

James Lambert (intro)

Hello, everyone. I am James Lambert, Director of Lifelong Learning at Washington and Lee University this season of W&L After Class, we are doing something a little different. For the last six seasons, we have wandered the colonnade with professors, leaders, thinkers and personalities that define the Washington and Lee experience. Please go back to our archives and listen to those podcasts to hear from those on our campus that make the university what it is. In future seasons, however, we want to use some of those personalities to explore central ideas from different perspectives, disciplines and histories, so that we not only get to know our greatest thinkers but get to listen to them think. We don't just want to know who they are, but want to experience what they do, both as representatives of a field of study and as teachers of rich ideas and possibilities in the great Washington and Lee liberal arts tradition. To this end, we wanted to ask a central question to each guest and hear how they might approach an answer. The central question to Season Seven is, what is beauty? And its follow up, what is beautiful? I'm very excited to dive deeper into this and to help start out this conversation, we are eager to hear from Assistant Professor of Philosophy, Angela Sun. Angela has been at W&L for four years after receiving her doctorate at University of Michigan and bachelor's degree at Wellesley. Angela spent the last year as a fellow at the National Humanities Center, and has published on integrity resolutions, art criticism, and has an upcoming article on death, consent, and well Taylor Swift. Besides that, Angela is an absolute delightful human being.

James Lambert

Angela, before we jump into my first question about this, tell us anything about your background that might help us understand your unique qualifications for taking on the topic of beauty today.

Angela Sun

Thanks so much, James. So, I fell in love with philosophy when I was in college. The first philosophy class I took my freshman year felt like a breath of fresh air. I just didn't know that I could think about topics like ethics and art and metaphysics with the kind of analytic rigor that is characteristic of a lot of scientific thinking, but direct that towards topics that I cared really deeply about. And at the time, I didn't know that I could do philosophy as a career, so I was thinking about what else I might want to do, and I double majored in architecture when I was in college. I had always loved art and I was good at math, so I thought that that was a good fit. But then, as I kept on sort of studying philosophy alongside architecture, I realized that I was really interested in thinking about architecture philosophically, so I ended up writing my senior thesis at Wellesley on the philosophy of architecture. When I went to grad school in philosophy, I was continuing to think about esthetics, but my dissertation research ended up being about the idea of what it means to be one person over time, not in a metaphysical sense, but in a practical sense. So for instance, right? I look at a photo of myself when I was a teenager, and I know that that's me metaphysically, right? We're one in the same person, but I might say something like, I'm not the person I used to be, or I've become a different person since then. And my dissertation was really about making sense of those kinds of statements of how you can become a different person over the course of your life. And even though that's not strictly speaking, an esthetic question, I do think that our esthetic commitments, the ideas about what

is beautiful and how that informs our style and interests are a huge part of what make us who we are. So, for instance, like my one of my closest communities in Lexington is the knitting group at House Mountain Yarn, the yarn shop in town, and we are a group of people who have come together around our shared esthetic interest in fiber arts. And that's a huge part of my life.

James Lambert

So fiber arts, the official term that I can use from-

Angela Sun

Fiber arts, is the official term yet for knitting, crochet, that whole family of activities. And yeah, I've been so lucky to be at W&L because I've been free to pursue my interest, both in ethics and political philosophy and in esthetics. So I've been doing my research in esthetics recently has been on the idea of, it's kind of, you know, some, some different kinds of topics, but I have an article. On re watching movies and why some movies are particularly rewatches. I've also been thinking about the connection between esthetic experience and depression and how mental health can affect our perception of esthetic properties. So I've been super lucky to be supported here in doing that research and having the opportunity to teach esthetics to students here as well.

James Lambert

So my follow up question to that is, can I just follow you around each day to see what new projects you're coming up with? If you're talking about rewatches of movies, you're talking about esthetic actually, before I go on, can you define esthetics? We've been using that term already here, and that's not a term that's self explanatory, I think.

Angela Sun

Totally. Yeah. So I think of generally esthetic value as being pretty synonymous with beauty. But beauty is sometimes taken to have this very positive connotation. It's associated with a feeling of pleasure. But I think things that are esthetically valuable provoke all sorts of different feelings within us that aren't we wouldn't necessarily associate with beauty. So for instance, I've recently gotten more into like punk and metal music, and that, to me, has a great deal of esthetic value, but I'm not sure that I would necessarily associate that value with beauty in the same way that, you know, the connotations are, you know, with the way I would describe a Da Vinci painting as beautiful, for instance.

