always struck me as a cheap and unearned happy resolution. I think a piece sounds better without it, so when I would practice alone, I wouldn't play it (though I would sometimes feel a twinge of guilt, looking around my

[16] Rohrbaugh also rejects answers on which our reasons of score compliance are ultimately grounded in moral respect for composers' intentions (since not all composers are living, and some could permissibly waive their claim to an accurate performance) or in rules of thumb for reliably generating aesthetic value (since the norm has deontic stringency).

[17] It is open to a defender of a two-level account to adopt a 'disaster avoidance' exception in which our deontic reasons to play the notes can be defeated by particularly weighty evaluative reasons. Rohrbaugh himself endorses such an exception: the point is not that performer's reasons "cannot ever be trumped by considerations of ensuing aesthetic value," just that they aren't automatically defeated (2020, p. 86). See also note 21.

shoulder to make sure no one was listening). But in performance, I would have to *bracket* that value-based reason: I wouldn't treat it as a reason for action.[18] The reason I have to end on a beautiful minor chord is not *outweighed* by my reason to comply with the score; by stipulation, my aesthetic value-based reasons are actually stronger than my reasons for compliance. Instead, the directly aesthetic reason is bracketed, and my reasons for compliance block the force of the weightier value-based considerations with which they compete.

To summarize: why does the fact that a certain note is in the score count as a reason for a performer to play it, even when it doesn't contribute to the aesthetic value of the performance? Because that's the norm of a practice, a norm that performers internalize. In the absence of the practice, performers would have no such requirement to play the notes. Of course, different practices interpret this norm in distinct ways. Western classical performance scores typically annotate every single note, while jazz scores might consist merely in a lead sheet with chords and a melody. But however exactly the norm of getting it right is understood, practitioners internalize it, in a way that brackets considerations of aesthetic value. What makes the norm of score compliance an *indirectly* aesthetic requirement? It will be indirect if the practice is aesthetic, i.e., one that attributes aesthetic value properties to objects and constitutively aims at an aesthetic value, such as making possible works of a scope and complexity that improvisation alone cannot attain.[19] But a performer's particular action of score compliance is not justified by that value, but by the internal norms of the practice. This is what we should expect from the structure of a practice.

1.2 The look of a mowed lawn

The example of score compliance might provoke two thoughts. First, it is something that practitioners do almost unthinkingly: anyone who learned to play an instrument in childhood knows that playing the notes is not even up for dispute. What about a case in which a practice comes into being? Second, score compliance is a paradigmatic artistic practice. What about a non-artistic practice? My second case study illustrates how a non-artistic practice originates.

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[18] To bracket an otherwise valid consideration—a consideration that does genuinely count in favor of some action—is to not treat it as a motivating reason to perform that action. See Raz (1999) for general discussion of exclusionary reasons.

[19] This is one possibility considered by Rohrbaugh (2020, p. 90). Others include making possible deeper appreciation of works through repeated hearings, and making possible subtly different interpretations of those works. Practitioners are not always able to articulate the value of a practice, or to agree on its specification, but they nonetheless take for granted that there is one.

Nicholas Wolterstorff's (2015) *Art Rethought* is mostly about the social practices of art. But he uses a non-artistic example to motivate the very idea of a practice: the look of a mowed lawn. In a social practice, there are multiple practitioners who are mutually aware of what others value, and so they perform certain actions in awareness of that value. But a practice typically originates with just one, or a few, individuals: centuries ago, someone first realized that they preferred the look of lawns that had been grazed by sheep to lawns that were untouched. That preference spread: others, whether independently or because of the evaluations of the first, began to prefer the look of a mowed lawn, too. Those evaluations began to guide their actions, such that they intentionally moved their flocks into areas where they wanted a certain look. Eventually new technologies arose, like mechanical lawnmowers, that cut the grass to a more uniform height than a flock of sheep could. What makes the practice social, according to Wolterstorff, is that people come to mow their lawns in part because others value that look, and then develop social interactions about the activity of lawn mowing (2015, p. 91). And they hold themselves and others liable to criticism when the practice's norms are violated.

