

Book Reviews

GUYER, PAUL. *A History of Modern Aesthetics, Volume 3: The Twentieth Century*. Cambridge University Press, 2014, vii + 604 pp., \$355.00 cloth [for 3-volume set].

The third and final volume of Paul Guyer's magisterial, ambitious, and beautifully executed *A History of Modern Aesthetics* covers aesthetics in the twentieth century. As with previous volumes, Guyer gives us a work that is argumentatively dense and erudite while being a pleasure to read, rich in detail, and comprehensive, while also being succinct and surveyable and brimming with critical insight throughout. There is much here to reward both those who are new to the subject as well as those for whom the study of the subject is his or her life's calling. The volume focuses on the German, English, and American traditions, although since the development of the English and American traditions were more closely intertwined, the latter two gain a disproportionate share of the attention—together roughly five-sixths of the total space—and constitute the book's center of gravity. Consequently, it is on this part of the volume that this review focuses. A notable omission is discussion of the important aesthetic thinkers who spent the bulk of their lives on French soil. This is regrettable, as Guyer full well recognizes, but it is hard to fault him for this omission, since inclusion of the sort of treatment this rich tradition deserves would have substantially magnified what was already a Herculean task, not to mention added substantial heft to what is already a hefty book.

If it is an exaggeration to say that contemporary aesthetics in the analytic tradition operates in historical amnesia, it is not at all an exaggeration to say that its collective historical memory is rather selective. This is particularly the case when it comes to the first half of the twentieth century, at least in Anglophone aesthetics. Guyer helps remedy this situation by giving us substantial treatments of well-known but currently underappreciated figures such as Bell, Bullough, Santayana, Collingwood, and Dewey, but also, notably, by devoting attention to

the accomplishments of figures whose works have fallen into all but complete neglect, figures like the Englishmen E. F. Carritt, L. A. Reid, and Samuel Alexander and the Americans Dewitt Parker, C. J. Ducasse, D. W. Prall, W. T. Stace, and T. M. Greene. Indeed, Guyer writes that the "retrieval" of the work of such neglected figures along with "the rescue of the work of the never completely forgotten R. G. Collingwood from its customary simplification or even caricature" formed "one of the primary ambitions of this volume" (p. 4). The project of "retrieval" continues into the second half of the twentieth century with substantive overviews of thinkers such as D. W. Gotshalk, Arnold Isenberg, Monroe Beardsley, Suzanne Langer, and Roger Scruton, along with figures whose work is more well known such as Goodman, Danto, Dickie, Sibley, Wollheim, and Cavell. The volume closes with a section examining the continuation of themes from the modern tradition in the works of selected contemporary aestheticians. Although Guyer's volume is quite comprehensive and could profitably be used as a reference work, since each individual entry is a concentrated, self-contained gem of critical exposition, it is much more than that. By placing each thinker in intimate conversation with those in his or her intellectual milieu and by setting them in relief against the background of the broader historical landscape, Guyer weaves a rich tapestry of themes and problems that brings out both the preoccupations and tendencies that are peculiar to the twentieth century and continuities with the broader tradition of modern aesthetics whose story he began telling in the previous volumes. Indeed, Guyer's three volumes taken as a whole give us nothing less than a highly complex and compelling, if also personal, statement of what the subject of aesthetics has been in the modern period, and thus *is* and *can be*. I know of no better work, historical or otherwise, for giving one a vivid appreciation of the fundamental challenges facing philosophical aesthetics and the prospects of the wide variety of attempts to meet these challenges.

The unifying thread of Guyer's history is the thesis that modern aesthetics is characterized by three broad classes of approach: the cognitivist approach—the "aesthetics of truth"; an approach that stresses the role of pleasure in the free play of the imagination—the "aesthetics of free play"; and an approach that stresses the emotional impact of aesthetic objects—the "aesthetics of emotional impact." These three approaches naturally recommend themselves, since each in its own way affords an explanation of the significance of artistic and aesthetic objects, an explanation of why we devote special attention to them, care about them in the ways that we do, and, perhaps, could hardly imagine our lives bereft of this central dimension of human existence. Aesthetic objects have the special significance they do because they afford either insight, pleasure in the free activity of our mental powers, emotional impact, or some combination of the three.

Although the three approaches are not mutually exclusive and although arguably any satisfying general aesthetic theory would accord a role to each, an emphasis on one can be in tension with an emphasis on the others, and, thus, as Guyer's discussion brings out, there have been periods in the development of Modern Aesthetics in which one of these approaches dominates the field. Guyer gives pride of place to philosophers who, like Kant, Schiller, and Dilthey in earlier centuries, adopt a synthesizing, "non-reductive" approach, who seek to combine two or more of the three orientations in a single unified account. Those who manage a threefold synthesis are accorded a special place of honor, even though Guyer is careful to be even-handed in his presentations. In the twentieth century, these include, in the first half, Collingwood, Parker, Santayana, and Dewey, and, in the second half, Gotshalk, Gadamer, Danto, Sibley, Wollheim, Scruton, and Cavell. However, one might wonder why a synthetic approach is to be preferred to a reductive one. Guyer does not address this question directly, but in what follows I sketch one of the main lines of development he traces in the Anglo-American tradition and point to a possible answer to this question that can be drawn from this line of development.