James Lambert

So then, great, that's a great explanation. So then, what is beauty? Let's start there. That's a big question. That's our question, what is beauty?

Angela Sun

So philosophers, historically writing about beauty have wrestled with this conflict in our thinking about beauty. On one hand, we feel like beauty is subjective, that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. There's no disputing about taste, and that's because beauty is not so much.

We don't think of beauty so much as a property of the object we're engaging as it is about how we feel about that object. So it's something that arises within us or is subjective. On the other hand, we can meaningfully distinguish between calling something beautiful and just saying that we like it, right? So we can say that, Oh, I loved the movie. I love this movie, but maybe it's not a good movie, right? It just appealed to me. We can also clearly make comparative judgments that seem to have like truth conditions. So for instance, if anyone were to say that like Friday by Rebecca Black is better than Happiness is a Butterfly by Lana Del Rey, I think that that would just be wrong. But if beauty were totally subjective, then we would have no grounds to say that someone who made that statement was incorrect in their judgment. So philosophers writing about beauty have sought to explain how, on one hand, beauty can be subjective, and yet there can be standards of taste, and we can make claims that are meaningful to one another about what has esthetic value and what doesn't.

James Lambert

This is really provocative. I'm thinking of two experiences I just had, and I want you to help me parse them out. I was at a concert, and it was very beautiful. It was in Carnegie Hall. I was just in New York, and the most beautiful thing I experienced is watching someone three rows down who, you know, had on really raggedy clothes, and just crying during the third movement of Brahms, you know, first symphony, high end stuff. But what I'm most moved by is this guy who didn't did almost didn't belong in the concert hall, having this incredible emotional reaction. I wondered, though, if that was my experience and not a collective experience of the beauty. You know, I wasn't thinking that Brahms Symphony Number one was particularly beautiful or not. I was just enjoying it. I thought that was beautiful. And then I go outside and I see everyone gathered around the tree in Rockefeller Plaza. You know, it's this beautiful Christmas tree. And I thought it was beautiful too. And we and there, I thought, that's a beautiful experience. We can all agree. We're all enjoying it together. Is there a difference between the beauty of those two experiences? Or one, I see something that seems personal to me and I have a reaction, and the other one, I have a shared experience where we kind of all agree, or I assume we all agree that what we're witnessing is beautiful.

Angela Sun

I do think that it's really powerful to witness everyone sharing in a collective moment of appreciation, and that can be really affirming. And I think that it's really just speaks to our shared humanity, that we can all contemplate something and share in the pleasure that it's giving us. And I do think that historically, philosophers have been more concerned in analyzing a particular relationship between a single viewer and a single art object. But I think recently, there has been philosophers are more interested in esthetic communities and how we can sort of engage in these different meaning making practices together through our esthetic experiences. So I think that those kinds of experiences are on a par, right? It's just different kinds of engagement with esthetic value. But ultimately, what you are seeking out is esthetic value from both those experiences.

James Lambert

Okay, so going back to this idea of the thing itself being beautiful, or me, the experience of me watching it, let's say the relationship between the things. So to me, I see that tree and the tree itself is beautiful. Most of us agree. I have no idea what the experience of the person next to me is. Other than that, we're both looking at the same thing, and so there's an ostensible agreement that it's beautiful. In the other one, I have an emotional reaction, because I have some sort of experience where I see this person and my moral sense or my history is projected onto that person who has, you know, who's having this reaction, and it's very personal. And I don't know that that other people would think that that is as beautiful as I thought. Maybe our listeners do. I don't know. And I just wonder, what is the thing giving the beauty the observer, or the thing itself, what, what is, who is defining that is that? Does that help?

Angela Sun

That's a good Yeah. So are you saying that your, your experience of watching this other person being moved, is what's beautiful to you?

James Lambert

Yes, my reaction is, is, is just as beautiful as the thing. I don't think that thing, the tree, is beautiful. The experience of watching the person is beautiful. Those seem to me, two different things.

Angela Sun

So I think that beauty is not quite like a property, like color or size, right, a property that exists in the object itself. I do think that it is perceivers that the that where beauty originates in the perceiver. But I think one thing that is pretty incredible about humans is that we can reach consensus, or at least have meaningful conversations about what is or isn't beautiful, even though these are kind of subject fundamentally subjective responses, and it really speaks to our shared humanity that there is something in the object that through our kind of shared capacities for perception and understanding and imagination, that we can have experiences that are fundamentally subjective, but that we can share with one another. And that's why it's so cool that everyone can be gathered around the tree in Rockefeller Plaza, and through no particular property of the tree itself, which itself does not have the property of beauty, but we are all projecting the property onto it that we can share in that experience.