At a certain point—difficult to say when—mowing the lawn, like score compliance, becomes something that is done for its own sake, regardless of the overall aesthetic value generated. It becomes an indirectly, rather than directly, aesthetic requirement. In certain parts of the US, such as central Texas, the lawn is often brown and dried, especially during the summer, and yet lawnmowers still cut it to a uniform length. No matter how ugly the lawn looks otherwise, they just have to cut it each week. You might think that cutting the grass isn't going to produce any additional aesthetic value, or that the dead grass would actually look better if it weren't cut, but if you are a practitioner, then you bracket that evaluative aesthetic consideration: you are not motivated by considerations of overall aesthetic value, but continue to mow the grass each week, just as, even though the étude isn't very good, you still have to play all the notes.

This example introduces the idea of outsiders to a practice. Some people are neither lawnmowers nor appreciators. They do not take themselves to have any reason to get it right, either by cutting their lawns to a uniform height or by making a positive aesthetic evaluation of lawns that are uniformly mowed. They might insist that there are many other contexts in which grass looks good when it's not mowed. And they'd surely be correct to deny that everyone has reason to prefer a practice of lawnmowing to a wilder landscape style. I return to the notion of an outsider in the second part of the paper.

1.3 Literary interpretation

The third case study, literary interpretation, has received a lot of philosophical attention. So my goal is simply to show that it can usefully be analyzed as having the same practice-based justificatory structure as the other two. Before we ask whether or not a literary work is any good, we need to make sure we have understood it. We need our interpretation—the set of claims we make about a work's meaning—to *match* or *fit* the work, and the meaning it contains. In short, we need to get it right. But there is significant debate about what it is for an interpretation to fit a work, notably surrounding the question of whether interpretations must be constrained by authorial intentions. As I understand it, this is a debate about whether an interpretation can be fitting if it flouts an author's publicly available intentions concerning a work's meaning: intentionalists say no, anti-intentionalists say yes.[20] The most popular variety of anti-intentionalism offers a distinct constraint on interpretation, which is that interpretations should aim to maximize the value of a work. Fitting interpretations, on this view, are those that put the work in its aesthetically best possible light. This might look like a one-level account, on which all aesthetic reasons are evaluative. Yet even these value-maximizers acknowledge a dimension of correctness distinct from value. Stephen Davies (2006) says that "the work must be seen in the best light that is consistent with preserving its identity," where identity is preserved by making claims that fit the work (p. 244). Alan Goldman (2006) writes, "Aesthetic experience should be grounded in an acceptable interpretation of its object, and an acceptable interpretation is one that maximizes the value of the experience while being constrained by the objective or base properties of the object" (p. 341). These anti-intentionalists want our interpretations to latch on to *some* independently specified object. So while value-maximizing anti-intentionalists claim, controversially, that one wrong-making property of an interpretation is that it fails to make the work valuable, they also recognize, as actual and moderate intentionalists do, that another wrong-making property of an interpretation is that it fails to fit the work. In other words, on both views, even if the work turns out to be bad, interpreters are still required to interpret it correctly, even though they could generate a more aesthetically satisfying interpretation if they didn't. Thus we see the same justificatory structure as in the other two cases: I sometimes have to bracket my evaluative aesthetic reasons, because I have internalized the norm to get the text right.

[20] For a general overview of the debate, see Irvin (2006). Wimsatt and Beardsley (1946) is the *locus classicus* of the anti-intentionalist view. Carroll (2001) is perhaps the definitive contemporary statement of the intentionalist rejoinder.

As some have argued, debates are literary interpretation are fruitfully understood as disputes about distinct interpretive practices, which endorse different norms. Hallvard Lillehammer (2008), in discussing whether the ethical value of a work of art ever contributes to its aesthetic value, argues that conceptual analysis is not going to settle such questions, because they are substantial normative questions internal to the broader practices of aesthetic criticism. Elsewhere, I argue for a similar position with respect to the intentionalism debate, understanding the two sides as different practices, individuated by different constitutive aims (Kubala, 2019a). For instance, Noël Carroll takes the value at which intentionalism aims to be the appreciation of the author's achievement (2009, p. 13), while Goldman takes the value at which anti-intentionalism aims to be the appreciation of all the values in a work (2013, p. 30).

But I will not say anything further here about how values justify aesthetic practices, or about what kind of values they are. My brief mentions of Carroll and Goldman illustrate the claim that an aesthetic practice is one that constitutively aims at something aesthetic: the creation, cultivation, and appreciation of an aesthetic value. But surely other considerations can come into play: moral considerations might speak against a practice of personal beautification, for instance, to the extent that the practice rests on oppressive gender norms. In the second part of the paper, when considering the normative question of which aesthetic practices agents have reason to opt into, I will implicitly be restricting the class to *justified* aesthetic practices, however that notion of justification is ultimately understood.

