

Reading Questions for September 27

These questions cover excerpts from five different sources (which I have combined into one PDF – which I have titled “Excerpts on Beauty”). One is by Plato and called *The Symposium*. Another is by Aristotle and called *Metaphysics*. A third is by René Descartes and is from a letter he sent to someone named Mersenne. A fourth is by David Hume and called “Of the Standard of Taste.” The final one is by Immanuel Kant and is called *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. The answers do not have to be turned in. You will probably have to read more than once to get the answers.

*Background:*

In the course of examining the question “What is beauty?” we are going to take a quick tour through history. In particular, we are going to see what five of the most important philosophers in the history of Western Philosophy have to say with regards to beauty. (Some of these philosophers are a little hard to understand.) Then on Thursday, we will discuss your own views on the subject.

*Questions:*

1. What are the key things that Plato says about beauty? What do you think, is he right about them? Why?
2. What are the key things that Aristotle says about beauty in the paragraph starting “Now since the good ...”? What do you think, is he right about them? Why?
3. What are the key things that Descartes says about beauty in his letter to Mersenne from 18 March 1630? What do you think, is he right about them? Why?
4. What are the key things that Hume says about beauty? What do you think, is he right about them? Why?
5. What are the key things that Kant says about beauty in Section 7 (97-8)? What do you think, is he right about them? Why?