Book forum

On Dominic McIver Lopes's
Being for beauty. Aesthetic agency and value
(Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 288)

With contributions by Dominic McIver Lopes, Robert Hopkins, Brian Soucek, Rachel Zuckert

Précis of the book
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This masala is mellow. According to aesthetic hedonism, the consensus theory of aesthetic value, the masala's mellowness is a property of it that stands in constitutive relation to a finally valuable experience. *Being for beauty* articulates and defends an alternative to aesthetic hedonism, the network theory of aesthetic value (Lopes 2018). In doing so, it reflects upon what is at stake in theorizing about aesthetic value. That is, it sees us as pressing an aesthetic variant of Socrates' question, what does aesthetic engagement contribute to the good life? Like aesthetic hedonism, the network theory is intended to help answer that question.

The main argument for the network theory is a limited, contrastive argument to the best explanation. The argument is limited because there is no consensus in philosophy on what needs explaining. Some explananda are therefore proposed, in the hope of whipping up a discussion of whether the list is correct and complete. Limited arguments are tentative about explananda. The argument is contrastive because a case is made only that the network theory is superior to aesthetic hedonism, which is the only competition for now. Meanwhile, the main argument assumes three points of common ground between aesthetic hedonism and the network theory.

First is a distinction between aesthetic value and artistic value. Aesthetic value is found in works of art but also in nature, design, games and sports, religion, and the world of ideas. In addition, many artistic values are not aesthetic – they are moral, political, cognitive or practical instead. Too many philosophers who acknowledge these points still use "artistic" and "aesthetic" interchangeably, and still gravitate to works of art for examples.

Second, a theory of aesthetic value might answer two questions. A masala's mellowness is an aesthetic value, but not a journalist's integrity or an activist's courage. The demarcation question asks what makes some values distinctively aesthetic. However, knowing what makes the masala's mellowness an aesthetic value leaves open what makes it the case that its being mellow gives anyone reason to do anything. So the normative question asks what makes it the case that an item's aesthetic value gives anyone reason to do anything. Only the normative question is addressed by the network theory and contemporary flavors of aesthetic hedonism. Both punt on demarcation.

Third, the network theory and aesthetic hedonism answer the normative question in a way that is at home in the standard framework for thinking about practical reasons. Aesthetic reasons are worldly facts, such as the fact that the masala is mellow. Facts such as these are empirical or theoretical reasons, but they are also practical reasons. They lend weight to the proposition that A should φ in C. Thus the fact that the masala is mellow lends weight to the proposition that Kamala should appreciate it. What explains her actually appreciating it is that she evaluates it as mellow. Her evaluating it as mellow is a motivating reason. Aesthetic acts are ones motivated by aesthetic evaluations. In sum:

- evaluation: a state is an aesthetic evaluation = the state is a mental representation of some item as having some aesthetic value;

- act: A's φing is an aesthetic act = A's φing counterfactually depends on the content of A's aesthetic evaluation of x, where A's φing operates on x;

- reason: the fact that x is V is an aesthetic reason for A to φ in C = the fact that x is V lends weight to the proposition that A aesthetically should φ in C.

To answer the normative question is to give an informative reduction of the right hand side of reason, one that completes the schema: an aesthetic value, V, is reason-giving = the fact that x is V lends weight to the proposition that…

Aesthetic hedonism fills in the dots. Since being mellow stands in constitutive relation to finally valuable experience, a masala's being mellow lends weight to the proposition that Kamala should appreciate it. Appreciating it delivers a finally valuable experience, and anyone always has (often not decisive) reason to do what delivers finally valuable experience. Aesthetic hedonists nowadays answer the normative question by appeal to plain vanilla hedonic normativity.

Finally, to some explananda. *Being for beauty* opens with case studies of several aesthetic experts, who perform reliably well, solving problems through their aesthetic activities. They are a gardener and her grandson, who restored the garden to life, a photographer who promoted the work of her predecessor, a talk show host who started a book club (you can guess), a video game source code sleuth, and a dance educator. Six observations about these cases need explaining. Aesthetic experts hail from almost all demographic niches, they jointly cover the whole aesthetic universe, they specialize by aesthetic domain (gardens vs photography), they specialize by activity (restoring vs promoting), where specialization by activity and domain interact (restoring gardens vs restoring games; making photographs vs promoting photographs), and their expertise is relatively stable.

Those trained in aesthetics will be surprised by the case studies and the explananda. The prevalent image of the aesthetic expert is a consummate appreciator and critic, a Berenson or a Leavis. The demographics of the prevalent image are terrible, and it stems from two errors. One is to confuse aesthetic evaluation with aesthetic appreciation. Curry newbies might judge, based on testimony, that the masala is mellow and yet be unable to appreciate it. Confusing aesthetic evaluation with aesthetic appreciation occasions a second error, which takes all aesthetic acts to be or to involve acts of appreciation. In truth, a source code sleuth needs to evaluate the game she's working on, typically without playing the game. Although aesthetic hedonism encourages both errors, it commits to neither. So, the book assumes as common ground a distinction between appreciation and evaluation and the wide view of aesthetic acts that the distinction opens up.

Whereas the best versions of aesthetic hedonism are consistent with most of the explananda, the network theory predicts all six. Here is the official statement: an aesthetic value, V, is reason-giving = the fact that x is V lends weight to the proposition that it would be an aesthetic achievement for some A to φ in C, where x is an item in an

aesthetic practice, K, and A's competence to ϕ is aligned upon an aesthetic profile that is constitutive of K.

Commentators remark that the theory packs in many moving parts!

Start with achievement. To achieve is to perform an act successfully, as a result of competence. Right there we have the key ingredient of an answer to the normative question. Anyone who acts at all thereby has reason to succeed and hence to use their competence to succeed. So, if Kamala knows her curries and if the fact that a masala is mellow lends weight to its being an achievement for someone like her to appreciate it, then she has reason thereby to appreciate it. The network theory answers the normative question by appeal to plain vanilla practical normativity: when you act, you have reason to act as someone acts who acts well.

