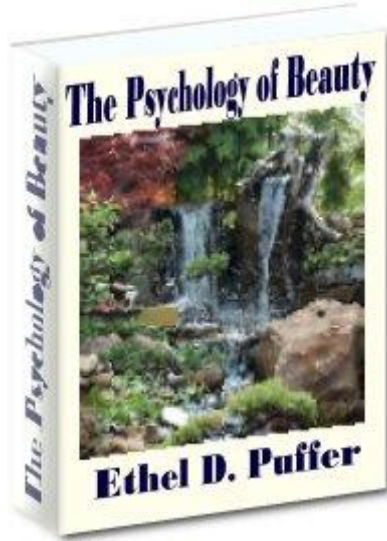


Psychology Of Beauty - Discover The Pleasure Of Contemplating The Arts, Nature & Great Ideas



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The Psychology of Beauty The Psychology of Beauty by Ethel D. Puffer is a discussion of beauty in its various forms. Most concepts still apply today though the original book was written in 1905. The author explains the various components and factors that comprise beauty. He also criticizes popular opinion on beauty.

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Book Excerpts: THE human being who thrills to the experience of beauty in nature and in art does not forever rest with that experience unquestioned. The day comes when he yearns to pierce the secret of his emotion, to discover what it is, and why, that has so stung him--to defend and to justify his transport to himself and to others. He seeks a reason for the faith that is in him. And so have arisen the speculative theories of the nature of beauty, on the one hand, and the studies of concrete beauty and our feelings about it, on the other. Speculative theory has taken its own way, however, as a part of philosophy, in relating the Beautiful to the other great concepts of the True and the

Good; building up an architectonic of abstract ideas, far from the immediate facts and problems of the enjoyment of beauty. There has grown up, on the other hand, in the last years, a great literature of special studies in the facts of aesthetic production and enjoyment. Experiments with the aesthetic elements; investigations into the physiological psychology of aesthetic reactions; studies in the genesis and development of art forms, have multiplied apace. But these are still mere groups of facts for psychology; they have not been taken up into a single authoritative principle. Psychology cannot do justice to the imperative of beauty, by virtue of which, when we say "this is beautiful," we have a right to imply that the universe must agree with us. A synthesis of these tendencies in the study of beauty is needed, in which the results of modern psychology shall help to make intelligible a philosophical theory of beauty. The chief purpose of this book is to seek to effect such a union. A way of defining Beauty which grounds it in general principles, while allowing it to reach the concrete case, is set forth in the essay on the Nature of Beauty. The following chapters aim to expand, to test, and to confirm this central theory, by showing, partly by the aid of the aforesaid special studies, how it accounts for our pleasure in pictures, music, and literature. The whole field of beauty is thus brought under discussion; and therefore, though it nowhere seeks to be exhaustive in treatment, the book may fairly claim to be a more or less consistent and complete aesthetic theory, and hence to address itself to the student of aesthetics as well as to the general reader. The chapter on the Nature of Beauty, indeed, will doubtless be found by the latter somewhat technical, and should be omitted by all who definitely object to professional phraseology. The general conclusions of the book are sufficiently stated in the less abstract papers. Of the essays which compose the following volume, the first, third, and last are reprinted, in more or less revised form, from the "Atlantic Monthly" and the "International Monthly." Although written as independent papers, it is thought that they do not unduly repeat each other, but that they serve to verify, in each of the several realms of beauty, the truth of the central theory of the book. The various influences which have served to shape a work of this kind become evident in the reading; but I cannot refrain from a word of thanks to the teachers whose inspiration and encouragement first made it possible. I owe much gratitude to Professor Mary A. Jordan and Professor H. Norman Gardiner of Smith College, who in literature and in philosophy first set me in the way of aesthetic interest and inquiry, and to Professor Hugo Munsterberg of Harvard University, whose philosophical theories and scientific guidance have largely influenced my thought.

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