Guyer finds that the most dominant strand in the twentieth century, in all three geographical centers, was the cognitivist approach—"the aesthetics of truth." This was the approach taken by the figure with the greatest impact in shaping Anglophone aesthetics in the first half of the twentieth century, who was, however, neither English nor American: the Italian, Benedetto Croce. As Guyer explains, Croce's central aesthetic notion was what he called "expression." What he meant by "expression" was not the expression of meaning in signs or the expression of psychological states in behavior, but rather what he called

"intuition," the singling out, through attention, of aspects and elements of experience from the formless flux of raw sensory material so as to hold before consciousness what would otherwise pass by indistinctly. For Croce the aesthetic just is the field of expression, and since expression is knowledge, his approach is cognitivist. But aesthetic knowledge is distinct from scientific knowledge, since the latter is conceptually mediated knowledge of the universal, and the aesthetic is immediate knowledge of the particular—"this light of the moon," "this contour of the land" (never mind the fact that concepts are employed in such formulations). Expression can include feeling, since we may apprehend the particular with feeling—"this serene light of the moon," "this flowing contour of the land." Although there can be no rules for expression, since it deals with the irreducibly particular, there is nonetheless a normative distinction between successful and unsuccessful expression, constituted by the presence, respectively, of pleasure or displeasure. And since the apprehension of expressive form allows us to put some distance between ourselves and the content of experience, which would otherwise threaten to overwhelm us, the act of expression is liberating: it allows us to realize a distinction between the passive flow of our experience and our active self. Guyer shows that this cluster of ideas centering on the notion of expression—its irreducible particularity, its immediacy, its normativity and link with pleasure and displeasure, its connection with form, and its liberating character—was enormously influential in orienting the work of aesthetic theory throughout the first half of the twentieth century and beyond.

Viewed in terms of Guyer's tripartite framework, Croce's theory incorporates two of the three elements—the cognitive and the emotive—but not free play, even though aesthetic experience results in an expansion of freedom. The synthesis of the cognitive and the emotive is achieved not in what could be called a Kantian fashion, by extending—as Kant did not himself do—the reach of the free play of our mental powers into the range of the emotions, but rather by conceiving of aesthetic experience as a form of self-knowledge, knowledge of one's emotions. Thus, Croce achieved this synthesis by taking an inward turn, a turn that had the consequence of implicating his view in a kind of aesthetic idealism. Croce held the paradoxical view that the work of art is nothing more than an (irreducibly particular) idea in the mind of the artist or audience, and the things we intuitively think of as works of art, physical objects (or in some cases physical object types), such as a sculpture, a painting, or a musical piece, are merely incidental to the constitution of the work of art itself, at best necessary vehicles for the communication of an idea in the mind. As Guyer brings out, the many followers of Croce in England and America accepted the main

lines of his conception of the aesthetic as expression, and so his way of synthesizing the cognitive and the emotive, while rejecting Croce's aesthetic idealism, a view that in identifying meaning with a mental state seems to veer dangerously close to a kind of aesthetic solipsism—a worry, it seems to me, in the aesthetic sphere that bears a striking resemblance to the charge of psychologism that Frege famously leveled at previous accounts of linguistic meaning.

L. A. Reid, for example, maintained that expression should be conceived of not simply as sensory perception accompanied with emotion, but in terms of an emotive or expressive meaning that is experienced as “in” the object and inseparable from it. And E. F. Carritt insisted on the essentially communicative character of expression and so on the necessity of public, physical embodiment of the act of imagination and the unavoidability of treating the relations between artist, aesthetic object, and audience as forming a single, irreducible triad. Although Collingwood's sharp distinction in *Principles of Art* between craft and art seems to reinstate Croce's aesthetic idealism, Guyer points out that later in this work, Collingwood reunites what Croce had cast asunder by arguing for a conception of language on which the “external,” or embodied, expression of emotion in language and the “internal” work of singling out emotions necessarily go hand in hand. Many Americans also fell in line with the general tendency of locating the value of aesthetic experience in the self-knowledge of human emotions in all their richness and particularity, with some, like Parker and Dewey, managing to avoid Croce's one-sided idealism by integrating this view with the Kantian idea of a free play of all our mental powers.

As Guyer recounts, further versions of the threefold synthesis involved the incorporation into aesthetics of “the linguistic turn,” perhaps already gestured at in the work of Collingwood. As it did in other areas of philosophy, Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* had a widespread impact on the practice of philosophical aesthetics in the third quarter of the century. Guyer, however, points out that Wittgenstein's initial impact was not one that issued in a transformation of the Crocean tradition at all but rather in a wholesale repudiation of it. The “first wave” of aestheticians influenced by Wittgenstein, represented by figures such as Paul Ziff, John Passmore, and Morris Weitz, took Wittgenstein to have rendered the very idea of experience, and so a *fortiori* aesthetic experience, problematic and so eschewed inquiry into its nature in favor of the explication of the meaning of aesthetic terms in language. Following Wittgenstein's remarks concerning family resemblance, they argued that it is impossible to state necessary and sufficient conditions for membership under aesthetic classifications, and so

argued that the concept of art is indefinable. In response Arthur Danto and George Dickie, following Maurice Mandelbaum's suggestion that a definition of art need not restrict itself to directly perceptible properties of a work but can avail itself of imperceptible relational properties, formulated what might be called “contextual” definitions of art. In his famous essay “The Art World,” Danto argued that what constitutes something as a work of art is not its perceptible properties but its location in the art-historical and theoretical context that Danto called “the art world.” Dickie argued that what determines what counts as a work of art are the broad social institutions in which works of art have a place and the say-so of particular individuals who are spokesmen for these institutions. Of course, these moves push the question back a step: what makes something an art world? What gives authority to spokesmen for the institutions of art? At this point these views are threatened either with circularity or the objection that what counts as art is determined by an arbitrary declaration.

In any case, as Guyer points out, Wittgenstein was also the inspiration for a “second wave” of thinkers who drew altogether different lessons from his later work. While the first wave took from Wittgenstein a proscription against the very idea of aesthetic experience as a fit subject of philosophical analysis, the second wave found in him resources for new ways of thinking about aesthetic experience in philosophy. In particular these philosophers took Wittgenstein's remarks about seeing-as from Part II of *Philosophical Investigations* as the model for a special kind of “aesthetic seeing” and took his remarks about language as a “form of life” as the basis for a conception of the aesthetic use of language as affording the possibility of an intimacy of mutual understanding that is not based on rules. The philosophers that Guyer includes under this heading are Frank Sibley, Richard Wollheim, Roger Scruton, and Stanley Cavell.