Obviously, the first clause of the reduction does not predict the explananda; the task is to show how the achievement clause generates the rest of the theory. As we saw, there are many types of aesthetic act – editing and restoring, not just appreciating. Each act-type has characteristic success conditions and exploits different skills. Suppose you take and promote photographs. In doing these things, you have different aims and must bring different skills to bear. Your having reason to achieve as a photographer and as a promoter is thereby reason for you to take photographs of a kind that you can promote, and to promote in a way that fits the photographs you take. When that is demanding, you have achievement-based reason to specialize in one activity and find a partner who specializes in the other. For the division of labor to work, you and your partner must be on the same page aesthetically. You must agree on the aesthetic profile of the photographs (modernist, not pictorialist, for example). Indeed, you must be so coordinated around the same aesthetic profile that your joint activities are explained by your complying with a norm conform to the aesthetic profile. You are now in a social practice wherein your reason to achieve is often enough reason to comply with a practice-constitutive norm. Finally, your reason to achieve in this way drives more specialization. The practice comes to be populated by agents with many different kinds of expertise. They specialize by refining the aesthetic profile, which leads to more specialized aesthetic domains – the profile of photographs splits into pictorialist versus modernist, modernism splits into the mode of the decisive moment versus that of revealing formalism, and so on. Members of any social group, in-

teracting non-aesthetically, will have reason to step onto the aesthetic specialization escalator. Plain vanilla practical normativity predicts the six explananda.

The main argument for the network theory, namely that it handles the six explananda better than aesthetic hedonism, is meant to persuade, but also to enrich the pool of resources we have to think about aesthetic value. The distinction between demarcation and normativity, the application of the standard meta-normative framework, and the six explananda give us far more to work with than we ever had when we just took aesthetic hedonism for granted. In the same spirit, the final chapters of the book offer five bonus arguments for the network theory that empower thinking about aesthetic value.

Chapter 8, on aesthetic motivation, takes the sting out of the implication that aesthetic value is not tied constitutively to finally valuable experience. It also makes a case for aesthetic reasons externalism, the thesis that the fact that the masala is mellow is reason for Kamala to appreciate it even if she cannot be motivated to appreciate it just by her evaluating it as mellow. Maybe she is motivated by professional concerns: she writes reviews but is jaded and does it for the living.

Certain worries about disagreement galvanize traditional thinking about aesthetic value. Chapter 9 articulates and then dispels the worries by showing how they overlook the key role that disagreement plays in smoothing aesthetic interaction by establishing, and also modifying, the profiles of aesthetic practices.

Chapter 10 tackles the metaphysics of aesthetic values and argues that they are not response-constituted. For more, see the reply to Hopkins, in the essay to follow.

Two closing chapters mull what draws us into aesthetics in the first place. We want to know how engaging with beauty contributes to a life that goes well. Chapter 11 answers that achievement-based engagement in aesthetic practices sources meaning and well-being for individuals. Chapter 12 moves from the individual to the collective level, scouting the reasons we have to support aesthetic practices of which we are not members. Aesthetic goods are collective as well as personal goods. Rachel Zuckert, Rob Hopkins, and Brian Soucek will press further on these matters.

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Aesthetics for amateurs

Rachel Zuckert (Northwestern University)

This is a marvelous book. Sophisticated, ambitious, and tightly argued, it develops a unified theory of aesthetic value (the network theory), drawing on a wide range of contemporary scholarly literature from philosophy and beyond, and deploying an unusually explicit, worked-out philosophical methodology. It is also deeply attentive to currently experienced realities of aesthetic value: as pervasive, threading through most aspects of our lives, and thickly various, instantiated in vastly different objects, in different contexts. In Lopes's terms: "we cannot stale beauty's infinite variety" (Lopes 2018: 143). Consonantly, he emphasizes the variety of aesthetic appreciators – or, in his broader terms, aesthetic "agents" (appreciation being just one of many activities that people can pursue with an eye to aesthetic value). Appreciators are both socially embedded and path-dependent: we cannot all appreciate everything, because there are so many potentially appreciable things, requiring specialized knowledge, practice, contexts, and so forth for appropriate uptake of their value. For example, "Sam," one of the book's orienting examples, is an expert in preserving code for computer games; she can recognize the elegance of particular stretches of code. Though I can recognize her expertise (from outside), I will never be able so to evaluate myself, however, given my ignorance of everything involved in such evaluation (what it is like to play the games, constraints on how code is written, and so forth) – an ignorance and consequent inability explained, in part, by my history and social context. As Lopes writes, for us, now, "all [aesthetic practices] are niches" (Lopes 2018: 202).

Most importantly, this book is a generous and genuine intervention. Generous because it aspires to recognize much aesthetic value and activity informed by it. Genuine because that recognition expresses Lopes's own appreciation of the wide variety of aesthetic value and appreciators, and dislike of snobbery that excludes them,

most explicitly signaled in his choice of Oprah and her book club as another central example of aesthetic agency. The work is genuine as well because it takes its bearing from what Lopes calls the primitive question: "what is the place of aesthetic value in a good life?" (Lopes 2018: 3). Lopes thus both takes up the philosophical question of most pre-theoretical interest (how do I live a good life?), and directly engages with the reason why most of us study aesthetics.

In the following remarks, I will take up Lopes's invitation to consider this question, and, specifically, to collaborate in his inquiry, using his methodology. That is, Lopes begins the book with portraits of "experts", "exemplary figures [...] who thrive in their aesthetic pursuits" (Lopes 2018: 15) – to use as reference points for his investigation. These figures, including Sam and Oprah, are admirable because they understand aesthetic value and integrate it into their lives well; consideration of them tells us what an aesthetic theory must explain. Among these explananda, Lopes emphasizes the experts' *agency* – in light of their accurate aesthetic evaluations, they engage in a plethora of activities (editing code, selecting books, and so forth) – and their *specialization* both concerning the objects with which they engage, and in the competences therein exercised. This is a theoretically ingenious, sideways approach to investigating aesthetic value – via its "afterimage" (Lopes 2018: 41) in action – by contrast to a more common approach oriented by some set of privileged objects, taken to have aesthetic value. This methodological innovation pays off: it calls attention to the weighty evidence against a traditional conception of the aesthetic in terms of disinterestedness, understood as disengagement from action. As Lopes notes, recognition of aesthetic value *in fact* prompts and guides much activity, as for his experts; it is at the core of some people's jobs – such as (to take another of his examples, to which I will return) a set designer for Wagnerian opera. Lopes's approach also raises doubt about another common connotation of disinterestedness – as impersonal regard – and correlatively aesthetic value as that which can be appreciated by "anyone", calling attention, rather, to personalized involvement with thickly various aesthetic values. In sum: through Lopes's method, we are prompted to recognize the lived reality of aesthetic value, to remove screens of a theoretical tradition that may obscure it. Indeed, one might say that Lopes returns us to a prior moment in the history of philosophical aesthetics, before disinterestedness arrived (in the eighteenth century). As he notes, the primitive question is akin to Socrates' question

concerning how to live a good life; his rejection of disinterestedness likewise returns us to Plato's conception of beauty as of deep personal interest, energizing the appreciator to intense activity.

