In Defence of Tourists

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Abstract:
It is not uncommon for art historians and philosophers of art to deride the kinds of aesthetic experiences tourists seek out by characterizing them as bowing to the will of the herd, succumbing to peer pressure, or simply seeking out what is popular. Two charges, in particular, tend to be levelled against tourists. The first, which I call the motivation problem, contends that tourists are motivated to seek out aesthetic experiences for the wrong kinds of reasons. The second, which I call the appreciation problem, maintains that tourist tastes are aesthetically uninformed and are thus the inauthentic product of aesthetic luck. But there is a better way of thinking about aesthetic tourism, one that can capture both the tourist's motivations and the role of aesthetic luck. I argue that aesthetic tourists, like many experts, subscribe to the acquaintance principle, and that doing so generates aesthetic obligations to their practical identity. The tourist, in the end, is no more – and no less – a product of aesthetic luck than the expert connoisseur.

In Defence of Tourists

1. Two problems

Nobody likes a tourist. They walk slowly and gawk openly, clog venues, and lead to significant price hikes. Some might be thought to be especially bad: those who flock to major metropolitan centres to see the famous art, sometimes even to the exclusion of nearby pieces which experts judge to be of higher aesthetic merit. Such gawkers are *aesthetic tourists*: people who do not ordinarily take a significant interest in art or its history, or in nature and her breathtaking vistas, but who nevertheless, when leisure and money afford, seek out popular aesthetic experiences.

Consider the *Mona Lisa* (c. 1503-06), which is just another Leonardo in the Louvre, and one of the museum's smallest paintings to boot. The portrait is of some aesthetic interest for its early use of aerial perspective and for showing the subject in front of an imaginary landscape, but it owes most of its fame and recognition to nineteenth-century mythmaking and its 1911 theft and return. Perhaps its most remarkable feature is that the crowds it draws make it nearly impossible to properly appreciate the *largest* painting in the Louvre, which sits on the wall directly opposite: Veronese's *Wedding at Cana* (1563). It would come as no surprise if most of the *Mona Lisa*'s gawkers had no idea that Veronese's superior work was in the Louvre, let alone in the same room.

One kind of distinctively *aesthetic* concern with tourism—call it the *motivation problem*—stems from the idea that tourists are motivated by the wrong kinds of reasons, as evidenced by the disenchantment so many feel when they finally encounter the authentic object of their pursuit. Umberto Eco, for example, derided tourist sights as sites 'where the American imagination demands the real thing and, to attain it, must fabricate the absolute fake'.[1] Daniel Boorstin likewise characterized tourists as naïve and gullible, arguing that 'The tourist seldom likes the authentic (to him often

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[1] Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality: Essays*, Trans. William Weaver (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 8.

unintelligible) product of the foreign culture; he prefers his own provincial expectations'.[2] Somewhat more recently, Allen Carlson has bemoaned the fact that tourists appreciate nature primarily through the lens of the picturesque, and thus appreciate the natural world 'primarily in light of renderings of nature typical of travel brochures, calendar photos, and picture postcards'.[3]

According to a second kind of concern—call it the *appreciation problem*—tourist tastes are aesthetically uninformed; tourists tend to settle for 'easier' and less valuable aesthetic experiences. Two closely related vices fall under this banner: (1) evincing popular (i.e. unsophisticated) taste, and (2) the pursuit of popular taste at the expense (i.e. to the detriment) of more aesthetically valuable works and experiences.

A common historical formulation has it that the masses are simply incapable of properly appreciating High-Art, since such aesthetic experiences come with difficulty and training. Here, for example, is Schopenhauer:

> the most excellent works of every art, the noblest products of genius, will always and necessarily remain closed books for the obtuse majority, inaccessible to them and separated from them by a wide gulf, just as the society of the prince is inaccessible to the rabble.[4]

The appreciation problem's roots lie in class prejudice, and the advent of affordable global transit has ensured that today's tourists are mostly from the 'obtuse majority,' rather than the cultured elite.

A second, related formulation maintains that ordinary folk prefer 'easy' aesthetic experiences, no doubt because they are aesthetically uninformed. Clement Greenberg, for instance, infamously derided 'kitsch' and its popular appeal for 'using for raw material the debased and academicized simulacra of genuine culture,'[5] adding that

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[2] Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992 [1961]), 106.
[3] Allen Carlson, *Aesthetics and the Environment: The Appreciation of Nature, Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2000), 4.
[4] Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*. Trans. Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman, and Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010 [1818]), 260.
[5] Clement Greenberg, "Avant Garde and Kitsch," in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 10.

> The peasant finds no 'natural' urgency within himself that will drive him toward Picasso in spite of all difficulties. In the end the peasant will go back to kitsch when he feels like looking at pictures, for he can enjoy kitsch without effort.[6]

For Greenberg, 'the folk' simply lack the desire or the intellectual wherewithal to appreciate the objects of highest aesthetic value.

