

REASONS, NORMATIVITY, AND VALUE IN AESTHETICS

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Abstract: Discussions of aesthetic reasons and normativity are becoming increasingly popular. This piece outlines six basic questions about aesthetic reasons, normativity, and value and discusses the space of possible answers to these questions. I divide the terrain into two groups of three questions each. First are questions about the shape of aesthetic reasons: what they favor, how strong they are, and where they come from. Second are relational questions about how aesthetic reasons fit into the bigger normative landscape: whether they are distinctive, what their normative status is, and how they interact with each other and with non-aesthetic reasons. This piece aims to provide a taxonomy to clarify and organize the burgeoning literature and to make a few concrete suggestions for avenues of future research.

1. Introduction

You're running slightly late for dinner with a friend. You hastily examine two of your favorite go-to shirts, opting for one over the other because it's just a little more fun. En route, you get into a nice mental groove jamming to some cheerful music. Just outside the restaurant, you pause at a row of flowers and the echo of that cliché tickles at the back of your mind: Stop and smell the roses. You take a little whiff before proceeding inside. Once the food arrives, your friend takes their first bite, leans over, and says, "You *have to* try this. It's incredible!"

Each of these four familiar moments is a site of aesthetic reasons. You make a choice informed by aesthetic considerations about what shirt to wear. You respond meaningfully to an artwork: the music has certain aesthetic features that make it cheerful, and you reasonably feel cheery in response. Feeling upset, disgusted, or afraid is not what the music calls for or, differently put, what it gives you reason to feel. And you are told – by collective wisdom or by a specific person – to do something. Why smell the roses? Why

taste the food? Because both are sources of aesthetic value, and you have aesthetic reasons to engage with them.

Discussions of aesthetic reasons and normativity have become increasingly popular since the turn of the century. In this burgeoning literature, two debates seem to dominate: first, whether there are aesthetic obligations, and second, whether aesthetic reasons or value are grounded in an object's ability to produce pleasure (a view called aesthetic hedonism or aesthetic empiricism).¹ But many important unexplored and underexplored questions remain, and we need to take account of them in order to understand these debates and their broader place in meta-aesthetics and metanormativity. My primary aim in this piece is to outline six basic questions about aesthetic reasons, aesthetic value, and aesthetic normativity. In making these questions and the space of possible answers more precise, I aim to offer clearer ways to organize and think through these matters. A secondary aim is to put these questions to use in situating existing debates and views, and in doing so, make a few concrete suggestions for avenues of future research.

I will divide the terrain into two groups of questions. First are questions about the shape of aesthetic reasons: what they favor, how strong they are, and where they come from. Second are relational questions about how aesthetic reasons fit into the bigger normative landscape: whether they are distinctive, what their normative status is, and how they interact with each other and with non-aesthetic reasons. The separation into six topics is helpful, if a bit artificial. How one answers one question may very well have implications for how to answer the others, and even understanding the full import of what one question asks may involve setting the terms for how the others get framed. For example, what aesthetic reasons favor may look quite different if we are meant to be asking what *distinctively and fundamentally* aesthetic reasons favor, since these may be only a subset of all aesthetic reasons. In that way, the first question is undoubtedly wrapped up with the fourth in ways that are hard to disentangle. Still, for clarity of presentation and understanding, I will separate these questions, sometimes mentioning particularly salient or important intersections.

While talk of aesthetic reasons and normativity is relatively recent, debates about aesthetic value have a much longer history. For simplicity, this article will proceed mainly in terms of aesthetic reasons, but I will occasionally point out relationships to value as they become important for the discussion. By doing this, I don't mean to suggest that aesthetics is deeply connected to rationality, especially rationality construed as coherence or as the thing exemplified in good, explicit reasoning – although aesthetics may

¹ Understood as a question about aesthetic value or aesthetic experience, aesthetic hedonism has a long history; I emphasize only that this debate is also a central one in recent discussions focused explicitly on normativity.

well be connected to a more capacious notion of rationality (e.g., rationality as reason-responsiveness). Rather, talking in terms of reasons is meant to offer a kind of terminological common denominator that facilitates certain metanormative discussions. Those more comfortable thinking in value terms can make the shift to reasons by thinking that we have aesthetic reasons in light of or in response to aesthetic value(s).²

2. The Shape of Aesthetic Reasons

Assuming there are such things as aesthetic reasons, we can start our discussion with three questions that will help classify existing and possible views:

The Object Question: What is the object of aesthetic reasons?

The Strength Question: What strength do aesthetic reasons have?

The Source Question: What is the source of aesthetic reasons?³

2.1 *The Object Question: What is the object of aesthetic reasons?*

Adopting the common gloss of a reason as a favoring consideration, we can understand the present question as asking what sorts of things aesthetic reasons favor. This is not a substantive question about what actual things aesthetic reasons favor (e.g., a diagonal brushstroke right here); it's rather about the syntax of aesthetic reasons, about what kinds of object they take. There are three basic categories of answer, which most existing views are some combination of: aesthetic reasons favor beliefs; they favor non-cognitive, affective attitudes; or they favor actions. Let's dub these *doxastic*, *affective*, and *practical* views respectively.⁴

The affective view is most common. It's often implicitly assumed, or sometimes entailed, by accounts of aesthetic experience or value. The thought is that aesthetic reasons govern affective attitudes like pleasure, and perhaps others like awe, fear, sorrow, or joy. Historically popular, Kant-inspired views on which (disinterested) pleasure is the appropriate or constitutive response to the beautiful⁵ are affective

² Most if not all of these views will be compatible with reasons-first or values-first views, according to which reasons or values respectively are the fundamental normative notion to which the other class is reducible (and no-priority views, which deny any such reduction). However, some of them will sit more comfortably as reasons-first or values-first. For an introduction, see Suikkanen (2009).

³ See Matherne (2020) for a related breakdown of questions.

⁴ I use doxastic here rather than epistemic to emphasize that we are looking at the *objects* of reasons rather than the general domain to which such reasons "belong". This leaves it open whether we have, e.g., moral doxastic reasons (reasons to believe that are guided by morality) or even epistemic practical reasons (reasons to act that are guided by knowledge acquisition).