I worry, however, that Lopes's network theory leaves out an important aspect of Plato's treatment – in brief, the love of beauty. I sketch what I mean by adding a case study – as Lopes invites the reader to do – of two people I admire, in part for their "thriving" in their aesthetic pursuits. Let me call them Gigi and Gisela. Both are successful academics, who specialize in fields only tangentially related to aesthetics. Both are friends of mine – and, importantly, Facebook friends. That is how I learned about the importance of aesthetic value in their lives: both post many photos of natural beauty. Gigi posts (only) close-up photos of roses; Gisela most frequently photos of trees and sky. They have good lives in many respects – beyond their professional success, Gigi is a fantastic mother, Gisela an accomplished athlete, for example – but their appreciation for natural beauty importantly contributes to the goodness of their lives. What light does their case shed on the network theory?

Neither is a disinterested appreciator in the sense Lopes rejects. Both have strong personal interests in specific objects (Gigi loves roses more than most ever will), and are both driven to activity as a result – posting photos, traveling to experience natural beauty. But I think they raise three points for Lopes's account, which I abbreviate as follows: 1) love; 2) natural beauty; 3) paradigms (method).

I begin with love. According to Lopes's network theory, a set designer who is especially accomplished and sought-after for Wagnerian opera, but who hates Wagner is an "aesthetic expert" because she "routinely act[s] on the aesthetic reasons" she has, in accord with her "correct aesthetic evaluations", even though the "enterprise leaves her cold" (Lopes 2018: 150-1). She is fully cognizant of aesthetic value – even if, as noted in a later chapter, she is not thereby (fully) a happy person (see, e.g., Lopes 2018: 213). Here one may pose a comparative version of the primitive question, I think: for whom, the set designer or Gigi and Gisela, does aesthetic value as such contribute to a good life? Neither Gigi nor Gisela is an expert about roses, trees, or photography. Though they are interested in showing beauty to others, they collaborate in shared practices only in an attenuated sense (primarily: posting on Facebook). But they care about beauty; *as* beauty, it contributes to the goodness of their lives, from their own point of view. (And this is not because the roses or trees provide

pleasure or "finally good" experiences – as Lopes describes value according to aesthetic hedonism, the competitor view he considers – but because Gigi and Gisela take the roses and trees to have independent value, and take care to integrate noticing that value into their lives[1]). To be clear, I think that Lopes is right that there *are* aesthetic experts, people with specialized skills and superior discernment, professionally and collaboratively engaged with aesthetically valuable objects. It is less obvious to me, however, that such expertise is the same as "thriving" in one's aesthetic pursuits from the point of view of having a good life. To adapt a criticism Lopes raises against aesthetic hedonism: why should it matter to Gigi and Gisela if an aesthetically expert horticulturalist judges their photographed varieties of roses or species of trees to be of second-best quality? Or to pose the question on the other side: for the set designer, her prowess at aesthetic judgment is valuable, but it is valuable economically or intellectually or socially – not aesthetically. It seems to me that a theory of aesthetic value should be able to mark this difference. In sum: can the network theory incorporate amateurs (in both senses of the word)?

My second question is briefer: Natural beauty is manifestly an aesthetic value – but little discussed here. How does the network theory account for it? As for Gigi and Gisela, natural beauty can inspire action; it may be appreciated in a way formed by one's cultural context or life path. (Gisela's Nordic background probably informs her love of icy landscapes, for example.) But can one understand its value as "anchored" (in the terms of chapter 11, e.g., Lopes 2018: 194-5) by the norms of niche social practices? Doesn't it seem likely, rather, that (love of) natural beauty preexisted and partially inspired the formation of such social practices both historically and (often) personally – out of a wish to promote, imitate, or extend this wonderful thing?

This question brings me to my last point. In proposing his methodology, Lopes suggests that one not focus exclusively on "creating, performing, appreciating" as philosophers have done, but on a wider range of aesthetically oriented activities (Lopes 2018: 29). This reori-

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[1] This is not the place for a full-fledged account of love, but I assume that most would agree that love does not reduce to having pleasurable experiences caused by some object, that it is an attitude taking its object to be valuable, and that it contributes importantly to good human lives.

entation is productive, as I have noted. But, I worry, the resultant view may not be accurate to the shape of the concept of aesthetic value. Though we should indeed not lose sight of the multiformity of aesthetic value, as Lopes insists, perhaps some instances are paradigms, more central cases, in the character of which others participate, based on which the others are later developed, and so forth; perhaps the concept of aesthetic value does not apply to all cases flatly and equally. Bluntly, in terms of my cases: Facebook notwithstanding, Gigi and Gisela seem to me better to represent the role of aesthetic value in human life, over most of human history, than does Sam.

I now elaborate this concern, in a few ways. Returning to my first point: we should grant to Lopes, I think, that one's every action in light of aesthetic value need not be appreciative, or (in my terms) done with love. Still, if one is to count really as an aesthetic agent, as alive to aesthetic value, maybe some of them – the paradigmatic ones? – have to be. Or, in historical terms: the network theory is a brilliant theoretical portrait of aesthetics now, the niche aesthetics of an economically specialized, culturally diverse society (of late capitalism, if one likes). Prior societies have been significantly more "monocultural" (see chapter 12, e.g. Lopes 2018: 222), however. Why should one take our social organization and aesthetic practices to reveal the truth about aesthetic value as such – to be the paradigm? Or, with respect to the term, "beauty": as Lopes notes, "beauty" is used widely and narrowly, i.e., to mean all aesthetic value or one specific value (say, that of perceptible order calling for love; Lopes 2018: 6). Consistently with his aspiration to inclusiveness, the "beauty" of Lopes's title is the wider one. But perhaps there is a reason for the blurred usage; maybe narrow "beauty" is more central to aesthetic value than other specific values, a necessity for human life that then gives rise to elaborations (denoted by the wider "beauty"). Perhaps narrow beauty is correlatively, epistemically, more central than other values to conceptual understanding of the aesthetic. Is there a place for this centrality in the network theory, or must it be dismissed as mere historical contingency or sloppy language?

These are difficult and important questions, with which all theorists of aesthetic value should grapple. This wonderful book, with its theoretical sophistication and ambition, its genuineness of questioning and connection to lived realities, energizes me to do so.

