

Aesthetic Investigations

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On the category of “the aesthetic”.

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Abstract: Contemporary discussions of art regularly contrast artistic judgement and appreciation with the judgement and appreciation of beauty (and similar), as aesthetic judgement and appreciation—if not always in those terms. That contrast seems fundamental to our understanding of art. For there will be features, ascribable to artworks, that must be understood by contrast with such aesthetic appreciation. Further, considerations from natural beauty and attractive design (as with, say, wallpaper) seem ill-suited to explain what is distinctive about art, as it is presently understood. Too often, though, the aesthetic here is left relatively unconsidered—with perhaps recognition of its attention to manifest properties, such as colours, sounds and textures, as grounding beauty (or whatever): that is, those properties that do not depend on the recognition of art-status. A position that fails to draw this artistic/aesthetic contrast cannot tolerate the category of art as such (however much it thinks it can). In different contexts, concern with the aesthetic may amount to different things, drawing on different contrasts.

Contemporary discussions of art regularly contrast *artistic* judgement and appreciation with the judgement and appreciation of beauty (and similar), as *aesthetic* judgement and appreciation—if not always in those terms. That contrast seems fundamental to our understanding of art. For there will be features, ascribable to artworks, that must be understood by contrast with such aesthetic appreciation. As Arthur Danto points out, artworks reflect the *embodiment of meaning*.¹ Further, considerations from natural beauty and attractive design (as with, say, wallpaper) seem ill-suited to explain what

is distinctive about *art*, as it is presently understood. Too often, though, *the aesthetic* here is left relatively unconsidered, beyond its connection to the appreciation of beauty (and such like)—with perhaps recognition of its attention to *manifest properties*, such as colours, sounds and textures, as grounding beauty (or whatever): that is, those properties that do not depend on the recognition of art-status.

Such properties are widely addressed as though more or less homogeneous. At the least, Danto, in searching for “confusable counterparts” of artworks, seems to be appealing to properties shared by artworks and non-art objects: for many, these will be included amongst aesthetic properties.² At the least, the concept of the aesthetic seems fairly clear here, whatever its relation to *the artistic*. So a first thought might be that, although *the aesthetic* might be a difficult concept to elucidate, its elucidation would be—somehow—along one dimension. But now I recognize that such an account will not do: that the nature of aesthetic judgement typically requires more articulation of context than is usually granted by aestheticians.

This issue has a direct relevance to other ideas of mine, in three related ways. First, an artistic/aesthetic contrast like that sketched above is deployed, as a technical distinction, in my account of a framework for philosophical aesthetics. And my exposition of that framework had included a promise to elaborate the concept of *the aesthetic*; and I had not discharged that obligation. Second, the contextualism just mentioned for *the aesthetic* is of a piece with my more general contextualism, thereby recognizing aesthetic judgement as *context-dependent* or *occasion sensitive*.³ But, third, a specific aspect of such contextualism, sketched by Austin, locates the particular contribution of some terms in some contexts as operating broadly negatively: and here I shall urge that aesthetic judgement falls into that category.⁴

I

So, in line with the first point, one way to identify the topic of this paper is by elaborating a comparison and contrast with some of my previous discussions. Thus, I advertised my *Artistic Judgement* as volume one of *The Muscular Aesthetic*, explaining its project as concerned with the philosophy of art.⁵ That project included the stipulation in verbal terms of the contrast urged above as central to concern with the philosophy of art: that is, a contrast between the judgement and appreciation of artworks (called “artistic appreciation”) and the judgement and appreciation of all the other cases of interest in line, grace, and so on, as well as their opposites (together called “aesthetic judgement”). For, to deploy the idea of *fine art* as we do, whatever words are used, is implicitly to contrast such art, and our interest in it, with other objects of (mere) aesthetic interest: the artwork must be distinguished from the wallpaper on the wall on which it hangs—failure to draw this contrast is a failure to grasp the distinctiveness of *art*. And, as above, this contrast was

