

Margaret Little

• Cosmetic Surgery: medical enhancements

- often motivated by "suffering" → not a desire for beauty, but to end alienation and escape "teasing" (→ to conform)

↳ Little claims there should be special concerns about surgeries whose moral status is complicated when the motivation of the surgery comes from suffering from "norms of appearance"

• 3 cases + 3 moral planes: suffering is the same, but they each raise different moral considerations

- Aesthetic Preference → society expresses a preference (creates non-harmful aesthetic norm)

• ex: having 'l-chin' in a society where 'double-chins' are attractive

→ society is not morally implicated for the person's suffering; "not everything unfortunate is unfair"

- Prejudicial Behavior → society exercises a prejudice (participates in morally problematic behavior)

• ex: having big ears in a society where they are mocked

→ society is morally implicated/culpable for the person's suffering by its enforcement of a norm

- Suspect norms + injustice → society reinforces an injustice (complicit in deep systematic moral wrongs)

• ex: being African American or a woman given our current norms of appearance

↳ norms of appearance usually favor European features, current norms have immoral content

→ the content of certain norms of appearance is deeply unjust b/c they reinforce ideas that races + sexes are unequal in value

• Responsibility in medicine: the physician's relationship to the system that causes suffering

→ Little believes these issues cannot be resolved by:

1) specifying the purpose of medical practice (whether cosmetic surgeries for aesthetic reason fall within the purpose of medical practice, or whether it's a duty to address all the harms in the 'maintenance of health' to alleviate patient's suffering)

2) weighing the risks + benefits of procedures on a case-by-case basis (whether particular surgery would be in the interest of that particular individual)

• Complicit Action

- norms: imply they are worthy of being adhered to

- action: a surgeon's action is assumed to be okay b/c the medical community is respected → may reinforce a suspect/injust system regardless of the surgeon's intention