

Beyond Compare

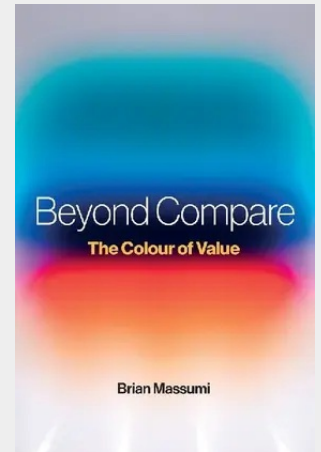
The Colour of Value

"(I) To live, (II) to live well, (III) to live better." A. N. Whitehead concisely sums up the question of ethics in this phrase. Less a conclusion, it is the opening of a problem. "Well," "better," by what yardstick? Can we think ethically without the imposition of a norm that prejudices value according to a preset mold? When a norm is imposed, is it not always limitative, channeling behavior, and segregative, drawing lines of exclusion and inclusion? In short, does this anodyne phrase camouflage a disciplinary power operation that molds and reduces life potential? Not if we envision a radically non-normative ethics. In this book, Brian Massumi takes up the challenge of a non-normative ethics. It is necessary, Massumi argues, to fundamentally reforge value along different axes of thought and feeling. The compass needle of the ethical must swing to the aesthetic, toward the fulfilment of the ethico-aesthetic paradigm called for by Félix Guattari. *Beyond Compare* is a magisterial reappraisal of value from one of the defining philosophers of the past quarter-century.

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In this book, Brian Massumi envisions a radically non-normative ethics, one that might help us think differently about the concept of value. For such an ethics to be viable, it is necessary to fundamentally reforge value along different axes of thought and feeling. To do so, Massumi argues, we must move the compass needle of the ethical toward the aesthetic fulfilling the ethico-aesthetic paradigm called for by Félix Guattari.

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