⁵ For debate on what exactly 's view is, see Guyer (2017) and Ginsborg (2017).

views, as are views on which certain emotions are appropriate responses to particular artworks or aesthetic objects (as with, say, awe and the sublime, or sorrow and tragedies).⁶ Although there are objections to any particular instantiation of the affective view, it is the least controversial of the three basic views. It's very intuitive to think that pleasure and emotional responses are intimately and even necessarily implicated in aesthetic experience and value. Nobody who grants the existence of aesthetic reasons and the existence of affective reasons disputes the existence of aesthetic affective reasons, but some think that aesthetic reasons stop there.

The second basic category of answer holds that aesthetic considerations may directly favor actions, i.e., give us practical reasons. For a painter, the fact that a particular brushstroke would make a painting better may favor executing that brushstroke. That reading a novel carefully would promote a richer understanding and appreciation of it may favor one's reading it carefully. A Nietzschean approach argues that our lives are themselves, in a sense, artworks, and so we have reason to shape our lives into beautiful creations much like an artist does.⁷ A second strategy simply points out that, if we have aesthetic reasons for attitudes, we plausibly have such reasons for actions too.⁸ Another approach argues that aesthetic appreciation or the recognition of aesthetic value necessarily involves certain actions, so that the existence of reasons for appreciation translates directly to reasons for actions.⁹ Yet another begins by thinking through the nature of aesthetic value and normativity, and constructs views on which actions turn out to be more central to aesthetic life than passive reception.¹⁰ But there are puzzles for such views: How can artists act for reasons if their creative acts are open-ended? If we have such reasons, doesn't failing to do what they enjoin mean that you do something *wrong*? And could aesthetic reasons really work that way?¹¹ We will discuss some solutions to the second and third questions in more detail in the next section, but there is a final and potentially more troubling concern.

⁶ Fitting attitude theories offer one way to defend the latter type of view, see e.g. D'Arms and Jacobson (2000), Patridge and Jordan (2018). Such views hold that we have aesthetic reasons when certain attitudes or responses would be *fitting* – in other words, appropriate to feel in response to the object. Still, some are skeptical that reasons for attitudes exist (see Parfit (2011), 52ff. and Maguire (2018)). It's worth noting, too, that such views typically focus not on pleasure, but on more specific emotions: one *fears* the fearful, is *amused* by the funny, and so on. Indeed, it is trickier to expand standard fitting attitude theories to include pleasure (such that one is *pleased* by the beautiful), and so a defense of hedonism from these theories is at least not straightforward. See King (forthcoming b) for a detailed examination of the prospects of fitting attitude theories in aesthetics.

⁷ See Nietzsche (1882/1974), Nehamas (2007), King (2018).

⁸ King (2018).

⁹ Cross (2017b), Matherne and Riggle (2021a).

¹⁰ McGonigal (2017), Lopes (2018), Nguyen (2019).

¹¹ See Alvarez and Ridley (2017) for an Anscombean answer to the former puzzle. We'll discuss the second and third questions in more detail in the next section.

To see it, we have to step back a moment. In talking about aesthetic reasons or value, we might be interested in one of two slightly different things. First are reasons or values that simply have to do with, for example, a certain kind of (aesthetic) experience or specific sorts of (aesthetic) properties or objects. I have an aesthetic reason to feel awed by Walter de Maria's *Lightning Field*, as much as I have aesthetic reason to preserve beautiful natural landscapes, to eat delicious food, and perhaps even to buy an inexpensive artwork to fill a blank wall.¹² One might balk at the inclusion of the last item, but it too has to do with a paradigm aesthetic object, namely an artwork. Still, those with the balking instinct might realize that they are interested in reasons and values whose normativity (whose reason-giving force or 'oomph') is *fundamentally* or *irreducibly* aesthetic in nature, as opposed to being ultimately, say, moral or prudential. The troubling concern for aesthetic reasons for action rests on the idea that, if aesthetic hedonism is roughly true, then our actions are ultimately justified by the pleasure they bring us, rather than by anything distinctively aesthetic. In that case, our so-called aesthetic practical reasons are just prudential practical reasons. Much more on this later, but for now it's worth bearing in mind because it's much easier to defend the existence of aesthetic reasons for action in the former (has-to-do-with-aesthetic-stuff) sense than in the latter (fundamentally aesthetic) sense.

Aesthetic doxastic reasons, too, might take either of these two forms. One defense of aesthetic reasons for belief might hold that we have aesthetic reasons to believe propositions with aesthetic content. Suppose there is reason to believe that a particular poem is good because there is sufficient evidence to support that belief. Should we consider this an aesthetic doxastic reason? Perhaps yes, though only in the same way that we have a financial doxastic reason to form certain beliefs about how much money is in one's bank account.

One way to defend irreducibly aesthetic doxastic reasons would hold that aesthetic standards themselves govern, at least partly, what one ought to believe. A first-pass version of this might say that because it would be beautiful to believe something, one has some reason to believe it. While a certain Platonist view unifies beauty, moral goodness, and truth in a way that would vindicate this, such views are relatively rare.¹³ To a modern ear, this first-pass view will sound very implausible, and those familiar with related metanormative debates will hear this as a classic instance of wrong-kind reasons. However, we can soften it by turning instead to canonical epistemic values like simplicity or parsimony, or to potentially epistemic values like elegance. The case for each of these as a fundamentally aesthetic standard will vary,

¹² McGonigal (2018) offers a conception of aesthetic reasons that includes all of these.

¹³ See Pappas (2020) for more on Plato; compare Murdoch (1959).

but if, say, simplicity is a reason for belief (or sets of beliefs),¹⁴ and if simplicity involves fundamentally aesthetic standards, then we have aesthetic reasons (or at least intractably aesthetics-infused reasons) for beliefs. Similarly, if the elegance of a theory is a reason to believe that theory, then we have an aesthetic reason for belief.¹⁵ Even these cases will strike some as implausible (for example, strict evidentialists), but they are common enough to be worth taking seriously.

