RESPONDING TO AESTHETIC REASONS

Sophia left the tree stump in the yard not for environmental reasons, but aesthetic ones. There are reasons to think Cumbernauld Town Centre an aesthetic failure, as well as an economic one. Aesthetic considerations swayed Aran more than prudential ones when he turned down the complimentary solar panels. Beckett was guided by aesthetic concerns, not the constraints of telegraphic communication, when he employed short sentences in Act 1 of *Godot*. The design of the bridge was effective at easing traffic flow, but didn't give enough weight to aesthetic considerations.

What kinds of contrasts are we drawing here? What is involved in responding to aesthetic reasons?

1. *Preliminaries*

Our focus here will be on *normative* or *justificatory* reasons: considerations that count for or against activities or attitudes, and help us normatively appraise them, rather than just causally explaining their occurrence. I'll follow Dancy and Raz in holding that such reasons can both provide guidance to agents in selecting actions and adjusting attitudes, and help us evaluate their so doing.[1] I won't assume that any reductive account of normativity can be provided, and will generally proceed as if some form of non-reductive realism was true, although plausible forms of reductionism should be able to echo most of the central points. The reader won't be asked to accept that values are reducible to reasons or vice versa; the same holds of requirements of rationality.[2] (My inclination is to embrace a no-priority view of the former issue and a reasons-first view of the latter).

Our focus will be on aesthetic reasons in a broad, inclusive sense. We won't presuppose that any form of *aesthetic empiricism* is true, understood as the view that aesthetic reasons all hold in virtue of facts about experiences. Nor will we restrict our attention to some favoured class of aesthetic properties, attitudes, judgements, commitments, or concepts (such as "free beauty", "aesthetic pleasure" or "the standard of taste"). More generally, I won't take for granted that any given historically influential treatment of the nature of aesthetic judgement or standards – Kant's say, or Hume's – is correct. I'll take that as a substantive issue, to be settled by argument. If defenders of a

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[1] See Dancy *Practical Reality* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000) pp. 2-3 and Raz *Engaging Reality* (Oxford: OUP, 1999) pp. 219-220

[2] For some relevant discussion, see Broome *Rationality Through Reasoning*, (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013)

given position are distinctively vulnerable to (or immune from) an objection, I'll try to signal that as I go along.

2. *Aesthetic reasons as reasons-for-aesthetic-attitudes*

When we distinguish between aesthetic reasons and other types of reasons, what kind of contrast are we drawing? And how fundamental or structural is that contrast?

Let me say a little more about the kind of questions I have in mind. Learning that somebody acted for an aesthetic reason seems to help us explain why they acted, and to know why they acted as they did. But it is very plausible to think that knowledge and explanation of this kind is closely connected with the elimination of members of a contrast set: out of an initial contextually determined set of possible kinds of reason - {aesthetic considerations; considerations of public safety} - one comes to know that one rather than the other was the one that guided the agent's action. When we think about things in this way, aesthetic reasons as a class will often seem to contrast with fairly specific, contextually-embedded and determinate groupings of normative reasons. If Dominic wasn't wearing the hat for aesthetic reasons, it was surely because he was being paid to do so (he needed the money), or for reasons of friendship (he hated it; the friend he was meeting thought she had chosen well), or out of vanity (to hide the bald spot), or as a sign of protest (head coverings were unjustly banned), etc.

If we thought about the contrasts in this way, aesthetic reasons might seem comparatively thick and practice-sensitive in comparison with the reasons we have to value, say, free agency or self-development. But we might wonder whether aesthetic reasons constitute a more fundamental normative kind than this. After all, as Raz says in a related discussion

> We do not think of people's behavior towards issues involving beauty as a practice, for there is no specific action-type, performance or approval of which can constitute the practice of beauty, so to speak…Our appreciation of beauty can be manifested by almost any conceivable action under some circumstances or other.[3]

There is a long tradition of thinking that the distinction between aesthetic and non-aesthetic reasons cuts at a normative joint. Can we provide adequate motivation for such a view?

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[3] Raz, *Practice of Value* (Oxford: OUP, 2003) p. 38.

Let me begin by describing a common approach to this question, that I'll ultimately want to argue is at best incomplete. This strategy attempts to (i) individuate types of reasons in terms of a designated attitude or activity that they bear on and (ii) find some such attitude or activity that is suitably related to the realm of the aesthetic. For example, a simple but attractive model might distinguish

(i) epistemic reasons: reasons for belief.

(ii) practical reasons: reasons for action

(iii) aesthetic reasons: reasons for appreciation.

On this view, the distinctions between aesthetic reasons and others are as structural as the distinctions between the attitudes and activities that they are directed towards.[4]

A familiar set of concerns arise here. For example, since believing falsely that P may give rise to certain practical benefits on occasion, we might worry that the above picture does not adequately distinguish epistemic from practical reasons for belief. We might then try to enrich the picture by requiring that the reasons bear on the attitude or action in a specific way. For example, we might say that epistemic reasons are those reasons for belief in P that form part of a case that P, or that help us settle the question of whether P.[5] We might think of (positive) practical reasons as those that help make a case for performance of an action A, or that that help us settle the question of whether to do A. If we developed the view in this way, aesthetic reasons would presumably consist of those that form part of a case for appreciating an aesthetic object O, or for settling the question of whether O is worth appreciating, or whether to take up an aesthetic attitude towards O, or something like that.

Developing the view in this way raises a prima facie puzzle, however. Suppose we say that aesthetic reasons are those that help us settle the question of whether O is worth appreciating. Why aren't these reasons thereby epistemic reasons? After all, they directly bear on the truth or falsity of a proposition. Similarly, suppose we say that aesthetic reasons are those that help us settle the question of whether to appreciate O. Why isn't this enough to make them practical reasons? After all, they seem to help us settle the question of whether to undertake a given pattern of activity – attending to the aesthetically relevant properties of O, dwelling on their interrelations, interpreting

[4] Keren Gorodeisky and Eric Marcus defended a version of this view in their paper "Aesthetic Rationality", delivered at a symposium we shared at the *American Philosophical Association Pacific Division Meeting* in 2016.

[5] Pamela Hieronymi has defended this style of view in an important series of related papers. See also Raz "Reasons: Practical and Adaptive" in David Sobel and Steven Wall (eds.) *Reasons for Action* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009)

them in the light of a range of background art-historical knowledge, and so on. Aesthetic reasons so understood might not seem to be suitably "categorically different" from reasons for action and belief. And that might be thought to imperil the project of identifying a suitably fundamental normative joint.