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The power and purpose of *Being for beauty*
Robert Hopkins (New York University)

1.

What's worth wanting in life? Two answers popular in philosophy have been: valuable experiences and achievements. (Think of the literature on death). Is an engagement with the aesthetic character of things worth wanting and, if so, why? This is Lopes's "primitive" question. Much philosophical theorizing about the aesthetic has, if it's addressed this question at all, responded by appeal to valuable experiences. In *Being for beauty* Lopes takes the path less trodden, developing an answer in terms of achievement.

He does so by first addressing the distinct, "normative" question: what makes aesthetic values *values*? What is the source of their normative authority? We are to tackle the primitive question by first answering the normative one, since the latter captures everything in the former that can be made tractable (Lopes 2018: 47). How satisfactory is Lopes's answer to the normative question, and how far does his answer help with the primitive question that lies beneath?

2.

If a thing's worth doing, it's worth doing well. Lopes's answer to the normative question, the Network Theory (NT), takes this old saw to heart. Values, whatever their flavour (epistemic, ethical, aesthetic, sporting…), offer reasons for action. Aesthetic values offer us reason to act aesthetically, that is to act in ways that are counterfactually dependent on our evaluation of objects as bearing aesthetic values. Aesthetic values make aesthetic things worth doing. According to the saw, they are thus reasons to do those things well. Lopes understands

doing well as *achieving*: acting successfully through the exercise of competence. The locus of aesthetic values' normativity lies in the achievements they give us reason to attain (ch. 5).

But not in isolation. Aesthetic normativity bites on us as members of networks of collaborating agents. Given a set of aesthetic goals, we specialise, taking our place in a network in which each does better what she would do worse were she a generalist. The social implementation of such a collaborative network is an *aesthetic practice*, centred on an *aesthetic profile*. Profiles generalise Walton's categories of art: they are assignments of aesthetic values to objects given their non-aesthetic properties. They lie at the heart of networks in that the aesthetic acts of the network's members are guided by evaluations that aim to track those assignments (ch. 7).

Here's NT in action. The fact that the coffee is bright is a reason for me to brew it using a filter rather than a cafetière. (The latter method tends to dampen brightness). My act counts as aesthetic provided I choose the method guided by my evaluation that the beans yield a bright brew. But all this depends on the practice of coffee-making/drinking to which I belong: the flavours which that practice maps to brightness would map to sharpness or shrillness in some other practice, such as, perhaps, that of preparing/appreciating hot chocolate.

3.

On the Network Theory values are internal to practices. Things aren't bright in themselves (any more than *Guernica* is shocking and violent independently of the practice of painting), but only relative to a profile assigning non-aesthetic features (flavours) to aesthetic ones (brightness, sharpness, shrillness or whatever). But since nothing is a value unless it provides reason for acting, it is not merely what counts as bright, but what coffee-makers have reason to do, that is dependent on the practice in play. This is why, as Lopes's later discussion makes clear, X's bearing a value gives me no aesthetic reason to do anything at all unless I belong to the practice, the profile at the heart of which assigns that value to things with X's non-aesthetic features (Lopes 2018: 205).

Thus NT amounts to a kind of social existentialism: we make our own values, at least aesthetic values, by the practices we participate

in. Now, of course, the original, asocial, existentialists thought some-
thing like this was true of all value. If they were right, it's hardly a sur-
prise that it holds in the aesthetic case. But were they right? Or, to
ask a more manageable question, how easy is it to maintain the exis-
tentialist perspective from within the lived pursuit of the aesthetic?

4.

Tastes change, and when ours do, it's often hard not to think of them
as having improved. No doubt sometimes these changes involve
aligning our competences more closely with the profiles constitutive
of a given practice. We get better at recognizing and advancing the
values the practice fixes. Such cases present no challenge to NT: we
simply conceive ourselves as responding more adequately to the aes-
thetic reasons the practice provides. But sometimes we undergo
more radical shifts. We come to see one practice as superior to an-
other – perhaps finding that the satisfactions of prog rock are really
just a pale shadow of those on offer in jazz; or experiencing self-
expression through graffiti as offering a combination of authenticity
and originality that writing song lyrics does not. If the normativity of
aesthetic values reduces to the achievements they invite us to attain,
and if those values and achievements are internal to the practice,
what sense can we make of this?

   Note that adopting the new practice need not mean abandoning
the old. I may continue to enjoy my prog rock albums while thinking
that jazz is where the real aesthetic action is. I still inhabit the prac-
tice that produced the former. Only, I do so while considering what is
on offer there to be inferior to the riches jazz reveals. Perhaps my
pleasure, or as NT would prefer, pursuit of achievement, is guilty, but
guilt does not preclude participation.

   Thus the challenge here is different from that posed by Lopes's
outsider skeptic, someone outside the practice who asks what reason
she has to enter it (ch. 11). Even so, his discussion of that character
does offer one resource to appeal to here. As Lopes notes, practices
and agents are like horses and courses: particular agents will be bet-
ter suited to some practices, and to some roles within them, than to
others. Lopes uses this to frame the idea of *derived aesthetic reasons*
that can speak to the outsider skeptic: she has more reason to adopt
a practice, the better her prospects for aesthetic achievement within

it (Lopes 2018: 206). Perhaps our upward trajectory can be understood in the same terms. We move from a practice in which our prospects for achievement are limited to one in which they are improved.

Sadly, like hopeless students in love with philosophy, sometimes we are drawn to practices and roles to which we are not well suited. Recognising this need not shake our sense that nonetheless the step was upwards, from inferior practice to superior. And even when we do thrive in the new environment it is hard to think that our sense of a step up reduces to being better able to respond to the aesthetic reasons the practice puts our way. It is not our response that seems better, but what we respond to. As it seems to us, we achieve more at least in part because our actions are responses to values *higher* than those our old passion pursued. This appearance NT must treat as illusory.

5.

If a thing's worth doing… But if one's not already into the practice, it's not yet worth doing, from one's point of view. How can anyone rationally choose to enter into a practice? What reason can they have to choose one over another?

Here we do run into Lopes's outsider skeptic. We've already seen his response to her, the appeal to derivative aesthetic reasons. Note how different these are from genuine, or internal, aesthetic reasons. They are as different as the reasons I have as the player of a game to make a move and the reason I have as a non-player to take up the game in the first place. Someone with a good memory, a fine nose for risk and a flair for subtle communication has what we might call a *derivative gaming* reason to take up bridge: they are likely to win at it. That is very different from the non-derivative reason someone playing the game has to take the current trick, which is that doing so will bring victory nearer. A similar divide separates Lopes's aesthetic reasons from their derivative cousins (Lopes 2018: 205-6).

