

# [Cultural conservation](https://assignbuster.com/cultural-conservation/)

Word Count: 715One problem with :
To put it simply, and its not a problems that only conservatives very often confuse
(or conflate ethics and aesthetics. When Gertrude Himmererfarf lambastes out (as she
perceives it) 'amoral, 'sexually deviant' and 'polymorpously perverse' culture she is
primarily responding to something that she finds culturally foreign and aesthetically
threatening.

I agree with her that values are oftentimes a good thing, but only when they are
born of an ethical and pragmatic perspective, not an aesthetic one.

The conservatives want a seemingly neat and compartment society wherein stable
appearances are maintained and archaic cultural archetypes are adhered to religiously. I
grew up in a world of cultural archetypes. I grew up with white businessmen going to
office buildings while their wives stayed at home and their kids went to school. or , more
accurately, I grew up with alcoholic, adulterous business men who lives culturally insular
lives while their wives took sedatives and smoked cigarettes and vented their frustrations
on there kids, and these same kids took reams of drugs, got abortions, drove drunk, and
victimized the weaklings. I grew up in what most conservatives would consider a utopia;
lots of money, prestige, cultural cohesion, and good conservative values.
But their values were in fact aesthetics, and maintaining these aesthetics ruled and
ruined their lives. Almost everyone in this suburban bourgeoisie system hated their lives,
but because they had been brought up to worship aesthetic myths they felt that to
question them was an admission of personal failure.

What are these myths? they're old and platitudinal but I'll trot on them again:
that's money makes you happy, that society is right and that poverty is bad, that
maintaining convention in every aspect of your life is the ultimate good, that aberrance
from these ideas is sin. ect.

I'm not going to say that the polar opposites of the cliches is true, that would be
one of the failings of the radical left. I believe that for the most part these criteria are
irrelevant. Money can make life easier, but it also can make life miserable. Poverty can
be bad but it can also be fine. Convention has some good points and some bad points.
What it all comes down to is flexibility that should allow for the well being of the
individual without compromising the rights of other individuals.

When conservatives trot out their litany of evils-homosexuality, single parent
families, multiculturalism, ect. I'm always asking 'why?'. If people are happy being gay
then whets wrong with that? it may be a lifestyle that's aesthetically different from what
we've been brought up with, but so what? and single parent families? better a loving
single parent family than a 'conventional family' wherein the parents hate each other and
the father is a demagogue.

One reason that we have such a wide variety of alternative lifestyles is that the
conventional lifestyles that the conservatives champion are often quite flawed and
restrictive.

Restrictive mores can be terrific when applied to peoples violent impulses, but
restrictiveness is terribly unhealthy when its used to get people to conform to arbitrate
social archetypes. This restrictiveness can make people feel inadequate and inferior and
it needs to be done away with.

If someone's gay, let them be gay. If your son wants to marry a black woman (or
white or yellow or Muslim) then let the,. We need to love each other and support each
other even if we choose to live in alternatives but harmless ways. Obviously if your son
is a rapist or a wifebeater or a child molester then you need to question your support of
his actions and values.

I'm not championing a retreat for responsibility. I believe that personal and
social well being is built upon and foundation of hard work, loyalty, honesty, diligence,
respect, tolerance, and other good 'values.' But it doesn't matter what the cultural
manifestation of the values looks like. It can be straight or gay or male or female or
black or white or anything as long as its respectful and makes the practitioner feel well.

So my advise to cultural conservatives (and others) would be to cultivate an
approach to values based on principles rather than aesthetics. I would also like to say
that any pronouncements on the values of others, especially pronouncements veering into
the pre-scriptive realm, need to be cautious, pragmatic, logical and not just the typically
hateful and reactionary vacuities that we've grown so accustomed to.