Suppose, for example, we embraced Iseminger's well-known account of the aesthetic state of mind. On this view, somebody is aesthetically appreciating a state of affairs just in case (i) they believe that their cognitively apprehending something about that state of affairs is good, and (ii) that belief is not based on reasons that present that apprehension as a means to other ends.[6] On this account, presumably, one's reasons for appreciation would be reasons that (i) helped one resolve what to believe by settling the question of whether one's cognitively apprehending something about a given state of affairs is good (ii) in a way that didn't depend on their presenting the apprehension as an effective means to some other end. But for all that has been said, those reasons might just be a subset of epistemic reasons. If so, aesthetic reasons wouldn't seem to form a natural contrast class with practical and epistemic reasons. (Compare: there are many good reasons to build bridges over rivers, but that shouldn't encourage us to talk in terms of a special normative class of "bridge-building" reasons.)[7]

There is therefore pressure on such a position, given its motivations, to find a special aesthetic attitude or activity to shore up the normative joints. We could think of them as a particular species of "judgement-sensitive" attitude in Scanlon's sense.[8] If we thought that these states were quite different from beliefs or actions, but still comparatively practice-independent and suitably universal, we might view aesthetic reasons as belonging to a fairly basic, general, unified normative category. That would allow the distinctiveness of aesthetic reasons to 'piggy-back' on the distinctiveness of folk-psychological categories. They would be like reasons for indignation, or reasons to be cheerful. They would be more like epistemic reasons, and less like reasons to build bridges.

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[6] See Iseminger "The Aesthetic State of Mind" in Kieran (ed.) *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art (Oxford: Blackwell 2006)*. Iseminger talks of belief, but elements of his discussion suggest that he may have something more like occurrent belief or judgement in mind.
[7] Raz makes this point in "Reasons: Practical and Adaptive".
[8] Judgement-sensitive attitudes are those "…that an ideally rational person would come to have whenever that person judged there to be sufficient reasons for them, and that would, in an ideally rational person, 'extinguish' when that person judged them not to be supported by reasons of the appropriate kind". Scanlon *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1998) p. 20

I think that most extant developed views of this kind are ultimately unsatisfying in one of three ways. They either (a) surrender too much of the rational authority of aesthetic normativity (b) present us as bound by overblown and implausibly demanding normative constraints or (c) overgeneralize in a way that robs aesthetic reasons of too much of their content. I can't offer a full defense of these claims here, but in order to motivate exploration of a rival approach, let me say something about the types of ways that I think such views fall short.

A defender of such a view should want the states in question to (i) not just be beliefs or actions (ii) be reason-sensitive (iii) be suitably distinctive and unified (iv) be appropriately related to everyday aesthetic talk and practice. The first condition seems to rule out cognitivist treatments of aesthetic attitudes that identify them with beliefs whose content ascribes, say, a type of secondary quality. The second condition apparently rules out brute sensory states like aches, itches or non-presentational sensations of pleasure. The third condition sits uneasily with treatments that treat the aesthetic attitude as one contingent, permissible, appetitive preference among others, such as a desire for ice-cream. The fourth requires that the attitude in question relate in the right way to the kind of explanation that we give when we say that the placement of the bridge didn't give enough weight to aesthetic considerations. Since this is a contrastive explanation, the attitude in question seems as if it shouldn't be something that, say, is merited by every object or situation whatsoever.

A "fitting-attitude" account of appreciation might be thought offer a means of balancing up these various tensions.[9] Such an account might aim to identify an attitude that offers a distinctive blend of cognitive and affective elements, so as to avoid the problems that we just saw would arise if we focused solely on beliefs, preferences, or "mere" affective states. Evaluative elements might be integrated too. For example, some theorists might characterize the emotion as a perception of the fact that one's circumstances merit such a response, under a special affective mode of presentation. Suppose that we endorsed such a view. We could then ask whether rational agents quite generally are supposed to have aesthetic reasons to adopt or undergo such an attitude.

[9] For a useful overview of this style of position, see Jacobsen "Fitting Attititude Accounts of Value" *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Spring 2011 Edition),* Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2011/entries/fitting-attitude-theories/>.

Suppose that we allowed that the attitude in question can vary faultlessly across a given populace, in the way that emotions such as ellipsism, liberosis or enouement might be thought to do.[10] It has seemed to many theorists that this would be to give up too much of the objectivity and generality of aesthetic response.[11] Moreover, allowing this kind of faultless variation might be thought to undermine the parallels between aesthetic, epistemic and practical reasons, since the latter two categories arguably apply to rational agents universally. Stressing that the attitude in question is directed towards a normative or evaluative fact doesn't seem to help here. After all, we can make sense of certain feelings of liberosis being merited or appropriate and other ones being pathological. Nevertheless, the state seems unusual or permissibly variable enough to undermine any natural contrast with belief or action.

Even in the case of less unusual, more widely experienced feelings – sexual attraction, say – we might think that a plausible fitting-attitude account will not claim universality. Such states might well be thought to unify cognitive, evaluative and affective components. We might well treat them as presenting an external, evaluative fact under an affective guise (the qualities of the person the feeling is directed at seem to merit such a response, rather than it presenting like a pathological urge). But it seems phenomenologically wrong, and normatively incorrect to think that the meriting state in question requires *everyone* to respond in the way the agent does, insofar as they are rational.[12]

If aesthetic reasons are like this, then I think that we should conclude that either (i) they do not require everyone to engage in appreciation, on pain of rational fault, and are in that sense rationally optional or (ii) the fact that they do so require remains a mystery. The first option has commonly been felt to be inconsistent with the objectivity and generality of aesthetic reasons. Even if that is incorrect, we might prefer an account that was able to demonstrate that the authority of such reasons was as robust as that of the epistemic and practical reasons it is alleged to contrast with. On the second option, the burden of proof is surely on the defenders of this kind of view to establish

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[10] Ellipsism is a kind of regret that one will not live to see the future. Liberosis is a longing to care less about things, as one did as a child. Enouement is the feeling of wishing that you could go back in time and tell your earlier self about how things will turn out.

[11] It's notable that philosophers as different as Plato, Aquinas, Hume and Kant seem to have construed correct aesthetic response in more universal and authoritative terms.