James Lambert

Okay, I'm going to push on definition a little bit. The way I often define things is to understand the opposition, or understand the opposite of that thing. So what is the opposite of beauty?

Angela Sun

The opposite of beauty, that's really interesting. So it might be tempting to say that ugliness is the opposite of beauty, but even ugliness is a kind of esthetic value, right? So, if you go to, for instance, a contemporary art museum, I think a lot of the art in those exhibits is quite ugly, you know, just it can be grotesque and really challenge what you are willing to sort of take seriously. And yet, I find that to be an incredible value in those works of art that they are meant to challenge us. So I would put ugliness even within the don't within the category of esthetic

value. So I think that the opposite of beauty, or might just be the absence of esthetic value altogether. And I think that maybe one possibility for the opposite of beauty might be like a purely utilitarian approach to life. So I do think that beauty starts to come in once we sort of utilitarian reasons start running out. So for instance, you might have a hammer, and the top of the hammer is meant to serve a utilitarian function, and that's why there isn't that much variety in the way that hammer heads look. But. Once you get to the handle, there's more freedom in what a handle can look like while the hammer still fulfills its function. And that's why, like, a lot of hammer handles look different. You know, they have different shapes, different colors. And so I would say that the absence of esthetic value is maybe where things are completely determined by utilitarian functions.

James Lambert

I love that definition. First of all, it's almost as if the, you know, when people say the opposite of love is not hate, the opposite of love is apathy, or it's a similar version, you know, that applies to beauty. It means that the absence of judgment or the absence of experience, seems to me, where there's no beauty. So, so you may perceive something as ugly, but your that perception there's something about in the rubric of beauty happening when you make that judgment or you make that perception, yes, am I on the right track?

Angela Sun

Definitely.

James Lambert

Okay. So then here's a question. You have shared value. We look at a hammer and the most utility, the most useful it is, is the most beautiful it can be to some people, or maybe the handle is, you know, patent leather, and that's the most beautiful it could be. So at what point does a civilization? Let me rephrase that, and I'm going to ask, does a standard of beauty support civilization? That is that we have a shared sense of what is beautiful, what's utilitarian, what's ugly. In other words, do we? Do we benefit from speaking to each other the same language of beauty as a civilization?

Angela Sun

I think we do, maybe not at a civilization level, but maybe-

James Lambert

Too big?

Angela Sun

Yeah, because I also think that there are, there's huge value in just esthetic diversity and having people who are interested in different kinds of things where maybe it is hard to have communication across different esthetic communities. For example, I have, like punk music has never really appealed to me. It has always just kind of sounded like noise. Yeah. I like pop music. I like a strong melody. Sue me, you know, I'm saying but then I recently read a biography of Kurt Cobain heavier than heaven by Charles Cross, and it really opened my eyes to how the

sound of Nirvana's music was meant to express this inner angst that he had and was meant to be reactionary towards the sort of status quo politics, and once I realized that that was sort of the language that Nirvana was speaking that allowed me to relate to it better. So even though it's not sort of the music that speaks to my soul in the clearest way, I recognized that there was something to appreciate in the way that that sounded. And so I think that having a general appreciative orientation towards life and realizing that even when we don't understand why people are congregating around some esthetic practice, to be able to see that they are speaking this language and that is cool and valuable. I think, in general, having that appreciative mindset, rather than demanding that everyone make themselves completely legible and transparent to us, is really the best way to go about one's esthetic life.

James Lambert

That's a beautiful answer. It makes me think I personally don't like the wicked films, nor the Broadway show. Now, I don't mean to offend any listeners, but when I see the reaction that some people have to those films or the show, I kind of enjoy that they have that reaction and, and, and that feels like a good to me. That feels like I'm doing a good when, even though I don't really like them, they don't appeal to me, perhaps the way you used to feel about punk. I like that other people are moved by them. In other words, it's sort of a different version of me appreciating some element of beauty to that scenario.

Angela Sun

Yeah, the philosopher Samuel Scheffler has a really useful distinction here between valuing and understanding the value of. So, for instance, I don't personally value the opera, but I understand that the opera is a valuable practice, and I think once we draw this distinction, then we can become much more open minded to the world of value, even though, as finite beings, we could not possibly value everything that there is that is worth valuing.