These three case studies jointly suggest four lessons about aesthetic normativity. First, some aesthetic requirements are not directly value-based. Practitioners are still required to play the notes, cut the lawn, and interpret accurately, no matter how aesthetically bad or good the musical score, grass, or literary work is. Second, when aesthetic requirements have this character, they can be explained by the existence of a social practice, in the absence of which practitioners would have no such requirement. Facts about the correct action to perform within a practice are explained by norms internal to a practice: a certain action might be correct within a practice of Baroque keyboard music but not within a practice of jazz improvisation. Third, even those non-value-based aesthetic requirements are indirectly value-based, so long as they are based in the constitutive value of the practice, the value that the practice as a whole aims to promote.[21] Fourth, these requirements are inescapable in the sense that practitioners

[21] It is worth spelling out the sense in which internal practice norms are not merely instrumental to the facilitation of the value of the practice; they aren't rules of thumb, or what Rawls calls summary rules. If the aim of a practice is to promote *V*, and the aim of your particular action is also to promote *V*, then

remain liable to criticism, even if they are trying to act as reformers. If I were to play the Tallis piece without the Picardy third, I would still be liable to criticism *qua* performer in that existing practice, even if what I'm trying to do is to get the reform to spread in a modified version of the practice.

These case studies also have taxonomic implications for an account of aesthetic reasons. Some reasons are practice-internal: their content depends on the existence and norms of the practices that give rise to them. Practice-internal reasons are themselves of two kinds. Some are *evaluative*, appealing directly to considerations of aesthetic value as understood by the practice: the fact that the complex harmonies can be better heard is a reason to use the damper pedal sparingly when playing Bach on the piano. Others are *constitutive*, appealing to considerations about the nature of the practice itself: the fact that the Picardy third is in the score counts in favor of playing the chord. These are both reasons to perform aesthetic actions within aesthetic practices.

It is worth returning to an objection mentioned at the beginning of the paper. The arts, or at least the contemporary arts, make almost a fetish of rule-breaking. Artistic innovation is thought to require the overturning of received wisdom, the flouting of existing norms, and perhaps even, as Kant (1790/2000) put it, genius, understood as "a talent for producing that for which no determinate rule can be given" (p. 186). Yet this rule-breaking itself rests on a foundation of rules. In order to have a practice or tradition at all, there needs to be some shared agreement about certain basic norms, even if others are changing rapidly. Maybe there is a norm on appreciators to give *prima facie* consideration to the title of an artwork, such that if a conceptual artist calls their sculpture a painting, appreciators ought to approach it with the concept of a painting in mind. Or maybe the norms are even more basic, as basic as evaluating the object correctly, even if what counts as correct is evolving.[22] So while there may be an enormous amount of messiness at the level of practice, this does not undermine the theoretical neatness of the two-level structure at a given point in time.

A second objection will lead into the second part of the paper by returning to the idea of outsiders to a practice. While practice-internal norms determine which actions are

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you're vulnerable to worries, familiar from discussions of rule-consequentialism, about the collapse of the two-level structure, since you would automatically override the norms you've internalized whenever you expect your action to generate more of *V*. But as the case study of score compliance makes clear, that's not how practitioners deliberate. Better to understand value as attaching directly to the practice—such that practitioners really do internalize the norm to get it right, and not merely for the sake of some further end—but to understand that value (call it *V*) as having a distinct specification from the internal values (call them *V′*, *V ″*, etc.).

[22] As Lopes (2018) puts it, "disputants can modify the aesthetic profile of a practice without violating core aesthetic norms" (p. 177).

correct, not every action that is correct is an action that we have reason to perform. It's correct to play the Picardy third, but that doesn't give me any reason to simultaneously strike three keys on the harpsichord unless I have distinct, practice-external reason to be in the Baroque keyboard practice where Picardy thirds are correct. While each of us is surely a practitioner within some aesthetic practices, we're also all outsiders to others—we wonder what the value is of various other practices, and whether we have any reason to opt in, especially given that we're confronted with far more aesthetic value than we could fully respond to in one lifetime. What kind of technology are the serious coffee-drinkers using? What's up with those dance videos on TikTok? What does anybody get out of collecting Hummel figurines? Facts about the correct action to perform (practice-internal reasons) are not of interest to outsiders unless they have reasons to be in that practice (practice-external reasons). The objector worries, reasonably, that we cannot know which of these practice-internal reasons have genuine normative force unless we have some account of what the practice-external reasons are.[23] This is the *outsider question*: why should I take part in any particular practice? It's the idea of outsiders that takes us to the source question about aesthetic normativity.[24]