Finally, in much the same vein, Virginia Woolf attacked what she called 'middlebrow' taste:

> We highbrows, I agree, have to earn our livings; but when we have earned enough to live on, then we live. When the middlebrows, on the contrary, have earned enough to live on, they go on earning enough to buy—what are the things that middlebrows always buy? Queen Anne furniture (faked, but none the less expensive); first editions of dead writers, always the worst; pictures, or reproductions from pictures, by dead painters; […] but never anything new, never a picture by a living painter […] for to buy living art requires living taste.[7]

According to Woolf, tourists might, in principle, be capable of appreciating high-grade aesthetic objects but, lacking 'taste', they do not do so. Even Cain Samuel Todd, who is generally sympathetic to aesthetic tourism, concedes that many touristic experiences are less rich and rewarding, and less intrinsically valuable, than their more serious analogues, thanks to conventional notions of the picturesque and the superficiality of touristic engagement.[8]

None of these critics stoop so low as to deny that tourists have their reasons; what they lament are the *quality* of the tourist's reasons, which are reduced to ignorance and poor taste. But what explains the imperative a tourist feels to seek out these first-personal experiences, often at non-negligible personal cost and despite the easy availability of high-quality epistemic analogues such as photographs? If the tourist's aesthetic engagement is largely superficial, then this seems puzzling: why would anyone

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[6] Ibid.,18.

[7] Virginia Woolf, "Middlebrow," in *The Death of the Moth, and other essays*, ed. Leonard Woolf (London: The Hogarth Press, 1942), 120.

[8] Cain Samuel Todd, "Nature, Beauty and Tourism," in *Philosophical Issues in Tourism*, ed. John Tribe (Toronto: Channel View Publications, 2009), 154-70.

invest in a trip to foreign parts to spend a few seconds in front of a tiny painting they can hardly see for all the other people jostling to catch a glimpse of it?

I will argue that there is a more generous way of thinking about aesthetic tourism, and of answering the charges brought by the motivation and appreciation problems. I begin, in §2, by arguing that we can do a much better job of capturing the tourist's thinking, and what is at stake for them, if we recognize that tourists conceive of the relevant aesthetic experiences as being important to their practical identities. A 'practical identity' is a contingent description of one's actions and one's life which offers a rationale for their pursuit as worthwhile endeavours.[9] Under such a self-conception, certain obligations follow which, if unfulfilled, threaten a significant personal loss.[10] I will argue that although tourist and expert alike seek out aesthetic experiences, their different practical identities yield different aesthetic obligations which require different kinds of propitiation.

In §3 I flesh out this account of the tourist's motivations by suggesting that tourists may be driven to seek out first-personal aesthetic experiences by an underlying commitment to what Richard Wollheim called *the acquaintance principle*, which posits that judgements of aesthetic value (1) are largely intransmissible, and so (2) must be based on first-hand experience.[11] It is all well and good to see pictures of the Grand Canyon or the *Mona Lisa*, but the tourist suspects that they are missing out unless they see them live and *in situ*. Only a direct acquaintance with the object, they think, can communicate the full range of its aesthetic properties and thus fulfill the demands of their practical identity.

Armed with these responses to the motivation problem, I turn my attention to the appreciation problem in §4 and §5, arguing that aesthetic expertise matters a great deal less than we might think. In §4, I argue that the tourist's appreciation of stereotypical aesthetic experiences is not, in fact, an

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[9] Christine M. Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 101.
[10] This not to say that we cannot or do not shed some practical identities and adopt others over time (Ibid., 120).
[11] Richard Wollheim, *Art and Its Objects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015 [1968]), 156.

appreciative vice; it is a perfectly acceptable response on the part of someone whose practical identity is not that of an artworld insider. Finally, in §5 I argue that we should not place too high a premium on experts' appreciation of high-grade aesthetic experiences because their judgements are every bit as subject to aesthetic luck as those of non-experts.

2. Aesthetic Obligations

The natural answer to the motivation problem is simply to deny that tourists are motivated by the wrong kinds of reasons in the first place. If their reasons look wrong from the perspective of aesthetic experts, it is because we misunderstand the tourist's goals, mistaking them for mirrors of our own (*qua* experts).

One natural place to start looking for an account of tourists' motivations is with the notion of aesthetic obligations. Many philosophers of art think that aesthetic properties—primarily beauty— have deontic force, that is, that aesthetic properties make some kind of *demand* on audiences. The salient question, however, is just *how* aesthetic properties make these demands of us. One possibility is that we owe the work or its author a particular kind of engagement and response. Film critics such as Mark Kermode, for example, think audiences should refrain from texting or talking in the cinema, even when they are alone in a screening, out of respect for the film and the people who made it. If there *are* aesthetic obligations, and if they attach to works and authors, then it may well be that we owe it to the *Mona Lisa*—or to Leonardo—to see it. Some—perhaps even many—aestheticians and other artworld experts are likely to be moved by such a view, but it seems much less likely to command widespread assent outside such circles. What we are looking for, instead, is an account of the tourist's motivations which will be recognizable to *her*.

A more promising explanation of the deontic force of aesthetic reasons does not rely on aesthetic properties being special in any way, or on obligations to inanimate works, abstract ideals, or

distant authors. The *relational strategy* takes aesthetic obligations to be grounded in duties we have towards someone or something in virtue of our practical identities. That is to say, aesthetic obligations derive from the role aesthetic considerations play in our practical identities, rather than from some normative relation we bear to aesthetic objects as such, or some special weight which aesthetic considerations have.