Affective, practical, and doxastic: I have ordered these basic categories of answer from easiest to hardest to defend. These are complex issues, but work on this is just beginning and the field is ripe for more. One especially fruitful avenue for further exploration concerns what I'll call hybrid and multiple object accounts. *Hybrid accounts* hold that aesthetic reasons are directed toward some complex, intertwined combination of beliefs, affective attitudes, or actions. For example, Gorodeisky and Marcus (2018) argue that aesthetic reasons favor mental states that possess both cognitive and affective components. Other views combine the spirit of an affective view with cognitivism about emotions – that emotions involve beliefs in addition to purely affective states, so that fear is partly constituted by a belief that the object of fear is dangerous.¹⁶ Meanwhile, *multiple object accounts* deny that aesthetic reasons take only one sort of object. Someone who conceded enough of the above examples should hold that there are aesthetic reasons for affective attitudes, actions, and beliefs. Typically, defenders of the doxastic and practical views are concerned to argue that aesthetic reasons *can* function as practical or doxastic reasons, not that they *only* function that way, and so they implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) endorse a multiple object account. It's normally only supporters of affective views that defend their answer to the exclusion of the other two. Multiple object accounts need not, however, commit themselves to each type of reason being normatively on par with the others. Indeed, such an account might offer an additional claim about relative fundamentality or conceptual dependence. If a landscape's having certain properties gives us reason to feel awe, and we have reason to go seek out (awe-inspiring) landscapes, then perhaps the latter – though an aesthetic practical reason – depends on the former in some way. By holding to these claims, someone endorsing the affective view might countenance aesthetic reasons for action or even belief, but make those ultimately dependent on affective reasons.

¹⁴ Although we're currently focusing on reasons for belief, we might expand this doxastic category to include other epistemic reasons, such as reasons for credal states, inferences, or combinations of beliefs.

¹⁵ Compare the mathematician G.H. Hardy (1940), who says, "The mathematician's patterns, like the painter's or the poet's must be beautiful; the ideas like the colours or the words, must fit together in a harmonious way"; or the physicist Paul Dirac (1995): "The research worker, in his efforts to express the fundamental laws of Nature in mathematical form, should strive mainly for mathematical beauty" (909). See Chandrasekhar 1987 and Keas 2018 for overviews of these issues.

¹⁶ For another possible hybrid view, see Charlton (1983) who claims that aesthetic reasons for enjoyment *are* aesthetic reasons for action.

Lastly, one might think that the most natural object of aesthetic reasons is *appreciation*.¹⁷ If nothing else, we at least have fundamentally aesthetic reasons to appreciate things. I have set this aside because it depends so inextricably on the nature of appreciation. One might think that it is a purely affective state, purely doxastic, a hybrid of the two, or even that it involves action (Cross 2017b). Still, the foregoing taxonomy provides a way to conceptualize each of these variations and understand its corresponding commitments and drawbacks.

2.2 *The Strength Question: What strength do aesthetic reasons have?*

Whatever aesthetic reasons favor, it is natural to wonder how strong they are. Reasons associated with moral rights are, for example, quite strong. Reasons associated with slight preferences are, alternatively, relatively weak. How strong should we think aesthetic reasons are?

This question hints at a number of other issues, including the place of aesthetic reasons in deliberation, practical reasoning, and motivation, as well as the interaction of aesthetic reasons with other sorts of reasons. In this section, we'll focus on the *absolute strength* of aesthetic reasons: Are they binding in the way that rights and obligations are? Are they more like slight preferences, or are they not even that weighty? We will set aside until later what to think about the *relative strength* of aesthetic reasons, i.e., how they weigh against each other and against other kinds of reasons.

There are broadly two categories: *binding views*, which make aesthetic reasons out to be obligation-like, and *non-binding views*, which don't. Rights views, one version of binding views, assign the greatest strength to aesthetic reasons, holding that (at least some) aesthetic reasons derive from rights possessed by artworks themselves. One approach sees the rights of artworks as based in their interests (Tormey 1973). Another approach (Hein 1978) provisionally grants artworks rights given a rights-based background framework, but assumes that doing so is the only way to ensure respect for objects that are not always instrumentally valuable for human self-interest. However, it's easy to see the rights of artworks as simply rights held by the artists or artworks' owners, and thus as not ultimately *aesthetic* rights but moral or legal rights.¹⁸ This debate can begin to resemble debates about whether non-human animals and the environment have rights. Do things become rights-bearers in virtue of sentience, capacity to feel and to suffer, or even interest? Although rights-based views have fallen out of favor, there is underexplored territory here.

¹⁷ See, e.g., McGonigal (2017).

¹⁸ See Sparshott (1983) and Goldblatt (1976) for further objections. Note again here that, on a more inclusive sense of aesthetic reasons, these rights might be aesthetic – just not *irreducibly* so.

Thinking about these parallels may suggest a way to fit artworks into a more careful and systematic rights framework.

Most have demurred at anything as strong as aesthetic rights. But many have argued that there are nevertheless aesthetic obligations.¹⁹ Marcia Muelder Eaton (2008) gives an influential defense of this view. Riffing on a classic moral dilemma, she considers a case where a Rembrandt and a Vermeer are both inside a burning museum, but only one can be saved. Here we face an aesthetic dilemma, a situation where there are two aesthetic obligations which are not jointly satisfiable (she denies the possibility that these are moral dilemmas in disguise). In the same paper, she also defends as aesthetic the obligation to tell good stories about others, an obligation that is especially salient in eulogies. Eaton is not alone in defending the existence of aesthetic obligations. Howard Press argues that the fundamental aesthetic obligation is to appreciate things that are beautiful, though he sees the aesthetic as ultimately “bound up with” the moral (1969, p. 526). Alfred Archer and Lauren Ware (2017) take this a step further, arguing that Press-style obligations gives rise to yet other obligations to develop our skills and sensitivity and to follow through on our artistic potential.

Where these authors argue for aesthetic obligations by reference to the aesthetic object (typically an art object), others instead argue by reference to features of the person possessing the obligation. Richard Moran (2012) inspires much of this turn, arguing that the demands of beauty are not, as Kant thought, for the universal agreement of others but rather are addressed to ourselves, intimately related to our own identities. Anthony Cross (2017a, forthcoming) argues that our obligations to artworks arise from our relationship to the aesthetic object: We love the object, and in doing so commit ourselves to behaving in certain ways toward it. Robbie Kubala (2018, 2020b) focuses instead on practical identities and promises: aesthetic obligations arise from or are structurally analogous to promises we make to ourselves – for example, a promise to attend to the aesthetic object, or to care for, promote, or honor it. Andrew McGonigal (2018) has a different spin on the practical identity account, holding that a variety of different aesthetic sensibilities or personalities are permissible. However, those sensibilities, once adopted, can yield corresponding obligations (in the same way that parenthood, a permissible-but-not-required state to enter into, produces a range of corresponding obligations once entered).

