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Art Beauty and Creativity: Indian and Western Aesthetics

Shyamala Gupta

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When the 18th century German philosopher, A.G. Baumgarten first introduced Aesthetics as an academic discipline to deal with the philosophy of beauty, he couldnt possibly have anticipated the controversies that have lately been raised by logical positivists, analytical schools, and even linguists -controversies questioning the validity, the very legitimacy, of a philosophical inquiry into beauty, art and creative processes. Notwithstanding the relatively more recent usage of the term proper, Aesthetics has a millennia-long history: beginning, in the West, with the old-world Greek philosophers, like Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle; and, in India, with the Vedic writings, more specifically, Bharata. Dr. Shyamala Gupta s book is indisputably a painstaking effort trying to chart the historical progression of aesthetics: both Indian and Western -with focus not only on its evolutionary landmarks, but on its important concepts and theories as well. Schematically structured into two parts, Part 1 of the book examines the status of Indian aesthetics: its theories of rasa and dhvani, and, besides these, of its world- view of art. In its Part 2 are traced the development of Western theories of art and beauty, together with their attendant issues appearing, from time to time: from the days of ancient Greek philosophers to contemporary thinkers. Additionally, the authoress also tries to show how art is positioned vis-a-vis morality, science, sport and culture. A comprehensive, meticulously updated perspective on aesthetics, the book is sure to interest anyone concerned with the discipline: whether as a specialist, a student or a general reader.

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