

# PHL 365 Philosophy of Beauty - Week 4

→ [Problems in Taste](#) ← (art, movies, books, etc.)

## **Good Taste → “True Judges” -Humes**

The ‘So What’ argument?

- 1. The person with good taste takes pleasure in things he (correctly) finds beautiful
- 2. The person with bad taste takes pleasure in things he (mistakenly) finds beautiful
- 3. Both get an equal amount of pleasure
- 4. So, it doesn't matter whether you have good taste or bad taste
- Is it better to have bad taste than good taste?
  - i.e. Simon Cowell
- Can we find a reason for matter of aesthetics?

## **Reasons to Care?**

1. “It is acknowledged to be the perfection of every sense or faculty, to perceive with exactness its most minute objects, and allow nothing to escape its notice and observation...”
  - delicate sensibility -Humes (keenness of perception)
    - true judge is keenly aware and wouldn't miss details
  - reason to be a true judge, there is general admiration for this ‘perfectionist’
    - we want to acquire this same perfection in ourselves
  - i.e. Super Temperature Man
2. The true judges get pleasure of higher quality
  - what is value to you?

## **John Stuart Mill (1806-1873)**

- “it would be absurd by while measuring all other things”
  - when comparing for high quality, looking not just at measurement in quantity, but also quality
  - i.e. comparison of feelings in tea to cocaine
- Mill's Test
  - “if one of two [pleasures] is, by those who are competently acquainted with both, placed so far...”
    - can compare quality with a comparison test exposing person to both types of pleasure to show which they are interested in
  - 1. Sensual Pleasure (humans share similarity with animals)
  - 2. Intellectual Pleasure (what makes us human)
- **Intellectual over Sensual?**
  - pig → intellect =0, sensual =100
  - human → intellect =30, sensual =10
    - intellectual pleasures must be of higher quality
  - i.e. Citizen Kane =intellectual (beauty), Resident Evil =pleasure (ugly)
    - would you go back to bad taste?
- What does this mean for someone not a true judge?
  - try to change and aspire our tastes to the true judges
- How fashion relates to aesthetics, is it not socially constructed?

## Fashion

- video: “100 years of fashion” → YouTube, Buzzfeed?
- central or decentral that fashion displays
- main feature: throw off their style to adopt a new style

## Ducasse on Fashion? (changing styles and aesthetics)

- Ducasse → aesthetics is about personal preference, subjective
1. Why give up what you prefer for what’s ‘in’?
    - a social phenomenon, but there also has to be some aesthetic activity

## Farennikova & Prinz: “fashion as an aesthetic pursuit”

- important aesthetic activity
- “What makes something fashionable?”

## PHILOSOPHICAL Definition (i.e. Defining ‘U.S. President’)

- someone who is thirty-five or older, living in the US for fourteen years, and who has been elected to the Office
  - doesn’t describe president duties
  - doesn’t say ‘born in the U.S.’
  - philosophers would say that → a definition must specify (aesthetic) conditions that, collectively, are **sufficient** to make someone president -- to include enough features
- someone who is male, thirty-five or older, born in the US, and who has been elected to the Office
  - specifies too much, why only male?
  - a definition must specify (aesthetic) conditions that, collectively, are **necessary** to make someone president -- to include enough features

## Essences

- a set of conditions that are (1) individually *necessary* for the concept to apply and (2) jointly *sufficient* for the concept to apply
  - once essence is established, a thorough understanding has been received

## Farennikova & Prinz: “fashion as an aesthetic pursuit”

- philosophical definition:
  - x is fashionable if, and only if:
    1. **at some time in the near future, x will no longer be fashionable**
      - inherently and only fashionable for a certain amount of time
        - “fashion... comes in temporarily bounded trends. This might seem to be a merely contingent feature of fashion, but we think it’s essential... The idea of something that is in fashion forever verges on incoherence...”
          - i.e. ‘Man Bun’
    2. **it is worn by many people**
      - Capital ‘F’ fashionable → Haute Couture, no mass consumption
      - Lowercase ‘f’ fashionable → RTW, yes mass consumption =necessary
        - “no following, no fashionability”
      - cool → individualistic, can be stylish to the person, but not ‘fashionable’
    3. **is it endorsed by individuals regarded as experts**

→ i.e. Khakis were always popular, but not fashionable until expert stated

- Fashion Insiders / Forecasters → i.e. Anna Wintour
  - “fashion creators and its professional critics: designers, creative directors of the brand, editors, buyers, and critics. And...”
- Trend Setters → i.e. Kate Moss, Kate Middleton
  - “not certified professionals, but people with an intuitive sense of style, capable of aesthetic innovation... models, celebrities, socialites, or anyone style-savvy in our social group.”
- “fashion expertise is relative... Those who want to be fashionable must first identify the group to whom they want their couture to appeal. Only then can the appropriate experts be identified” → i.e. Bradley Wiggins > Mod Style

**4. those people wear it *because its aesthetic value is endorsed by experts***

- adopt for a reason, some expert has endorsed the value → also the concept of choosing couture for the right reasons i.e. for aesthetic

**A Problem?**

- double-breasted suit → 1990 looks good and then 2015 looks dorky  
→ So which is it?

**A Social Phenomenon?**

- “... fashion must change or it will cease to serve its purpose. Fashion is used ....”  
-Farennikova & Prinz
  - this quote sounds like from Ducasse, are they both fully behind the idea that fashion is an aesthetic pursuit