elaborated by reference to “confusable counterparts”.⁶ Hence a position that fails to draw this artistic/aesthetic contrast cannot tolerate the category of *art* as such (however much it thinks it can). In line with its target in the philosophy of art, *Artistic Judgement* addressed my so-called *artistic judgement* throughout, promising to take up the corresponding aesthetic judgement in its sequel. But when the second half of *The Muscular Aesthetic* appeared (as *The Philosophical Aesthetics of Dance*), it did not discharge this obligation, in part because the variety of cases to be considered precluded the brief treatment of this issue that I had envisaged initially.⁷ And the rationale for that strategy will be demonstrated, or, anyway, exemplified, in this paper.

Thus, here, I will say something more in elaboration of *the aesthetic*, and *aesthetic judgement*, while still falling short of completely discharging my previous obligation. One complexity here becomes clear when we note the injunction from Austin to attend to “the dainty *and* the dumpy”.⁸ For that injunction rightly recognizes that aesthetic interest, properly understood, can be in the ugly, and such like, as well as the beautiful and the graceful. This idea has a familiar application to art: the paintings of Chaim Soutine or of Goya’s ‘Black Period’ are certainly not beautiful in any ordinary sense: nevertheless they are suitable ‘objects of artistic appreciation’. But one must also reject the ‘aesthetic’ account of artistic beauty, which takes art’s “. . . primary aim . . . [as] to produce beauty, by which I mean something with *positive* aesthetic value”: for most aestheticians, artworks such as the Warhol *Brillo Boxes* demonstrate the falsity of this conception of art, since the interest of such works seems unconnected to their appearance.⁹ At the least, they are not beautiful, nor meant to be. Hence, at least applied to art, judgements of the broadly aesthetic include works granted to be ugly, at least in the ordinary sense. By contrast, though, the term “aesthetic” in common parlance seems generally reserved for the cases of *positive* aesthetic value: that is, of beauty, or something similar.¹⁰ In practice, then, *aesthetic* interest is rarely evinced in respect of the ugly. We may criticize something as ugly, and explain the *basis* of this criticism as aesthetic; yet, asked for aesthetic judgement, these will not be typical examples. So the term “aesthetic” seems to amount to something different in those cases where the answer will recognize positive or negative valencies of the aesthetic from those where only the positive is granted.

All this becomes problematic in *philosophical aesthetics* once we notice that many objects of genuine artistic interest (artworks) might also be perceived as of *aesthetic* interest: that is, often they are objects of beauty, or something similar. Of course, as I argued in *Artistic Judgement*, this is *misperception*, if the object really is an artwork: we are treating the music, say, as though it were birdsong or the painting as though it were wallpaper; and that is—in effect—to *mistreat* it by misperceiving it.¹¹ To elaborate that claim, I would follow Walton in identifying those *categories of art* within which artworks must be located to avoid such misperception, to argue that more than

a work’s *manifest* properties can bear on its proper appreciation: that, for instance, facts about an artwork’s history of making can be of relevance.¹² But, equally, those who do not understand the distinctiveness of artworks can nevertheless often find something worthy of appreciation in the objects that comprise these works: at least sometimes, the painting, for instance, is rightly beautiful or graceful, even if such a mode of attention pays no regard to its art-status; and hence misperceives it.

Moreover, this issue is tied to the idea of *the aesthetic* as perceptual: that the *manifest* properties mentioned above are typically thought those given immediately and directly in perception. And this too can seem a marker for *the aesthetic*. Thus, there does not seem to be quite the same issue for literature, an artform where the traditional mode of engagement, reading, is not straightforwardly perceptual.¹³ And this is just to recognize the literary case as importantly different in this respect from, say, much painting or music. For, although works appropriate for art-type reading should be contrasted with those appropriate for *other* types of reading (that is, roughly, a contrast between, say, those novels that are literature and those that are not), the non-literature works for reading are not regularly or reliably thought *aesthetic*. Indeed, it seems odd to regard novels or poems both as not artworks, and yet aesthetic. But such cases are not the centre of our concern with artworks and the aesthetic.¹⁴

