



The Experimental Psychology of Beauty: Volume 7 (Collected Works of C.W. Valentine)

C.W. Valentine

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Originally published in 1962, the experimental study of aesthetics was a field particularly associated with the name of C.W. Valentine, who in this book provided a critical review of research carried out since the end of the nineteenth century principally by British and American psychologists. The investigations described, many of them conducted by the author, are concerned with individual responses to what is commonly regarded as beautiful in painting, music, and poetry, an important distinction being made between the perception of objects as 'beautiful' as opposed to 'pleasing'. The reactions of children and adults, and of people having different ethnic and social backgrounds, are explored in a variety of experiments dealing with specific elements, including colour, form, and balance in painting; musical intervals, discord, harmony, melody, and tempo; and rhythm, metre, imagery, and associations in classical and romantic poetry. Other experiments seek to disclose the temperamental and attitudinal factors underlying individual differences in the judgement and appreciation of specific works of art. Of particular interest are the studies of responses to modern paintings, poems and musical compositions.

The findings throw light on the development of discrimination and taste and suggest the possibility of some common factor in the appreciation of these three arts. It was felt that critics as well as psychologists and aestheticians would find much to encourage reflection and to stimulate further research.



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