

to its title; it encompasses the thematization of the Goddess in South Asian films of Nepal, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka within its trajectory, ensuring a holistic presentation. The book is unique with regard to its relationship to the academic disciplines of feminism, philosophy and theology and it will contribute immensely to the researches on feminist religious discourse.

DEBASMITA TRIPATHY

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WITTGENSTEIN AND AESTHETICS. By Hanne Appelqvist. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. 74 pp.

The question of aesthetics in art and philosophy is by no means a recent one. It has been asked and answered by thinkers as early as Plato and Aristotle. In the Indian tradition as well, the centrality of aesthetics cannot be understated. In fact, the ancient text of *Natyashastra* can be read as Bharata's seminal contribution as an aesthetician. Yet, the question had remained unsettled and engaged the intrigue of various ages in particular ways. Along its long evolution, approaches have been many and varied, drawing and differing from each other, contributing to the contentious and dynamic status of aesthetics today.

Hanne Appelqvist's book *Wittgenstein and Aesthetics* presents an insightful account of Ludwig Wittgenstein's understanding of aesthetics and marks it as a significant milestone in the history of aesthetics. The author places aesthetics at the centre of Wittgenstein's philosophy, and argues that his engagement with aesthetics is integral and not secondary to his principal investigations on language. Through the Kantian affinities that the author observes in Wittgenstein's thought, the latter's position in the philosophical history of aesthetics is established. The book, therefore, has much to offer readers who are specifically interested in the philosopher as well as those who wish to explore aesthetics as an interdisciplinary domain.

The introduction to the text performs the function of a glossary and elucidates certain crucial features of Wittgenstein's conception. Appelqvist anticipates the ambiguity that can arise from the usage of the term "aesthetics" and takes the effort to describe the particular meaning that it holds for Wittgenstein. The author clarifies that Wittgenstein's conception of aesthetics, though it does concern itself with beauty, is not limited to art, and is applicable to broader philosophical questions. What is proposed by Wittgenstein is a perspective that can provide solutions to both artistic and philosophical puzzles. It is also clarified that aesthetic judgements are assertions of conviction and not statements of facts. What is then provoked is the question of artistic essence, of whether it is to be located in the object or in the experience of the object. It appears to the reviewer that such a binary is dissolved in Wittgenstein, and what is instead proposed by the philosopher and emphasised by Appelqvist is a relation between the experience and the experienced. Through these clarifications, the author is able to simultaneously enrich the notion of aesthetics for the reader while refining their reading of Wittgenstein.

The book also functions as an archive by collecting and connecting Wittgenstein's reflections on aesthetics that appear in *Tractatus*, *Philosophical Investigations*, and in the lecture notes available as *The Blue and Brown Books*. Although Wittgenstein does not approach the study of aesthetics in a systematic manner, the development of his conception is perceptible through the remarks scattered across the various periods of his philosophical career. Appelqvist takes up the challenge of coherently structuring these instances into a system of aesthetics that evolves alongside Wittgenstein's philosophy of language. However, it must be noted with appreciation that the documentation offered by the author preserves the "digressions" and examples that are critical to Wittgenstein's understanding of aesthetics.

The book is divided into four major parts, chronologically arranged, that trace the evolution of Wittgenstein's earlier thoughts into his more mature stances. Wittgenstein appears to rely on a method of comparison as opposed to explanation, aligning aesthetics with ethics, logic, language, and philosophy. These comparisons are elaborated upon in the book across its four chapters, and the author is compelling in her argument that each comparison culminates in the proposal of a "non-conceptual perspective". What Appelqvist recognises is a form of relation, a particular type of encounter that characterises not only Wittgenstein's conception of aesthetics but also guides his understanding of related fields.

A non-conceptual perspective, according to Wittgenstein, is essential for the possibility of aesthetic understanding and for the justification of aesthetic judgements. By providing relevant references, Appelqvist relates this perspective to Kant's influential views on aesthetics. The author is able to effectively demonstrate that Wittgenstein's description of aesthetic judgement as constituted by both subjective reactions and rules draws from the Kantian distinctions of "the beautiful" and "the agreeable". Kant's differentiation of "determining" and "reflective" judgements is also shown to be echoed in Wittgenstein's understanding of aesthetics. The reader can find a detailed discussion of these philosophically heavy terms in the chapters of the book, along with an elaboration on how they are incorporated into Wittgenstein's larger philosophical framework.