James Lambert

That gets me into the idea of what you've called in the past discretionary value. So the idea that there is value to a thing that is good for society or that has some sort of moral good. And forgive me, if I'm using the wrong philosophical terms, I'm just kind of-

Angela Sun

No, you're killing it.

James Lambert

So moral values so that we don't kill one another. We don't commit violence. There's, there's value in that. But then there's value that is not necessarily shared. It's that has a moral valence to it. There's, I like, you know, I like contemporary classical music and you like punk rock. Which one takes hold? Or does the fact that we can have those different values matter even more?

Angela Sun

Like you said, right in when it comes to value, often we don't have a lot of freedom in that. So for instance, if we think of moral value, there are just we often use the language of duty when it

comes to moral value. So there are things that I need to do in order to be a good person or a good friend or a good teacher. Similarly, with our epistemic practices, you know-

James Lambert

What's that?

Angela Sun

What's our belief forming practices, our practices of gaining knowledge, seeking knowledge, there... There are lots of ways that people gain different knowledge, right? We might have different styles in what we like to read. Maybe I like to go to the primary text. Someone else likes to watch YouTube videos or read Wikipedia. But ultimately, our belief forming practices are constrained by the truth, so whatever practice you use to gather evidence to form your beliefs. Ultimately, you need to believe in accordance with the truth. Otherwise, you're not doing a good job epistemically. By contrast, the esthetic domain, when it comes to esthetic values, we have a huge amount of discretion over what we value. So some people like punk music, some people like knitting. Some people watch sports. We don't really have a rational basis for saying that a good life consists in one of these things over others. Historically, I think that, you know, the uppity academics have tried to separate high art from low art and claim that a good life will consist in engaging like the masterworks of fine arts and painting and literature. But I think that just being open minded about esthetic value and realizing that there are so many ways that people are able to find beauty and express their own personal styles and individuality in that way that we can't really when it comes to morality or belief formation. It's a way of expressing our humanity as individuals.

James Lambert

Wait, so you telling me that K Pop isn't necessarily worse than Radiohead? And I'm really asking because this is what my daughter and I fight about. So, so tell me about that. I like Radiohead, you know, really educated rockers who appeal to a certain esthetic about complicated, you know, 40 somethings. I don't know males and k pop, which is much younger, much more exciting, much more accessible. I would say I can't hierarchize those, I mean, or them, like one's more beautiful than the other. And I'm just curious your view on that.

Angela Sun

I think that you can't. It's I think that you know one way that at least Hume tried to define a standard of taste, right? So a standard by which we could say that some works of art are better than other works of art was by appealing to what he called the joint verdict of true judges. So he thought that because we couldn't point to any property in a work of art itself, that would dictate whether it was better or worse than another work of art, because our judgments of beauty are fundamentally subjective. He thought that the way that we could determine whether one artwork was better than another was by seeing what all the experts think, the people who know about art history, who are free of prejudice, who don't have any particular interest in advocating for one artwork over another, to see what they jointly thought. And it is kind of interesting how often there is expert consensus over what the great works are critics Exactly. But I don't know if there are genuine art experts who know about every single domain

of art, and are equipped to say in every single domain what the master works in that domain are. I don't know if anyone who really knows their Radiohead is also a Blackpink or BTS expert, for instance.

James Lambert

That's well put. So those of us who prefer Radiohead are spending a lot more time studying Radiohead than we are. K Pop, which informs our esthetic decisions.

Angela Sun

Exactly. Yeah, and I think that that's still compatible with saying that, you know, within a certain domain, or maybe sometimes even across domains, you can compare individual artworks and sort of say whether one is better than the other.

James Lambert

That's excellent. Thank you. That helps me, I'm going to be more generous towards my daughter.

Angela Sun

Good, yeah, maybe give k pop another listen.

James Lambert

So I want to ask you a question that's very concrete, and you didn't know this question was coming at all. What is the most beautiful thing you've experienced, seen, heard, whatever in the last month, and can you tell us what that is?

Angela Sun

That is such a good question. I have a vinyl collection, and I love to collect physical objects that represent what I'm interested in. So I love to collect books. I love to collect vinyl. And I again, you know, sort of going down this I mean, I feel like my interest in punk has been coming out a lot during this conversation. But I listened to Evil Empire by Rage Against the Machine, the album, and it really was striking to me, just to realize that if I people have things to say, you know, and when I really sat down with the lyrics and like moved with the music, I feel like I finally understood what Rage Against the Machine was about. And I think that that was the most beautiful experience that I've had this month.