This relational strategy has been articulated in several different ways. Robbie Kubala, for example, has argued that aesthetic obligations take the form of promises towards ourselves.[12] Aesthetic obligations thus *concern* aesthetic objects, but are not obligations to those objects themselves. On Kubala's model, obligations take the form of a three-place relation between an obligor (A), an obligee (B), and the content of the obligation (C), such that we can say that 'B owes it to A to C.'[13] So, for example, we might say that a tenant (B) owes it to their landlord (A) to pay the rent (C). In the aesthetic realm, however, obligor and obligee are often one and the same; thus, we might say that an avid metalhead (B) owes it to herself (A) to see Iron Maiden live, or that a child who loved *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* owes it to herself to read its six sequels.

Such obligations all prominently feature aesthetic objects, but the obligation itself is neither directed towards, nor is it generated by, those objects. The source of the obligation, rather, is one's practical identity; it is agents' conceptions of themselves—*qua* metalheads or *qua* Potterheads—which generate aesthetic obligations, and agents merely owe it to *themselves*, in light of that self-conception, to perform the requisite actions. The result is a series of obligations which are conditional and non-universal in form.[14] Agents need only attend to objects that play an important, constitutive role in their self-conception, and to fail with respect to one of these obligations is to threaten the integrity of the agent's self-conception, but that is as far as the wrongdoing goes.

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[12] Robbie Kubala, "Grounding Aesthetic Obligations," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 58, no. 3 (2018), 271-85.
[13] Ibid., 273.
[14] Ibid., 275.

Anthony Cross suggests, instead, that an aesthetic obligation is as an obligation incurred by virtue of standing in a particular relationship to some individual—such as a loving relationship.[15] So: our metalhead incurs an obligation to see Iron Maiden live because she *loves* their music; our Potterhead must read the sequels because she *loved* the first book; etc. Aesthetic obligations are thus incurred by first developing relationships to particular works, artists, or genres, so that they become valuable to our practical identities in some way and, second, our making some further commitment to them.

Finally, Andrew McGonigal has argued that aesthetic obligations are incurred by our commitment to *integrity*: we have a duty towards ourselves to honour and authentically express our actual aesthetic preferences, and we can do so by seeking out more of the same experiences, or experiences which express, reflect, or sharpen our practical identities.[16]

The relational model thus grounds aesthetic obligations in a commitment we have towards ourselves in virtue of how we conceive of ourselves and our actions. This may or may not yield a holistic account of aesthetic obligation as such.[17] Nevertheless, it clearly identifies a *species* of obligation we experience as compelling, even if we sometimes allow ourselves to fall short, or if our commitment to a particular practical identity is not life-long. And that, I think, is all we need to mount a defence of aesthetic tourism.

There is some empirical evidence for the relational model of aesthetic obligation in studies of museum and gallery visits, though these are not specific to tourists. In his landmark study of French museums and galleries, for instance, Pierre Bourdieu found that participating in cultural activities positively reinforces a person's self-image, and that social class has a significant effect on people's

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[15] Anthony Cross, "Obligations to Artworks as Duties of Love.," *Estetika* 54, no. 1 (2017): 85-101.

[16] Andrew McGonigal, "Aesthetic Reasons," in *The Oxford Handbook of Reasons and Normativity*, ed. Daniel Star (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018): 908-36.

[17] Dyck argues convincingly that it does not in "There are No Purely Aesthetic Obligations," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 102, no. 4 (2021): 592–612.

appetite for culture.[18] These results were borne out in a later study of visitors to ten museums in the United Kingdom, which confirmed the correlation between social class and cultural appetite.[19] More interestingly for our purposes, this study found that visitors who cared a great deal about social approval were significantly more interested in an exhibition's *social* significance than its subject content, whereas those who cared less about social approval prioritized subject content.[20]

This is important because tourist experiences are social, and an important part of such social experiences is the consumption of a commodity *alongside likeminded others*.[21] Although tourists care that they are seeing the *Mona Lisa*, they also care a great deal about the fact that lots of other people are interested in doing the same thing. It reaffirms their sense of the importance and value of their action, and the ambience serves to highlight it as an Experience well outside the ordinary.[22] These are the kinds of people who go to the Louvre at least partly to have their picture taken in front of the *Mona Lisa*, rather than just to see it for themselves; for these tourists, the operative desire is to be *perceived* as cultured, rather than to improve their aesthetic understanding. In fact, interest in subject content seems strongly related to educational attainment: those without university degrees are far more interested in the social aspect of the outing than degree-holders, and among degree-holders, those with postgraduate degrees are the most interested in the exhibition's subject content.[23]

These results suggest that casual museum-goers, including tourists, are deeply concerned about their practical identities, but that these are not the same as the art afficionado's—it is the difference between conceiving of oneself as, say, a *museum-goer* (an identity which imposes very loose requirements) versus an *art afficionado* (an identity which demands more, and more specific,

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[18] Pierre Bourdieu, Alain Darbel, and Dominique Schnapper, *L'amour de l'art: Les musées d'art européens et leur public* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1966).

