

The Metaphysics of Beauty

By Nick Zangwill

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The Metaphysics of Beauty By Nick Zangwill

In chapters ranging from "The Beautiful, the Dainty, and the Dumpy" to "Skin-deep or In the Eye of the Beholder?" Nick Zangwill investigates the nature of beauty as we conceive it, and as it is in itself. The notion of beauty is currently attracting increased interest, particularly in philosophical aesthetics and in discussions of our experiences and judgments about art. In The Metaphysics of Beauty, Zangwill argues that it is essential to beauty that it depends on the ordinary features of things. He uses this principle to defend the notion of the aesthetic, to call for a version of aesthetic formalism, and to reconsider the reality of beauty. The Metaphysics of Beauty brings beauty to the center of intellectual consciousness in a manner informed by contemporary metaphysics and engages with beauty as an enduring object of human thought and experience.

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Editorial Review

Review
"Zangwill has written a book which seeks, in part at least, to restore beauty to a primary place in aesthetic theory. . . . His project is quite ambitious. And Zangwill delivers. The book is enjoyable to read and offers an interesting alternative view of aesthetic value. . . . He writes with a clear, straightforward, and engaging style. The book is well researched. I enjoyed reading it, and I believe anyone interested in contemporary issues in aesthetics will find the book very rewarding."?Julia Driver, Dartmouth College. Australasian Journal of Philosophy, vol. 80, No. 4, December 2002

"The book touches on an impressive range of topics in analytic aesthetics. . . Throughout, Zangwill confronts the best of philosophical aesthetics in an engaging and honest style. When he is uneasy with his own views he says so, and he is not above occasionally admitting that his opponents are right. That said, Zangwill spends most of the book arguing iconoclastically and inventively against philosophical orthodoxy. Zangwill brings thoroughness, erudition and insight. . . to each of the issues he tackles. . . The Metaphysics of Beauty as a stimulating and spirited tour through many of the central issues of contemporary aesthetics, is clear testament to the vibrancy of that tradition."?Glenn Parsons, University of Toronto. Philosophy in Review, XXI:1-XXII:2.

"The core of aesthetics?at least when distinguished from the philosophy of art or criticism?is the study of beauty and the aesthetic experience. This is a fascinating but difficult part of the subject. Nick Zangwill has, as he says, been thinking about the topic for about a decade. . . . It is to the author's credit that he has given us a book packed with argument and insight, which is bound to open up new areas of enquiry in the area."?Derek Matravers, The Open University, British Journal of Aesthetics, vol. 42, no. 4, October 2002

"Characterized by rigorous argumentation and by informed, highly interesting discussions of trends and major figures in recent aesthetic theory, The Metaphysics of Beauty is an important book. Nick Zangwill is to be congratulated for breathing new life into topics that most philosophers of art long ago abandoned as dead."?Theodore Gracyk, Author of Rhythm and Noise: An Aesthetics of Rock

"With this book, Nick Zangwill brings a distinctive, refreshing voice to the field of aesthetics. Striking, lucid, forceful, and often irreverently humorous, The Metaphysics of Beauty will change minds and make clear that there is life yet in the formalist conception of art's value. Even those who disagree with this engaging book will find it a valuable stimulus to their own thinking."?Garry L. Hagberg, author of Art As Language: Wittgenstein, Meaning, and Aesthetic Theory

"Zangwill . . . writes with a clear, straightforward, and engaging style. The book is well researched. I enjoyed reading it, and I believe anyone interested in contemporary issues in anesthetics will find the book very rewarding."?Julia Driver, Dartmouth College, vol. 80, no. 4, December 2002

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