[12] A fallback approach might attempt to argue that everyone is so bound, as long as they meet certain enabling conditions. This might equally be true of somebody who has formed a permissible longing for chocolate ice cream, though. Being bound by this kind of reason seems connected to human rational agency in a way which is quite different from epistemic and practical reasons. In one case, but not the other, there seems to be rational pressure to ensure the continuance of the enabling conditions, for example. I should take steps to ensure that I am suitably responsive to evidence, reasons for action, and so on. I needn't take steps to ensure that I long for ice cream.

that they are not merely stipulating into existence overblown, over-demanding normative constraints.

3. Can a Kantian approach help?

Kant's approach to aesthetic judgement is rightly regarded as the most serious, developed attempt at discharging this burden of proof. It aims at establishing the normative authority and generality of aesthetic reasons – "how the feeling in the judgement of taste comes to be exacted from everyone as a kind of duty". Let's consider a broadly anti-realist interpretation of the Kantian position, that offers, I believe, the most compelling explanation of the source of this rational authority.[13] On this account, Kant agrees with Hume when he tells is that the beauty of a circle is 'not a quality of the circle'

> "To say, This flower is beautiful, is tantamount to a mere repetition of the flower's own claim to everyone's liking…beauty is not a property of the flower itself". [14]

Hume thought of beauty as "founded entirely on the particular fabric and constitution of the human species". We might interpret this as meaning that as an a posteriori, contingent, law-like regularity of nature, certain properties of objects causally necessitate pleasure in human animals like us. Similarly, the prospect of the absence of defects and imperfections that prevent us feeling such pleasures also naturally pleases universally (again, as a contingent, a posteriori fact about animals like us). But Kant wants a form of normative necessitation rather than natural necessitation – a rational requirement, not a causal law. He agrees with Hume that beauty constitutively involves pleasure, but holds that this pleasure rests on "subjective conditions for the possibility of cognition as such".[15]

How should we understand the connection between rationally mandated pleasure and the fulfilment of the subjective conditions for cognition? The anti-realist interpretation replies as follow. Consider an everyday singular observational judgement, like "This is red" or "This is spherical". Such a thought does at least two things, corresponding to its perceptual-demonstrative and predicative components. It (i) picks out an object, and (ii) identifies an external condition that the object has to meet if the claim is to be true. To find out whether the claim is in fact true, we have to examine the

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[13] My intention here is only to offer an interpretation that respects core Kantian themes, and seems to offer a reasonable prospect of explaining the universality of the demand to share a pleasure. Elements of the position I describe may be in tension with other apparent Kantian doctrines.

[14] *Critique of Judgement* Section 32.

[15] Ibid., Section 39

specified object and see whether it meets the external condition. Claiming that the object does meet the condition commits one to a normative claim: that anybody who doesn't agree that it meets the condition is making a mistake.

In the case of "This is red" or "This is spherical", Kantian intuition does the job of picking out the object. Kant tells us that intuition "refers immediately to the object and is singular" (CPR A320/B377), that "an intuition is a singular representation" (JL Ak. ix. 91), and that "since individual things, or individuals, are thoroughly determinate, there can be thoroughly determinate cognitions only as intuitions, but not as concepts". (JL Ak. ix. 99) The external condition supplied by the predicate is expressed by a concept ("mediate, conveyed by a mark, which can be common to many things") (CPR A320/B377)[16]

But the thought "This is beautiful" works differently. We can see that by examining its epistemology. In order to tell whether something is beautiful, we don't look outward, to see if it meets some further external condition, specified in the predicate. Rather, we look inward "to the subject and his feeling of pleasure or displeasure". Since the predicate in "This is beautiful" doesn't supply any external condition for the object to meet, no concept is used to cognize the object. We talk as if beauty was a property of the object, but it isn't. Thus Kant says: "[the subject] will talk about the beautiful as if beauty was a characteristic of the object and the judgment were logical (namely a cognition of the object through concepts of it) even though in fact the judgment is only aesthetic and refers the object's presentation merely to the subject".[17]

Anachronistically, we might think of "This is beautiful" as expressing a kind of gappy proposition, that picks out an object, and places it within a name-predicate structure, but leaves the predicative space empty, marking it with a kind of 'dummy' predicate *"x is beautiful'*. The thought determines a singular reference by means of perception, but does not predicatively classify the object in question in any way whatsoever. The perceptual identification of the object, and its location within a structure that only requires the completion of the predicative place in order to be truth-evaluable, activates the Kantian cognitive powers. Imagination is constrained by understanding (since it has made the object available for the application of concepts) but without any particular such concept yet being applied. There's an 'attunement' between the faculty that delivers singular reference and

[16] See McClear (2016) "Kant on Perceptual Content", *Mind* 125 (497) 95-144 for relevant discussion. I set aside here whether we should think of the singular, object directed element of the "proposition" as more like an object or a Fregean "singular sense".
[17] *Critique of Judgement* Section 7

that which delivers predicative classification. It is not implausible to think that such a process must be possible if any empirical cognition is to take place whatsoever. Thus Kant says "this pleasure accompanies our ordinary apprehension of an object by means of the imagination, our power of intuition, in relation to the understanding, our power of concepts. This apprehension occurs by means of a procedure that judgment has to carry out to give rise even the most ordinary experience".[18]

What connects any of this up with rationally mandated feelings of pleasure? Why is such a demand or requirement legitimate? Why, just because I take disinterested pleasure in something, am I within my rights to demand that everybody else does too? In the case of "This is red" or "This is square", the normative demand was connected with the application of an external, objective condition. But that is explicitly not what is at issue with 'This is beautiful". I think that the most defensible view is to simply *identify* the satisfaction of a precondition for rational activity in general with pleasure (see e.g. the discussion of the determination of the will in Section 12). Any rational agent, qua rational agent, should will that the essential preconditions for rational agency are fulfilled, and the fulfillment of this kind of willed end – or perhaps, the recognition of such fulfilment - is just what the pleasure in question *is*. In the case of the pure judgement of taste, the precondition consists in the singling out of an object, and making it available for perceptual classification.[19]

The pleasure in pure beauty is thus directed at a purposiveness (singular representation perfectly poised for conceptual classification) without a purpose (no end specified by the concept, since no concept yet specified). In aesthetic experience, the world is revealed to us as thinkable, as it would be if it were made to accord with our nature as rational, experiencing beings. But no particular completion of the thought is forced upon us: the content of our experience includes a predicative blank for us to fill in, without compulsion to fill it in this way rather than that. The gap-where-a-concept-ought-to-be thus offers us a conceptual affordance that speaks to us as free agents, autonomously able to categorize our world, and direct our own activity.