II. **The Source of Aesthetic Normativity**

The distinction between practice-internal and practice-external reasons is an instance of the general distinction between thin and robust normativity: the thin normativity of what is fitting, merited, or appropriate according to any token standard of correctness, and the robust normativity of what we have authoritative reason to do.[25] In this section, I argue that while there are multiple sources of practice-external reasons, the only practice-external aesthetic requirement is a *generic* one to opt into at least some aesthetic practices. I support that claim by considering the source of aesthetic

[23] Whether or not we need reasons *ex ante* in order to be justified in participating in any aesthetic practice—and I take no stand on this question—it seems clear that investigating our reasons *ex post* is at least of interest in guiding practice-change going forward.

[24] There are many other important questions that a practice-based account ought to answer, including questions about the individuation of practices, the source of some members' authority within a practice, and the conditions on counting as a practitioner at all. I set those questions aside for another occasion.

[25] Lord and Sylvan (2019) defend the claim that "the reasons that determine 'fittingness' are not essentially normative in any sense stronger than that associated with any arbitrary standard of correctness" (p. 45). Broome (2013) notes that while there is a sense of 'norm' that merely "refers to an established practice or alternatively to a rule or requirement," what he calls "true normativity" helps to determine what you *ought* to do (p. 11). Terminology differs greatly for this latter sense of normativity: true, genuine, substantive, thick, robust, authoritative, full-blooded, etc.

normativity: in virtue of what aesthetic value is genuinely reason-giving.[26] Some think that, because aesthetic normativity has a single source, that answer could give us a rational basis for choice among particular practices and ground *specific* practice-external aesthetic requirements. The hedonist thinks we can rank practices by appealing to the normativity of pleasure, and the network theorist thinks we can rank practices by appealing to the normativity of achievement. I present an objection to both accounts. I then argue that either there is no single source of aesthetic normativity—no *one* value that rationalizes practice-choice—or there is no source at all, because a certain kind of primitivism is true. Although there aren't any aesthetic requirements to opt into particular practices, both views are compatible with the plausible idea that there would be something to criticize in an anaesthetic agent: one who never responded to any aesthetic values at all.

2.1 Pleasure

The source question asks first for a general explanatory value-claim: an explanation of how, i.e., in virtue of what, aesthetic value is reason-giving for us. The hedonist answers by pointing to the normativity of *pleasure*, specifically aesthetic pleasure. Everyone agrees that pleasure is reason-giving, that we have reason, not always decisive, to pursue pleasure. What makes aesthetic value reason-giving is that aesthetic value is, or at least can be, pleasing. In general, it's the power of aesthetic value to please that makes it normative for us.

What about the rational basis for specific practice-choice? While a hedonist could offer several possible answers, the most popular one is Humean. On the Humean view, an object is aesthetically valuable in virtue of the pleasure it non-contingently affords to competent agents, and the most aesthetically valuable objects are identified by true judges, whose expert sensitivities equip them to identify the cross-cultural masterworks that will in fact afford the most pleasure to agents who competently appreciate them (Mothersill, 1989; Levinson, 2002). This has the potential to yield a ranking of practices in terms of the degree of pleasure produced (or expected to be produced) by existing (or,

[26] We can ask how aesthetic value is reason-giving without a full account of the nature of aesthetic value in the same way that we can ask how moral value is reason-giving without a full account of the nature of moral value. The question 'why be moral?' might be answered by claiming that following the moral rules is in our self-interest, without thereby committing to the view that moral value is the value of rational agency, or the value of states of affairs, or some other position. Similarly, the analogous question 'why be aesthetic?' might be answered by claiming that aesthetic objects contribute to our welfare, without thereby committing to the view that aesthetic value is the value of experiences, or some non-reductive value we experience objects as having, or some other position. But see note 9 for the limits of this approach.

potentially, future) aesthetic objects within a practice, where degree can be a function of both quantity and quality of pleasure. And so it issues specific practice-external requirements: because of the degree of pleasure that competent agents derive, everyone might be aesthetically required to participate in the appreciation of Western classical music and forbidden from participating in the practice of twelve-tone atonal music, or 1980s soft rock, for example.