The first chapter details Wittgenstein's consideration of ethics and aesthetics as the condition of one's relation to the world, operatively similar to logic. Rather than an empirical property belonging to an object or a fact, value is recognised as a feature of perception. This understanding leads to his assertion that value (aesthetic and ethical) is "ineffable", in the sense that it cannot be conceptually explained (14). Appelqvist makes another successful comparison here, relating Wittgenstein's idea of ethics and aesthetics to Kant's notion of the "transcendental" conditions that constitute man's experience of the world (9).

The chapter introduces Wittgenstein's notion of the "sub specie aeterni" as the "disinterested" yet "contemplative" perception that yields aesthetic and ethical value (10). It is described as "disinterested" as it views the object as it is, focusing only on its formal features. However, contemplation on the form of the object, according to Wittgenstein, allows one to see the object as a whole designed for a purpose. This purpose, it must be noted, is not an objective quality that can be conceptually defined. Rather, the value or the purpose of the object has to be sensed or subjectively experienced.

The author succeeds in demonstrating Wittgenstein's application of such a perspective to both ethics and aesthetics, and further connects it to Wittgenstein's picture theory of language. According to the picture theory, language and reality share a logical form. Wittgenstein observes that this logical form can only be displayed or expressed as itself and is unavailable in conceptual terms. By focusing on this understanding, Appelqvist is able to recognise that, for Wittgenstein, language too possesses the quality of ineffability that had been ascribed to aesthetics. Thus, the chapter presents a pattern in Wittgenstein's thought, wherein congruent models of aesthetics, ethics and language emerge. The dots are connected, though briefly, and the reader is able to visualise the framework that is beginning to take form.

Chapter two tracks a transition in Wittgenstein's philosophy of language and a related modification in his conception of aesthetics. The "middle period" of his philosophy witnesses a substitution of the picture theory of language by an emphasis on the rule-governed grammatical system of language. Consistent with this shift, the author notes that a similar emphasis is placed on "shared", "normative", and "historically transmitted" aesthetic systems (34), within which aesthetic phenomena occur as "utterances" (28).

The chapter goes on to present the possibility and justification of aesthetic judgements as provided by Wittgenstein. According to the philosopher, judgements of beauty are to be differentiated from cognitive judgements as they are grounded in the subject's feeling of pleasure/displeasure in the contemplation of an object rather than on empirical properties. However, aesthetic judgements

are not expressive of mere subjective feelings or preferences. In fact, aesthetic judgements for Wittgenstein are normative in nature.

The apparent contradiction here is clarified by the author by referencing Kant's distinction of "the beautiful" and "the agreeable". Judgements of the agreeable reflect subjective idiosyncrasies, such as finding an isolated colour or sound pleasing. In contrast, judgements of beauty imply a formal "necessity", and demand justification (23). The question of aesthetics, as Wittgenstein puts it, is not "do you like it?", but "if you do, *why* do you?" (26). However, for Kant, as it is for Wittgenstein, the justification for aesthetic judgement is descriptive rather than explanatory in nature.

Appelqvist makes the astute observation that both Kant and Wittgenstein confront the problem of applying concepts/rules to particulars and propose a similar method as the solution. The author argues that for both the philosophers, rules and applications are not causally but intentionally linked. The claim is substantiated by Wittgenstein's notion of aesthetic judgements as judgements grounded in "reasons" as opposed to "causes" (31). Once again, Appelqvist recognises ineffability at the very core of Wittgenstein's understanding, as reasons are described by Wittgenstein as those that intuitively occur to the subject and cannot be conceptually explained.

Instead of explaining the particular phenomenon in terms of general rules, reasons describe a way of seeing, a personal encounter. However, the author reminds the reader that the reasons considered valid by Wittgenstein are those that are related to the form of the object. The attentive reader is expected to find here a resonance of the "disinterested" perspective that was described in the earlier chapter. Beauty is, thus, neither an objective property, nor is it a subjective impression. Rather, it can be best understood as a formal quality that is to be subjectively experienced. Reasons describe this subjective experience and, therefore, justify aesthetic judgements.

The second chapter thus aids our understanding of Wittgenstein's "system". Though governed by rules, the system does not determine a single way to follow these rules. Instead, each instance within the system describes the rule in an intentional manner. The system, though normative in nature, is shown to be inherently plural in practice. Therefore, the author argues that Wittgenstein conceptualises the system as a product of human activity, by virtue of which it is dynamic in nature. For readers interested in further articulations and reiterations of this idea, the reviewer recommends Theodor Adorno's idea of aesthetic individuation and Hans Robert Jauss' concept of horizon of expectations.