II

In line with the second idea identified above, my conceptual framework here is heavily contextual. I deploy Charles Travis’s idea of occasion-sensitivity: thus, if a claim that previously counted as true now counts as false, that need not reflect simply a change in the world crudely conceived: rather, it follows from the occasion-sensitivity of relevant concepts that the very same door might count as blue on this occasion but not blue on some other occasion, without its pigmentation changing in the meantime (say, all the doors in the street were painted either red, green or blue—this was one of the blue ones, whatever its current state of deterioration); or that curtains (drapes) might be red for *some* purposes (despite being faded and in tatters), but not red on other occasions. So that:

... there are various things that might be said in describing the drapes as red; various things that might count, or again, not count, as their being red. The mere notion of something’s being red does not, as such, choose any of these as what one would say, or what would so count.¹⁵

What is said depends on the occasion of the speaking—there is no *one* thing it amounts to, (somehow) based on the words alone, or their truth-conditions. Of course, I do not defend this idea here. But this alone, once granted, might lead to suspicion that any single unified account will accommo-

date the *aesthetic*. Yet, by itself, it would not offer anything more particular to add. Where next?

Some discussions of sport recently brought one aspect of this issue to my attention. To understand what these discussions raise, one must first address two distinctions: that between *aesthetic sports* and *purposive sports*; and that, as an abstraction, between *partisan* spectators of sporting events and their *purist* counterparts.¹⁶ David Best recognizes that typical sports are of one of two kinds:¹⁷ in the first, aesthetic sports, the scoring depends on the *manner* of performance, as in gymnastic vaulting or figure skating, so that one is not just trying, say, to get over the vaulting horse but to do so in a particular way; and this is what scores the points that lead, ultimately, to victory in the sport. For the second kind, purposive sports, the manner of scoring does not matter, as long as it is within the rules. In particular, for purposive sports, the grace or elegance of scoring is beside the point, since it is not reflected in the scoring in the sport. Most sports will be of this purposive kind. Thus, in soccer (football), the goalmouth scramble counts as much, or as little, as the elegant volley, as long as it is within the rules (as, say, Maradona's 'Hand of God' goal should not have been). All count as just one goal, even when one is elegantly achieved and the other is not. Notice that this is a comment concerning the nature of sport, related to the character of success in that sport, and is not just a recipe for spectatorship in that sport. For, although a spectator may admire the grace or elegance of the pass or the shot, that admiration is formally irrelevant.

Although neither of Best's terms is entirely happy, the valuing in aesthetic sports is broadly *aesthetic*, in that it is concerned with the grace, line and elegance of the actions within the sport (although here again the positive valence is typically implicit); while the valuing within purposive sports is irreducibly *purposive*—that is why, when someone takes an aesthetic interest in events in purposive sport, such as soccer, the purposive element is typically set aside, or assumed to be successful: the elegant pass must succeed as a pass; and graceful dribbling of the ball requires that the dribbling be aimed towards some purpose in the game—otherwise it is just self-indulgent.¹⁸ Thus, in the 'Goal of the Month' competition on UK television, a panel of experts was asked to evaluate a series of goals from soccer matches. Since each will be a goal, and since all these goals are detached from any place in match or competition (we do not know, nor care, if they were, say, winning goals), the panel can only address the grace and elegance with which this goal was scored: here, the interest is more properly aesthetic; but only once the purposive element integral to the sport is independently satisfied.¹⁹ Indeed, there is a clear sense in which watching these goals differs from, for instance, watching highlights of football matches: in that sense, watching them in the 'Goal of the Month' competition is not really watching soccer at all.