Derivative aesthetic reasons are personal, in the sense that they provide a partial ordinal ranking of practices I have reason to take up that is valid only for me (Lopes 2018: 206-7). They are focused on my prospects for aesthetic attainment. Are they the only reasons I might feel the need of, as I consider whether to enter into an aesthetic practice? Suppose I'm confronted with a choice between two such

practices. One is demanding: my chances of success in it are slim; the other is nicely tailored to my modest abilities. Lopes's derivative aesthetic reasons speak for the easier option. But might I not worry that the values and achievements it defines are cheap? Of course, until I enter into the practice, my knowledge of what it offers can be at best very limited. Perhaps I cannot really have any feel for the aesthetic values that its profile determines until I am immersed. But NT tells me, not that my worry will be hard to assuage, but that it is incoherent. It makes no sense to suppose that one practice pursues aesthetic values inferior to another, since such values are values at all only relative to the practices themselves.

6.

The upshot of these two brief discussions is that NT appears to leave out something in our aesthetic thinking that, if taken seriously, would shape answers to the normative question. As aesthetic agents, considering where we have come from, or considering where to aim to go next, we are inclined to treat aesthetic values as having a feature that Lopes's version of social existentialism struggles to accommodate. We are tempted to think of them as fitting into a ranking of higher and lower. The resultant ordering may be highly partial. However, it is not clearly personal, and certainly does not reduce to our individual prospects for success in achievement. Of course, perhaps this aspect of our aesthetic thinking should not be taken seriously. Lopes may offer an error theory explaining why things seem to be this way, when they are not; or appeal to more general arguments to explain why they simply cannot be as they seem. But absent such manoeuvres, we are left chalking up at least one point in favour of NT's great rival, Aesthetic Hedonism. For it does seem able to countenance an impersonal comparison of values across practices.

7.

So much for the normative question. What of the primitive question that underlies it? Lopes's discussion of this, while rich and intricate, in the end leaves me with more questions than answers. But rather than

explaining how, let me sketch an alternative. It's suggested by (though not in) recent work by Thi Nguyen (forthcoming).

Nguyen's idea is that our aesthetic practices have a distinctive motivational structure. In them we aim at something, but for the *purpose* of attaining something else. If this is right, perhaps NT correctly describes the aim of aesthetic practices (achievement), but misses the purposes for which we engage in them. But it will be these purposes that provide the answer to the primitive question.

Nguyen takes his inspiration from a phenomenon we've already mentioned: games. The aim of playing a game is to win. But the point of playing games is not winning, but all the challenges thrown up, and fun had, in trying to attain that aim. If we ask why we should play games – gaming's primitive question – any plausible answer must appeal to the challenge, fun etc., i.e. to the purpose of game playing. Appeal to its aim does nothing: we don't care about winning unless we're already playing. And appeal to "derivative gaming reasons", in terms of our prospects for winning, would seem little better placed.

If so for games, why not for the aesthetic? If there too aim and purpose come apart, any satisfactory answer to the primitive question should look to the latter. Aesthetic achievement, in the terms set by a practice, is of no interest to those not already participating in it. The prospect of achieving, given the practice and one's competences (i.e. derivative aesthetic reasons), seems similarly peripheral. It is the purpose(s) of the practice that offer the normative meat, at least when it comes to the primitive question.

This is an appealing structure, but how might it be fleshed out? Nguyen himself suggests that the aim of aesthetic practice is correct judgement, while its purpose lies in the satisfactions offered by the struggle to come to that judgement (the subtleties of interpretation, pleasure of the sudden aspect shift when a new reading opens up, and so on). This is unlikely to convince Lopes. One of the background ambitions of *Being for beauty* is to lay the foundations for an aesthetic theory that is genuinely cosmopolitan, applying equally to the many and various aesthetic practices found across cultures, subgroups and historical periods. Round here and about now we may aim at correct evaluation and relish the challenge of reaching it, but why think that every aesthetic practice is or has been that way, let alone that it must be?

However, Nguyen's proposal generalises. NT itself suggests how to do this for the aim of aesthetic practices. It may not always be cor-

rect judgement, but it is always aesthetic achievement in some form or other. In its rich discussions of various forms of aesthetic expertise, Being for Beauty gives us a wonderful sense of just how varied such achievements might be. As long as they form a class contrasting with purposes, that variety is unproblematic.

What, though, of the purposes themselves? I doubt anything much can be said *a priori* about the full range of options here. Nguyen has given us one plausible example, for at least some aesthetic practices pursued in our place and time. But who is to say what other ends might be, and have been, served by participating in aesthetic practices, and attaining the achievements they render possible? Maintaining a suitable relation to God or the gods, binding the community in a shared sense of wider values, articulating one's own thoughts and feelings, coming to know things that can't be grasped discursively – all have been pointed to as possible rewards of making art. None need be taken as primary: different artistic practices may further different purposes. And when, as Lopes rightly insists we should, we expand our view beyond art to the aesthetic at large, no doubt the roster of possible purposes expands too. The resulting view might thus be thoroughly pluralistic. If so, the answer to the primitive question will be fragmented, varying with cultural and historical location. But if that answer lies in the purposes, not the aims, of aesthetic practices, we had better start exploring that variety.

8.

Nearly 50 years ago, Alistair MacIntyre, faced with another primitive question, "why be moral?", suggested an ethics rooted in the structure of practices that he hoped would, if not answer that question, at least make it feel less pressing. In *Being for beauty* Lopes offers us an *After virtue* for the aesthetic, and for our times. Its emphasis on practices, agency, reasons and achievements roots aesthetic value in features of the human sufficiently deep and universal for its cosmopolitan ambition not to appear overreaching. And yet that emphasis also reflects the particularity of our cultural moment: we live in the age in which one stratum in Western society has become obsessed with aesthetic doing and appreciating. (Just think coffee culture, pimping one's ride, or the care many will devote to discussing trash TV). No one should ignore this bold, meticulous, insightful and imaginative at-

tempt to reorient the entire discipline of philosophical aesthetics. We will be discussing *Being for beauty* for many years to come.

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Regulating for beauty
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1.