Notoriously, this agent-neutral version of hedonism gives all agents the same aesthetic aim.[27] As such, many have objected that it wrongly requires us to abandon our unique aesthetic personalities for the sake of some greater expected pleasure (Nehamas, 2007; Kieran, 2008; Riggle, 2013). Another objection concerns the malleability of pleasure: it's not clear why committed pleasure-maximizing hedonists shouldn't lower their threshold to enjoy just about everything, rather than raise it to enjoy only the masterworks identified by true judges (Shelley, 2011). A third objection concerns the fallacy of approximation: it's not clear that we will actually attain more pleasure by trying and failing to appreciate masterworks than if we contentedly continue to enjoy our reliable lower aesthetic pleasures (Morton, 2012). Yet as Servaas van der Berg (2020) puts it, "while the challenges mount, replies from within the hedonist camp have so far been scarce and, at best, perfunctory" (p. 1). Because of this fact, and because my objection to the less-discussed network theory will target hedonism as well, I move to a more thorough discussion of the network theory.

2.2 Achievement

Developed by Lopes (2018) in *Being for Beauty*, the neo-Aristotelian network theory explains how aesthetic value is normative by pointing to the reason-giving nature of *achievement*, specifically aesthetic achievement. Lopes holds that if we have reason to do anything at all, then we have reason to achieve: to do it well, as an expert agent within a practice would. (Unlike many of his opponents in the hedonist camp, Lopes explicitly appeals to practices as structuring the space of aesthetic reasons.) What makes aesthetic value reason-giving is that we can achieve aesthetically when we accurately represent the aesthetic values there are, putting ourselves in a position to perform successful actions out of our aesthetic competence at getting those values right. Lopes invokes achievement to

[27] An alternative is agent-relative hedonism: agents have reason to appreciate the aesthetic objects that are most capable of giving them pleasure in fact, regardless of what the true judges say. As Van der Berg (2020) puts it, "there are possible hedonisms that forego any appeal to ideal critics or Humean true judges, but none is as fully developed or widely influential as Hume-inspired, ideal-critic-centered hedonism" (p. 9).

explain how aesthetic value facts—facts such as 'the counterpoint is haunting' or 'the lawn is ugly'—can be aesthetic reasons to act well, but spelling out the role that achievement plays in his explanation requires some care. The fact that the pianist will achieve by playing the Bach fugue without the damper pedal is *not* an aesthetic reason for them to do so. Rather, the fact that they will achieve by doing so explains *why* the fact that 'the counterpoint is haunting' is an aesthetic reason for them to play it without pedal (p. 136). In other words, what counts in favor of playing the fugue without pedal is the fact that the counterpoint is haunting, not the fact that playing the fugue without pedal is what the expert pianist would do. So it's not that achievement itself gives us aesthetic reasons, but that achievement explains why aesthetic values are reason-giving. For my purposes, however, the form of this explanation will not be as important as the application of the network theory to the question of practice-choice, for which Lopes will introduce a distinct kind of reason.

What about the rational basis for specific practice-choice? Here too achievement plays the crucial role. As opposed to agent-neutral hedonism's cardinal ranking of aesthetic practices, based on some complex notion of degree of pleasure, the agent-relative network theory generates an ordinal ranking of aesthetic practices, based on a particular agent's prospects for achievement as cashed out in terms of their existing abilities and competences. This ranking explains, from the point of view of their current circumstances, which practices an agent should opt into.[28] It's not that all agents are aesthetically required to go in for the same practices, but rather that particular agents are aesthetically required to go in for some rather than others. To spell this out, Lopes introduces the notion of a *derived* aesthetic reason for an agent, based on whether or not they would achieve, to opt into some but not all aesthetic practices. To take Lopes' example, "Aaron, who is good at making North Indian curries, has strong derived aesthetic reason to learn to make Goan curries. Not so Rosalina, who does not cook" (p. 206). So Aaron, in virtue of his competence with cooking in a similar practice, has practice-external reason to move into a different practice, a reason that Rosalina lacks.