The second key contrast, between the *partisan* and the *purist*, concerns sports spectating. Thus, in contrast to the partisan, Mumford's purist "... is

a fan of a sport, and may love deeply the sport concerned, but have no particular allegiance to any particular team. . . . [Such a person] may attend games and enjoy them despite having no preference for either team to win”.²⁰ As one indicator here, the purist will hope for the best game, with both teams playing to their full potential, while the partisan “. . . may be very happy if the opposition team underperforms”, since this will presumably facilitate his preferred team’s winning.²¹ Hence:

. . . the purist . . . may enjoy working out the tactics of the two teams and seeing how the play develops, how the tactics are adapted to fit new circumstances, and how the game has key moments of drama. . . . [Purists] may also enjoy seeing individual skilful players, perhaps competing against each other, and will want both sides to play well, to their full potential.²²

In summary, Mumford claims that “[a]ny interest that the purist has is for the sport itself. . . . [Purists] want to see it for all its beauty and drama . . . they would much rather see a beautiful game irrespective of the winner.”²³ This defence of purism admonishes us to adopt “. . . a life enjoying sport for its purely positive and aesthetic aspects”.²⁴

Such a contrast is given relevance for us here by Mumford’s insistence, first, that “. . . one reason to watch sport . . . [is] because it gives aesthetic pleasure” and, second, that the purist’s interest in sport is an *aesthetic* interest; that the Mumford’s purist is seeing “. . . only aesthetic aspects of sport”, or something of that sort.²⁵ It seems, then, that the purist attends to aesthetic aspects of purposive sports *because* the purposive dimension is set aside, as though only these concepts should have application here. But such an inference is unjustified: an interest in what is not (or is no longer) purposive is not necessarily *thereby* aesthetic. Similarly, one might acknowledge Bauhaus furniture, for instance, as worthy of admiration as efficient without *thereby* making an aesthetic judgement of that furniture. Moreover, if the purist simply insists on these concepts as exhausting *his* interest, the specific transition from non-purposive to aesthetic remains unjustified.

Indeed, in a similar vein, *disinterestedness* is regularly raised in attempts to characterize “the aesthetic”; as though a concern for an object itself that lacked any interest in the functional or purposive qualities *can only* be a concern with its intrinsic qualities. Yet disinterestedness can take many forms; imply many differing contrasts. Certainly, when my interest in the events unfolding is an aesthetic interest (and especially “merely an aesthetic interest”), I will not be an interested party; or, at least, my concern will not reflect any degree of interest beyond the minimal. But that can leave open the extent to which I am concerned with the *ugly* aspects of aesthetic attention, and therefore the degree to which that is, or is not, implicit in the use of the term “aesthetic” in any specific context one selected.

For example, when my concern with the sculpture is with its look, and not with its use as a door-stop, we are some distance to recognizing my interest as *aesthetic* interest. Moreover, since there can be a contrast with the *purposive* (as for sport-types), it is right that aesthetic evaluation is typically non-purposive (as in Best's account of sports). That is, a contrast here with the purposive is useful in shedding light on the aesthetic (in this context); my concern was not purposive, so . . . The problems here are, first, that it *seems* more needs to be said to locate the concern as aesthetic: in this case at least, the contrast is not enough;²⁶ and, second, that knowing the interest is *not purposive* is only revealing of its being aesthetic in those contexts where that is the natural contest to be drawing. For that is a way to ask what the term "aesthetic" amounts to in that context or in that utterance.

With what does my aesthetic concern for a landscape 'naturally' be contrasted? If I am to remain disinterested (the fact that I own the land, and could sell it for millions, is not germane), my interest might be thought *aesthetic*; and (perhaps) rightly so. But such a view would be consistent with a purposive concern; for instance, one with the amount of oxygen this land's trees return to the atmosphere. Yet this is not always the contrast being drawn by uses of the term "aesthetic" (not least because another, with "interested", was identified above); and *the aesthetic* is not alone in being non-purposive. That was the moral from the design of furniture and other functional objects: one cannot, in good part, admire them *simply* aesthetically, since they must do the job for which they were designed—to some degree at least! (Such chairs need not be *very* comfortable!) Here, we are engaged with a kind of functional beauty, where our interest is certainly not in the look of the thing only; but neither is it confined to its ability to fulfil its role. Here, an aesthetic concern merges with a practical one. And a full account of the aesthetic would need to give some consideration to such cases.