[19] Rita Kottasz, "Understanding the Influences of Atmospheric Cues on the Emotional Responses and Behaviours of Museum Visitors," *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing* 16, no. 1-2 (2006): 95-121.

[20] Ibid., 109.

[21] John Urry, "The 'Consumption' Of Tourism," *Sociology* 24, no. 1 (1990): 25.

[22] Ibid., 26.

[23] Kottasz, "Understanding," 108.

propitiation). For the museum-goer, what matters most is the act of *going to the museum*, rather than the particular aesthetic experiences on offer there.

This may seem to sharpen the motivation problem, inviting us to dismiss this class of gawkers as the *bad* tourists who care more about selfies than aesthetic experiences. But remember that tourists *travel* for the sake of their aesthetic experiences. We must be careful here not to romanticize tourists—the pursuit of aesthetic experiences is surely seldom their sole motivation for travel. But few things are. What matters is just that the desire for aesthetic experiences features in their deliberations and follows from their self-conception. It would be a shame, after all, to travel to Paris for work, but not take the time to visit the Louvre. Depending on the situation one finds oneself in, some motivational attitudes may take a back seat while others are reinforced by what one is doing, just as some practical identities may be shed or reinforced over time, as our circumstances change and as we reflect on our values.

This suggests a simple answer to the motivation problem: we've mistaken the motivations at issue. Tourist and aesthete alike are concerned with articulating and reinforcing their practical identities, but each has a different practical identity. The ordinary tourist is looking for a good time with friends and family, but this hardly precludes aesthetic self-improvement. The 'bad' tourist is looking to reinforce an image of themselves, but again, this does not entail that the aesthetic experience is of no consequence to them, or has no effect once had. The expert, by contrast, is hungry to consume more and newer items from the cultural buffet, but this, too, involves prioritizing a facet of their practical identity. It comes as no surprise, then, that they must do slightly different things—engage with their experiences in slightly different ways—to achieve their goals. In much the same way, the Harry Potter stories take on a different significance for the Potterhead than they do for parents reading them to their children, or for literary critics and theorists.

It might be replied that we have not yet answered the motivation problem: if tourists seek out art to bolster a facet of their practical identities that pertains to amusement or status, or if they seek it out merely incidentally—when in Rome, etc.—then they are being motivated to seek out art for the wrong reasons. But this misses the point: *everyone* is motivated to seek out aesthetic experiences by their practical identities, even the experts. It is wildly inappropriate to impose the standards of one practical identity on someone who does not avow that identity. In other words, the *motivations* at work are perfectly felicitous, and are echoed by the motivational structure which guides aesthetic experts. The problem identified by the motivation problem is not really about motivations, since satisfying the demands of one's practical identity is a perfectly good—and common—motivation for seeking out aesthetic experiences. If there is a problem, then it attaches either to tourists' choice of aesthetic objects, or to their practical identities. If it is tourists' choice of aesthetic objects which is problematic, then the so-called motivation problem in fact boils down to the appreciation problem. But if we think that the problem is the tourist's *practical identity*… Well, while there may well be some aesthetically defective practical identities,[24] we should not be too quick to consign the tourist to such company, lest we succumb to a pernicious elitism.

3. The Acquaintance Principle

A full-fledged answer to the motivation problem requires some explanation of why it is that aesthetic tourists travel in the first place, as opposed to settling for some reliable—and more readily available— epistemic analogue, such as a picture. The sightseer cannot just stare at posters all day, she has to go to the Grand Canyon for herself. Likewise, the empirical evidence suggests a distinct preference for

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[24] Alex King offers the anaesthete in this connection: Alex King, "The Amoralist and the Anaesthetic," *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 99, no. 4 (2018): 632-63.

authentic over inauthentic objects (i.e. replicas).[25] My contention is that tourists feel this way because they—like most people—subscribe to the *acquaintance principle*, and this background commitment informs the requirements of their practical identities, as they understand them.

According to the acquaintance principle, aesthetic knowledge is intransmissible, and must be had directly. Contemporary philosophers have generally been skeptical of the truth of the acquaintance principle,[26] and I share their skepticism; my argument, however, does not require its *truth*. All it requires is that ordinary people subscribe to it, at least as far as their intuitive (as opposed to *reflective*) judgements are concerned. And on this score, there is at least some good evidence that ordinary people privilege the experiential component of their activities in this way: a number of museum studies and meta-analyses have shown that viewing authentic artworks is especially important to visitors, and makes for a particularly satisfying experience.[27] Nor must we look far afield to see this belief in action: the staged nature of many tourist spaces suggests as much.[28] Or think of the outrage generated by Charles Mudede's recent suggestion that Notre Dame cathedral's burned-out husk be replaced with 3D projections,[29] or the controversy over 'immersive' exhibitions which feature gigantic digital projections of the Sistine Chapel, van Gogh's canon, and Frida Kahlo's oeuvre.

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[25] Brandy N. Frazier, Susan A. Gelman, Alice Wilson, and Bruce M. Hood, "Picasso Paintings, Moon Rocks, and Hand-Written Beatles Lyrics: Adults' Evaluations of Authentic Objects," *Journal of Cognition and Culture* 9, no. 1-2 (2009): 1-14.

