

# What is beauty?

Philip Bitar

©2012 Philip Bitar, Version 2012-10-10

They say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

So is the attribution of beauty arbitrary? Is there anything objective about the attribution of beauty?

Beauty is attributed to a wide range of things. We attribute beauty to the appearance of nature and to the processes of nature. We attribute beauty to human performance and to human creations. We attribute beauty to human appearance. We attribute beauty to ideas, such as mathematical concepts, theoretical concepts, and solutions to problems.

What is meant in making such an attribution? Is there an underlying theme among these wide-ranging instances of attributing beauty?

In developing my comprehensive theory of human life, I solved this problem. The solution is not obvious, and it surprised me. I'll say it here because I think that it will surprise you too:

***When we attribute beauty to something, we are praising skill in its creation or its performance.***

***Thus, when we attribute beauty to something, we are referring to some purpose in the thing, but our awareness of the purpose may be implicit rather than explicit.***

It turns out that the attribution of **good** is the same as the attribution of beauty, but in lower degree.

In this meeting, I will define and explain the following concepts:

- ◆ **Knowledge**
- ◆ **Skill**
- ◆ **Wisdom**
- ◆ **Beauty**
- ◆ **Good**

Then we'll discuss these ideas.

Although I had no practical application in mind when I developed the foregoing understanding of beauty, this understanding does teach us something of fundamental importance about beauty that can help us when we aspire to achieve beauty in anything that we create or that we do or that we work on, including our appearance. It also informs us why a woman should be cautious about how much to emphasize sexuality in her appearance.

In my book *Why? In Pursuit of the Ultimate Answer* (2008), I cover this topic on pages 105-112. In my book *Why Human Life Makes Sense* (2011, 2012), I present the parallel concepts of knowledge, skill, and wisdom in figure 2.3.