

Beauty and Physical Attractiveness

Beauty is a characteristic of a person, animal, place, object, or idea that provides a perceptual experience of pleasure or satisfaction. Beauty is studied as part of aesthetics, sociology, social psychology, and culture. An “ideal beauty” is an entity which is admired, or possesses features widely attributed to beauty in a particular culture, for perfection.

The experience of “beauty” often involves the interpretation of some entity as being in balance and harmony with nature, which may lead to feelings of attraction and emotional well-being. Because this can be a subjective experience, it is often said that “beauty is in the eye of the beholder.”

The characterization of a person as “beautiful”, whether on an individual basis or by community consensus, is often based on some combination of *inner beauty*, which includes psychological factors such as personality, intelligence, grace, politeness, charisma, integrity, congruence and elegance, and *outer beauty* (i.e. physical attractiveness) which includes physical attributes which are valued on aesthetic basis.

Standards of beauty have changed over time, based on changing cultural values. Historically, paintings show a wide range of different standards for beauty. However, humans who are relatively young, with smooth skin, well-proportioned bodies, and regular features, have traditionally been considered the most beautiful throughout history.

A strong indicator of physical beauty is “averageness”, or “koinophilia”. When images of human faces are averaged together to form a composite image, they become progressively closer to the “ideal” image and are perceived as more attractive. This was first noticed in 1883, when Francis Galton, cousin of Charles Darwin, overlaid photographic composite images of the faces of vegetarians and criminals to see if there was a typical facial appearance for each. When doing this, he noticed that the composite images were more attractive compared to any of the individual images.

People are influenced by the images they see in the media to determine what is or is not beautiful. Some feminists and doctors have suggested that the very thin models featured in magazines promote eating disorders, and others have argued that the predominance of white women featured in movies and advertising leads to a Eurocentric concept of beauty, feelings of inferiority in women of colour, and internalized racism.

I. Answer the questions True or False:

1. Beauty is a characteristic only of alive creatures
2. Beauty is studied by Exact Sciences
3. The feeling of beauty leads to feelings of attraction and emotional well-being.
4. Inner beauty includes psychological factors

5. There are some general features for standards of beauty that haven't change over the time.
6. Charles Darwin noticed that the composite images were more attractive compared to any of the individual images.
7. Hegemony of white women stared in films and commercials leads to a Eurocentric concept of beauty.

II. Choose the right synonyms from the text for the following words:

Reign, supremacy
Commercials
Balance, coherence
Magnetism
Trait

III. Give definitions to the following words:

Vegetarian
Perceive
Racism
Feminist
Conguence

IV. Choose the correct antonym for the following words:

Consensus	Inconguence
Inferiority	Opposition
Predominance	Decreasingly
Congruence	Supremacy
Progressively	Powerlessness