Wollheim, for example, returns to Collingwood's idea that art is an expression or externalization of the mental state of the artist while stressing the indispensability of the physical, public medium of art. He synthesizes these ideas by drawing on the notion of seeing-as or seeing-in. When I look at a portrait of Cromwell, my experience is “twofold:” I see a certain region of the painting both as pigment and as having certain representational and expressive properties. For Cavell, Wittgenstein's notion of seeing-as represents the possibility for “intimacy” of mutual understanding, mutual understanding that is not based on rules but is a matter of sharing a “form of life.” It is mutual understanding of this sort that is at stake in our relation to art and to other people. In both cases trust is not an alternative to knowledge but is constitutive of its possibility; thus, Cavell maintains that our relation to each is

not just a matter of knowledge but of what he calls “acknowledgement.”

Guyer’s discussion of the second wave Wittgensteinians stresses continuities with the earlier dialectic that reaches back to Croce, but, as his discussion also brings out, Wittgenstein’s concern with the connection between experience and language led, in thinkers like Wollheim and Cavell, to a renewed emphasis on the problem of communicability, a problem that Croce and others discounted by denying an essential role to the physical object itself. However, as a number of twentieth century figures held, we go wrong if we model aesthetic communication too closely on linguistic communication. While there is content in the aesthetic case, the content is not abstractable from its embodiment in the particularities of an object or situation and is not a function of general rules. In the aesthetic case the physical object figures not simply as a shared object of reference but as a shared vehicle of meaning. This provides a role for the free play of the imagination as the vehicle of aesthetic content. While several figures throughout the early part of the last century highlighted the liberating character of aesthetic experience, this was tied to the liberating significance of self-knowledge of one’s internal states and so carried the implication that the content of aesthetic judgment is a private affair. An important lesson to be drawn from Guyer’s discussion is that aesthetics, like epistemology and philosophy of language, has its own problem of uniting mind and world, its own need for a kind of aesthetic triangulation that would treat the creator–object–audience relation as a single irreducible nexus. It is not obvious how this unity may be achieved, but I take from Guyer’s discussion the idea that it is in the context of this problem that the theoretical significance of the free play of the imagination emerges.

Reading this work leaves one with the vivid impression that aesthetic experience turns out to be difficult to so much as keep in focus. It is at once cognitive in its significance, but importantly different from the more familiar forms of practical and theoretical forms of cognition; it has pleasure as an essential ingredient, but the pleasure is reducible neither to a merely sensory pleasure nor to the pleasure of solving a problem, be it theoretical or practical; it seems to have an emotional component, but feeling seems to be, contrary to the formalists, inseparable from perceptual form, leading to the popular idea of “expressive perception”; and it seems to engage the imagination in activity that is free, not rule-governed. Guyer more than once suggests that it is the latter that holds the key to resolving these tensions or antinomies (which is not, perhaps, surprising given his standing as one of this era’s foremost scholars of Kant). However that may be, what clearly emerges

from Guyer’s discussion is that part of the significance of aesthetics for philosophy in general is that the very discipline of aesthetics, as it has been practiced over the years, constitutes a challenge to rethink some of the cherished dichotomies that have dominated, and continue to dominate, philosophy outside of aesthetics.

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IRVIN, SHERRI, ed. *Body Aesthetics*. Oxford University Press, 2016, xvii + 330 pp., 34 b&w illus., \$74.00 cloth.

In this new anthology, Sherri Irvin has collected papers addressing a wide range of issues concerning the aesthetics of human bodies. As in the similar fields of environmental and everyday aesthetics, these articles illustrate a trend of work in aesthetics turning away from art-based models. The motivation for directing attention to human bodies seems to be dual. First, Irvin wants to add more critical reflection to a process that we all participate in already, assessing the attractiveness of human bodies. Second, the book often focuses on the intersection between aesthetic and ethical judgments. Morality is hard to avoid when aesthetic evaluation is directed to persons (or at least aspects of persons). Many of the authors included here tackle the inequities of current approaches toward such aesthetic judgments. They point out how our assessments lead to the objectification and alienation of people’s sexuality, discrimination against types of bodies or groups of people, and missed opportunities for body-based performance in fields ranging from theater and dance to sports.

Irvin’s introduction organizes the essays in the volume into four categories. These include “Representation,” concerning how images shape identity and construct gender; “The Look,” a section focused on norms and judgments about bodies and “otherness”; “Performance,” examining how bodies in performance function aesthetically and ethically; and “Practice,” considering how somatic practices shape self-constitution and promote moral ends. Many of the volume’s authors are well known in aesthetics, but Irvin draws from other fields, including sociology, women’s and gender studies, disability studies, law, race and culture, performance art, and medicine. She comments that philosophers’ attention to body aesthetics has been “sparse” and that relevant work from related fields is not well known in philosophical aesthetics (p. 10). Given her inclusion of an essay by Richard Shusterman

in the volume, Irvin might have tempered the former claim—Shusterman, after all, coined his term “somaesthetics” over two decades ago. Since then he has published numerous articles as well as two books devoted to topics that are closely related to those of this book. Shusterman rejected use of the term “body” in his project because of various associations it had with dualism and passivity and also because of negative associations within the Western tradition. But his goal seemed much the same as Irvin’s. More acknowledgment of Shusterman’s work, along with a stronger rationale for retaining use of the term “body,” would have seemed appropriate.

The array of issues about bodies addressed in Irvin’s book is quite broad, and there is not space in this review to do them all justice. Several articles are focused on race issues arising in contexts that range from pornography and police violence to art, sports, and film and television. Other articles criticize prevailing norms of female bodies and femininity, with critical discussion of how such norms are related to sexual desire. There is some attention to trans issues and to disabled bodies. For the most part the cultural context is Western (indeed, mostly American), although two articles, those by Yuriko Saito and Richard Shusterman, provide interesting commentary from an Asian (especially Japanese) context, examining bodily behavior in relation to moral virtues and eating, respectively.

Having used this book as a text in an upper-level undergraduate aesthetics course, my comments on it in part reflect student responses. The book was very successful at prompting classroom discussion and eliciting thoughtful critical essays. Perhaps not surprisingly, the volume’s articles on the role of body in sports and sexuality proved to be of special interest. The students expressed surprise, reported personal experiences, made observations about media representations, and questioned each other in our class conversations. The book is a very welcome teaching resource.