Once this point is recognized, the problem faced in *Artistic Judgement* may become clearer: that one can recognize *aesthetic* appreciation, drawing on its Greek roots, as essentially *perceptual*; and as concerned with grace, line and so on. Of course, as with the earlier remarks about *the artistic*, these comments on *the aesthetic* are not merely verbal, about how the term "aesthetic" is, or should be, used: the point throughout is to recognize the *artistic/aesthetic* contrast, with its roots in the perceptual recognition of grace, line, elegance, and similar. Other uses of the term "aesthetic", lacking such roots, can be set aside here.²⁷ But little else can be said about it, not least because the *technical* account of *the aesthetic* (which grants aesthetic status to judgements of ugliness, as above) is rarely carried through into ordinary claims. Yet, surely, if an object counts as of aesthetic interest by being ugly, the scope of aesthetic interest is different than when the concern is only with positive aesthetic values.

III

That leads us to the third of the ideas of mine mentioned above. For if the context differs when ugliness is being ruled out from that when it is not, that will draw to our attention to what point the term “aesthetic” makes when it is used here: that too requires attention to what is being thereby denied or ruled out. The point I am after here is roughly of the kind Austin makes in respect of, say, the term “free”, in noting that “... ‘free’ is only used to rule out the suggestion of some or all of its recognized antitheses”, such that the content of calling the action *free* is provided in part via the antithetical notion.²⁸ For we have seen that explaining the scope of “aesthetic” typically contrasts it with another concept. Thus, we have acknowledged that, like the term “free”, the term “aesthetic” is invoked when something specific is being denied: one of “... its recognized antitheses”. And that it gets some of its content from that denial: but, since there are many such contrasts, not necessarily the same contribution on all occasions.

Moreover, the negative, or denial-based, character of the ascription here is easily missed, since it can seem that, when contrasted with, say, the purposive, *the aesthetic* is always taken to have a kind of positive value or valence. But this is a confusion easily recognized in seeing that the requirement that a person’s last-will-and-testament be “true full, and free” is not the positive condition it sounds: rather, it is a kind of shorthand for all the conditions that would defeat the legality, and so on, of the will. It is to this idea, sometimes called *defeasibility*, that Austin was alluding in his discussion of freedom.²⁹ Thus, Austin urges that to say we acted freely:

... is to say only that we acted not un-freely, on one of the many heterogeneous ways of so acting (under duress, or what not).³⁰

And, of course, we know Austin was familiar with such legal distinctions, not least through his connections with H. L. A. Hart, including the class referred to in Austin 1979, (195 note).

Interest in beauty can make this point in a simplified form, by showing its connection to those sub-categories within which one typically identifies aesthetic concern. When Sibley discussed attributive and predicative uses of terms, he recognized that “... ‘beautiful for a pig’ seems all right whereas ‘beautiful for a pebble’ seems odd”; and “beige for a dress” seems downright peculiar.³¹ Hence, if the object is of a certain type, where appreciation of its look (or some such) as a typical mode of appreciation, to recognize that one’s interest is not, after all, in its purposive qualities may be suitably clarifying. Further, one way of addressing what the term “aesthetic” amounts to in that context or in that utterance is suggested: by considering, in Austin’s terms, what exactly is the right antithesis for *this* occasion.

However, might one then be struck by the object’s ugliness? Seen one way, that would be permissible within the more global ‘aesthetic concern’

rubric (the one officially adopted by much philosophy); but not from within that more traditional view that aligns the aesthetic only with its positive valence. What is the difference here? Then Austin's view seems exactly right: a difference of contrast means that *the aesthetic* amounts to something different in each case.