[26] See, e.g., Malcolm Budd, "The Acquaintance Principle." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 43, no. 4 (2003): 386-92; Paisley Livingston, "On An Apparent Truism In Aesthetics," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 43, no. 3 (2003): 260-78; Jerrold Levinson, "Aesthetic Properties II," *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 79 (2005): 211-27; Noël Carroll. "Aesthetic Experience: A Question of Content," in *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Matthew Kieran (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 69-96.

[27] See, e.g., Bourdieu et al, *L'amour*; Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, *Exhibiting Cultures: the poetics and politics of museum display* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991); Andrew J. Pekarik, Zahava D. Doering and David A. Karns, "Exploring Satisfying Experiences in Museums," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 42, no. 2 (1999): 152-73; Volker Kirchberg and Martin Tröndle, "Experiencing Exhibitions: A Review of Studies on Visitor Experiences in Museums," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 55, no. 4 (2012): 435-52; Ksenia Kirillova, Xiaoxiao Fu, Xinran Lehto, and Liping Cai. "What Makes a Destination Beautiful? Dimensions of Tourist Aesthetic Judgment," *Tourism Management* 42 (2014): 282-93.

[28] See Dean MacCannell, "Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings," *American Journal of Sociology* 79, no. 3 (1973): 589–603; Bruno Latour and Adam Lowe, "The migration of the aura or how to explore the original through its fac-similes," in *Switching Codes: Thinking Through Digital Technology in the Humanities and the Arts*, eds. Thoma Bartscherer and Roderick Coover (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011): 275-97.

[29] Charles Mudede, "Don't Cry About the Cathedral in Paris; 3D Technology Can Give It a New and Even More Spiritual Future," *Slog: The Stranger's Blog*, April 16, 2019,

We are now in a better position to understand the phenomenology of the aesthetic tourist's motivations. Tourists think they *owe it to themselves*, by virtue of some facet of their practical identities, to see the Grand Canyon in real life (e.g. *qua* nature enthusiast), to poke around the Louvre if they ever find themselves in Paris (e.g. *qua* cultured person), and so on. Poseurs may make do with coffee table books, since they merely *pretend* to have some trait in order to impress others.[30] But someone who genuinely conceives of themselves under the relevant identity will be motivated by that identity to seek out the 'authentic' aesthetic experience, which they believe can only be afforded by first-hand engagement with the aesthetic object. But why?

A promising explanation comes from the distinction between epistemic and provenential instances.[31] A *provenential instance* (P-instance) of an artwork is just the logically (though not necessarily temporally) first full instantiation of the artwork that stands in the right kind of causal-intentional relation to the artist's act of creation and possesses all of the rights kinds of manifest properties that bear experientially upon appreciation of the work.[32] Artworks can be either (1) P-singular, which is to say that they are of a kind properly instantiated only once, such as most paintings, or (2) P-multiple, as is usually the case with multiple artworks (e.g. literature or the performing arts).

An *epistemic instance* (E-instance) of a work, by contrast, is an instance that fully qualifies to play the same kind of experiential role as the perception of the original does.[33] In other words, E-instances possess all of the manifest properties required to properly appreciate the work in question. Works that

https://www.thestranger.com/slog/2019/04/16/39927138/dont-cry-about-the-cathedral-in-paris-3d-technology-can-give-it-a-new-and-even-more-spiritual-future

[30] Madeleine Ransom, "Frauds, Posers And Sheep: A Virtue Theoretic Solution to the Acquaintance Debate," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 98, no. 2 (2019): 417-34.

[31] See David Davies's "Multiple Instances and Multiple 'Instances'." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 50, no. 4 (2010): 411-26; "Enigmatic Variations." *The Monist* 95, no. 1 (2012): 644-63; "What Type of 'Type' is a Film?" in *Art & Abstract Objects*, ed. Christy Mag Uidhir. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 263-83.

[32] Davies, "Multiple," 414-5.

[33] Ibid., 415. Following Korsmeyer, an epistemic instance could similarly be characterized as possessing all of a work's *characteristic* properties; see Carolyn Korsmeyer, "Aesthetic Deception: On Encounters with the Past" *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 66, no. 2 (2008): 117-27; and "Real Old Things," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 56, no. 3 (2016): 225.

are P-multiple are necessarily E-multiple; P-singular works, however, can be either E-singular or E-multiple.[34] Where singular artworks are concerned, we usually count the work's P-instance as its only E-instance, and this explains why we think that we must travel to the Louvre to see the *Mona Lisa*: photographs are not proper epistemic instances of the work, because they cannot adequately capture all of its relevant perceptual properties. Multiple artworks, however, tend to offer a wider selection of E-instances—e.g., prints of a print or photograph, recordings of music, videotaped performances, etc. Even when these instances are not provenential, we are happy to concede that they give us a full aesthetic experience of the work in question.[35]

Other motivations are available, of course, but the acquaintance principle plausibly captures tourists' underlying reasoning when it is cashed out in terms of provenential and epistemic instances: aesthetic tourists privilege first-person aesthetic experiences because they think that descriptions, pictures, recordings, etc. do not convey the full range of relevant experiences or confer the right kind of social status. In other words, they think that our methods of communicating or sharing aesthetic experiences leave out essential ingredients, resulting in what are at best flawed epistemic instances.