Some brace at the thought that we are somehow beholden to aesthetic obligations, that we do something *wrong* if we fail to *obey* such obligations. This sort of deontic and quasi-moralistic talk can seem utterly inappropriate in the aesthetic context. And as before, one might worry that the above accounts cast

¹⁹ See Kubala (2020a) for more detail about aesthetic obligation views.

aesthetic reasons as fundamentally moral or personal (or otherwise non-aesthetic), so that there aren't really aesthetic obligations, but at best moral obligations to others or obligations to oneself.

Many binding views implicitly make two identifications: they identify 'ought' claims with claims about obligations, rights, and the like; and they identify obligation failure with wrongdoing, or the appropriateness of sanction or certain reactive attitudes. But these identifications, a matter of language use and conceptual analysis, are controversial.²⁰ Thus one way forward, represented by Alex King (2018), defends the existence of things we aesthetically ought to do, but rejects the first identification by disassociating 'oughts' from obligations and rights. Another is seen in Daniel Whiting (2021), who defends aesthetic obligations, but rejects the second identification. He says simply that we have an obligation to do something – and ought to do it – just in case the balance of reasons favors it.

Other more modest accounts of aesthetic reasons accept these identifications, but take aesthetic reasons not to provide any 'ought' at all. To understand such accounts, it is helpful to look at Jonathan Dancy's distinction between enticing and peremptory reasons (2004).²¹ Where peremptory reasons are fundamentally deontic in that they help to determine which actions we *ought* to perform (e.g., obligations), enticing reasons help to determine which actions are in some way *attractive* (e.g., pleasant or fun). No amount of enticing reasons will ever help us to determine what we ought in this sense to do; they're just not the right kind of thing to weigh in such a calculation.

In these terms, the binding rights and obligation views defend the existence of peremptory aesthetic reasons. Some views use the existence of peremptory aesthetic reasons as a foundation for corresponding enticing reasons. Archer and Ware (2017) take this approach. From the premise that there are aesthetic obligations, they argue that aesthetic supererogation involves doing *more* than one is aesthetically obligated to do. You may, for instance, eulogize someone to an extent beyond that aesthetically required of you – you may really go above and beyond in order to present a life narrative with profound emotional resonance.

In their cases, the existence of enticing aesthetic reasons depends essentially on the existence of corresponding peremptory ones.²² Aesthetic supererogation could not exist were there not aesthetic duties to go above and beyond. But seeing supererogation as necessarily "above and beyond" some corresponding obligation rests on a mistaken picture of reasons. Suppose you're on a bus and someone's hat blows off.

²⁰ Indeed, there is lots of evidence that we use 'ought' in ways that do not map onto obligation, but instead to express the thing one has most overall reason to do, supererogation, enticement, what it would be nice or ideal if the world were like, or even predictions. King (2018) contains a more detailed discussion.

²¹ One might also talk, as Whiting (2021) does, in terms of what Joshua Gert (2003, 2007) calls requiring and justifying reasons, though this terminology has not played as large a role in the debate.

²² Compare also McElwee's (2017) discussion of supererogation.

Running to fetch the hat is supererogatory, but it's unclear what basic duty you surpass. (Things like *a duty to express condolences to them* or *a duty to not go stomp on the hat* don't naturally correspond to the supererogatory action you've performed.) So it's important to distinguish the possibility of something like aesthetic supererogation from the existence of aesthetic obligation.

Notably, Dancy's original discussion of enticing reasons does not presume that the existence of enticing reasons in some domain depends on the existence of corresponding peremptory reasons. The most modest existing view of the strength of aesthetic reasons take inspiration from this thought. Stephanie Patridge and Andrew Jordan (2017) defend an enticing reasons model for humor, and John Dyck (2021) develops a view like this for aesthetic reasons generally. On such non-binding views, all aesthetic reasons are enticing, and their only function is to favor options in a non-deontic way.

I've already pointed out some potentially profitable avenues for future work, but a few general remarks are in order. There's much to be done to sort out the relationship between obligations, 'oughts,' and reasons and to develop models of aesthetic reasons that could generalize across normative domains. Drawing from work in other domains is often extremely fruitful – we should ask ourselves why, for example, we have been skeptical about aesthetic rights and obligations. But we should also pursue these endeavors with some caution. The focus on obligation and rights, for example, threatens to emphasize individualistic perspectives in aesthetics (as opposed to social and communal ones) in the same way it often has in Western analytic ethics, and we must also be wary of importing or even amplifying distortions endemic to those ways of thinking.²³ Perhaps a better approach is to recognize that aesthetic reasons don't have to be binding to be important.

2.3 *The Source Question: What is the source of aesthetic reasons?*

Regardless of the strength of aesthetic reasons, we also want to know where they come from. We have already seen instances of both major approaches in the previous section: views where aesthetic obligations arise from facts about the aesthetic object, and views where aesthetic obligations arise from facts about us, the subject. Let's call theories like these *object theories* and *subject theories*, respectively. And though these two classes are the most obvious and most popular, it's worth noting that they don't exhaust the space of possibilities. Perhaps aesthetic reasons are grounded in a complex combination of the two, or in something else entirely.

²³ This communal strand is especially evident in Confucian thought – see, e.g., Shun and Wong (2004) and Chung (2019).

Any theory that attempts to explain the source of aesthetic reasons will also have to delineate exactly which facts about the object or subject (or something else) give rise to aesthetic reasons. So while the object and subject theories are dominant, the focus on different sets of facts generates a lot of variation within these views.

Start with object theories. Which facts about the object are relevant? Prominent candidates point to certain sensory features, or certain conceptual or narrative content. Many traditional versions of formalism fall into the former class, holding that exclusively sensory features (typically visual or auditory) determine the value of an aesthetic object. This translates tidily into a corresponding view of aesthetic reasons on which our aesthetic reasons also derive from those sensory features. For example, maybe we have reason to listen to music with certain harmonies or to appreciate paintings with certain compositional features. On the other hand, common objections to formalism argue that conceptual and narrative *content* can contribute to aesthetic value. Such views, too, offer corresponding theories of aesthetic reasons: We have reason to appreciate narratives that are sensitive, subtle, and insightful; we have reason not to appreciate narratives that are shallow and forced. Some objections to formalism go further, including historical, moral, and other situational context as relevant to determining value – and thus, for our purposes, to determining what aesthetic reasons we have. To take just one example of this sort, the art historical context of an especially innovative piece could give us some aesthetic reason to appreciate or promote it.

Object theories face many hurdles. They must specify the features of the object that are relevant, a challenging task that we can see play out in the raging debates surrounding formalism. They also face the *prima facie* implausibility of attributing potentially normatively loaded features to objects. How could features of objects compel us to feel or do anything? Isn't aesthetics more subjective than that; isn't taste more variable?