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[18] Ibid., Section 39.

[19] This seems to individuate of the pleasure in terms of the content or object of the will, rather than phenomenologically. In the Introduction to the Critique, Kant suggests that pleasure is typically connected with the attainment of an aim, but that unexpected fulfilment can provide a noticeably different pleasure, though. See Guyer "The Harmony of the Faculties Revisited" in Kukla (ed.) *Aesthetics and Cognition in Kant's Critical Philosophy* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006) pp. 181-182 for relevant discussion.

Suppose for the sake of argument that the foregoing was the best way to precisify and defend a Kantian position. It could hardly be accused of not doing enough to connect up aesthetic pleasure with a universal, authoritative requirement upon rational agents. But the position as described seems in danger of over-generating aesthetic reasons. After all, the view as stated placed no restrictions upon the kinds of objects that occupied the perceptual-demonstrative element of the gappy propositions. The view thus seems prima facie committed to the interpretatively unpopular and counter-intuitive view that every object can be perceived as beautiful.[20] Moreover, the "thin" interpretation of pleasure as will-fulfillment might reasonably be thought to be phenomenologically inadequate to the felt rewards of aesthetic engagement. Perhaps there are satisfying answers to these concerns. But the difficulties they raise, taken together with the cognate problems faced by other influential interpretations of Kant's aesthetics, at the least serve to motivate exploration of a different style of account.

4. *A different approach*

The model we have been discussing so far individuates types of reason in terms of the kinds of attitudes and actions that they are reasons *for*. That's what put pressure on the view to find a distinctive kind of aesthetic attitude or activity – a special feeling of appreciation, say, or a special form of 'reflective' judgement –to contrast with the categories of belief and action. If the reasons that we had to come to accept that O is beautiful were just evidence for the belief that O had a certain kind of secondary quality, or that O ought to be appreciated in a certain way, then the intended contrast between epistemic, practical and aesthetic reasons could not be drawn.

I do not want to deny that there may be distinctively aesthetic attitudes or actions. I do think that it is a bad idea to restrict the scope of aesthetic reasons to reasons we have to enter such states. To do so would be to ignore an important regulative role that such aesthetic considerations play.

On the above view, reasons help us settle whether to go into a state that is in a sense normatively and evaluatively neutral. I can believe that P whether or not P is false, completely unjustified, concerns a matter of complete irrelevance, and so on. I can press a button whether or not there is anything to be said for so doing, utter sentences for bad purposes as well as good. Acting rationally,

[20] See Guyer Ibid. pp. 172-175 for discussion.

being reason responsive, is aiming to support one's selection of such a neutral state with considerations external to it that show it to be in good standing.[21]

A competing view, that Korsgaard has ascribed to both Aristotle and Kant, sets things up a little differently.[22] On this account, the primary object of practical reflection is not a reason-independent act such as pressing the button, or wearing the hat, which one then seeks reasons for and against. Rather, it is what she terms an *action*, thought of as an act-end pair – to build the bridge in order to facilitate traffic flow; to wear the hat so that you can hide the bald spot. Korsgaard's discussion focusses on practical reason, but we might view epistemic activity in a similar light. On this account, the basic object of epistemic appraisal would be a state that had relationships of rational support irreducibly 'baked in', as states of knowledge seem to have.[23]

If we thought of things in this way, we might view acts (pressing the button) and ends (hiding the bald spot) as in some sense derivative, abstractions from a structurally more basic state. Rationally permissible actions, the right kinds of combinations of acts and ends, are not identified by locating ends and purposes external to them that might justify their pursuit. Rather, we mark out actions as choice-worthy by establishing that they have genuine worth, are worthwhile in themselves. The job of practical reason is to (i) distinguish between those actions (putatively-reason-supported-acts) that really are worthwhile in themselves, and those that merely seem to be and (ii) to elect freely between the remaining range of worthwhile actions. Showing that an action is worthwhile in itself might involve showing that it is compatible with one's dignity as a rational agent, or the value of a noble life, or the goodness of happiness.[24] But the action needn't be thought of only justifiable to the

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[21] It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that this view of rationality is often endorsed by those attracted to reductive-naturalistic views that identify actions with bodily movements, beliefs with causal dispositions to bodily movements, etc.

[22] Korsgaard *The Constitution of Agency* (Oxford: OUP, 2008). Irwin's discussions of Aristotle, Aquinas and Kant in *The Development of Ethics* (Oxford: OUP 2009) provide additional detailed support for such a reading. On Kant, see also Herman *The Practice of Moral Judgement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

[23] Such a view fits well with views upon which rational deliberation considers potential actions and attitudes "under the guise of the good". The view can be thought to involve an explanatory primacy of the 'good case' in at least two sense. First, actions under consideration include their own putative justification, an aim or purpose which is supposed to explain or assure us of their choice-worthiness or goodness. Second, the procedures of rational deliberation and choice that regulate us in our selection of action constitutively aim to distinguish the genuinely choice-worthy or good from the merely apparently so. In this sense, good action, or rationally permissible action, is explanatorily more basic than either "act" or "action". We can understand pointless acts and misguided actions as failed actions-with-worth.

[24] We might think of things in a slightly more disjunctivist spirit as follows. When we feel pulled towards selecting a given act for a given reason, it typically feels as if it is the right or good thing to be doing. We might gloss such an evaluative appearance as follows: it either is the good choice, or it merely appears to be. We can think of the "normative filter" applied by the CI-procedure, Aristotelian practical reflection, Scanlonian respect for mutual justification, etc, as helping provide a guide as to which disjunct obtains. The fact that an action passes through the filter shows that it is one that we have adequately good reason to choose now. The filter needn't be thought of as substituting or adding a

extent that it is instrumental to such a valuable state. Rather, a life that is made up of such intrinsically worthwhile actions, because of the agent's own activity, might be what happiness, nobility, the dignity of humanity, etc, consist in. The actions would be components of a good life, and not just means to achieving one.