4. Tourists and Snobs

Let us turn now to the appreciation problem. The answer I've given to the motivation problem already goes some way towards helping with the appreciation problem: experts and tourists are both interested in aesthetic value, but their practical identities are different, and so call for different articulations. Tourists put their aesthetic experiences to different practical uses than experts do, and so it should come as no surprise that different kinds of experiences prove serviceable, some of them lower-grade. Tourists and ordinary folk get aesthetic value where they can.

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[34] Davies, "Multiple," 426.
[35] So long as the instance is not flawed; see Davies "Enigmatic" and "Type"..

But what about cases where tourist experiences come at the expense of higher-grade aesthetic experiences? This is a plausible description of what happens in the Louvre when the crowds jostle past Veronese's *Wedding at Cana* to catch a distant glimpse of the *Mona Lisa*. We might usefully characterize this not just as a personal failing, that is, as a matter of bad taste, but as an *interpersonal* one: tourists are failing to live up to their obligations to the work or its author, as well as to the other marvels in their vicinity.[36]

This is an attractive line of argument, not least because it can be generalized to explain why tourists are so tiresome. By traipsing around they change the places they visit, so that these come to resemble the kinds of places tourists expect to find, replete with high prices, traffic jams, and staged authenticity, and this is disrespectful to the original locale and its inhabitants. But while tourism may well invite failures to discharge *ethical* obligations, or simply be straightforwardly unethical, this does not entail that tourism is *aesthetically* deficient. And while it is certainly plausible that we have distinctively aesthetic obligations towards works and artists, which tourists routinely violate, this is a deeply contested view.[37] I have argued instead that it is likely that aesthetic obligations are self-directed; to the extent that this correctly captures the phenomenon, we should not be overly troubled by the fact that a tourist's aesthetic preferences tend to be for lower-grade aesthetic experiences.

But what should we make of the *bad* tourists—the poseurs—who aren't in it for the aesthetic experience at all, but rather for the social status the experience can confer? For these 'social' tourists, aesthetic value has not been built into their practical identities, except perhaps as a means to another end; consequently, their obligations to those practical identities will not help them to track *aesthetic* value. Where such tourists are concerned, the appreciation problem remains unmollified.

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[36] I am grateful to an anonymous referee for pressing this point.

[37] See Dyck "Purely," and Alex King, "Reasons, Normativity, and Value in Aesthetics," *Philosophy Compass* 17, no. 1 (2022): 1-17.

One way of thinking about what goes wrong with social tourists is that their process is flawed, and these flaws override the correctness of their aesthetic judgements (if they are in fact correct). So: it does not matter that they correctly judge the *Wedding at Cana* as superior to the *Mona Lisa* if the reason they do so is, e.g., to distinguish themselves from the herd, or because they are guided more by expert opinion than their own.

This emphasis on procedure echoes Matthew Kieran's worry about what he calls 'snobbishness'.[38] Aesthetic snobs are people whose judgements of aesthetic value are driven by aesthetically-irrelevant social factors, such as a desire to assert their superiority or elevate their status with respect to some group.[39] Because Kieran's is a virtue-theoretic account, the correctness of the output—e.g. the judgement that that Sophie Pemberton's paintings are beautiful—matters less than the fact that the process by which that output was reached is flawed. According to Kieran, what goes wrong with snobbery is that social considerations are allowed to infect and distort the individual's aesthetic responses; their motivations are extrinsic, rather than intrinsic. Snobbery, in other words, is an appreciative vice.[40] It might be tempting to identify social tourists as 'snobs' in Kieran's sense, despite the oddity of attributing a high-brow pejorative to a stereotypically low-brow activity. The suggestion would be that social tourists fall prey to the appreciation problem because they are mere snobs and have not appropriately matched their means to their ends. *Good* tourists, by contrast—those for whom the aesthetic experience directly figures in their practical identity—are safe from the appreciation problem because their aesthetic experiences satisfy the (less strict) requirements of their practical identities.

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[38] Matthew Kieran, "The Vice of Snobbery: Aesthetic Knowledge, Justification and Virtue in Art Appreciation," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 60, no. 239 (2010): 243-63.
[39] Kieran, "Vice," 244.
[40] Ibid.,255.

We should not yield to the further temptation to identify all tourists as snobs, simply on the basis that their aesthetic experiences are motivated by a concern for their practical identities. Although snobs and tourists may express similar motivations, tourism is directed towards collecting and curating aesthetic *experiences*, while snobbishness is directed towards proffering aesthetic *judgements*. In fact, the charge of 'snobbishness' does not quite capture what goes wrong with such tourists. The externally-motivated tourist is not a snob unless she takes the additional step of improperly formulating an aesthetic judgement (i.e. a viciously-motivated one). Tourists who are motivated by increasing their social status, but whose aesthetic judgements are correct and made on the basis of their own genuine engagement with the work would, in Kieran's terms, count as 'motivational snobs' and thus avoid the charge of appreciative vice.[41] On my account, however, the problem is just that the pursuit of aesthetic experiences does not tie back directly to some aspect of the bad tourist's practical identity. This is not necessarily a bad thing—not unless we have distinctively aesthetic obligations to works and artists, or unless it is done in service to a vicious practical identity. But that is surely not how most tourists go about their business.