To explore the network theory's implications, consider a potential counterexample, which comes from Sarah Paul and Jennifer Morton (2014). They introduce it against reasons fundamentalism, but I will show that it applies here as well:

> Consider the agent who values cooking and fine cuisine even though his palate is indiscriminate, his execution sloppy and his knowledge of

[28] Importantly for Lopes, this is not a ranking of the aesthetic value of practices, only a ranking of their reason-giving force for particular situated agents.

> cooking techniques limited. This agent is in a relatively bad position to engage with the activity of cooking, yet he eagerly watches cooking shows, subscribes to cooking magazines and eats at trendy restaurants.[29] It seems that in virtue of his love for cooking, he has more reason to take classes and spend time experimenting with cooking than someone else whom cooking leaves completely cold. This cannot be explained by his superior relation to cooking, since he is by hypothesis in a worse position than many others. One might argue … that his love of cooking indicates that he will enjoy this activity and that one has additional reason to engage with valuable activities if one will enjoy them. … But it is far from clear that the balance of pleasures and pains will always work out in favour of this suggestion; after all, our bumbling chef might get incredibly frustrated and disappointed as he pursues his beloved hobby. We suggest that this example lends support to an alternative view: perhaps the valuing itself is what gives rise to the additional reasons in question (p. 341).[30]

Suppose you agree that the bumbling chef does actually have these reasons to pursue his hobby. Then it looks like what we have practice-external reason to do cannot be fully explained in terms of achievement, since by hypothesis the bumbling chef is not likely to achieve. This example also works against taking pleasure to be the only source of our practice-external reasons, since the bumbling chef is frequently frustrated in his aims and may not derive much pleasure from the activity of cooking. But I focus on the network theory.

One way for Lopes to respond might be to claim that all agents have weak standing reason to mess around with unfamiliar aesthetic practices. But this cannot be satisfactory, because as the story is set up, the bumbling chef has gone well beyond experimentation into extended engagement with the activity. Another way to respond would be to deny that the bumbling chef really has derived aesthetic reasons to pursue his hobby. This is what Lopes is committed to, given his formulation in the text. He writes:

> What we need is a conception of a reason to achieve by joining an aesthetic practice that is not a fact of the form 'x is V' [where V is an aesthetic value fact]. Instead, it is a fact about an unfamiliar K—a fact of the form 'K is F' [where K is an aesthetic practice]—that gives some agent reason to develop competence in K. Call such a fact a derived aesthetic reason. That is,
>
> the fact that K is F is derived aesthetic reason for A to acquire core

[29] For my purposes, the chef must have the goal of improving his own cooking skills, since even a bad chef can still have aesthetic reason to appreciate fine dining.

[30] I first discussed the bumbling chef case as an objection to the network theory, though only briefly, in Kubala (2019b).

> aesthetic competence in K = the fact that K is F lends weight to the proposition that A would achieve were A to acquire core aesthetic competence in K.
>
> The fact that K is F is obviously a fact that stands K in relation to A (p. 206).

Applying this to the cooking example, the fact that, say French cooking requires competence in chopping herbs, whisking eggs, and melting butter is a fact that stands the practice of French cooking in relation to our bumbling chef. Because he lacks such competences, he has no derived aesthetic reason to opt into French cooking. There are no facts about his relation to the practice of French cooking that lend weight to the proposition that he would achieve.

Note that there are two possible readings of the proposition 'that A would achieve'. An objective reading holds that A would, in point of fact, achieve. But coming to appreciate new values is risky, and we cannot know in advance where it will take us, and whether we will in fact achieve (Paul, 2014; Callard, 2018). A more plausible reading is subjective, and better fits with Lopes' (2018) text, since he writes of A having "better prospects for aesthetic achievement" (p. 206). So A's derived aesthetic reasons stem from facts about what A reasonably believes they could achieve.

But what if an agent doesn't want to achieve? I don't mean at a given moment of *akrasia*, but at all, ever. My existing competences give me lots of derived aesthetic reasons: the fact that I was good at the piano gave me derived aesthetic reason to take organ lessons. But I hated playing the organ. Conversely, the bumbling chef's existing incompetences give him no derived aesthetic reason to cook. But he loves cooking. The judgment I'm trying to elicit is that Lopes' theory fails to capture the fact that our practice-external reasons depend, in part, on our *preferences*—what we like and dislike—understood expansively to include what we love or value in a robust way. He writes: "Having observed how being good at doing something often goes with loving to do it, we tend to reason that we must love what we are good at doing. But we reason fallaciously. We can sacrifice what we want on the altar of achievement" (p. 151). Of course, that's true; we *can* do that. But Lopes' account implies that in order to do what we have most derived aesthetic reason to do, we are required to sacrifice what we want whenever it comes apart from what we happen to be good at. Instead, I claim that the bumbling chef has other reasons to cook, deriving from what he values, which outweigh whatever achievement-based reasons he may have. If we really are under a practice-external aesthetic requirement to achieve, then so much the worse for achievement.

