

The complex definition of beauty

Throughout the history of mankind, the concept and definition of beauty has remained somewhat of a mystery. People define beauty in many contexts. Sunrise on a foggy day, with the luminous sunlight playing among the shadows, is certainly beautiful. Raphael's Transfiguration, with ethereal blue clouds surrounding the risen Jesus is beautiful. A child's face is beautiful. A hand-painted vase brimming with fresh flowers, or even just a lovely evening gown, can be beautiful. So how can you define beauty?

The definition of beauty is complex, legitimate on a number of aesthetic levels. It's not even a matter of values or sensitivity, as beauty can reside in something so seemingly unimportant as a leaf, floating down a quiet stream. Perhaps more to the point, beauty resides everywhere you wish to find it. According to Webster's, beauty is of a very pleasing quality. You may find a chocolate croissant and a cup of fine Arabica coffee to be beautiful, both in form and taste. An old tapestry, made of the finest silks and embroidered with skill, pleases the visual senses and is thus beautiful.

A closer examination of the definition of beauty reveals that there are degrees and venues into which we may assign the identification of beauty. Some are objects of beauty, such as a beautiful piece of jewelry, wrought of breathtaking materials, with such craftsmanship and skill that you can't help but see its loveliness.

However, as you appreciate and apprehend beauty, the definition of beauty narrows and you find yourself looking for a certain refinement that expresses the ethereal beauty that is ageless and is regarded by all of humanity as beauty.

Now you more closely approach true beauty. True beauty cannot be duplicated. The face of a child is unique. The face you see now may never again be duplicated in its expression, wonder and uniqueness. This is a definition of beauty that you can spend a lifetime contemplating and yet never capture, except in your heart.

Have you ever spent a day walking, just watching people and observing their various moods? You may see a hundred people in a day, just walking through the park or sitting on a bench. Each individual has innate beauty. It is up to you to find that definition of beauty which is surely there. Whether that person is a kindly old grandmother feeding birds, a mother tending her kids, or an unfortunate homeless man trying to make the best of his situation, there is beauty in abundance if only you can see it.

When next you contemplate your definition of beauty, include the vagaries of

humanity. There you will find spiritual qualities of that ephemeral beauty. Therein lies the definition of beauty.