On the above view, prospective actions are in a sense 'filtered' by practical reason: we ought only to consider those principles of action, specifying acts-for-ends-in-circumstances, that are compatible with our ultimate good, given our nature as rational creatures. We can think of the Categorical Imperative test as aiming to indicate when an act-for-a-reason will be compatible in this way. We might view a Scanlon-type view in a similar fashion: the actions that are suitable components of our ultimate good would be those that would not be disallowed by principles that no one could reasonably reject, when allowed to make appeal to "personal" reasons for rejection, reasons that they have "on their own account". This view wouldn't be compelled to insist, implausibly, that an action that was not so disallowed was only instrumentally valuable, good only insofar as it promoted the ultimate end of bringing into being practices of mutual justification between rational agents. Rather, being capable of meeting such a constraint would provide a mark of an action that was a suitable object of choice. It wouldn't specify an additional end, over and above the reason that was already taken to justify a given act.

Suppose that this kind of view could be made defensible. How would it differ from the reasons-for-appreciation style model discussed above? On that view, genuinely aesthetic reasons were considerations apt to occupy the "end" role in appreciation-end pairs. They were facts that normatively supported certain acts or states of aesthetic appreciation. They helped settle the question: is appreciation aesthetically merited here? I agree that the question of whether a certain object merits aesthetic appreciation is important, and that a range of interesting considerations can help us answer it. But the reasons that spring from aesthetic value may reasonably be thought to play another role, one less integrally tied to aesthetic appreciation or aesthetic judgement. They might play a regulative, filtering role, of the kind described above. They might help us identify suitable objects of choice.[25]

different reason to choose the act. It would be more like assuring yourself that there aren't undermining defeaters for a proof, which doesn't thereby become part of the proof.

[25] Doesn't the claim that aesthetic reasons could play such a role conflict with the claim that the "filtering" role of practical reason needn't be thought to provide additional reasons for action? No. Consideration of the Scanlon model

One heuristic that is sometimes useful in identifying aesthetic reasons in their regulative role is considering an expanded version of the contractualist model described above. Suppose that we had a group of people seeking to converge in an autonomous way upon sets of principles for the general regulation of conduct. Potential such principles are inadmissible if they can be reasonably rejected by people who are allowed to appeal to reasons that they have 'on their own account'. Conduct is morally wrong if it is prohibited by any admissible set of such principles. Now, imagine that we add to the procedure a set of spokespeople whose job is to act as 'guardians' of various forms of impersonal value. Those voices might advert to new considerations, not cited on people's own account: reasons related to the "impersonally good" value of knowledge, animal welfare, environmental diversity, natural grandeur, artistic magnificence, and so on. We can get a sense of whether a reason is a regulative aesthetic reason by thinking about whether it is the kind of consideration that an able and conscientious such spokesperson ought to cite if their job is to speak up for some recognizably aesthetic value.[26]

For example, quite apart from the 'personal' reasons that we have on our own behalf for objecting to the destruction of the Grand Canyon, Scanlon accepts that the loss of its aesthetic properties would make its destruction an impersonally bad result. This consideration would foreseeably be cited by a suitable spokesperson for natural beauty when rejecting various principles that might otherwise permit such destruction, and is thus an aesthetic reason. Suppose that somebody was wondering whether to strip mine there, in order to profit from recently discovered rare minerals. The decision in question would involve settling whether such an action was a good choice in these circumstances. Due regard for aesthetic value – aesthetic reasons in their regulative role – might prohibit such an action, by "striking it down" an eligible object of choice.

Similarly, a decision to build this bridge here, and in this way, might fail to give due weight to aesthetic considerations. Making that claim need not commit one to thinking that anything in particular merits appreciation, or that things always ought to be apt for appreciation, or whatever. (No other suitably determinate plan for the style of the bridge need have been drawn up; aesthetic

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and the CI-procedure show that reasons can play a role in setting up the filter, without the fact that an action passed the filtering test itself having to count as an additional or conflicting reason.

[26] This is only intended as a heuristic, and not as any kind of exhaustive identification procedure or reductive analysis. Scanlon accepts that there is a wider sense of justification in which the rejection of such principles would signal lack of justifiability to others, but distinguishes them from the class of moral justifications that spring from our value as rational beings. See Scanlon (2003) 13-18 for relevant discussion. It's clear that in many cases, we will have multiple independently sufficient grounds for rejecting inadmissible principles.

considerations might not count as suitable reasons for rejection in emergency situations, etc). Aesthetic reasons can in this way bear on and moderate a diverse range of attitudes and actions, just as Raz suggested. They help settle the question of whether we are entitled to act for certain purposes, even when those acts and purposes themselves are not distinctively aesthetic.

Aesthetic considerations on this account resemble reasons of friendship and justice. They are best conceived as reasons-of rather than reasons-for. They are distinguished primarily by the type of value that they help us integrate into our lives, and not by a distinctive aesthetic state that they support.

5. *Responding to aesthetic reasons*

There are at least two explanatory debts that such an account must discharge. The first is to explain the authority of aesthetic reasons, in their regulative role. This is not quite the same task as the challenge that faced the ambitious, universalist fitting-attitude theorist. Their difficulty was in making the case that we are within our rights, in responding with feeling to a given evaluative situation, to demand that everyone ought to respond in the same way. The regulative view need not embrace this form of universalism. The demand issued in the Grand Canyon case is that the miners not damage a given landscape, not that they take appreciative pleasure in it. Nevertheless, we would like an explanation of why aesthetic value could serve as a suitable ground for such constraints on otherwise rationally permissible projects. This would provide a vindication of the claim that certain aesthetic values are impersonally good in a way that can constrain otherwise permissible rational projects. I cannot discuss this issue here, although I have offered some preliminary thoughts in other work.[27]

The second explanatory debt is to motivate the picture of choice that Korsgaard ascribed to Aristotle and Kant. Why shouldn't we think of aesthetic appreciation by perceivers, or aesthetic accomplishment by artists, as a self-standing type of successful uptake of and response to independently identifiable reasons? Why view processes of rational deliberation and selection as primarily aimed at unified act-end pairs? After all, that was the model that seemed to allow us to say that aesthetic reasons could moderate the selection of practical projects, without thereby becoming the *reason for* those projects.