A further worry is that the foregoing examples commit object theories to the existence of general rules about what makes something good or what gives us aesthetic reason (that we should always appreciate harmony, subtlety, or innovativeness, wherever it appears), a view sometimes called *generalism*. However, these examples should be taken as only schematic, since most object-based views deny the existence of general aesthetic rules of this kind, a view sometimes called *particularism*. Aesthetic particularism holds that, though we might be able to offer helpful rules of thumb, there are always exceptions, and so general rules of the sort many think we find in ethics do not have an equivalent in aesthetics.²⁴ Such views can make the

²⁴ This disanalogy is often touted (e.g., Hampshire (1954), Zemach (1971), Hanson (2018)), but it's unclear whether we should endorse it. One might deny either generalism in the moral domain (as Dancy does in his work on particularism) or particularism in the aesthetic domain.

further, distinct claim that each aesthetic object is valuable, and thus gives us aesthetic reasons, in its own particular and unique way.²⁵

Alternatively, take subject theories, according to which facts about the person or people to whom the aesthetic reasons are addressed are the source of aesthetic reasons. Which facts about subjects are relevant? We can classify answers in three ways: (i) actual versus ideal subject theories, (ii) individual versus communal subject theories, and (iii) response versus non-response subject theories. Note that these are fundamentally cross-cutting distinctions, although some answers may fit together more obviously or naturally than others.

Actual subject theories hold that aesthetic reasons issue from facts about actual subjects – usually the very subjects to whom the reasons are addressed – whereas *ideal subject theories* take aesthetic reasons to issue from facts about subjects who are idealized in various respects.²⁶ In order to see the differences more clearly, let's assume for now that pleasure facts are the ultimately relevant facts. This sort of simple hedonic actual subject theory might hold that each person has reason to engage with (or appreciate, create, promote, etc.) aesthetic objects that in fact bring them pleasure, and precisely to the extent to which those objects bring them pleasure. On the other hand, a simple hedonic ideal subject theory might hold that each person has reason to engage with aesthetic objects that would bring an ideal subject pleasure, and precisely to the extent to which those objects would bring an ideal subject pleasure.

There are well-known problems for both types of theories. Actual subject theories are radically and implausibly subjectivist, and therefore are not commonly defended. Ideal subject theories, which take their cue originally from Hume (1777/1987), are much more popular.²⁷ That said, they too take on some serious burdens. They must, for example, specify the features possessed by the ideal subject (e.g., is background knowledge important, and if so, how much is needed?), as well as how reasons grounded in an ideal subject have any normative pull on non-ideal subjects. In other words, if I relish stuffing my face with cloyingly sweet Oreos, and the ideal subject would not, what does that really mean to me? Why should I be more like the ideal subject?²⁸

²⁵ Mothersill (1984) presents a famous defense of particularism, though hers is not an object theory. Sibley (1983) contains an influential statement of generalism.

²⁶ Many of these theories have traditionally been called ideal *observer* theories. I prefer to call them subject theories in part to avoid connotations of passivity in the aesthetic reasons we have, in that 'observation' connotes sitting and experiencing something rather than actively engaging with it or even performing certain actions.

²⁷ See, e.g., Mothersill (1989) and Levinson (2002).

²⁸ See Levinson (2002) for this objection and Shelley (2011) for a reply. See also Riggle (2015), who argues for an alternative, non-Humean conception of 'ideal subject' in terms of our contingent but deeply personal aesthetic attachments.

Within subject-based theories, we can also profitably distinguish between *individual* and *communal subject theories*, the former seeing aesthetic reasons as dependent on facts about individuals and the latter seeing them as dependent on facts about groups or communities. The above actual and ideal subject theories will count as individual subject theories, since they ground aesthetic reasons in facts about individuals, whether actual or ideal. But not all such theories need be individual. Indeed, some ideal subject theories are arguably communal, given a certain reading of Hume’s claim that it is “the joint verdict” of ideal judges that constitutes “the true standard of taste and beauty.”²⁹ But communal subject theories may look quite different from this Humean model. For example, some communities have the practice of drinking mixtures of fermented, flammable liquids. This existing, let’s say *cocktail*, practice gives its members aesthetic reason to mix some such liquids with others.³⁰ Such theories hold that all aesthetic reasons can ultimately be traced to corresponding communities and practices. Alternatively, many have thought that art and aesthetic phenomena are essentially expressive, communicative, or otherwise community-building endeavors, and one might derive the social nature of aesthetic reasons from that.³¹ And further theories interlock these two issues. For instance, a recent interpretation of Schiller defends his view as one on which aesthetic normativity is grounded in both individual and the communal.³² Though they have not been discussed in much detail, communal views are not without their own explanatory burdens. For example, because such views work best when it comes to *art* practices and therefore *artistic* reasons, they will have a harder time incorporating all aesthetic reasons.

Third is the distinction between response and non-response theories. *Response theories* see aesthetic reasons as dependent on facts about how an (actual or ideal) subject (or community) responds to an aesthetic object. Such responses are paradigmatically psychological. So although we sometimes talk of people responding to, e.g., an insult by throwing a punch, that is not a response in the relevant sense. The hedonic theories described above, for example, are response theories in that they see aesthetic reasons as dependent on the subject’s pleasure responses. Though hedonic views both simple and complex have dominated response theories,³³ it should not be assumed that pleasure is the only relevant response. The range of potentially relevant features is enormous. We might include responses like fascination, awe, and

²⁹ Hume (1777/1987), p. 241.

³⁰ See Lopes (2018) for a notable instance of this view, which centers the idea of achievement within a practice. Compare McGonigal (2017) for an account that centers individual achievement.

³¹ Tolstoy (1897/1995), Riggle (2017), and perhaps we might add *rasa* theory in Indian aesthetics (see Rayan (1965), though Lopes (2019) characterizes it as a form of hedonism) or Dewey’s expressive-experiential theory (1934/1980).

³² Matherne and Riggle (2021a, 2021b).

³³ See van der Berg (2019) for an overview of hedonic response theories, and Beardsley (1982), Mothersill (1984), Levinson (2002), Matthen (2017, 2018), Gorodeisky (2021) for influential presentations of such views.

inspiration; or responses specific to more circumscribed media or genres, like finding something delicious or experiencing something as funny or heartbreaking. To put these in terms of an ideal subject, we could say: There is aesthetic reason for me to feel heartbroken in response to a tragic play because the ideal subject would feel heartbroken, for me to go to an art show because the ideal subject would feel inspired by it, or for me to make a joke because the ideal subject would feel tickled by it.