Let me begin with the articles about sports. Shirley Anne Tate’s “A Tale of Two Olympians” presents a theoretically challenging construal of the role of race in the social presentation of two British Olympic track stars during the 2012 London Olympics. On the one hand, the fair-skinned mixed-race champion Jessica Ennis became a spokesperson for what Tate labels “Brand GB” and for numerous beauty products such as Olay. On the other hand, dark-skinned Jeanette Kwakye was selected as spokesperson for Ariel’s soap and cleaning products. (The article unfortunately did not include images, but the ads were easy to find online.) Despite lacking familiarity with either those athletes or the British social context, my students quickly got the point and made numerous connections to more recent examples. They brought

up the sexist or racist and objectifying treatment of U.S. athletes such as tennis star Serena Williams and boxer Ronda Rousey.

The other article in the volume highlighting women in sports is Peg Brand Weiser and Ed Weiser’s “Perceptual Sexism in Elite Women’s Sports.” This piece (which is lavishly illustrated) begins with a detailed overview of the standards of feminine beauty purveyed in Western art via the nude. It then links these norms to the persistent but ever-shifting search for definitive gender concepts to use in categorizing athletes in high-level international competition. Established beauty norms make it more likely that athletic competitors who appear nonstandard, e.g., those with large thighs, nontrim waists, or corn-rowed hair, will be subject to often degrading and invasive checks on their “true” sexual identity. Weiser and Weiser provide a history of these sorts of checks ranging from blood tests and body inspections to actual gynecological exams, with particular attention to the case of South African middle-distance runner Caster Semenya. Along the way, they reveal surprising facts about the role of testosterone in athletic performance: some women athletes with high levels of testosterone do not actually benefit from it as their bodies are unable to utilize it, and, in any case, testosterone levels are not always clearly linked to better performances. This article is eye-opening and often disturbing. But the positive recommendations that the Weisers reach about allowing athletes to compete in whatever category is self-designated, with certain controls based on recent performance records, do not seem to be very workable.

As I said above, the second topic prompting much class discussion was the role of aesthetic norms in shaping sexual desire. The relevant articles here are Anne Eaton’s “Taste in Bodies and Fat Oppression,” Ann Cahill’s “Sexual Desire, Inequality, and the Possibility of Transformation,” and Irvin and Sheila Lintott’s “Sex Objects and Sexy Subjects: A Feminist Reclamation of Sexiness.” These all proceed from a similar premise, namely, that our tastes (including both normative judgments of beauty and our sexual attitudes and preferences) can be transformed. Eaton outlines the need for a broad spectrum of changes that include both efforts to change individual tastes, using an Aristotelian model of the development of moral virtue, and broader cultural changes. A fat-positive campaign would range from appreciation of high art examples to admiration of certain popular culture stars to changes of fashion and advertising.

For those who might respond to Eaton by claiming that one’s own sexual tastes are inborn and fixed, Lintott and Irvin provide a range of responses. They survey and critique biology-based accounts, especially those from evolutionary psychology about

the supposedly innate human tendency to prefer certain body types based on clues to reproductive fitness. (Here they cite work by Stephen Davies, whose article on evolutionary biology is helpfully included in the volume.) Irvin and Lintott emphasize instead the role of representations in shaping sexual desires. They draw upon Ann Cahill's arguments in her article about making personal changes in one's sexual attitudes. Irvin and Lintott recommend considering people as centers of sexual subjectivity rather than focusing on their bodies as sexual objects. Although Lintott and Irvin are aware that this kind of change might seem impossible, they develop a new norm of genuineness in sexual expression: "Evidence of genuineness will be found in originality, comfort, confidence, playfulness, and a sense of improvisation, whereas conformity, discomfort, insecurity and strict adherence to norms will be evidence of a lack of genuineness in sexual expression" (p. 306). My students had diverse reactions to this ideal. They doubted a key claim that Irvin and Lintott make, that finding someone sexy does not amount to feeling sexual desire. They also felt that the authors propose too high and wide a standard of interpersonal attention to others' bodies, one that might result in an always sexually alert attitude that would be "creepy." This worry is also seen as a potential problem by Cahill, who asks, "are sexual subjects ethically required to be attracted to bodies of all sorts?" (p. 281). Anticipating the same concern, Lintott and Irvin respond that shaping our sexual desires is a moral project we should undergo because it is just a fact that we are "public entities in a public world, and we do direct sexualized attention at each other" (p. 311). If some people wish to opt out from this kind of attention, ideally, we would come to recognize that fact, realizing that "to appreciate such an individual's sexiness appropriately is to ignore it" (p. 312).

The body as a site of prowess in performance is another key topic in the volume. It is discussed by Yuriko Saito in "Body Aesthetics and the Cultivation of Moral Virtues," by Richard Shusterman in "Somaesthetics and the Fine Art of Eating," and in Barbara Montero's "Aesthetic Effortlessness." The first two of these emphasize connections between bodily activities of daily life and broader sensibilities about one's place in the larger world. Saito argues for a Confucian conception of the link between an "outward aesthetic expression of care and respect" and the moral value of actions (p. 227). She notes that the Zen-based Japanese tradition even calls for the respectful treatment of nonhumans, as shown in the arts of flower arrangement or food preparation. Shusterman speaks similarly about learning in a Zen dojo in Japan about how a heightened attention to eating can enhance bodily pleasures at the same time as it reflects collaborative interaction and respect for

others. Although Montero's focus is more on bodily expertise in the displays of highly trained performers in fields like dance, tennis, or skating, she recognizes room for something similar in everyday realms—perhaps even in the mundane task of dishwashing. Drawing on some interesting sources including Bergson and Spencer, Montero concludes that we perceive and admire effortlessness in actions partly through proprioceptive sympathy but also through recognizing a "superfluity of fitness" (p. 190).