The third chapter focuses on Wittgenstein's later philosophy as a culmination of his thoughts on language and aesthetics. The final model is presented in the form of an analogy between music and language, a comparison that Wittgenstein returns to and develops at various stages of his career. The connection is remade yet again in *Philosophical Investigations* in light of his understanding of meaning as use.

Language in Wittgenstein's mature philosophy is an activity that arises from an "occasion" (47). Each utterance, he argues, draws its purpose from the context of its usage. His focus on the rules of the grammatical system, thus shifts to the rules of the "language game" (47). Appelqvist observes a similar shift in Wittgenstein's conception of aesthetics that now considers aesthetic phenomena as activities performed according to the rules of the social context. However, it is also noted that the relation between the rules and their applications remains intentional instead of causal, similar to Wittgenstein's earlier formulations. Intention expresses itself in form, and aesthetic meaning remains a formal quality in spite of its social aspect. The chapter thus presents a coherent description of the interaction that Wittgenstein envisions between aesthetic phenomena and context as one that preserves the autonomy of art.

Appelqvist emphasises the significance of Wittgenstein's understanding by juxtaposing Wittgenstein's stance with that of traditional theories of representation and expression. In contrast to these theories, wherein meaning lies external to art, Wittgenstein describes art as that which conveys itself. The demarcation between form and content is reinterpreted, and content is understood as that which is conveyed by the form.

The chapter follows Wittgenstein's example of music, through which he presents meaning as that which is unavailable to be transcribed into another form. The meaning of a musical theme belongs to itself and resists all discursive explanations. To grasp/understand this meaning is to recognise its "intransitive" nature (56). Once again, Wittgenstein's central theme of ineffability is evoked by the author.

Moreover, Appelqvist rightly recognises Wittgenstein's innovation in applying such a perspective to language as well. A sentence, though it lends itself to explicit explanation in terms of its extralinguistic content, can be intransitively understood as well in terms of its formal structure. Such an observation allows one to recognise an expressive function of language beyond its communicative purpose, an understanding that is crucial to theories of literary language such as formalism.

The final chapter of the book extends Wittgenstein's conception of aesthetics to his method of philosophy. The philosophical perspective, according to Wittgenstein, is not discursive in nature as it does not offer knowledge of the world. The philosophical encounter, similar to the aesthetic encounter, is an example of a nonconceptual relation with the world. It does not seek to explain the facts of the world; instead, it attempts to describe the conditions of the world. Through description, both aesthetics and philosophy offer different ways of "seeing" an object as a whole (59). Both aesthetic judgements and philosophical statements present what Wittgenstein calls a "surveyable representation" of connections that cohere the whole (59). The justification for both relies on "reasons" intuitively felt. The chapter thus succeeds in demonstrating Wittgenstein's inquiry into aesthetics as a philosophical investigation.

By the end of the book, Hanne Appelqvist is able to effectively conclude the argument that Wittgenstein's approach to aesthetics is replicated in his consideration of ethical, linguistic, and philosophical questions. Through its four chapters, the book traces the development and evolution of a comprehensive framework, and succeeds in positioning Wittgenstein in relation to traditional, contemporary, and consequent schools of thought. Though the parallels drawn in the book exclusively refer to Western philosophers and their schools of thought, the arguments made are relevant to readers engaged with the Indian tradition of poetics. Particularly, the formalist yet phenomenological conception of aesthetics and language presented in the book can effectively complement one's reading of Indian theories. The clarity with which the book delivers this framework of aesthetics allows the reader to take up the task of applying and testing it in contexts that lie beyond the scope envisioned by the author.

The structure of the book also deserves special mention. The questions asked in each chapter trickle through to the next, and answers are questioned afresh at each stage. The reader is thus able to experience the gradual evolution of ideas and is encouraged to form their own critical stance on each new development. Though the book assumes a certain level of familiarity with the philosopher and the domain, it is not a prerequisite, and the arguments presented are not inaccessible to beginners. In fact, the book is replete with references and citations that could direct the reader to insightful scholarly works that concentrate on the particular concepts of linguistics, aesthetics, and philosophy discussed by Wittgenstein. To conclude, Hanne Appelqvist in *Wittgenstein and Aesthetics* is able to recognise and effectively respond to the interdisciplinary curiosity that characterises the critical impulse of academia today.

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EVOLUTION OF PRAGMATISM IN INDIA: AMBEDKAR, DEWEY, AND THE RHETORIC OF RECONSTRUCTION. By Scott R. Stroud. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023. 302 pp.