[27] See McGonigal (forthcoming) "Aesthetic Reasons" in Daniel Star (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Reasons and Normativity*

Here I think that the defender of regulative aesthetic reasons should emulate the strategy of knowledge-first theorists in epistemology.[28] Williamson famously argues that the history of "Gettierology" gives us inductive grounds for thinking that theoretical rationality is directed at unified states of knowledge. But he also offers a demonstration that quite minimal and plausible constraints on epistemic model theory have the result that there will be cases of justified true belief that aren't knowledge.[29] Given this demonstration, the hope that more plausible future theory could close the gap between warranted true belief and knowledge seems remote. Accordingly, it is reasonable to take knowledge as a primitive in epistemology, and build up from there. I'll offer a modified version of Williamson's argument in the practical case to try and help establish a similar result. I'll focus on the case of aesthetic performance. It follows from quite modest model-theoretic assumptions that there are bound to be cases of successful response to independently aesthetic reasons which fail to be cases of skillful aesthetic accomplishment. This provides us with methodological reason to think of the skillful accomplishment of aesthetic action as a sort of unitary state, analogous to knowledge, rather than beginning with the aesthetic analogues of truth, belief and reasons for belief and building up from there.[30]

6. *Williamson on epistemic model theory.*

Williamson's account proceeds as follows. Let an epistemic model be an ordered pair <W, R>, where W is a non-empty set, and R a set of ordered pairs of members of W. The members of W are thought of as *worlds* – maximally specific states. (For exegetical purposes I'll follow Williamson in concentrating on a more specific set of models that deal with very simple 'worlds', but we'll get to that soon enough). We want enough structure in our model theory to represent propositions that can be true, known, justifiedly believed, and so on. Williamson adds most of this structure in a very standard way. Propositions in a model are subsets of W. A proposition p is true in a world w just in

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[28] Williamson *Knowledge and Its Limits* (Oxford: OUP 2000).
[29] Williamson, T. (2013) "Gettier Cases in Epistemic Logic" *Inquiry*, 56:1, 1-14
[30] Justification helps settle the question of whether P, and provides reason to think that P is true. Williamson's argument, if it works, entails that successfully according with such a reason for belief (having excellent evidence for the truth of P, and correctly believing that P as a result) won't entail knowing that P. We'll have to add an unreduced clause "according with it in the right way" or "in the right circumstances", that we don't know how to spell out without appeal to knowledge itself. This frustrates the reduction, and encourages us simply to start with knowledge as a primitive. Analogously, my argument entails that successfully according with aesthetic reasons (making an attempt at an aesthetic outcome that I recognize that I have reason to bring about, and achieving it) won't amount to the kind of skillful accomplishment that we know is possible in aesthetic agency. We'll have to add in the modifying clauses. As with the epistemic case, this will in effect frustrate a reduction of action to "act" and "reason", and encourage us simply to take the former as a primitive.

case w is a member of p, and false otherwise. One proposition entails another if the former is a subset of the latter, and so propositions are identical just in case they are mutually entailing. An agent counts as knowing whatever is true in all the worlds that, for all she knows, she is in. We model that via R, construed as a relation of epistemic accessibility: a world x is accessible from a world w (wRx) just in case whatever the agent knows in w is true in x. The proposition that the agent knows that p is identified with the proposition Kp that is true in a world w just in case every world x accessible from w is a world in which p is true. We build in the factivity of knowledge by requiring that R be reflexive. We'll model the intuitive conception of *what an agent knows* in w by identifying it with the strongest proposition known by the agent, which we'll call R(w)={x:wRx}. We can think of an important goal of an enquiring agent being to advance knowledge by ruling out epistemic possibilities – that is, by eliminating worlds from R(w). For example, if what an agent knows doesn't settle whether Helen is speaking or not, and they come to know that she is, then every non-Helen-speaking world will thereby be eliminated from R(w), and what the agent now knows will now be represented by a stronger, smaller proposition R'(k).

Williamson is going to deal with issues of justified belief as well as knowledge, so he needs to add a bit more structure to the theory. It's easiest to see the role that this structure is playing if we follow him in considering a set of very simple 'worlds' that just encode a set of facts about how an agent takes her environment as being, and how it really is. Abstracting from irrelevant complications about indeterminate appearances and the like, let's think of the worlds in question as being ordered pairs of two parameters <e, f> from a value-set E, where e represents the real value of some parameter and f represents the value it appears to the agent to have. For example, suppose that we have a set of possible weights E, and the agent is reading off the weight of a given object by using a set of electronic scales that she is entitled to presume are accurate. Let's abstract away from every possible source of error except a potential mis-measurement by the scales. Then if the scales weigh the object in a wholly accurate way, then the values of the two parameters will be identical, but otherwise, they will differ. If E is the range of values {1, 2, 3}, then there will be nine different 'worlds' of this kind that might obtain.

As noted, we're abstracting away from sources of epistemic error other than a failure of the scales, and so it's harmless to assume that the agent always knows how things appear to her (if <e, f>R<e*, f*> then f=f*). We don't want to assert the converse claim though, that if two worlds are identical with respect to appearance then what an agent knows at one cannot rule out the other as an open epistemic possibility. That would be to allow, for example, that taking the scales at face value when they are giving a wholly accurate reading of 10 kilos in favourable circumstances could never allow an agent to thereby come to know that the object didn't weigh a million kilos. Non-sceptics should agree that in cases of this kind, the agent can take appearance as an epistemic guide to reality. They should agree that taking accurate appearances at face value in an epistemically permissible way allows us to eliminate some worlds that were previously epistemic possibilities for us. Plausible such accounts should allow that the agent can't take appearance as a perfect guide, however. We know that the basic epistemic methods that she employs to find out how the world is need not be, and typically won't be, perfectly discriminating. (Even a scale which is known to be very highly accurate might not discriminate perfectly between tiny differences in weight).

We noted above that the factivity of knowledge is modeled by stipulating that the accessibility relation R is to be reflexive. An agent at a world where appearance matches reality – call it <f, f> - will thus have that world itself as an open epistemic possibility. Williamson models the fact that our epistemic methods are typically not perfectly discriminating aspect via the stipulation that every such world accesses another distinct world. For example, if our agent is at a world where the object weighs exactly ten kilos, and the reading on the scale tells her that this is so, then it will remain an open epistemic possibility that the object weighs 10+k kilos, where k is some vanishingly small quantity to which the scale is at best unreliably sensitive to. Formally, we have the constraint that the proposition {<f, f>} is a proper subset of the open epistemic possibilities at the world <f, f>, that is:

(1) $\{\langle f, f\rangle\} \subset R\ (\langle f, f\rangle)$

Adopting an anti-sceptical position with respect to whether appearance can ever be a guide to reality shouldn't commit us to the implausible view that knowledge is only possible when appearance and reality match *perfectly*. It's much more plausible to think that, even if light-refraction causes a mountain to look to me to be a little larger than it actually is, I can still come to exclude certain epistemic possibilities on the basis of my visual access to it – I can rule out the hypothesis that the mountain is the size of a grape, for example. Moreover, my capacity for such exclusion seems to be inversely proportional to the degree to which appearance and reality come apart. In situations where the refraction is more and more extreme, I can come to know less and less about how the mountain actually is, if my vision is all I have to go on. Williamson models the availability of such knowledge by adding a further constraint on the accessibility relation R. He adds a metric to his formal theory that helps us model the idea that ignorance grows as the gap between appearance and reality widens. Where d is a function from pairs of values in E to real numbers, such that d(e, f) measures the difference between e and f, we have

(2) $d(e, f) \leq d(e^*, f)$ if and only if $R(<e, f>) \subseteq R(<e^*, f>)$

If the distance between appearance and reality is greater in one world than another, then the agent knows less at the former than she does at the latter.