But it turns out that matters are more complicated than this, because it isn't clear what makes this derived aesthetic requirement *aesthetic* in the first place. After all,

achievement-based reasons aren't evaluative aesthetic reasons, because they don't make reference to aesthetic value: they aren't facts of the form 'x is V' but of 'K is F', where Fs are facts about the competences agents need for achievement within a practice. And they aren't constitutive aesthetic reasons, because, as Lopes himself admits, there isn't a single practice of aesthetic achievement (p. 95). Lopes is certainly correct to allow that agents have plenty of non-aesthetic reasons to opt into a new aesthetic practice: reasons of partiality to others, reasons of social identity, prestige- or wealth-based reasons (p. 203). As such, it is open to him to agree with me that in the bumbling chef case, such non-aesthetic reasons could outweigh the achievement-based reasons. Maybe the bumbling chef has most overall reason to pursue his hobby; it's just that it goes against the grain of aesthetic rationality, of what he has most aesthetic reason to do. But if the point of insisting that these achievement-based reasons are *aesthetic* reasons is to accord them special normative status, then we should deny that such status has been earned.[31] Achievement is just one more non-aesthetic source of practice-external reasons.

Elsewhere in his book, in fact, Lopes appears to grant that derived aesthetic reasons are not really aesthetic, except insofar as they concern aesthetic practices. The normativity of achievement is what he calls "plain vanilla normativity: […] normativity that may well be found outside the aesthetic domain; it is not distinctively aesthetic" (p. 48). And insofar as the normativity of derived aesthetic reasons reduces to the normativity of achievement, then derived aesthetic reasons are not distinctively aesthetic. But then reasons of achievement have no special claim on aesthetic rationality—they can compete with other practical reasons, and perhaps often lose out. Notice that the same is true of hedonism: the normativity of pleasure is another kind of 'plain vanilla normativity'. We have plenty of pleasure-based reasons that have nothing to do with the aesthetic domain. And our hedonic reasons can compete with, and lose out to, practical reasons of other kinds. On both hedonism and the network theory, therefore, there turns out to be nothing distinctively aesthetic about the source of aesthetic normativity at all.

I have, in effect, presented both hedonism and the network theory with a dilemma. Either pleasure or achievement is the only source of practice-external reasons to opt into aesthetic practices, or there are other sources. The single-source view is implausible, as the bumbling chef example illustrates: without denying that pleasure or achievement can serve as potential sources of practice-external reasons, it looks like the bumbling chef has decisive reasons to opt into a culinary practice that are not grounded in either source. But

[31] The 'derived' terminology is potentially misleading, too, since the practice-external ('derived') reasons are actually more normatively fundamental, stemming directly from what Lopes takes to be the source of aesthetic normativity, viz. achievement.

on the hybrid-source view, it is not clear why reasons of pleasure or achievement should be accorded special normative status, since there is nothing distinctively aesthetic about such reasons. The bumbling chef has many practice-external reasons, but none of them has a claim to be distinctively aesthetic.

2.3 Morality

Other single-source answers don't fare much better. A third candidate might be a *moral* value: maybe aesthetic value is reason-giving in virtue of some moral value it possesses, such as its capacity to contribute to welfare. But this doesn't seem like the right kind of answer when it comes to practice-external aesthetic requirements. Am I required to opt into the aesthetic practices in which I would promote the greatest welfare? That is surely the wrong place for moral considerations to come into play. More plausibly, moral considerations function as screeners, which screen off, in some minimal way, which aesthetic practices are potentially reason-giving.[32] A plausible necessary condition on a justified aesthetic practice is that it be reasonably conducive to general human flourishing, or at least not in violation of moral requirements.