On a related topic about performance, Tobin Siebers's paper concerning disability on the stage seems incomplete, perhaps due to the sad fact of his death during the book's production. Although Siebers takes up the intriguing topic of making the disabled body visible on stage, his only example is of the Irish performance artist Mary Duffy, who was born without arms, presenting herself as the Venus de Milo. The central idea of Siebers's article is that a performance like this, making disability visible, transforms both the artist and the character being portrayed. But the rather abstract notion he has in mind is hard to grasp, and there is so much particularity to the Duffy/Venus de Milo case that it is difficult to infer much more from it. Perhaps the central idea might have been better developed by providing more reference to other examples of disabled performers in standard theatrical roles. In fact, there are numerous disabled theater groups that might have been mentioned, such as Deaf West, That Uppity Theatre Company, and Theater Breaking Through Barriers. Recent years have also seen controversies about the failure to cast disabled actors in roles featuring disabled characters—an echo of similar criticisms of problems of casting nonethnic characters in ethnic roles.

While the consideration of race is entirely appropriate in a volume on body aesthetics, there are significant limitations in the pieces included here. Some of my students found the articles by Maria del Guadalupe Davidson and George Yancy on black/white issues too binary; they fail to acknowledge the complexity of race relations in our country. Davidson in "Kara Walker's Magic Lantern" develops an account of Walker's art as "didactic pornography." She contrasts Walker's work with cringe-worthy historical examples of racist pornography treating the black female body as property and site of both disgust and fascination. Davidson examines Walker's controversial art, including silhouettes of scenes from the antebellum South and the monumental sculpture "Sugar Baby" made of white sugar and exhibited in a closed Domino Sugar factory in Brooklyn. Davidson defends Walker's art against critics who contend that it perpetuates racist stereotypes and sexual objectification of black women. Instead, she argues, Walker is articulating sophisticated

and angry criticisms of white viewers. Walker hopes that self-reflection will enable white folks to “see and acknowledge their own culpability in her objectification” (p. 35). The response of black viewers, who are somehow more in on the joke, will be to understand that these images are a form of resistance. If so, the Latino and Asian students in my class wondered, how should *they* view such art? Indeed, do they even “belong” to its audience? Neither Mexican Americans nor recent Asian immigrants could find a place for themselves or their role in addressing art about the heritage of African slavery in the New World.

Yancy uses a similar black/white binary in speaking about the relation between the “white gaze” and “the black body.” He claims that through the legacy of colonialism whites are institutionalized into structures of a framework or gaze positioning blacks as disgusting, ugly, subhuman, unpredictable, and sources of violence. Yancy writes powerfully about four recent examples of violence against Blacks in the United States (cases that have been central in the Black Lives Matter movement): those of Eric Garner, Trayvon Martin, Renisha McBride, and Sandra Bland. Yancy imagines a world in which a white observer can become “unsutured,” that is, open and vulnerable, able to listen to and relate to the black person before him as someone who is suffering and reaching out for help. This idea is appealing, although it strikes me as underdeveloped. And again, the racial lens is too simple. Yancy downplays the fact that two of the culprits in his examples were Hispanic (Zimmerman and Encinia). He acknowledges that Zimmerman was mixed race (in a footnote), but claims that “he internalized the logic of the white gaze” (n. 12, p. 250). I submit that neither in Florida nor in Texas would a Hispanic man feel he could easily insert himself into the white gaze, given standard experiences of discrimination and racism. Brown/black relations are often themselves fraught with problems, especially in southern and southwestern states.

There are other limitations in this book’s (obviously admirable) efforts to address the body in relation to race issues. In our current political context, it is regrettable not to have anything addressing the symbolism of the Muslim body—whether as terrorist, exotic harem member, or refugee. In addition, there are flaws in C. Winter Han’s article about Asian masculinity. Han discusses the representation of Asian men mostly in the context of American pop culture in Hollywood movies and TV shows. His article, “From ‘Little Brown Brothers’ to ‘Queer Asian Wives’: Constructing the Asian Male Body,” makes a case for the general perception of Asian men as “feminine” and often passive partners in homoerotic relations. My students, who included a number of both South Asians and East Asians, raised

problems with it. They all agreed that “Asian” is too broad a term. The South Asians were disappointed by Han’s neglect of romantic male leads in Bollywood films. True, Han was mostly focused on American-produced media, but why set up the framework this way, especially given Bollywood’s great popularity around the world? Several of the East Asians also pointed out that Han’s criticisms of heroes like Jet Li in action films were poorly grounded. Although Han acknowledges that such Asian stars may be shown as strong and masculine, he says they are not treated like comparable white action heroes because they do not “get the girl.” But this is probably because the martial arts tradition has often required that warriors take vows of celibacy; thus, to criticize a hero’s lack of romantic entanglement is inattentive to the cultural context. Han’s recommendation for reform is also vague: “The goal then shouldn’t be to change the way that Asian men are represented so that they are presented in similar ways to white men, but to challenge the larger beliefs about what is and is not appropriately masculine” (p. 76). But how can such broad representations be modified, particularly when they are parts of vast corporate entertainment complexes?

Irvin’s volume is part of a larger movement placing new emphasis on the body as an important site of perception even in relation to the more traditionally recognized arts. Recent years have seen increased attention, for example, to the role of smell and touch in art, the place of the body in relation to museum displays, and embodied perception in film theory (also prompted by technological advances such as 3D and Imax theaters). Irvin’s book suggests other avenues that would be intriguing to pursue, for example, the aesthetics of virtual bodies in game culture, body modification practices, aging and disease, and so on. *Body Aesthetics* succeeds in demonstrating that many topics about the aesthetics of bodies are worthwhile and fruitful, and it makes a good start on opening up new areas for philosophical discussion and debate.

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GILLESPIE, MICHAEL BOYCE. *Film Blackness: American Cinema and the Idea of Black Film*. Duke University Press, 2016, 248 pp., 50 b&w illus., \$23.95 paper.