Williamson argues that the above two constraints establish that the epistemic accessibility relation R is non-transitive (corresponding to failure of the KK-principle) and non-symmetric (in a way that suggests that an exact match between appearance and reality is an epistemically open possibility in bad cases where appearance varies widely from reality, but that the agent is in a position to eliminate such bad cases when occupying the good case of close match between appearance and reality). I refer interested readers to his discussion of the issues. More important for our purposes here is his distinctive treatment of *belief* and *justification* in the theory.

Let's continue to follow Williamson in only considering the highly simplified <reality, appearance> type worlds introduced above. We'll also follow him in simplifying the case further in restricting our attention to cases where the agent's beliefs depend only on how things appear to her. Since belief will thus be indifferent as to whether or not appearances match reality or not, we can consider the good case of the wholly accurate <f, f> world. By the belief condition on knowledge, whatever the agent knows at <f, f> she will believe at <f, f>. Given our anti-sceptical approach to knowledge, it is overwhelming natural to think that when she forms her belief that the real value is f in the good case <f, f> world, her belief will amount to (or result in) knowledge. It follows that (i) whatever the agent believes in <f, f> she knows in <f, f> and therefore, given our assumption that her beliefs are only sensitive to facts about appearance, and not reality (ii) whatever the agent believes in <e, f>, she knows in <f, f>. Thus we can define a relation of doxastic accessibility S in terms of our extant relation of epistemic accessibility R:

(S) $<e, f>S<e^*f^*>$ if and only if $<f, f>R<e^*, f^*>$

(Since we are still assuming that appearances are fully epistemically transparent to the agent, this will require that $f=f^*$, since otherwise the agent would not know whether appearances were f or f*.)

Williamson identifies at least two possible candidate notions eligible to play the role of epistemic justification in his theory. One is knowledge itself: an agent is (completely) justified in believing that P just in case she knows that P. It is difficult to see how Gettier cases could arise for this infallibilist notion of justification. To find a notion of justification likely to give rise to Gettier structures, it's natural to look at the component of the theory that models the agent's 'basing' her beliefs on how things appear. This is a seemingly internalist notion of justification, that does not depend on the actual facts about reality. It seems suitable to model the kinds of notions ("adequate evidence for acceptance of P" "right to be sure that P is true") that Gettier originally took as his target, at least in an anti-sceptical dialectical context where we are presuming that we can in fact come to know things on the basis of appearance.

We're now in a position to see why Williamson thinks that Gettier cases are bound to arise in the models he has described. Consider the proposition R(<f, f>) – the strongest proposition knowable by the agent in <f, f>, which can serve to model "what the agent knows" in <f, f>. We saw that by the first constraint on R, established by reflecting on that fact that the agent's epistemic methods and capacities were not perfectly discriminating, what the agent knows does not serve to single out the unique way things actually are, but leaves at least one distinct epistemic possibility open. (The object might indeed weigh 1 kg., or 1.000000000000000000000000000000001 kg., given that the scale weighs 1 kilo, in otherwise favourable circumstances).

(1) $\{\langle f, f\rangle\} \subset R\ (\langle f, f\rangle)$

Consider the a simple model containing just three worlds

w1 = <f, f>

w2 = <f', f>

w3 = <f'', f>

such that w1Rw2 and w2Rw3 but not w1Rw3

The appearances match in each case. In w1, the strongest proposition the agent knows, R(<f, f>), is known, obviously. In w2, that proposition is believed, since by the definition of doxastic accessibility, what the agent believes in <f', f> = what she knows in <f, f>. That proposition is true at w2 (since w2 is a member of R(<f, f>)) and justified, since wholly based on the appearance that f, in otherwise favourable circumstances. But the proposition is not known at w2, since it is false at w3, which is epistemically accessible from w2. If the agent did know R(f, f>) at w2, then that would rule out w3 as an epistemic possibility. But w3 is not ruled out, so the agent does not know the proposition. So the principled, independently motivated constraints on an epistemic model theory that Williamson has identified provide for there being justified true belief that does not suffice for knowledge.

7. Is skillful aesthetic accomplishment just successful response to aesthetic reasons?

Williamson's argument as it stands only extends to epistemic Gettier cases, and aims to support the view that knowledge should be treated as a fundamental, unified state in theoretical philosophy. Our focus was on the question of whether we should think of actions – acts-for-reasons – as a fundamental, unified state in practical philosophy. In particular, we were interested in the question of whether certain canonically aesthetic acts and reasons might be taken as basic instead. Fortunately, it seems as if the approach can be generalized to include the wide range of 'goal-based' performances that Sosa and others have discussed. We can examine skillful aesthetic performances, to see whether they have a kind of unity that goes beyond successful response to aesthetic reason.

Let an accomplishment model be a non-empty set <W, R> where W is a non-empty set and R is a set of ordered pairs of members of W. Informally we think of the members of W as worlds – maximally specific conditions that an agent can realize through her agency. Propositions are subsets of W, and a proposition P is true at a world if the world belongs to P, and false otherwise. An agent counts as having skillfully accomplished whatever is true in all the worlds consistent with that accomplishment (whether or not what was accomplished was accomplished skillfully at those worlds). To take an example, part of Shakespeare's accomplishment in composing Hamlet was the skillful construction of an intriguing central character, and so at every world consistent with that accomplishment it is true that Hamlet contains an intriguing central character. As with Williamson on knowledge, we model the content of accomplishment via a reflexive accessibility relation R: a world x is R-accessible from a world w just in case whatever the agent skillfully accomplished in w is true in x. We identify *what an agent skillfully accomplished* with the strongest proposition made true as a result of the agent's skill: $R(w)=\{x: wRx\}$. Again, as with Williamson, skillful accomplishment will narrow down the set of worlds in R(w). We can think of this as setting a goal for the skillful agent. If an archer skillfully directs the arrow into the inner ring of the target, but not to its centre, then she could have acted more skillfully by achieving this latter feat, which in turn would have resulted in a smaller measure of worlds in R(w).

