

Aesthetic Emotions, Feelings and Modes of Action Readiness

Andrea Scarantino

Abstract De Sousa has argued that aesthetic emotions lack a motivational dimension, unlike practical, garden-variety emotions. In this article, I first try to understand what aesthetic emotions are, and then explore de Sousa's reasons for proposing that aesthetic emotions are for feeling rather than for doing. I argue that, on the contrary, aesthetic emotions have a great many bodily and mental modes of action readiness associated with them. At the same time, I share de Sousa's view that there is something special about the nature of aesthetic experience, namely a type of 'savoring' which allows us to indulge in the details of the artwork and in the satisfaction it gives us. This experiential savoring is shaped by the conative dimension of aesthetic emotions rather than being disconnected from it. I conclude by rejecting the existence of a difference in kind between practical and aesthetic emotions with respect to the modes of action readiness they involve.