“I’m tired of hearing that race is constructed—it’s lived.” That was how Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, author of the critically acclaimed postcolonial novel *Americanah*, testily replied to a student’s question

premiered on “the construction of race” when she visited one of my classes at Penn State. Adichie was speaking of her frustration at discourse-based discussions of race-as-culture, which may leave white students inexperienced with the performative subtleties of cultural theory imagining that “race” is solely a rhetorical invention, not also an experience (Patrycja Koziel, “Narrative Strategy in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s Novel *Americanah*: The Manifestation of Migrant Identity,” *Studies of the Department of African Languages and Cultures* 49 [2015]: 96–113).

All novelists—Adichie included—employ the aesthetic tools of metaphor, irony, imagery, and the rest to articulate their vision of culture. So too it is with filmmakers, who use their own toolkit, of *mise-en-scène*, cinematography, editing, and the rest, to construct a vision of the world. This critical commonplace is as true of self-consciously “social” films such as *Do the Right Thing* (Spike Lee, 1989) as it is of “entertainment” films like *Madea’s Family Reunion* (Tyler Perry, 2006), though both of these very different films qualify as “black cinema.” Yet many affirmations of constructedness slight the foundational question of exactly how such constructions are, well, *constructed*, concentrating relentlessly on the fealty of the tale told to lived existence. In the case of black film, this impatience with fictional mechanics is basic to a prideful critical performance in which the urgencies of black social existence are presumably served by correcting the assumptions raised by complicit texts and honoring texts which subvert that complicity. The result is a regular but unremarked-upon paradox: an endlessly variable fictional text is ranged against the stable and verifiable reality of black life.

Michael Boyce Gillespie’s *Film Blackness: American Cinema and the Idea of Black Film* engages this paradox creatively. Gillespie, joining many other scholars, argues that the lived experience of race follows on its status as a cultural fiction. The frustration that Adichie finds with the arbitrariness of life along a color line is a function of the illusions about race that we could just as well call fiction. The arguments from sociology which are so frequently used to assess black film, however beloved, lack respect for the modes of fictionality that all cultures use to understand themselves and express themselves to others. Indeed, Gillespie is critical of the popular narrative cinema that fools viewers into accepting a “portrayal” of black life as a documentary account precisely through its manipulation of the storytelling tropes of the classical narrative cinema. (The self-satisfied reception of *Hidden Figures* [Theodore Melfi, 2016] in the popular media shows how problematic this practice can be.) For Gillespie, the historical and biographical conceits of much of mainstream black cinema are too often complicit with the cultural assumptions that have quashed black self-regard. James Baldwin

understood such films as validations of the good intentions of their producers and thus worse than useless in the attempt to confront the vast American racist social unconscious (*The Evidence of Things Not Seen* [New York: Henry Holt, 1995], pp. xv–xvi). In this passage, Baldwin is referring to *The Atlanta Child Murders* (1985), a television docudrama on the Atlanta child murders of 1979–1981, a production with impeccable liberal credentials (Baldwin, *The Devil Finds Work* [New York: Random House, 1976], pp. 52–79). Such films are properly thought of, as Chris Fujiwara says, “as seal[ing] an ideological message about history with the verisimilitude of fiction” (*The Cinema of Jacques Tourneur* [Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998], p. 151).

Gillespie’s recuperation of the African American independent cinema of the 1990s moves us away from a generalized black “experience” and toward a more precise group portrait of the forces at work in black art at a specific historical moment. He presents this historical moment as remarkable precisely because of the interpenetration of the cinematic arts with other art forms at the site of blackness; black filmmakers were not there to document others making black art, but to make it themselves. This moment was close enough to its roots in the Black Arts movement of the 1960s and 1970s but far enough away from the hothouse atmosphere of academic art sponsorship to have found a productively populist space for the expression of social concerns in a modernist aesthetic vein. Gillespie’s treatment of Wendell Harris’s remarkable *Chameleon Street* (1989) shows a commendable concern not only with the patterns of black signification but with the institutional practices of independent distribution that in fact condition these patterns. As Carrie Mae Weems’s artistic production and its circulation is hard to imagine without the modern curatorial establishment, anything called “the black cinema” must take account of the processes of commerce and transmittal, not as matters external to creativity, but as intrinsic factors in this industrialized art form. Interpretative performances of “the black cinema” which fail to account for these institutional traits neglect essential influences. (An exemplar is Anna Everett, *Returning the Gaze: A Genealogy of Black Film Criticism, 1909–1949* [Duke University Press, 2001]. Here Everett discusses the recursive relationship between black filmmakers and the institutions of criticism.)

Film Blackness matches genre designations to four films that Gillespie argues are not key ones in the usual historical sense of the term but instead notable markers of his own notion of a thing called “black film.” The distinction is crucial. His choices for this indexing function, each interpreted in detail, are Ralph Bakshi’s notorious animated film *Coonskin* (1975), Wendell B. Harris’s absurdist

minstrel comedy *Chameleon Street* (1989), Bill Duke's black noir *Deep Cover* (1992), and the social problem melodrama of Barry Jenkins's *Medicine for Melancholy* (2008). In each case, the film chosen becomes a site for intercultural and intercinematic exchanges, not a "portrayal of the black experience." These choices are iconoclastic, defiantly so; few scholars or other viewers would mark even one of them as a milestone in black cinema. Gillespie's quartet of films does not fit the usual tests of a sociologically inclined analysis of film (popularity, controversial social aspects, even influence), and, for him, that is just the point.

Of course, the danger with a topical account that uses extended readings of a handful of films to render an entire set of film practices is that the choice of a different set of texts would certainly generate a new set of interpretive norms. Gillespie's choices are clearly personal, yet they are anything but arbitrary. He is careful to cite other films within each of the ad hoc categories these films establish. While others have written on the mainstream black noir exemplified by Bill Duke's *Deep Cover*, Gillespie's curatorial gaze at the black independent cinema of the post-*Do the Right Thing* era is welcome.

