

# Facial Attractiveness Essay

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What makes a face attractive? This question has been asked for countless years. Several say that symmetry or youthfulness makes up an attractive face. Others say that familiarity and averageness is more attractive. Which side is right? Both sides can agree that expressions play a role in how attractive a person is. What most don't know is that many find [averageness](#) attractive, even if they don't know that the person is "average."

One of the first scientists to truly ask "What's in a [face](#)?" was Francis Galton. Galton was focused on vegetarians and criminals. His main aim was to understand if there was a similar facial appearance for both. To do this, he made photographic composite images of both faces. In other words, Galton overlaid numerous images of faces onto a single plate. This created one final composite face that had characteristics of each original face. The resulted average face proved no evidence toward the criminal tendencies of vegetarians, but Galton noticed that the composite face was much more attractive than the original faces. "This phenomenon is now known as the averageness effect, where attractive faces tend to be indicative of the average traits of the population." (What's in a Face, 2002)

There are two main explanations (that follow the symmetric theory) that explain the attractiveness of the composite face. The evolutionary advantage theory proposes that individuals with symmetric faces tend to be more attractive. It draws upon the fact that they look healthier than those with unsymmetrical faces. Human genes are created to develop

symmetrically. Asymmetric faces are formed from defects and small imperfections created before and after birth. Those who have strong immune systems and can therefore be deemed...

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...iful with more extreme features. Symmetry, expressions, gaze direction, familiarity, averageness, and youthfulness can all play enormous factors in how attractive a person is perceived as. "This demonstrates the incredible sophistication of the mechanisms and processes that are involved in face perception." (Jones, B. C., DeBruine, L. M., Little, A. C., Conway, C. A. & Feinberg, D. R.(2006).)

#### References

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