2.4 Pluralism

The failure of each of these single-source accounts—pleasure, achievement, or some moral value—suggests that the source question does not have a single answer. A fourth possibility would therefore be to go *hybrid*. Andrew McGonigal (2018) argues that realists about aesthetic reasons should locate the source of aesthetic normativity in some "highly abstract and general agent-neutral reasons," such as our reason to value happiness, or to value rational accomplishment (p. 23). Given that McGonigal speaks of 'reasons' in the plural, we might develop this as a hybrid-source account, one that appeals not only to pleasure/happiness and achievement/rational accomplishment, but to desire-satisfaction or love. The list of such sources would be unified because they all relate our engagement with the aesthetic domain to something about the good life. But again, the source of aesthetic normativity would not be a single value, let alone a single aesthetic value.

[32] Alternatively, we might model moral considerations as reasons that compete in their own right with aesthetic considerations, such that they could override, not merely screen off, aesthetic reasons. But then it would be theoretically possible for some huge degree of aesthetic value to outweigh moral considerations.

2.5 Primitivism

Although I myself am attracted to a hybrid-source account, I will mention one final possibility, which is only beginning to be discussed. A *primitivist* holds that there is no more fundamental answer to the question of how aesthetic values are reason-giving. Keren Gorodeisky (2019) gestures toward, though stops short of defending, such a primitivist account, on which beauty is a basic value, like truth or goodness. As she puts it, "the general question 'why are aesthetically valuable objects in general valuable or good?' makes as little sense as the questions 'why are virtuous people good?' 'why is a life of well-being good?'" (p. 18). Such a primitivist denies that there is any true explanatory value-claim to be had about how aesthetic value is, in general, reason-giving. It's not that the source question is meaningless, *contra* Gorodeisky's formulation, but that it has no substantive answer. As James Shelley (2011) puts it, in glossing the primitivist position he finds in Hume, we cannot explain the normativity of aesthetic value "by appealing to some value more basic than the value we find in [aesthetically valuable objects]" (p. 220). Whether or not primitivism is true therefore depends on whether or not there is a substantive value, or set of values, more explanatorily basic than aesthetic value. Because I think there may well be, I am not drawn to primitivism, but settling that issue is a further task.

To move to a positive conclusion: both the primitivist and the hybrid-source theorist agree that aesthetic value is, in general, normative. The primitivist agrees because aesthetic value is a basic value, and the hybrid-source theorist agrees because aesthetic value is explanatorily connected with more fundamental values concerning the good life. So both agree that there would be something to criticize in an anaesthetic agent, one who never responds to any aesthetic values at all. But both deny that there are any specific aesthetic practices that all agents are required to opt into.[33] Rather, an agent's choice of which practices to go in for will depend on particularizing information about their sensibilities, abilities, and contexts: what they happen to like, what they happen to be good at doing, and which determinate aesthetic values happen to be in the vicinity.[34] Such information can provide plenty of practice-external reasons, which speak in favor of certain practices rather than others, but will not issue any specific requirements.

[33] As Lillehammer (2007) writes in another context, "the rational inescapability of having at least some substantial values does not entail the rational escapability of any specific substantial values" (p. 60).
[34] As Gorodeisky (2019) argues, we have "pragmatic and personal reasons," based in our sensibilities, not to respond to most aesthetically valuable objects (p. 8).

I have argued that aesthetic actions and attitudes are largely practice-governed, and that practitioners are, as such, subject to practice-internal norms and requirements.[35] Although not all of these requirements are directly aesthetic, they can all be understood as indirectly aesthetic in virtue of their connection to the aesthetic value(s) at which a practice constitutively aims; this preserves the explanatory primacy of value-based notions over correctness-based notions in the aesthetic domain. But because there are no specific practice-external aesthetic requirements, my account is able to clarify the sense many have that the aesthetic really is a domain of freedom from rules and norms: it turns out to be a domain of freedom from any *particular* rules and norms.[36]

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[35] I say 'largely practice-governed' because agents also have reasons for practice-change. Some of them will be moral, or political, but others will be responsive to the same aesthetic value that (somehow) justifies the practice. Again, this makes for practical messiness: when it comes to practice-change, sometimes the same value rationalizes both the practice and the reformer's action. Consider modifications to a utilitarian practice of punishment: the practice is justified by making things go better on the whole, while particular actions of punishment are justified by guilt. But a reformer might propose that punishment consist not (merely) in incarceration, say, but in attempts at therapeutic rehabilitation, on the grounds of making things go better on the whole. This practical messiness is, however, compatible with the theoretical neatness of the logical distinction between justifying an action and justifying a practice.

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