Gillespie's philosophical point of departure is the seemingly bland reassertion that film is both a mass medium and an art form. Of course, it is more accurate to say that film is *always* an art object, and *sometimes* participates in the systems of cultural, economic, and technical exchanges called the mass communications media. Terry Bolas has described, in an account whose title is its argument (*Screen Education: From Film Appreciation to Media Studies* [Bristol: Intellect, 2009]), how film studies have been shaped institutionally by the general media studies settings in which they are frequently housed, often becoming a single, outsized, and ill-digested component within media studies' fundamentally sociological concerns. (Bolas's title-claim ignores both the sociological strain in the first generation of film studies, and the continuing significance of aesthetics in film studies.)

That Gillespie explicitly rejects social indexicality in the framework of anything called "black cinema" is in itself striking. Perhaps more than any other set of U.S. film practices, the African American cinema seems to demand a sociological approach. The lies told about blackness by whiteness in the United States as a part of racialist oppression make an ethical call on scholars to tell the sociological truth. Indeed, early studies of black cinema such as Peter Noble's *The Negro in Films* (1948) pioneered such an approach in film studies generally. But Gillespie is unapologetic as well as explicit: he means, he says, "to dispute the fidelity considerations of black film: the presumption that this

brand of American cinema entails an extradiegetic responsibility or capacity to embody the black life-world or provide answers in the sense of social problem solving" (p. 2).

With this reduction of the "extradiegetic responsibility" comes the consequent dismissal of the need for black film to achieve "mimetic corroboration of the black experience" (p. 2). For Gillespie, this is good riddance, for he sees this long-standing critical norm as a form of liberal racism, a variety of what historian Mark Salber Philips has described as a normative formation in contemporary historiography: "sentimental history," a narrating choice that allies the historian with the subaltern identity group he or she is chronicling (*On Historical Distance* [Yale University Press, 2013], pp. 189–236.) The task of film analysis in this setting becomes a parallel to the plot archetype of a canonical social problem film in which sympathetic middle-class protagonists address threats to the white middle-class order by advocating intergroup dialogue and political consensus across identity lines. Indeed, black film scholar Allison Graham refers to this archetype in the cinema of race as the "sentimental education" plot (*Framing the South: Hollywood, Television, and Race During the Civil Rights Struggle* [Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001], pp. 54–80.) More sociologically minded scholars following Graham have described this as the "white savior narrative," but Graham's analysis respects fiction-making as fiction (Matthew W. Hughey, *The White Savior Film: Content, Critics, and Consumption* [Philadelphia: Temple Press, 2014]).

Gillespie's choice is the recuperation of black film as film. Yet this puts him in a logical impasse. At pains to avoid charges of advocating for "an aesthete's vision of a pure cinema" (p. 2), Gillespie insists that black film draws from a specifically black intellectual matrix, referring to it "as a practice which emanates from the conceptual field of black visual and expressive culture" (p. 2). Yet that "conceptual field" is a cultural salmagundi, made so in part by the legacy of the very processes of exclusion and segregation that culturally displaced African Americans. In *Negroland*, her memoir of post-World War II middle-class black life, Margo Jefferson writes of an encounter in January 1993 between herself and an old friend. Both are black women in their mid-forties. They speak of two deaths that have dominated the news media that week, and one says, "You know, in a way, Audrey Hepburn's death meant more to me than Thurgood Marshall's." "I know," her friend responds. Explaining an identification the two women are startled by, even ashamed of, Jefferson writes, "Audrey Hepburn gave us the privilege of fantasy life, grounded in centuries of cherished European girlhood. . . . O, the vehement inner lives of girls snatching at heroines and role

models!” (Margo Jefferson, *Negroland: A Memoir* [New York: Vintage, 2015], p. 199). A generation before Jefferson and her friend adored Audrey Hepburn, a young James Baldwin, growing up both black and gay, found identification in the films of Bette Davis and Joan Crawford, whose personae expressed both outspokenness and marginalization in the measure that Baldwin found more personally confirmatory than the role models in his black community that he was urged to emulate (James Baldwin, *The Devil Finds Work* [New York: Random House, 1976], pp. 3–7). And a generation after Margo Jefferson, Kenyatta Matthews, a child of the Civil Rights generation, continued that adoration, now mingled comfortably with black culture; Matthews “fell in love with New York through culture, through *Crossing Delancey*, *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, *Working Girl*, Nas, and Wu-Tang” (Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* [New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2015], p. 86).

There is a second conflict of interest which Gillespie faces. The cinema itself is a cosmopolitan art form. Filmmakers are often trained in spaces and places distant from their cultural roots (e.g., film schools or apprenticeships on the sets of films made far from the centers of black life). And as with all arts, their influences are a *mélange*, not a monolith—see, for instance, the controversy surrounding Spike Lee’s list of important films, and the backlash it inspired because of its “missing” films by black and/or female directors in favor of white European and American filmmakers (Dominique Sisley, “Spike Lee’s 95 Films Every Aspiring Director Should See,” *Dazed*, March 17, 2013, <http://www.dazeddigital.com/artsandculture/article/30421/1/spike-lee-shares-87-films-every-aspiring-director-should-see>, and Tambay A. Obenson, “Spike Lee’s Essential List of Films for Filmmakers: What’s Missing? How Many Have You Seen?” *Indiewire*, July 26, 2013, <http://www.indiewire.com/2013/07/spike-lees-essential-list-of-films-for-filmmakers-whats-missing-how-many-have-you-seen-166420/>). Gillespie’s *cul-de-sac* resembles that of the dilemma faced by the circle of African American abstract expressionist painters including Norman Lewis and Alma Thomas who were active during the period 1950–1975 (Hilarie M. Sheets, “The Changing Complex Profile of African American Abstract Expressionists,” *Art News*, June 6, 2014, <http://www.artnews.com/2014/06/04/changing-complex-profile-of-black-abstract-painters/>). These artists sought to redefine blackness away from social realism and toward the universals of line, shape, and color. My analogy quickly breaks down, of course, because the work of any abstract painter is definitionally nonrepresentational, while film, with its powerful claims on phenomenal reality

via its use of photography, is often automatically realist, no matter what the abstract ideational ends the photographed image may be put to. And anything calling itself (or called) “black film” has always made a further claim on realism, that of political realism. African American filmmaking, from *Within Our Gates* (Oscar Micheaux, 1920) to *Fences* (Denzel Washington, 2017), has routinely enclosed private tales of individual character within public narratives of the consequences of group oppression. Indeed, without such a tension, the most socially earnest critics would argue there would be no genuinely “black cinema,” only movies with black characters.