James Lambert

Great. So this is what we're going to do. Angela, I am going to listen to that. I've actually heard it before, but I'm going to take that, take that advice about beauty, and I'm going to really listen to that album.

Angela Sun

I'm glad. And then we should debrief after that.

James Lambert

Yeah, and I'm going to tell you to do something, because I was just thinking about this question when I asked it myself. I think the film *Train Dreams*, which I saw a few weeks ago, was the most beautiful thing I've seen the last month. Have you seen it?

Angela Sun

I have, yeah.

James Lambert

Oh, I was gonna sign you. We were gonna have to debrief later, but yeah. And I think it particularly appealed to me, not only because it's a beautiful piece of art, but it also is about the West, which is where I'm from. And you know, there are personal reactions. What you're saying about your choice is, the more education you have about a certain thing, the more beautiful it can become for you, when maybe before it wasn't as beautiful. Is that fair to say about your age against machine choice?

Angela Sun

I think that just taking something seriously is a very eye-opening experience. And I think often, you know, when it comes to music and even movies, sometimes we kind of just let it go on in the background, but I think that really sitting down with something and thinking about it seriously can open our eyes so that something where maybe before, we only understood that it was valuable, drawing on that distinction again, we come to really appreciate the value of ourselves.

James Lambert

You know, and I feel like we should give assignments in this kind of podcast to each other and others, in part, because we're discussing beauty, and so are there arenas you talked about knitting, we've talked about music, we've talked a little bit about film. Are there arenas that you feel that, and I'm going to word the use the word attention, that we need to pay more attention to in our culture, where there's beauties that are untapped, and I'm thinking particularly now of education, which I think is currently undervalued. I can't imagine anything better than taking a class from you right now where we get to discuss these issues. Are there arenas in our culture today that we are undervaluing, or that we are not considering or not paying enough attention to that are full of beauties that we haven't yet or that we may have been paying attention to at one time and we're ignoring at the moment.

Angela Sun

Yeah, absolutely. I think that recently, the proliferation of AI into our esthetic lives has made me more appreciative of some of our older practices when before AI was around. So for instance, Spotify is debuting a new function where it will generate a playlist for you on the basis of a prompt. And that made me really think about. About just the joy I used to have in making mix tapes for people of like care, carefully curating songs for a particular person, or for me, if I'm going through a hard time of me choosing the songs that were going to define that time for me and help me get through it. And you know, even in the age of streaming, we careful. It was even easier to make playlists for people in a way that was pretty cool and allowed me to make

more and experiment with that more. But when I think about, you know, giving someone a playlist that was AI generated, it loses out a lot on the humanity behind sharing these artifacts, these songs that we care a lot about. Another example of how AI has proliferated in our esthetic engagement is now a lot of us mostly, or perhaps exclusively, watch movies and TV shows on streaming platforms which provide recommendations algorithmically based on what it thinks we're going to like. And I think that that causes two problematic things. Has two problematic implications. One is that it starts to narrow our taste, because if we are just watching what something that the algorithm knows we're already going to like, then we become less experimental, and so the range of esthetic value that we engage with becomes smaller. And another problem is that because Netflix and other streaming platforms are incentivized to keep you on the platform for as long as possible, they are not really incentivized to provide us with challenging artworks that are really going to push us esthetically, but instead, give us a lot of like nice core, as my friend the philosopher Matt Strohl puts it, and like nice core content, right? Stuff that's pleasant to engage, and I think that it challenging. Art is really awesome, right? Art that broadens what we think could be beautiful or esthetically valuable. And so those are two a ways that I think AI is going to shift our esthetic engagement in ways that make me very nostalgic for a time before AI.

James Lambert

We need to wrap up. That's an excellent answer. And I think what I would add to that, to go back to your earlier definition of beauty, you're talking about being presented with not something that we necessarily thought was beautiful ahead of time, but that we have to educate ourselves into recognizing its beauty. So maybe something that we initially think is ugly or resist by the attention we pay to it without it necessarily being curated by an algorithm allows us to expand our definition, or deepen our definition of what beauty can be. Is that a fair conclusion when we thinking about kind of the trajectory of you defining beauty to let's not let algorithms make all our choices.

Angela Sun

Definitely. Yeah, just, you know, stay open minded about the different types of experiences we could have. Go into your engagements with art with an appreciative disposition instead of a judgmental one. And I think that that's, I think that shift in attitude is what really opened up the world of art and esthetic value to me. And so that's what I would recommend to anyone who's sort of foraying into the esthetic domain.