Response theories are much more widely defended than *non-response theories*, according to which aesthetic reasons arise from something other than the subject's responses. Recently, however, a number of notable versions have appeared. For example, the practice-based communal theory outlined above is a non-response theory because it grounds aesthetic reasons in facts about what practices the community has, *not* facts about its members' patterns of psychological responses. We could read many of the earlier obligation theories, too, as non-response subject theories. If, e.g., we have aesthetic reasons due to rights of the object or to promises or commitments we make to ourselves, then the reasons don't depend on any particular response on the part of the subject.

It won't always be a straightforward matter whether something counts as a response. For example, suppose that having a certain relationship to one's community is what grounds aesthetic reasons, and that we therefore have aesthetic reasons to do things insofar as they will promote that relationship to our community. This view as stated is *not* a response theory. However, it could be a response theory if it took us to have aesthetic reason because it gives us the *experience* of a certain relationship to our community. Similarly, while the keeping of a promise is not a response, the *feeling* of keeping a promise – or a promise kept – might be. This may seem straightforward, but it becomes very thorny on theories where aesthetic reasons issue from things like love or personality; play, where play is an activity of the mind (initially popularized by Kant and post-Kantians); or transcendence and temporary cessation of suffering (Schopenhauer). Are these best understood as responses? It is not a trivial question to answer. Still, the distinction can help us think through the commitments of such theories.

Because hedonic response theories have been so historically popular, there is a lot of room to articulate and defend alternatives to these accounts. And although the distinction between response and non-response theories is much more interesting when applied to subject theories, it's worth pointing out that all object theories are in a sense non-response theories. All object theories hold that the source of aesthetic reasons lies with facts about the object, which are necessarily not facts about subject's responses.³⁴

³⁴ Here too there is a classificatory complication. Theories that see the properties of the object as dispositions to produce certain responses in subjects are difficult to place. (I have in mind secondary qualities views, including Landmann-Kalischer (see

However, all subject theories face a shared problem that makes object theories look better by contrast. It is a version of the Euthyphro dilemma: whether something is pious because the gods love it, or whether the gods love it because it is pious. Here, we must ask whether, for example, the aesthetic object is valuable because it pleases an ideal observer or whether it pleases the ideal observer because it is valuable. Is the value in the object, or is it in us? We often talk as though the value is in the object and our reasons derive from that, but this does not sit well with subject theories, which take us to be the ultimate source of aesthetic reasons and value.

This sub-section has proceeded in terms of reasons, but some of these views correspond naturally to accounts of aesthetic value. Object-based theories will see aesthetic value as a property of the object, response-based theories will likely see aesthetic value as a property of the specified responses, and so on. But there is much more work to be done to flesh out these relationships and, as evident in our inquiry so far, the normative structure of aesthetics in general.

3. Relational Issues for Aesthetic Reasons and Normativity

So far, we have looked at what I called the shape of aesthetic reasons: what exactly aesthetic reasons are reasons for, how strong they are, and where they come from. A full account of aesthetic reasons will explain these three central aspects, and we've canvassed the main approaches. But a full account of aesthetic reasons may do many other things in addition to this. In what follows, we will consider three further questions that concern the relationship aesthetic reasons bear to other sorts of reasons and to normativity in general:

The Distinctiveness Question: What, if anything, makes aesthetic reasons distinct from other kinds of reasons?

The Normativity Question: Do we have any real reason, at the end of the day, to do what we have aesthetic reason to do (and if so, why)?

The Interaction Question: How do aesthetic reasons interact with each other and with other sorts of reasons?

Matherne (2020)), McDowell (1998), and Wiggins (1998).) Depending on the details, they might sit better as object theories, ideal subject theories, or hybrid subject-object theories.

3.1 *The Distinctiveness Question: What, if anything, makes aesthetic reasons distinct from other kinds of reasons?*

There are several ways to try to distinguish aesthetic reasons from non-aesthetic reasons. Under this description, the debate has not been especially lively until very recently. But there is a long history of distinguishing aesthetic *value* and aesthetic *experience* from other sorts of value and experience. It is a complicated matter, to be sure, and one that has seen no real consensus. Nevertheless, such attempts can be adapted to reasons relatively straightforwardly. If something makes aesthetic value or experience distinctive, and aesthetic reasons derive from aesthetic value or experience, then perhaps aesthetic reasons will also be distinctive from the reasons that correspond to other sorts of value or experience.

Existing accounts of the distinctiveness of aesthetic experience point to its special relationship to sensory experience, to its unique phenomenology, or to the characteristic attitude or point of view that we take toward the things we (then and thereby) deem aesthetic objects. Existing accounts of the distinctiveness of aesthetic value point to features of the objects, especially its formal qualities or its content, or they may point to its social status, including its relationship to institutions (museums and the art world) or social practices. Of course, accounts of the distinctiveness of aesthetic experience and the distinctiveness of aesthetic value need not preclude each other. Perhaps they are interdependent; even so, perhaps one is more explanatorily fundamental. (Notice, too, that these accounts will be related but not identical to views about the definition and ontology of *art*.)

No matter which explanation we prefer, there are traditional problems to avoid. First, two objects that are identical in all relevant respects need to provide the same aesthetic reasons. So, if we are pure formalists, it will be a challenge to explain why an original and its forgery seem to possess different amounts of aesthetic value or give us different aesthetic reasons. Second, the distinction should be neither too exclusive nor too inclusive. If we take aesthetic reasons to be those relating to artworks, it will be a challenge to explain away our seeming aesthetic reasons concerning nature and non-art artifacts. If on the other hand we are aesthetic attitude theorists, the challenge will be to explain why there isn't an explosion of aesthetic reasons everywhere, since everything – and every kind of thing – can be looked at aesthetically (or else to accept that fate and explain why it's not so bad).

An alternative approach is to answer this question by simply pointing out paradigmatic cases of aesthetic reasons or carving out a large disjunction, as with McGonigal's very inclusive characterization (2018). But while this final approach may succeed in tracking our linguistic practices, it doesn't offer us any real understanding of what's distinctive about aesthetic reasons.