Assume that the network theory of aesthetic value is true. What morally or politically follows? The network theory makes this question at once more pressing and more complicated than it is for many of the theories Dom Lopes's *Being for beauty* works so effectively to supplant[2].

   The question is more pressing because the network theory has sociality baked into it. Unlike the pleasure-seeking appreciator of traditional theories – the aesthete judging paintings in the museum – Lopes situates aesthetic value within networks of experts and aspiring experts specializing in a whole variety of activities, not just or even primarily appreciation. Whereas we *might* be able to bracket disinterested contemplation from our moral and political concerns, there is no way we could similarly insulate groups of aesthetic actors who are busy planting, selling, and visiting large gardens, getting them designated as national historic sites, building inns, gift shops, and restaurants, managing trusts, commissioning sculptures, and hosting festivals. (And that's just from the book's first example – that of Elsie and Alexander Redford).

[2] This comment was written for an author-meet-critics session on Dominic McIver Lopes's *Being for beauty* at the 2019 Annual Meeting of the American Society for Aesthetics.

Moreover, the network theory makes questions about the morality and politics of aesthetic value harder, not just harder to avoid. The individualistic model of disinterested contemplation that *Being for beauty* rejects has long gone hand-in-hand with universalizing notions of aesthetic judgment. The realm of the aesthetic thus becomes one where we at least aspire to move beyond our self-interested differences. By comparison, the political implications of the network theory aren't as clear. With aesthetic enthusiasts siloed into their separate, varyingly accessible aesthetic practices, the politics of supporting or regulating those practices, and the potential political and moral consequences of the practices themselves, become subjects in need of investigation.

Lopes begins that investigation in the final chapter of his book, which, in his description, "switches to the collective perspective, laying out an entirely new justification for aesthetic education and the aesthetic policies of groups, especially states" (Lopes 2018: 11). That chapter, however, is something of an anomaly in a book that's otherwise so bold in its refusal to accept the standard assumptions and framings of its field, for the last chapter largely accepts the terms in which aesthetic policymaking is usually debated. A book that elsewhere makes such strides by refusing to cabin aesthetic value to the arts ends up asking its moral and political questions primarily in relation to the arts.

I point this out less as a criticism than as an observed opportunity, for I think Lopes's theory of aesthetic value has the potential to get us asking entirely new and better questions about state interventions in aesthetics. Fittingly, the value of the network theory is seen in part from how much it gives us reason to do, in aesthetic policymaking as elsewhere.

2.

Seldom have aesthetic value, action, or expertise been treated as wide-rangingly as Lopes does in his book. To take *Being for beauty* seriously would be to fundamentally alter the topics discussed in this journal and elsewhere in aesthetics.

At the same time, we might wonder how fractured the field would become, for aesthetic values provide reasons for aesthetic acts (including discussions of such values) only to those within an aesthetic

practice. For the rest of us outsiders, Lopes offers the notion of "derived aesthetic reasons" for thinking that we are likely to achieve were we to acquire "core aesthetic competence" in some new practice (Lopes 2018: 206). Given the network theory's perspectivism, there is no view from nowhere from which we can rank the goods of one practice against another's, but given someone's circumstances and existing competencies, we can rank her chances for aesthetic achievement within various new practices.

This brings us to aesthetic policymaking. Since policymakers can't rank the world's aesthetic values in order to promote the most valuable[3], Lopes argues that aesthetic policy should aim instead at increasing overall aesthetic opportunity: the diversity of aesthetic practices within a society and the ease by which those with derived aesthetic reasons for joining a practice are able to do so (Lopes 2018: 223).

3.

It is here that I think the book hews too closely to an existing literature that largely fails to treat the realm of aesthetic value and action as capaciously as Lopes himself does.

Thus, for example, when discussing instrumentalist justifications for aesthetic regulation, Lopes writes that "since most state-level aesthetic policy is arts policy, the discussion centres on the instrumental benefits of the arts" (Lopes 2018: 220). Or later, he claims that "aesthetic practices number in the zillions, but the state mostly intervenes in arts funding. As to the rest, the policy is laissez-faire" (Lopes 2018: 225). He goes on to ask what justifies the state's intervention "in aesthetic education only when it comes to some aesthetic practices, namely the arts" (Lopes 2018: 225)?

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[3] See, for example, Lopes's acknowledgment (Lopes 2018: 218) that "the network theory does not take for granted that any aesthetic good benefits all or most. (Why should the larger society do anything for my wee corner of the aesthetic universe, or yours?)".

The shared premise here is wrong. Most state-level *aesthetic* policy is not, in fact, arts policy. And much of our most important *arts* policy is surprisingly non-interventionist[4].

Consider copyright, a state subsidy given to creators of "original works of authorship fixed in any tangible medium of expression" (17 U.S.C. § 102). Decisions about what is protected, how long protections last, and, within that time, what counts as allowable fair use by other creators together establish the parameters of a property grant worth inestimably more than any subsidies government arts councils might dole out. (Just think of how much is at stake in our refusal to grant copyright protection to an aesthetic activity as important as fashion design). Design patents – which protect "new, original and ornamental design for an article of manufacture" (35 U.S.C. § 101) – and trademark protection for logos, jingles, the shape of certain soda bottles, even the color of some products together make state-level aesthetic policy even less art-centric.

Land use policies tilt the balance still further. Whether the law is protecting an unspoiled landscape or a historic district from new construction, regulating the size, color, or style of a neighborhood's buildings, telling residents how they have to maintain their yards, or demolishing blighted buildings[5], land use law literally shapes the visual environment in which we live. Sometimes it determines how noisy and smelly our world is too. The point is that all is this count as aesthetic regulation, though little of it touches on art.

What *does* affect art, greatly, are the tax breaks non-profit arts organizations and their donors receive in the United States – though notably, these aren't given to organizations like art museums and symphony orchestras *qua* arts organizations, but only insofar as they are seen as "educational," one of the tax-exempt categories under federal law. Within that limit, who gets subsidized is determined not

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[4] I focus on aesthetic regulation in the United States, because that is what I know, and *Being for beauty* never tethers its discussion to any particular legal system. Still, my use of "our" in what follows is problematic – perhaps fittingly, given how the network theory, I'll argue, also complicates what is "ours" in the world of aesthetics.

[5] The U.S. Supreme Court has said that this can be done to ensure that that "the community should be beautiful as well as healthy, spacious as well as clean, well-balanced as well as carefully patrolled" (Berman v. Parker, 348 U.S. 26, 33, 1954).

by the state, but by the private choices of donors who decide what aesthetic practices they want to fund.

