



The Beauty of Convention: Essays in Literature and Culture

Marija Krivokapic-knezevic

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This volume addresses the beauty of convention not in an attempt to recapitulate established values (as, luckily, in literature and culture, there are not absolute beauties that serve everyone and always), but as an aesthetic appreciation of form as a keeper of meaning and as an ethical post-cynical meta discourse on human dependence on symbolic interaction and generic conventions. Looking into the artificial, invented, side of this concept, the book addresses such questions as: What is beauty by virtue of convention? How does convention generate beauty? How does it happen that a convention acquires a normative force? What is the nature and the "logic of situation" that leads to the arbitrary conventions? How are alternative conventions made? What is inertia, and what real joy or belief ensures the stability of convention? Is there a natural correctness that enables the stability of convention? How does convention determine linguistic meanings? Can interpretation avoid convention? Without imposing one definition onto the reader, this volume presents an understanding of the stability of convention and how it generates beauty by employing numerous contemporary reading strategies and diverse cultural, ethnic, gender, psychological, and textual perspectives. Primary focus is given to various literary texts ranging from early classics to modernism and contemporary writing, though there are also discussions on other forms of human expressions, such as music, dance and sculpture. This book will contribute to the no-going discussion about the ambiguities inherent in the concept of convention, and, thus, stimulate intellectual confrontation and circulation of ideas within the fields of literature and culture.

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