IV

My thought has been to suggest that a variety of contrasts are standardly drawn for the term *the aesthetic*, identifiable primarily through what each implicitly denies. But the same apparent contrast can conceal differences: for example, whether or not, in that context, *the aesthetic* includes the ugly. Hence, that we should be wary of inferring too much even from some of the familiar contrasts.

For instance, Mumford's hypothetical purist, sketched above, may admire *the game itself*, somehow detached from any purposive concern.³² Yet that does not mean that his concern is automatically *aesthetic* (contrary to Mumford's assertions—at least, if the term “aesthetic” maintains its standard contrasts). To admire *efficiency*, for example, even in those sport-directed actions of which the sporting event is composed, is not—or not necessarily—*aesthetic* admiration, since the efficiency will relate to the winning and losing, and need not be graceful or elegant (unless one makes it so by fiat). There are sporting styles that, while effective, contain flourishes and other movements unnecessary for ‘getting the job done’ (here, Best cites the running of Emil Zatopek, who “. . . was not an aesthetically attractive runner because much of his movement seemed irrelevant to the ideal of most direct accomplishment of the task”; but readers can supply their own examples).³³ These styles [a] seem inefficient, say, mechanically; and [b] lack grace or elegance. But obviously, there is a sense in which they need not be *inefficient* in practical terms (that is, ineffective): Zatopek was a highly successful runner, despite “. . . the extraneous rolls and jerks which seemed wasteful”.³⁴ And, as above, to conclude, say, that Zatopek's running *must* count as graceful in context *because* it is efficient, would amount to tying *the aesthetic* to efficiency by fiat.

This case illustrates two related points: first, when drawing attention to aesthetic interest, we are typically contrasting it with some other interest (such as purposive interest), but there is not just one kind of judgement here since typically, as in this case, many “recognized antitheses” are possible, and the impact of the term “aesthetic” remains unclear until the contrast *here* is recognized. After all, sometimes the recognition of efficiency has an aesthetic dimension, and sometimes it does not. Second, the aesthetic appreciation depends on what kind of thing is being appreciated, since these too can generate “. . . recognized antitheses”: the *actions* of persons (say, those involved in sport) differ from the movements of those persons in having a normative nexus provided by the context—we can imagine mistakes and misfires there, under-

stood in terms of failures of goal-directedness, while (for movements) there is only the movement: it cannot be a failure, as such. Consider, say, claims to elegance for chess moves: at the least, such elegance cannot be explained causally, since a bad move in chess has a causal explanation just as much as a good move. So ugly moves cannot be distinguished on *that* basis from elegant ones. As Frege recognized, “[e]rror and superstition have causes just as much as correct cognition”, which grants that, say, a particular causal story for some event—or amounting to particular bodily movements—cannot explain that event’s normative force (cannot, say, distinguish the elegant chess move from the other).³⁵ Hence the aesthetic appreciation of human *actions*—say, in sport (where passes in soccer must succeed to count as *passes*)—necessarily differs from that of the (constitutive) movements, in just the ways Austin’s view suggests.

V

Indeed, we can perhaps now return to the issue from the perspective of *The Muscular Aesthetic*, with its first volume directed at the *artistic* part of the artistic/aesthetic contrast—enough was said about *the aesthetic* to clarify the target, and to show what *the artistic* was *not*—although the possibility of confusing the artistic and the aesthetic, as well as the disastrous consequences of doing so, were emphasized. For instance, much of the debate around the propaganda-status of Riefenstahl’s film *Triumph of the Will* (1935) disappears once it is recognized as an object of aesthetic appreciation only, not an artwork: hence it does not pose the question of whether artworks can embody propaganda.