The present question has gone by different names, including “the aesthetic question” and “the demarcation problem.” Many take it to be answerable independently from the next question, one that concerns the normative force of aesthetic reasons and has been called “the normative question” or “the value question.”³⁵ Lopes (2018) puts it roughly this way: the former question asks what makes aesthetic value *aesthetic*; the latter, what makes it a *value*. However, as I will argue, disentangling these issues is not so simple.

3.2 *The Normativity Question: Do we have any real reason, at the end of the day, to do what we have aesthetic reason to do (and if so, why)?*

To put this question differently, we might ask whether aesthetic reasons as such have any genuine normative force. Is saying that we have an aesthetic reason to do something like saying that we have a “chess reason” to castle? We don’t have any real, ultimate reason to castle.³⁶ We only have a reason to castle *if* we have a reason to win, and one might reasonably think we only have reason to win if we want to win. In that case, it’s our desire to win that really gives us reason; the chess reason by itself has no normative force. So, are aesthetic reasons like this, or are they somehow more fundamental? Are they reducible or not?

The issue of fundamentality or irreducibility is importantly related to one way we might conceive of distinctiveness. In asking whether aesthetic reasons (or indeed any other kind of reasons) are distinctive, we might be asking either of two different questions. One exists at the surface, while the other is more foundational. We can ask the surface question of chess reasons, regardless of what we think about their ultimate normative force. What makes chess reasons distinctive from the other sorts of reasons? Well, just that they follow from or have to do with the rules and winning conditions that constitute the game of chess. So what makes aesthetic reasons distinctive from other sorts of reasons? Well, maybe that they have to do with certain sensory experiences, certain sorts of objects, or a certain phenomenology. These answers will strongly resemble those suggested earlier.

The more foundational question attaches to the normative force of aesthetic reasons. Chess reasons do not form a distinctive normative category. Whatever chess reasons we have depend, we’re assuming, on our corresponding desires. (Do you want to win? Then castle.) Moral reasons, on the other hand, seem not to depend on or reduce to other sorts of reason. (It doesn’t matter what you want; don’t harm others.) In

³⁵ See, e.g., Beardsley (1979), Lopes (2018, 42ff.), and Matherne (2020).

³⁶ This talk of having a “real,” “genuine,” or “ultimate” reason is admittedly loose, but should capture the idea well enough for present purposes.

this way, we might say that nothing really makes chess reasons distinct from other sorts of desire-based reasons, whereas something makes moral reasons importantly distinct from desire-based reasons and perhaps from all other sorts of reasons. And so we might correspondingly wonder whether aesthetic reasons are distinct in that, like moral reasons, they form their own normative category.³⁷

This brings us back to the question at hand. Do we have any real reason to do what we have aesthetic reason to do? If aesthetic reasons are like chess reasons, then we should say no – or at least not necessarily. Aesthetic reasons pull on us only insofar as they align with what would, let’s say, promote our individual well-being. But responding to some aesthetic reasons might not promote our well-being, and under such conditions, those aesthetic reasons enjoy no normative force. (This is analogous to how some chess reasons will not promote the fulfillment of our desires, e.g., if we don’t care about winning.) Let’s call views like this *reductionist*, since they reduce the normativity of aesthetic reasons to normativity of some other sort. By contrast, if aesthetic reasons are more like moral reasons, then we can say yes, aesthetic reasons themselves, as such, possess genuine normative force. Let’s call those views, on which they have irreducible normative force, *non-reductionist*.

Many existing views of aesthetic reasons strongly imply, if not outright entail, reductionism. For example, on the earlier hedonic, actual subject theory, aesthetic reasons reduce to prudential reasons. Why should I watch a certain movie? Just because it’ll bring me pleasure to do so. Here, the reason I have to do things that bring me pleasure has nothing distinctively aesthetic about it.

That’s a simple case, but a more sophisticated hedonist is also likely to be a reductionist. Suppose we have reason to engage with certain objects to the extent that it will generate a special sort of complex, *distinctively aesthetic* pleasure. Such a view will still be a form of reductionism as long as it holds that we have reason to pursue aesthetic pleasure precisely because we have reason to pursue pleasure in general. (It may, however, answer the distinctiveness question in the surface-level sense, if it tells us what makes a pleasure distinctively aesthetic.)

The rights and obligation views we saw earlier look reductionist, too, insofar as they ground aesthetic reasons in rights possessed by the object, in the value of other persons, or in one’s personal, pre-existing normative situation. For instance, a traditional understanding of rights sees them as virtually inseparable from justice and desert, and so a defense of the rights of art objects is essentially a defense of

³⁷ Parallel debates arise with respect to the normative force of morality and well-being. Worries about the normative force of morality manifest as views that reduce moral normativity to desires or personal well-being—think, e.g., of prudential answers to the infamous question, “Why be moral?” For discussion about the normative force of well-being, see Worsnip (2018) and Fletcher (2019, 2021).

their *moral* rights. Aesthetic obligations on the above views can likewise look moralized. Press explicitly takes the aesthetic obligation he defends to rest on moral obligations regarding the development of our character. Even Eaton's dilemma is easy to read as ultimately moral – we ought to save the paintings so that others can see them; it's just a form of helping others. Alternatively, to the extent that aesthetic obligations arise from self-promises, commitments, or personality, they look like a species of duties to self. It's not that any possible accounts of aesthetic rights or obligations has to be reductionist, of course, but these particular accounts look highly susceptible to reduction.

Even practice-based accounts rest the normativity of aesthetic reasons with the normativity of the corresponding practices. This generates a normative structure that looks analogous to the chess case. The question naturally then becomes whether we have reason to engage in the relevant practice, and if so, whether those reasons are distinctively aesthetic.³⁸

If so many are reductionists, what can be the problem with it? We might point out two things. First, there's something sort of disappointing about it. Such accounts make aesthetic reasons out to be less special than they might otherwise be, and therefore potentially of less philosophical interest. We don't have a subfield of philosophy devoted to chess value and reasons, so why should we have one devoted to aesthetic value and reasons? In defense of a reductive account, though, one might say that aesthetic reasons can still play a very important role in our lives, that they're still somehow special (in that they are distinct from other sub-categories of moral or prudential reasons), or even that understanding them might help us better understand the sorts of reasons to which they reduce.

The second, more deeply troubling thought is that reductionism of this kind might amount to eliminativism about aesthetic reasons. If we ultimately have aesthetic reason to think, feel, or do something only insofar as we have moral or prudential reason to do so, then, in terms of the foundational distinctiveness question, we deny the existence of aesthetic reasons. If our reason to save a painting from destruction is that it would bring others immense happiness, then while we might call it an "aesthetic" reason, it's ultimately the same reason we have to help others or do nice things for them. There's no truly aesthetic reason at play here, only other sorts of reasons that contingently operate through the medium of aesthetic stuff.

