Philosophy and the Arts

Paper topics

Write a 1000 word essay (you can write more if you want) on one of the following paper topics:

1. In discussing art, and our ability to define and understand what art is, Fisher brings in Wittgenstein as a philosopher whose insights illuminate the limitations we face in discussing what art is. What were these insights (arguments, concepts, etc.), and what are the limitations we face? Elaborate.

2. In Hume’s essay, “Standard of Taste,” Hume attempts to show both that standards of beauty and good taste are culturally relative, and yet within a given culture one can legitimately say that one piece is better than another, or that one person has better taste than another. How does Hume make this case? Do you think he is successful? In the context of this essay, be sure to refer to works of art, or to a genre of art, in clarifying the arguments that Hume makes.

3. An important theme in discussions of art centers on the relationship between art and society. By discussing some of the readings and arguments concerning the relationship between art and morality as well as the social causes of the avant-garde movement in art, explore this theme. What conclusions do any of these arguments lead you to in thinking about art’s role in society?