4.

I would love to see what the last chapter of *Being for beauty* would look like if the discussion of aesthetic regulation took account of all of this — that's to say, were it as untethered as the rest of this book is from our usual consuming focus on the arts. Take the important question of aesthetic education. I don't think it's true that state interventionism in aesthetic education only or primarily happens through *art* education (Lopes 2018: 225). The unbelievable variety of domains and skills baked into the network theory itself suggests how much wider our focus could be.

Mathematics provides Lopes one of his early examples of beauty (Lopes 2018: 5); shouldn't state curricular standards for math be brought into the discussion? What about the ways the state so thoroughly regulates the grooming and fashion practices of its young? (Lopes notes at one point that "[m]ost humans designated male are not permitted to wear dresses", Lopes 2018: 222. Were we to ask "Permitted by whom?", surely "schools" would be one of the top answers). Physical education classes, instruction on writing, the dress-up and drawing and cheerleading and (at the school on my block) gardening that students are taught to do — all of these can be forms of aesthetic education, and I wonder how they stack up against arts education in developing core aesthetic competencies or competence in some of the specialized skills that aesthetic experts tend to have.

Lopes makes the empirical claim that given the prominence of the arts and the rich critical tradition that attends them, education in one of the arts is likely to build competencies that are especially transferrable. The arts, in other words, are likely to serve as hubs, with spokes that lead to other quirkier aesthetic practices. To promote aesthetic opportunity, aesthetic educators just need to pick a hub, any hub.

I just asked whether the arts are more likely than math or philosophy or rhetoric or gardening to serve as hubs. When educators pick a hub, any hub, what should be among the options? But we might ask also, or instead, whether a menu of options is what we want. Perhaps we have aesthetic reasons — or moral or political ones — for ensuring

that everyone travels through one or more of the *same* hubs in order to share at least some aesthetic practices.

If no aesthetic practices are shared amongst us all – because our skills and interests naturally differ, our aesthetic education uses a pick-a-hub-any-hub model, and many of our other aesthetic regulations are laissez-faire – then we, as a community, will not end up sharing any aesthetic reasons for action. This strikes me as a profound impoverishment of our communal life.

What are the prospects of public art, for example, in the siloed aesthetic world of the network theory? Danto wrote of truly public art as not just art in public, but as art in which the public has "invested […] its feelings, beliefs, and values". Public artworks, he said, "in effect *are* the public in the medium of art" (Danto 1989: 289). The network theory explains to me one major way public art often goes wrong. In fact, it explains exactly what Danto thought was wrong about Richard Serra's *Tilted arc* in Lower Manhattan: it imposed the values of its aesthetic practice – within which the piece was a stunning achievement – on a public outside the practice, whose values were not its (Soucek, forthcoming).

How, though, does the network theory account for public art that succeeds? What aesthetic practice do we share as a community such that we can contest whether a given aesthetic object truly counts as us in the medium of art? Often contestation of this sort is primarily moral or political, as with debates over the Confederate monuments in the United States. But an account of aesthetic normativity should also give us the tools for saying that something is or isn't *aesthetically* us: for example, the fascist aesthetic of the World War II Memorial on the Washington Mall.

How, finally, are we to make the interventionist policy choices that are sometimes pressed upon us, if the network theory doesn't permit a view from nowhere, or at least a widely-enough-shared view from somewhere? Laissez-faire aesthetic policy isn't always possible, or neutral in its impact. Debates over fair use in copyright will pit appropriation artists against those engaged in other aesthetic practices – how do we decide between them? Loosening zoning and building codes might at first seem to liberate each to pursue his architectural practices unhindered. But actually, someone's whose practice values stylistic uniformity will be stymied in his quest for aesthetic achievement.

5.

According to *Being for beauty*, "Aesthetic normativity is the same for all, but what each aesthetically should do reflects who they are, and where they are" (Lopes 2018: 137). In Lopes's snappy analogy: "Not everyone eats the same food when all eat the hundred-mile diet". Locavore policymaking is easy: just maximize the opportunities for quality food production everywhere. Regulating for beauty is a trickier business. Helping me do what I aesthetically should do, given who and where I am, might hinder you from doing what you aesthetically should do over where you are. And sometimes, you and I might want to share something beautiful in common, even or especially when we are more than a hundred miles away.

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Responses: love, illusion, regulation
Dominic McIver Lopes

New work on aesthetic value is complicated, in two ways, by the default status of aesthetic hedonism. That nobody has felt compelled to argue for the view makes it hard to see how to argue for alternatives to aesthetic hedonism, so we must start at scratch, asking what work we need a theory of aesthetic value to perform. And since widespread acceptance of aesthetic hedonism has left it free to dominate our aesthetic intuitions, we must find methods that do not rely on them. Zuckert, Hopkins, and Soucek assess how well the network theory meets these challenges.

Zuckert's feeling for Gigi and Gisela resonates with the prime directive under which *Being for beauty* operates, to take every effort not to build theory tainted by the slightest whiff of elitism. Gigi and Gisela are "amateurs" in both senses of the word: they are not professionals and they act out of love. We should renounce any theory that denies them a place at table by failing a "Bourdieu test".

Aesthetic experts, who hail from all walks of life, reliably succeed within their aesthetic niches, yet most of us are not experts, for we have just enough competence to get by. Assume that every agent has reasons to act. Sometimes we are motivated to act by beliefs and desires that represent our reasons, but mostly we muddle. An expert is just someone with a competence that routinely motivates them to act on the reasons they have. That is, they act on the reasons that we all have but that most of us fail to act on. In this modest sense, they are normative standards. *Being for beauty* does not say that we must want to be experts, that we must regret our muddling through, or that the benefits of aesthetic life accrue to experts alone.

Zuckert sees that; her challenge is that it matters not a whit that Gigi and Ghisela are not experts. They reap a reward of aesthetic life, which lies in their love of bits of nature, even when they fall short in their aesthetic acts.

One thought in reply is that aesthetic love is not oblivious. Imagine that Gigi posts photos indiscriminately, without regard for aesthetic value. She sees the rose is ratty, and shrugs it off. Maybe she acts out of love, but is it aesthetic love, if it takes no notice of the rose's aesthetic features? What the network theory says is that, in finding that a rose is ratty, and expressing her love on that basis, Gigi complies with a normative standard. We cannot make sense of her and Ghisela as attentive aesthetic lovers without appeal to a normative standard according to which they count as attentive.