My thought had been that, in order to say more about the artform dance, the second volume would require a much fuller treatment of *the aesthetic* than in the first volume, not least because the line, elegance, and grace of human bodies in motion (a subject of aesthetic interest, as here) would need to be clarified, and contrasted with the line, elegance, and grace of the dancers in performing the artworks (artistic appreciation). But doing this in enough detail to clarify the case for dance still left a great deal of *the aesthetic* unaccounted for; or, at least, it seemed to. For that discussion had dealt with, at most, *one* of the “recognized antitheses”. By contrast, my thought here is that the aesthetic will always be the junior partner in such a relationship, such that we can say enough about it to elaborate the positive, ‘senior partner’ (art, dance) without producing a list of features or properties that characterized the aesthetic exceptionlessly, even granting the defeasibility of such claims.³⁶ And here this point is exemplified with the sport-based example.

Moreover, the consideration of sport illustrates why one cannot simply proceed by addressing the “recognized antitheses” one-by-one. For we have no method of drawing up the list of such “antitheses”: at best, we can recognize them when we encounter them; and each will depend on which features of

contrast are deployed, including whether or not the term “aesthetic” assumes the positive valence.

So, by discussing the case from sport, we have in effect distinguished two kinds of aesthetic concern for persons here: that depending simply on the grace or elegance or whatever of the movements of the human body, detached from the particular actions involved; and that where the *actions* of the person (in the case imagined, the footballing actions) are admired. In the second case, one cannot identify the actions admired *detached* from the sporting event; and hence from the sport itself. Further, that sport—and hence the actions comprising a sporting event—depend in part on its *rules*, since they constrain actions appropriate within the sport. This is relevant here in showing (once again) the diversity within *the aesthetic*: one cannot bring to bear a single, unified conception of *the aesthetic* even as it applies to human activities—we have seen that by contrasting two cases that might be applied to sport, without addressing the further, crucially different case of the artform of dance.³⁷ So, while there is mileage in contrasting such aesthetic judgement and appreciation with the judgement and appreciation of *art* (the artistic/aesthetic contrast, as deployed in AJ) and in distinguishing aesthetic concerns from purposive ones, this does not give us a durable positive characterization of the aesthetic, applicable exceptionlessly across all contexts and situations. Then someone might insist that this is, after all, a kind of systematic framework. My point has been that this is the maximum systematicity that the concepts permit: and that it is not much. Rather, in different contexts, concern with *the aesthetic* may amount to different things, drawing on different contrasts, only some of which have been distinguished here. But at least the contrastive character of some such uses offers us a partial explanation: in this sense, we return refreshed to aesthetic judgement as *context-dependent* or *occasion-sensitive* (see Travis 2008, es150-160). That in turn grounds the general difficulty in dealing broadly with the category of *the aesthetic* for any who accept the framework sketched here (and thus *my* difficulty in dealing with it). Hence our conclusion must be to prefer a contextualist diversity in accounts of that category, in line with the thoughts here, once the hope for a single, unified account is set aside.

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NOTES

1. Danto 1997, 196; Danto 2013, 37-39.
2. Danto 1981, 139.
3. Travis 2008, es150-160.
4. Austin 1979, 180.
5. AJ: 2011a. Throughout, “AJ” refers to McFee 2011a; “PAD” to McFee 2011b. See also McFee 2005.
6. Danto 1981, 139.
7. PAD.
8. Austin 1979, 183, my emphasis.
9. Mumford 2012b, 41—my emphasis
10. Mumford’s suggestion, above, of an ‘aesthetic’ account of artistic value has a sim-