James Lambert

Okay, well, I am going to do that with the rage against machine album,

Angela Sun

Good and K Pop.

James Lambert

I kind of already like k pop. I have to admit, I was just using an example, but I do like Radiohead a little bit better, but I do like k pop. I'll give you the assignment of Brahm symphony number one. How about that?

Angela Sun

Done.

James Lambert

I can imagine having so much fun discussing these things in your class. Tell us about the classes that you're teaching this semester, which would be winter 2026.

Angela Sun

Totally, I am teaching introduction to moral and political philosophy. Love teaching intro classes and getting to expose students to just amazing, mind boggling ideas that I hope change the way that they think about ethics and politics. And I'm also teaching a class on Karl Marx where we're going to be reading capital front to back. So lots of reading, but it'll be really interesting.

James Lambert

Angela thinking about some of the artifacts that we've talked about, whether it's K pop or whether it's some very difficult philosophical tract. How do you teach these things in your classes so that they're accessible to students that may not be familiar with them, but also ground them in the liberal arts tradition, ground them in the idea of what beauty is and what truth is and those kinds of things that are sort of universal. Or how do you mix those. Into your classes.

Angela Sun

Thanks so much for that question. So we read, you know, a lot of the classic texts, like Kant's critique of judgment, Hume's essays on esthetics, as well as work by contemporary philosophers on esthetics. But through all that, I really want to get students to reflect on the role of esthetic practices in their own lives, because I think a lot of the times, students don't realize that their lives are inflected through and through with it, with esthetics, you know, considerations about what music they're going to listen to, what movies they're going to watch, how they dress, that all of these fall under the domain of esthetics, and I hope that what we talk about gives them some of the language and concepts to reflect on that meaningfully in their lives and as they go through life. Ultimately, in all my classes, I really see my job as helping students, not necessarily to prepare them for any specific job or, you know, future profession, but to help them cultivate rich inner lives that are going to sustain them spiritually for the rest of their lives, no matter where they end up, and what could be more sustaining than beauty? Right to think about what it is, what we find beautiful, and what it all means about our shared humanity with one another. And so I hope that by engaging with these texts and by really unpacking them and appreciating these ideas, that students get some of the tools to develop this kind of rich inner thinking about beauty and all the places it comes up.

James Lambert

Angela, when I look at your CV, I notice that some of your recent work is on Taylor Swift, which I've already mentioned. We need to hear about this, not only about your approach to Taylor Swift, but for those of us Swifties out there, what's the best album? What's the most beautiful album, those kinds of things.

Angela Sun

Oh, that's such a good question. I became a Swiftie in June 2024, I'm a late Swiftie, yeah, but it was over the course of researching for this article, which I wrote about the idea of eras and what it means for not just Taylor Swift, but for us to go through eras where we experiment with our identities and our style for a sort of clearly delineated amount of time. But as I was researching that article again, it had to do with starting really to take Taylor Swift seriously and really, really listen to what she was saying. And once I sort of clocked in on that, I really began appreciating her as an artist. So my favorite album of hers is Red. I think that it is-

James Lambert

Solid choice.

Angela Sun

Yeah, I love how it has, you know, kind of this on one hand, this melodic, like melancholy, old Taylor Swift, country influence, but also begins her foray into pop music and just the concept of the album, of it being red, and how emotions have different colors. But a lot of the strong emotions are red, I think is, is very clever.

James Lambert

And goes towards some of our discussions of beauty. I mean, there's almost a synesthetic quality. And when I say synesthetic, I should probably, you know, the idea that sense is getting intermixed, that what you hear has a color, or there's, there's something I agree about that album, and I don't mean to get too much into the weeds where she really pushes on that idea of a full experience, rather just than just a catchy tune.

Angela Sun

Totally, yeah.

James Lambert

Let me just say that I'm a 1989 guy myself.

Angela Sun

Respect.

James Lambert

Yeah. Excellent answer. I would be thrilled to eventually read your work on Taylor Swift. When it comes out.

Angela Sun

It's coming out in should be coming out in 2026.

James Lambert

Thanks, Angela, for talking with us today at our W&L after class podcast. This concludes the first episode of season seven of our After Class podcast, we've had a great time. Thank you for being a part of it and thank you all for listening. Just as a reminder, this season, we are going to be focusing on that big question, what is beauty all season long, and then in following seasons, we'll pick another question so that we can pick the brains and watch the professors think through one of these big questions in the great liberal arts tradition, we hope you tune in to all of our episodes this season, and we look forward to that. Thanks.