The hard part is the love side of the story. Since Zuckert accepts aesthetic reason internalism, the question is whether the network theory can explain why engagement in an aesthetic practice can so readily lend itself to aesthetic love. There is this. Having a reason to perform an act gives an agent an additional reason to want to perform the act for that reason (Lopes 2018: 148-9). When its being lush is reason for Ghisela to post a photo, she has reason to want to post it for that reason. So, there is a path from reasons to desire. The next step is to clear the path from desire to love. For that, we need a theory of aesthetic love, and it is time to craft such a theory. Why not ex-

plore the thought that engaging in a social practice – be it aesthetic, athletic, ludic, or intellectual – can nurture a form of love?

Hopkins questions the network theory's implication that aesthetic values are practice internal, such that there is no view from aesthetic nowhere from which we can rank aesthetic practices. Since we want impersonal rankings, he offers a suggestion about the valuable purposes aesthetic practices can serve, in view of which we can rank them. The suggestions about the purposes of aesthetic life are on the money, but we should explain away intuitions about impersonal rankings, but

While aesthetic value is practice internal, it is discovered, not made. What makes a peaberry bright is such facts as its having prominent raspberry notes. Its brightness is metaphysically grounded in its other features, not in features of us. Granted, the grounding comes with a social practice, for facts about us ground the fact that the practice is our practice. However, what we have is the fact that x is V is grounded in the fact that x is F, and, in addition, the fact that that whole fact (the fact that x is V is grounded in the fact that x is F) is grounded in facts about us. From this it does not follow that facts about us ground the fact that x is V. Compare: *Guernica* is both a painting and a guernica, independent of us, but we have made paintings our practice, not guernicas (Walton 1970).

We discover that the peaberry is bright only once trained up in the practice. Its brightness is practice internal. Yet we are not trapped in aesthetic silos as long as we have derived aesthetic reasons to act in ways that transport us into new practices. When K* is enough like K, my acting on the reasons I have in K can give me competence to act in K*. Agents can rank Ks personally, from their path dependent viewpoints. All the same, Hopkins is right that it does it seem to us that many people see some aesthetic practices as aesthetically better in ways that cannot be explained by appeal to their derived aesthetic reasons. Is the appearance an illusion?

Here is the error theory. Aesthetic hedonism was entrenched in the early modern period, at a time when the new middle classes sought advice on which aesthetic activities befitted their newfound leisure. The theory's ideological role was to install intuitions about impersonal rankings of aesthetic practices. The aesthetic prospects of middle class (white, gender-norm conforming) Europeans were imposed as impersonal prospects for everyone.

Suppose we unmask the illusion. We gain in passing the Bourdieu test. Have we lost anything, except our illusions, that we do not get from path-dependent rankings? Only an affirmative answer puts the network theory in real jeopardy.

On a positive note, Thi Nguyen (forthcoming) is right that in aiming to act well we might attain a further purpose, which is just to have an opportunity to act, and it can be a norm of some aesthetic practices to acts so as to attain that further purpose in that way. Translating from motivational norms to rational norms, it is plausible that, in aesthetically acting well in K, we might thereby comply with norms to relate suitably to the gods, bind with a community, express ourselves, or, to return to Zuckert, express our love. We should celebrate explore the plurality of such non-constitutive norms of aesthetic agency as help us to live well. The network theory predicts, a priori, that the norms will be ones that we follow because the aesthetic domain is one where we can act well, and that none will hold across all aesthetic practices.

Soucek calls out the narrowness of the final chapter of *Being for beauty*, then also worries that a less narrow treatment of the regulation of aesthetic culture might not make sense of what has shaped political thinking about aesthetic life.

Chapter 12 outlines a rationale for state support of socially distributed aesthetic action, but Soucek is right that the chapter "largely accepts the terms in which aesthetic policymaking is usually debated" (e.g. Beardsley 1970, Dworkin 1985). That is, "aesthetic" policymaking concerns arts policy, whose instruments are the arts councils and public education. In fact, as Soucek points out the high-impact policy instruments are intellectual property law, tax break schemes, food and land use regulations, and municipal bylaws. Notice how the scope of these instruments ranges beyond the arts.

Taking these points on board does not directly impeach the principle proposed in chapter 12, namely that a society has reason to secure aesthetic opportunity, understood as the extent to which members of the population can join those aesthetic practices that they have strongest derived aesthetic reason to join (Lopes 2018: 223). The focus on the arts recognizes some contingent history. For several centuries, the cachet of the arts attracted lavish public and private patronage, which secured the arts' place in education. As a result, the arts have come to serve as hubs affording access to all kinds of aesthetic practices. One way to support aesthetic culture of all kinds is to

support the hubs. Alas, however, the principle of equal aesthetic opportunity is too narrow in two ways.

First, policy at the local level – in building codes and zoning by-laws, for example – does not establish hubs as opportunities for access. On the contrary, it promotes some local aesthetic practices at the expense of others, generating conflicts whose resolution must appeal to principles other than equality of access. Finding the principles is hard work, which remains to be carried out.

Second, the social position of the arts is changing. For one thing, the internet is a far more ecumenical vehicle for aesthetic education than the schools. The privileged position of the arts should be replaced with a pick-a-hub-any-hub model. But then the trouble is that the pick-a-hub-any-hub model deprives us of the common aesthetic culture that the arts promised.

Public art is one concern. *Pace* Danto, public artworks are ones where the public is part of the medium. If so, we have reason to see to it that we are ready to be part of future memorials and monuments.

Another concern is about cross-cultural contact. Soucek writes that "sometimes, you and I might want to share something beautiful in common, even or especially when we are more than a hundred miles away". We have wanted there to be something such that everyone shares it. The arts promised to be for everyone, though it has to said that they never delivered. We need not despair. Suppose that, for each of us, there are some distant others with whom we share, or can come to share, an aesthetic perspective. Perhaps for me and a Tamil weaver, it is an interest in plaids. She and I leave you out, but she undoubtedly links to you in a chain of sharing. Should we not prefer a theory that predicts that the best we can hope for is to balance sharing with accommodating difference?

Which features of aesthetic life are constitutive of aesthetic value, and which features are best left as ones for the constitutive account to explain? This is the deep question that we four have struggled with in this symposium. We know so little but we are making rapid progress. Pat or decisive answers are not what we need to inspire new ideas. A closing thanks to Zuckert, Hopkins, and Soucek for pressing concerns that will bring us closer to what matters.

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