One might try to deny this inference, of course. Or one could attempt a kind of partners-in-crime reply: This isn't so bad, since the same thought applies to a view like hedonic utilitarianism, which reduces moral reasons to reasons concerning individual pleasure. However, this won't quite work. The reductionist

³⁸ See Lopes (2018), King (2020), and Kubala (2020b).

says that aesthetic reasons are ultimately reasons of some other kind, with a common candidate being prudential reasons – i.e., reasons to do what promotes *one's own* well-being. And though the hedonic utilitarian grounds moral facts in facts about well-being, they hold that *each person* ought to promote *everybody's* well-being. Thus even hedonic utilitarianism doesn't entail that, anytime I have moral reason to do something, I really just have prudential reason to do so.

The underexplored alternative to reductionism sees aesthetic reasons as their own distinctive, irreducible normative category. Perhaps aesthetic reasons do not rely ultimately on social or personal or moral value, but on fundamentally aesthetic value. Perhaps aesthetic value can be given a characterization independent of our community, pleasure responses, or moral status. Because it's not obvious how such a story would go, the real challenge for the non-reductivist is to develop one.³⁹

A frequent theme of the first three questions (about the object, strength, and source of aesthetic reasons) was the unresolved issue of how to understand what counts as an aesthetic reason. While many authors try to sharply divorce the distinctiveness question from the normativity question, taking them to be answerable independently of one another, it's unclear whether this is possible. To use Lopes' phrasing, if we want to know what makes aesthetic value valuable, we need to be able to pick out those things whose value we're trying to account for. If we want to know what makes such values aesthetic, we need to know which ones actually have the value that we want to distinguish from others.⁴⁰

3.3 *The Interaction Question: How do aesthetic reasons interact with each other and with other sorts of reasons?*

Finally, we might ask questions about how aesthetic reasons interact both internally, with each other, and externally, with other sorts of reasons. It's already commonplace to ask both of these questions of moral reasons. Does some class of moral reasons always trump another class of moral reasons? For example, do considerations of justice always outweigh those of beneficence? And do moral reasons always trump non-moral reasons, e.g., those concerning self-interest? Translated to the aesthetic domain, we might want to know (internally) whether aesthetic obligations (if they exist) always outweigh non-obligating aesthetic reasons, or (externally) whether they could ever outweigh moral obligations or prudential reasons.

First, to internal interactions. What we say here will depend importantly on the *commensurability* and *comparability* of aesthetic values and value-bearers, the aesthetic objects we take to possess aesthetic

³⁹ For some forays in this spirit, see Railton (1998), Shelley (2010), Hanson (2018), and King (forthcoming a).

⁴⁰ See also King (2020), Shelley (2021).

value(s). Two value-bearers are comparable when one is better, worse, or equally as good as another. Commensurability is stronger; two value-bearers are commensurate when there is a common scale of measurement along which they can be placed. In a sense, then, we might say that commensurability involves absolute value assessments in addition to comparability's relative assessments.

To illustrate, poems are comparable but not commensurable if some are better than others, but we cannot place them on any sort of scale. That is, one poem might be better than another even though we cannot say, for example, that one poem possesses only 37 units of beauty and the other only 25.⁴¹ If this makes aesthetic commensurability sound too silly to be plausible, consider more plausible cases. An economically minded view about artistic value might hold that a painting selling for fifty million dollars is *five times as good* as a painting selling for only ten million, or one might want to say that a movie that has a five-star rating is not only better than one with two-and-a-half stars, but that it's *twice as good*. Both statements require commensurability.

Still, comparability is significantly more plausible than commensurability for aesthetic value and therefore for aesthetic reasons. But notice that the simple hedonic view from earlier is committed to the commensurability of aesthetic value and reasons, as long as pleasures are themselves commensurable. More complex versions of hedonism may be able to avoid this, but the problem is implicit in some arguments against the view.⁴²

We should also ask how far comparability can be taken. It's certainly plausible that some aesthetic objects are better than others, at least in some respects. But it's less plausible to think that, for any two aesthetic objects, we can compare them and get the result that one is better, worse, or as good as the other.

The external question, how aesthetic values and reasons interact with non-aesthetic values and reasons, brings all three issues from this section together. How we answer, and indeed even conceptualize, this question will depend on accounts of the distinctiveness and normativity of aesthetic reasons. If aesthetic reasons are a species of prudential reasons, then the question is really how aesthetic prudential reasons interact with non-aesthetic prudential reasons, or perhaps with moral reasons.

On a non-reductionist view, aesthetic objects possess distinctively and fundamentally aesthetic value. We can then ask whether a good poem is more valuable than a little bit of human pleasure, or whether a good poem is more valuable than some trivial truths. Are these values comparable or commensurable with one another? If so, how do they weigh against each other? For instance, if Eaton is

⁴¹ See Chang (2013) for an overview of these issues.

⁴² See Shelley (2010), Stang (2012).

right that there are aesthetic obligations to eulogize, perhaps those could outweigh moral obligations (or epistemic reasons, if present) to be perfectly truthful. Regardless of how we want to answer, work on these issues – already well under way in ethics – would benefit from the input of those working in aesthetics.

4. Conclusion

This article has looked at six questions about aesthetic reasons. The first three, about the object, source, and strength of aesthetic reasons, provide a useful taxonomy for existing and possible theories. The second three, about the distinctness, normative force, and interaction of aesthetic reasons, are further important questions about the status of aesthetic reasons in such theories and their relationship to other normative domains. I have sketched salient worries that different answers and answer combinations will face. I have also aimed to present a variety of ways that people are currently moving these debates forward while highlighting places where work is especially lacking – for example, with respect to non-hedonic and non-reductionist theories, communal and non-response theories, and metanormative work on the interaction question. I especially hope that seeing these views in a larger context will spur yet further exploration of unobvious and underappreciated possibilities.⁴³

⁴³ Thanks to John Dyck, Chris Howard, Daniel Fogal, Zoë Johnson King, Robbie Kubala, Stephanie Leary, Sean T. Murphy, Nick Riggle, Keshav Singh, Daniel Wodak, and Alex Worsnip, and to Nick Riggle and an anonymous referee for immensely helpful comments on earlier drafts.

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