- ilar motivation: that, in general, the term “aesthetic” is used in everyday speech for the positive aesthetic value.
11. AJ, 9-10.
 12. Walton 1970.
 13. Diffey 1991, 125-138.
 14. As so often, the artform of architecture provides a puzzling case here. At its heart, the difficulty is that, since most architecture amounts to buildings for people to live in, it has an irreducible purposive dimension: the building must not fall down. Moreover, any talk of its being ‘fit for purpose’ incorporates the sorts of purposes humans have in living in buildings. By contrast, Oscar Wilde was right to think all art pointless—it precisely lacks this connection to human life, whatever others it supports (see AJ, 57-67). As far as I can see, architecture could only be free of this purposive dimension if, say, there were powerful magicians who (by infusing buildings with magic) could produce structures not sustained within the laws of physics (as, for instance, in Trudi Canavan *The High Lord*, Orbit Books, 2004).
 15. Travis 2011, 106.
 16. The first is due to David Best 1978, 104-105; the second to Stephen Mumford 2012b, 10.
 17. Or, as with ski-jumping, a mixture of both. In this way, the contrast is rightly taken to be exhaustive.
 18. McFee 2013, 3.
 19. Best also argues convincingly that no sportsforms can be, or become, artforms.
 20. Mumford 2012b, 10.
 21. Mumford 2012b, 10.
 22. Mumford 2012b, 10.
 23. Mumford 2012b, 14. Mumford (2012b, 10) is arguing against Dixon, 2001 who presented the purist as “... someone whose allegiance shifts according to which is currently the best team” (Dixon is quoted Mumford 2012b, 14 top).
 24. Mumford 2012b, 18.
 25. Mumford 2012b, 41, and resMumford 2012a, 372.
 26. Although perhaps Kant thought it should be. As Paul Guyer (2005 192) accurately notes: “...Kant begins his analysis of ...our claim that a particular object is beautiful from the premise that our pleasure in a beautiful object occurs independently of any interest in the existence of the object as physiologically agreeable (CPJ, §3, 5. 205-7) or as good for some purpose expressed by a determinate concept of utility or morality (CPJ, §4, 5. 207-9).” (“CPJ” refers, of course, to Kant 1789: *Critique of the Power of Judgment*.) Here, “disinterestedness” seems portrayed as sufficient.
 27. As can any that take for granted the univocality of “aesthetic”: sometimes this commitment is explicit.
 28. Austin 1979, 180. Austin (1962, 15, note) offers, as some recognized antitheses for “free’, (i) being in prison; (ii) being tied up in prison; and (iii) committed to a prior engagement—even before we come to the varieties of being coerced or constrained in one of many ways.
 29. See Baker 1977.
 30. Austin 1979, 180.
 31. Lyas 2013, 197.
 32. Or, at the least, this might be urged: as previously, one can only admire the elegance of the successful pass or of the dribbling that moves one’s side towards victory (or one’s opponents away from it); otherwise it may just become just self-indulgence.
 33. Best 1978, 106.
 34. Best 1978, 107.
 35. Frege 1918, 351.
 36. AJ, 33-34.
 37. Consider the fate of the Archie Gemmill goal (against the Netherlands) in the 1978 FIFA World Cup (McFee 2015, Ch. 6): it was recorded using the movement notation system Labanotation, and that score was ‘translated’ into a dance by Andy Howitt—and performed on at least three occasions, including once at Sadlers Wells theatre. But how exactly does dance relate to goal? If the constraint on successfully performing that dance was, say, to follow the Labanotation score, the status of Gemmill’s own dribbling run and goal would be unclear: it would have the wrong ‘direction of fit’, since the Labanotation score was made from what Gemmill actually did. In his case, any mismatch between notated score and behaviour would be a criticism of the score, not the movement. Yet then,

at the least, the elegance of that sequence of movements—as captured through the dance, perhaps, and then transfigured into art—has really nothing to do with football: anymore than my choreographing a dance based on the expressive movements of a roadsweeper would mean that the dance was the road sweeping; or even that it was ‘about’ roadsweeping. So Gemmill’s move-

ment pattern is elegant *as a goal*: and that means as part of the match, with the concomitant connection to the aspiration to win. In abstracting from that, the dance loses any connection to football (as though, if it were performed tomorrow, a new player might succeed in tackling the Gemmill figure!). Watching the dance is *not* really watching that goal.

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