Finally, what should we make of the fact that aesthetic tourists all seem to seek out the very same aesthetic experiences—viz., the Grand Canyon, the Sistine Chapel, the *Mona Lisa*, etc.? It is tempting to worry that such a convergence indicates a kind of inauthenticity on the tourist's part, that her preferences are the result of a herd mentality rather than genuine interest. The worry is that the aesthetic preferences expressed by the tourist do not actually reflect *her* practical identity, but rather express a shallow desire to have or to experience whatever is popular. The aesthetic tourist is thus akin to someone who seeks out the Barbara Kruger retrospective when it comes to town because Kruger was a famous artist, rather than because he enjoys looking at her works. To address this last objection, we will need to consider the influence of aesthetic luck.

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[41] Ibid., 261.

5. Aesthetic Luck

I argued, in §2, that the expert and the tourist are in the same motivational boat since both seek out aesthetic experiences to bolster their practical identities. What matters is not coincidence of taste or convergence on particular aesthetic objects and experiences, but rather how these relate to someone's practical identity and its requirements. We should be wary of prioritizing the expert's practical identity, and of unduly valorising their actions in service of that identity.

Tourist and expert aesthete alike are subject to many of the same influences and pressures, so what is disqualifying for one should also be disqualifying for the other. Anna Christina Ribeiro rightly observes that our relationship to aesthetically valuable experiences is governed by aesthetic luck: our 'aesthetic character' is formed largely by events and factors beyond individual control, such as our baseline abilities (e.g. possessing perfect pitch, superb motor control, or a good sense of smell), our upbringing (e.g. exposure to narrow or wide classes of artworks), sociogeography (viz., where in the world we are born and raised), and the circumstances of our lives (e.g. being introduced to horror films by one's partner).[42]

It is not just our aesthetic judgements but also our experience of beauty itself which is trained and constrained by our past experiences.[43] This is borne out by studies of the 'mere exposure effect', which names the tendency people have to form preferences for things that are familiar to them.[44] Those studies go back to Robert Zajonc's work, which found that exposure to a stimulus suffices to enhance a subject's evaluation of that stimulus, a result which has since been borne out in hundreds of studies and at least one meta-analysis.[45] These results have also been replicated in the context of

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[42] Anna Christina Ribeiro, "Aesthetic Luck," *The Monist* 101, no. 1 (2018): 99-113.

[43] Ribeiro, "Luck," 103.

[44] Though not, it seems, for outrageously awful works, whose perceived quality decreases with exposure. See Aaron Meskin, Mark Phelan, Margaret Moore, and Matthew Kieran, "Mere Exposure to Bad Art," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 53, no. 2 (2009): 139-64.

[45] Robert B. Zajonc, "Attitudinal Effects of Mere Exposure," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology Monographs* 9 (1968): 1-27. Bornstein's meta-analysis canvassed 208 other studies: Robert F. Bornstein, "Exposure and Affect: Overview and Meta-Analysis of Research," *Psychologial Bulletin* 106, no. 2 (1989): 265-89.

aesthetic experience. James Cutting, for example, found that the aesthetic preference for certain artworks is entirely a function of frequency of appearance, rather than factors like canonicity, prototypicality, or the subject's expertise.[46] Similarly, a number of studies have shown that tourists' preferences increase with their judgements of a landscape's 'typicality,' provided the setting is positively-valenced (e.g., a park rather than a dump).[47] Finally, several studies of visitors' perceptions of national park landscapes show that familiarity and past experience have a significant effect on their evaluative judgements.[48]

This is not to say that our aesthetic characters are wholly outside our control—on the contrary, we can and do regularly take steps to shape them, by, e.g., seeking out aesthetic experiences which are widely applauded, but which do not (yet) speak to us. The point, rather, is just that this is exactly what the aesthetic tourist does: she shapes her aesthetic character—sometimes deliberately, sometimes implicitly—in light of the demands of her practical identity. Her sense of what she ought to do falls out of who she takes herself to be; and so long as aesthetic obligations are conditional obligations to oneself and one's practical identity, and so long as the aesthetic experiences she pursues are appropriate to the demands of her practical identity, then she is aesthetically blameless. Indeed, she is aesthetically *virtuous*, even if the experiences she chooses differ from the expert's.

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[46] James Cutting, "Gustave Caillebotte, French Impressionism, and Mere Exposure," *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review* 10 (2003): 319-43.