In order to bring out the structural analogies with Williamson, let's focus on the simplified kinds of models that we introduced above. Let a world be an ordered pair <e, f>, where each variable stands for members of some value set E. Informally, we can think of e as the value that the agent *actually* brought about, and the value f as the value that they were *aiming* to bring about. Consider an archer who is being directed to hit different points on a target. We can distinguish what she is aiming to hit, from what she actually does hit. We'll abstract away from failings other than a lack of ability to fulfill one's aim, and thus assume that the agent can always skillfully select an aim (if <e, f>R<e*, f*> then f=f*). It's clear that such models are highly idealized, but more generally, we can think of <e, f> style worlds as coding up a measure that tracks the relationship between a set of reasons the agent has to produce some result C, and the actual result that she brings about. For example, if a stand-up comedian has a reason to include some well-timed punchlines in her work, then we can her evaluate her degree of success at bringing this about. A graphic artist might respond to the good reasons she has to draw an elegant line in certain circumstances, and succeed to a greater or lesser extent.

Nevertheless, as such examples bring out, it is implausible to think that the powers of a skilled agent need be perfectly discriminating. A skilled graphic artist needn't be able to distinguish between two distinct drawn lines that overlap massively. The comic's timing needn't distinguish between absolutely tiny fractions of a second in order to count as manifesting her aesthetic virtue. For the same reasons that Williamson gives, then, we should resist the idea what an agent skillfully accomplished is best modeled via a *unique* realized world rather than a plurality of perhaps subtly different ones

(1) $\{\langle f, f\rangle\} \subset R\,(\langle f, f\rangle)$

Similarly, it's natural to hold that the degree to which a performance was skillfully brought about decreases as the gap between what was aimed at and what was achieved grows wider

(2) $d(e, f) \leq d(e^*, f)$ if and only if $R(\langle e, f\rangle) \subseteq R(\langle e^*, f\rangle)$

If the gap between conception and execution is larger in one situation than another, then (holding our idealizing assumptions fixed) the agent skillfully accomplished less in the former than the latter.

We can piggy back on Williamson's arguments to establish the result that the relation R will be non-transitive and non-symmetric.

What is the correlate of belief here? We can think of the content of the agent's *reasonable attempt* as being the set of worlds that she would have brought about had she skillfully accomplished her aim. We can argue for that in a way that mirrors our reflections on belief and knowledge above. Adopt the optimistic assumption that we do sometimes skillfully accomplish things –that apt performance is possible. And make the further plausible assumption – the correlate of the belief condition on knowledge – that every skillful accomplishment requires a reasonable attempt. Finally, let's continue with our simplifying assumption that the attempt of the agent is governed only by her selection of an aim, and that she doesn't get hold of the wrong aim (mishear the instruction, or come to a false belief about the way the normative landscape lies). Again, it's then very natural to think that *what the agent reasonably attempted* at the world <f, f> where she adopts an aim and skillfully realizes it just is *what she brought about* in that w. She skillfully *accomplished what she was attempting*. If that's right, then we can follow Williamson in defining the success-neutral accessibility relation in terms of the success-essential one

(S) <e, f>S<e*f*> if and only if <f, f>R<e*, f*>

Belief and reasonable attempt both involve taking a shot at something – taking a position on how things are, or ought to be. Both are *committal* states, that are naturally contrasted with the non-committal states of agnosticism and indecision. In each case, the position can be one that turns out not to deliver the desired result – safe, accurate representation of the facts, or successful responsiveness to the reasons one has to change one's situation. But when things go well, with a capable agent in a cooperative environment, then cognitive and practical agency can result in knowledge and skillful accomplishment respectively.

The generalized interpretation of the model theory that Williamson provided us with provides natural interpretations of the very same theses that he uses to construct Gettier cases. So exactly the same structures will arise in the practical case. Suppose that the graphic artist recognizes the aesthetic reason she has to draw an elegant line. Consider a series of three worlds where her drawing of the line manifests less and less skill. In w1, her drawn line is a clear case of skillfully produced elegance; in w2, her drawn line is just within the bounds of elegance, but is so close to inelegance that she could easily have drawn an inelegant line, given the limitations of her skill; and in w3 the line is inelegant. That is, we have

w1 = <f, f>

w2 = <f’, f>

w3 = <f”, f>

such that w1Rw2 and w2Rw3 but not w1Rw3.

Consider the proposition R(w) – the content of the agent’s skillful accomplishment at w1. The agent made a attempt at bringing about this result in w2. Moreover, her attempt successfully brought about that attempted result, since R(w) is true at w2. (w2 is a member of R(w)). Moreover, the agent’s attempt was motivated by her successful recognition of the reason(s) she had to draw an elegant line. But the agent does not count as having skillfully accomplished that result, since it is consistent with all the agent did skillfully that the line was inelegantly drawn, as in w3, which is an R-accessible possibility in w2. We have a successful responsiveness to reasons that does not amount to skillful accomplishment.

8. Conclusion

We began with two questions. What kinds of contrasts are we drawing when we distinguish aesthetic considerations from others? And what is involved in responding to aesthetic reasons? My answers here have been primarily negative in two respects.

First, I’ve argued against a certain way of construing the contrast between aesthetic, practical and theoretical reasons. This held that (i) aesthetic reasons resemble the other categories in being essentially reasons-for (ii) the specific difference that marks them out as aesthetic consists in theor being reasons for some distinctively aesthetic attitude, as opposed to acts or beliefs. I’ve suggested that this view does not give due weight to the regulative role of aesthetic reasons.

Second, I’ve argued that skilled practical accomplishment, including aesthetic achievement, should not be analyzed as successful response to reasons. This gives us grounds for rejecting an approach to practical deliberation that takes non-reason-involving acts and reasons-for-them as basic components, and tries to build up from there. In contrast, I have suggested that skilled performance of an action is best thought of as a unitary, fundamental state, analogous in some ways to the epistemic primitive offered to us by the knowledge-first theorist. Suppose that this second claim is correct, and practical deliberation takes as an object such unitary states. Space then seems to open up for aesthetic reasons to moderate a wide range of our practical projects, without thereby surrendering their aesthetic character.[31]

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