

# Is the art of fashion worthy of the attention of an epicurean?

**Post by “godek” of June 5, 2019 at 1:11 AM**

What do you fellow epicureans believe to be true about fashion and art? Can one have fancy (artistic, stylish) shoes or clothes but may or may not be expensive and still be an epicurean? I thought Epicurus was more about plain simple basic and not extravagance.

I thought to mention this in light of the recent topics in music. Before I got into Epicurean Philosophy I got into metrosexuality (a man that gets into his feminine side but still being masculine in his choice of wardrobe his home his hygiene his taste in the arts and so on. It is about being stylish.) I read many books on the topic and applied some of it. But I think some of those metrosexual men take it too far and buy too many clothes, shoes and so forth. Not having many clothes and not following trends but something you find appeals to you after you have applied the tips for how to be stylish but in your own way such as wearing colors that go together not wearing cowboy hats or boots with shorts and other similar things.

Closing thoughts but then again Epicurus wasn't against indulging in luxuries when they are easily obtainable.

Thoughts?

By the way what did Epicureans teach about art like in designing clothing, perfumes, shoes, etc? Like they have ideas on Music but what about the other arts is what I am asking.

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**Post by “Hiram” of June 5, 2019 at 8:34 AM**

Michel Onfray is The only Epicurean that I know to have delved into aesthetics in a significant way (outside of the book “The Sculpted Word” which deals with Epicurean missionary work using sculptures and art to promote our values). If you search for “sculpted word” on this forum you will find my notes on it.

His main work in English is hedonist manifesto and Here he advises an aesthetics education to train ourselves to better relish chosen pleasures:

<https://theautarkist.wordpress.com/2016/08/01/cyr...etic-education/>

Elsewhere he says that art has a history and he advocates for art that is rooted in philosophical materialism, and which creates meaning rather than admit nihilism as its inspiration.

I think the Epicurean connection here is that we draw value from nature, from reality. Real value, not platonized, denaturalized, decontextualized value.

<https://theautarkist.wordpress.com/2017/12/06/rhm...tly-nihilistic/>

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### **Post by “Hiram” of June 5, 2019 at 8:37 AM**

Concerning aromas he mentions the anecdote of Aristippus wearing perfume at the agora. He turns it into an educational parable.

<http://societyofepicurus.com/michel-onfrays...-of-philosophy/>

<http://societyofepicurus.com/a-counter-history-of-aromas/>

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### **Post by “Joshua” of June 5, 2019 at 10:29 AM**

This will, of course, depend on culture. But there's an interesting corollary question regarding the ostentation of simplicity. This is wonderfully expressed by a story I once read, doubtless apocryphal, about Diogenes the Cynic. In any case I can't find it just now, but I recall it going like this; He went about Athens in the humblest of garb, browbeating citizens for their finery. Why should a man care what he wears? When he was at the public baths one day, his ratty cloak was stolen and replaced by fine robes. He refused these, and demanded from the young men standing by that they return his cloak.

"Ah," one of them responded, "but you have said that a wise man should take no care of what he wears. But we see now that you do care; here is YOUR pride and ostentation!"

And what do I think of this story? The cynic, fearing that he should be misunderstood by men, cannot take fine clothes. It would be the end of him as a cynic, for to be a cynic is nothing more than to be a reactionary to culture. The Epicurean, who follows a path of principles and not merely one of apposition, will not refuse the clothes because he will not fear to be misunderstood. Being misunderstood is, for him, de rigeur. And so he dons the finery, thanks his new friends for their gift, and perhaps invites them to dine that evening. 😊

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### **Post by “Joshua” of June 5, 2019 at 10:48 AM**

And another point I've thought of; acquiring many and nice clothes is an entirely different prospect for us today than it was even a century or two ago. The average teenager in our time wears more different shirts in a week than were worn in a year by the lower classes before the machination of laundry, weaving, knitting, and stitching. You can present yourself well without anything like what it would have cost before. And especially if you live in a modern city, you may dress stylishly and still not be ostentatious by comparison.

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### **Post by “Cassius” of June 5, 2019 at 1:10 PM**

Wasn't there an anecdote in "A Few Days In Athens" as well about the appearance of Gryphon? (or something like that)

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### **Post by “Godfrey” of June 5, 2019 at 3:12 PM**

Everything is worthy of the attention of an Epicurean.

The art of fashion is an excellent example. As in all things, it depends on your personal hedonic calculus: does the pleasure it brings to you outweigh the potential pain?

To what degree is it natural and necessary? This would be quite different for Tarzan, a corporate attorney and, presumably, you.

To what degree is it natural and unnecessary? What pleasures can you afford without undue sacrifice? Are comfortable, stylish, well fitting, well made clothes a pleasure to you? This could be anything from t-shirts and shorts to tailored suits, depending on your circumstances and desires. Or are these things meaningless to you?

To what degree is it unnatural; to what degree does it bring you more pain than pleasure? If you need tailored suits for work, but can't stand wearing them and can't afford them, then maybe a different job could be considered. If you "have" to have every latest fashion craze then maybe you need to examine at what point this desire will end, or if you need to control your desire.

Regarding the "art of fashion:" fashion entails art, design and craft and can be appreciated on all of these levels and more. But appreciation doesn't have to mean consumption. In my trips to art museums I've stumbled across a variety of fashion exhibits: historic clothing of various periods, Japanese armor, Hollywood costume design, and what may have been the post Met Gala exhibit. The aesthetic conception, richness of materials, intricate craftsmanship, sense of place and how the articles fit into their culture... this and more are worthy of consideration, if it brings you an excess of pleasure over pain.

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### **Post by "Hiram" of June 7, 2019 at 4:48 PM**

Relevant to this:

How virtue morphs into beauty in the eye of the beholder - <https://aeon.co/essays/how-vir...of-the-beholder>

I've heard the observation more than once that when people are mad or angry they look ugly. This is used in children's classes at Buddhist temples to encourage happy interactions. But there are studies that link cheerfulness (and confidence) with being more attractive. So beauty is not entirely about shape and appearance.

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### **Post by "Godfrey" of June 7, 2019 at 6:02 PM**

Interesting article. From an Epicurean point of view I see it as a intriguing examination of the non-conscious aspects of the Anticipations. The only major objection is the idea that morality is objective.