[47] See, e.g., C.M. Hägerhall, "Consensus in Landscape Preference Judgements," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 21, no. 1 (2001): 83-92; Thomas R. Herzog and Jeanne L. Stark, "Typicality and Preference for Positively and Negatively Valued Environmental Settings," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 24, no. 1 (2004): 85-92; Aslak Fyhri, Jens Kristian Steen Jacobsen, and Hans Tømmervik. "Tourists' landscape Perceptions and Preferences in a Scandinavian Coastal Region," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 91, no. 4 (2009): 202-11. For the general relation between typicality and preference formation, see J.D. Wellman and G.J. Buhyoff, "Effects of Regional Familiarity on Landscape Preferences," *Journal of Environmental Management* 11, no. 2 (1980): 105-10; A.T. Purcell, "Landscape Perception, Preference, and Schema Discrepancy," *Environment and Planning B: Planning & Design* 14, no. 1 (1987): 67-92; Michael Roth, "Validating the use of Internet survey techniques in visual landscape assessment: an empirical study from Germany," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 78, no. 3 (2006): 179-92.

[48] See, e.g., José V. DeLucio and Marta Múgica, "Landscape Preferences and Behaviour of Visitors to Spanish National Parks," *Landscape and Urban Planning* 29, no. 2-3 (1994): 145-60; William E. Hammitt, "The Familiarity-Preference Component of On-Site Recreational Experiences," *Leisure Sciences* 4, no. 2 (1981): 177-93.

Aesthetic tourists are hardly unique in being subject to the influence of luck—the experts all are, too. Nobody is born an expert; expertise is learned through trial and error, by faking it until we make it—by bootstrapping from whatever motivations we have to an accumulation of aesthetic experiences sufficient to shape our appreciation of those experiences. The preferences of aesthetic experts like Bill Holm, Lucy Lippard, and Clement Greenberg were informed by what they knew, by what they were taught, by the preferences expressed by other grey eminences before them, and by the caprice of the mere exposure effect, among other factors. Indeed, it is worth asking whether aesthetic experts really *are* better at tracking aesthetic value in the first place. After all, we know from our own experience that small adjustments to our contextual understanding of a work can result in radically different aesthetic experiences:[49] the geometric paintings of Russian Suprematism, for example, look trite and simplistic until we learn something about the goals and political background of Suprematism. And we also know from our own experience that the cultivation of some kinds of aesthetic appreciation precludes or undermines the cultivation of others:[50] this is why the 'men are from Mars, women are from Venus' style of comedy is not very funny to an experienced or feminist audience. Finally, it is also worth noting that we are not always reliable guides to our own aesthetic reasons; much of what we proffer by way of aesthetic reasons is just guesswork, posturing, and *post hoc* reconstruction.[51] We may not even recognize all of our aesthetic experiences as *aesthetic* experiences in the first place![52] If our aesthetic reasons are relatively opaque to introspection, this may explain why tourists struggle to articulate convincing reasons for their touring, and why so many opt for a social explanation instead.

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[49] See Matthew Kieran, "Why Ideal Critics Are Not Ideal: Aesthetic Character, Motivation, and Value," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 48, no. 3 (2008): 278-94.

[50] Ibid.

[51] See Kevin Melchionne, "On the Old Saw 'I know nothing about art but I know what I like'," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 68, no. 2 (2010): 131-41.

[52] Ibid., 136. Consider also everyday aesthetics.

Given these limitations on aesthetic appreciation, it is perfectly conceivable that certain works are only lauded today because we have not yet come to appreciate their significant aesthetic demerits. The expert's main advantage over the sightseer is that they have a wider range of aesthetic experiences to draw from—although again, it is worth observing that this range is subject to aesthetic luck. Very few American art historians, for example, have much (if any) experience with Indigenous artistic traditions, but comparatively many of their Canadian counterparts do, and that disparity is clearly reflected in their academic output. Aesthetic experts are just as much a product of their time and place as the medieval manuscript illustrators who enjoyed drawing murderous hares, and knights attacking snails (as in the *Smithfield Decretals*, c. 1300).

For the same reasons, the fact that tourists flock to the same sights is not especially miraculous; what would be astonishing is if instead of mobbing Niagara Falls tourists converged on an unnamed ephemeral fall. The reason it is not surprising is just that sightseers do not decide on their desired experiences independently; they hear about them conversationally, in their classes, from film and television, on internet fora, in guidebooks, from tourism agencies, and, of course, from advertisements.[53] And that is how the experts discover art's history, too: through the mediating influence of the canon, culture, education, and their social circles.

6. Conclusion

I have argued that aesthetic tourists seek out the experiences they do because of how these fit with the demands of their practical identities, and because of an underlying commitment to the acquaintance principle. In these respects, their motivations mirror those of aesthetic experts, and are blameless. If there is an aesthetic deficiency here, it must attach either to their choice of practical identities, or to their choice of aesthetic experiences in service of that identity.

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[53] See Urry, "Consumptin," 26-7.

What is a tourist's practical identity? It can be any of many in which aesthetic experiences play a central, organizing role. Some may be relatively narrow in scope and feature a tight link between the identity and the particular content of an experience. These are obligate aesthetes, tourists whose practical identities (e.g. *qua* SciFi fans, metalheads, outdoor enthusiasts, etc.), require a diet of specialized experiences. Others may take a broader scope and feature a relatively weak link between identity and content; these are aesthetic omnivores, consumers of culture whose practical identities (e.g. *qua* cultured person, art historian, aesthetician, critic, etc.) require them to sample a wider range of cultural delicacies. Both obligacy and omnivory, I have argued, are perfectly felicitous strategies for pursuing aesthetic value.

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