Gillespie’s attempt to delineate a black cinema that is not primarily mimetic, but that nevertheless “draws from black culture,” has been tried before, and with success. In 2000, Gladstone Yearwood published his fine *Black Film as a Signifying Practice: Cinema, Narration, and the African-American Aesthetic Tradition*, not via an academic press, but through an independent publishing house directly allied with a black cultural agenda, African World Press. (Gillespie does not cite or reference Yearwood’s book, though his bibliography is otherwise complete.) Yearwood organized his analysis around a distinctively black cultural/linguistic trope, that of signification. For him, the relationship between lived reality and the cinema lay not in what is vaguely replicated but in what is well said about that reality. Gillespie drills to the heart of the issue through a series of rhetorical questions: What if black film could be something other than embodied? What if black film was immaterial and bodiless? What if black film could be speculative or just ambivalent? What if film is ultimately the worst window imaginable and an even poorer mirror? What if black film is art or creative interpretation and not merely the visual transcription of the black lifeworld? (p. 5).

The complexity of the rhetorical task Gillespie has set for himself has also been acknowledged, and many times. As far back as 1993, surveying the first phase of black cinema scholarship, Mark Reid argued that “Black American cinema” is not a category, but a category problem, a disparate set of visual and narrative practices whose ostensible blackness often misdirects a critic in search of an impossible unity (*Redefining Black Film* [University of California Press, 1993]). Anything called “black film” must always be a massive hybridity, woven of reactions to “white cinema” (e.g., *The Birth of a Race* [John W. Noble, 1918]), engagement with genre in that white cinema (e.g., *The Bronze Buckaroo* [Richard C. Kahn, 1939], and *Buck and the Preacher* [Sidney Poitier, 1972] are among many black Westerns, yet each handles genre tropes very differently), and an

indigenous independent cinema that borrows from European traditions (e.g., *Killer of Sheep* [Charles Burnett, 1978]); there are many, many other skeins. To that variegated corpus can be added black documentary cinema, newsreels, animation, and films by white filmmakers about black life.

Gillespie's decision to define black film away from a dependence on fealty to a real world is significant in its implications for the criticism of realist film practice in general. Sociologically based readings of film seem to be built on a real world that is somehow seismically stable when the cultural texts that correlate to it never are. (Peter Roffman and Jim Purdy's *The Hollywood Social Problem: Madness, Despair, and Politics from the Depression to the Fifties* [Indiana University Press, 1981] is a canonical expression of this ethic, but the trend persists into the present day.) Thus, something like cultural truth is available in a given film, but it requires the skilled analyst to assay that truth in a bravura critical performance (David Bordwell, *Making Meaning: Inference and Rhetoric in the Interpretation of Cinema* [Harvard University Press, 1989], pp. 87–104, 205–223).

In *Film Blackness: American Cinema and the Idea of Black Film*, Michael Boyce Gillespie is reclaiming a mode of film analysis that is transitive to other texts and thus more useful than as a singular performance of interpretive virtuosity, however impressive that performance may be. *Film Blackness: American Cinema and the Idea of Black Film* qualifies as both a collection of individual aesthetic/cultural readings and a theoretical manifesto. It is not just that, as I have quoted Gillespie above, black film, and by extension, any category of film that depicts a recognizable social existence, should not be held “responsible.” It is that the realist narrative cinema does not have the “capacity” (Gillespie's word, as well as mine) to do so; the “answers” it provides are to questions of its own asking, not that of the society it claims to be representing. In a brief *tour-de-force* response to a sociologically based critique of Spike Lee's *Clockers* (1995) by Harry Allen, Gillespie shows how imprisoning arguments from social mimesis can be. As Gillespie says, the normative sociological approach in black cinema studies does not fundamentally distinguish between the forms and responsibilities of nonfiction and those of fiction (pp. 3–4). This limits the analyst from seeing the ways fictionality itself can express lived experience more powerfully. As many feminist film historians in particular have argued, such approaches contrast with the cultural work casual viewers do in creatively employing the devices of fiction to create a space to stand apart from that lived reality but remain conscious of it (Annette Kuhn, *Dreaming of Fred and Ginger: Cinema and Cultural Memory* [New York University Press, 2002]). The “realism” of the narrative cinema, understood correctly as a set of

codes for filtering, reordering, and altering emphases in lived experience, has what Gillespie considers a political capacity that Allen and others fail to recognize: as signifying on that lived experience.

No matter its producers' desire to exploit the combination of phenomenal photographic reality with the “based on a true story” sales pitch, no matter its audiences' yearning to accept these claims as valid, and no matter the scholarly inclination to adjudicate these claims from a position of sentimentality, a movie remains a movie, an artistic construction on the subject of something, a signification on that something, perhaps, but not a “depiction” of anything.

Gillespie's is a novel history of black film, because it sees the validating power of blackness not in the social world this cinema refers to but in the black cultural world it springs from and the fictional tropes this culture generates to give a creative accounting of itself. It is also a revisionist work of cultural history, which puts aesthetic questions and the evolution of style at the center of the historical narrative of the cinema, displacing sociologically based readings. Gillespie returns us to Adichie's complaint. We have been getting it backwards: black life is not a construct—black films are.

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BOGOST, IAN. *Play Anything: The Pleasure of Limits, the Uses of Boredom, and the Secret of Games*. New York: Basic Books, 2016, xiv + 267 pp., \$26.99 cloth.

Few themes are more central to modern aesthetic conversation, from Kant and Schiller through Derrida, than that of the meanings and uses of play. Ian Bogost, video game designer and media scholar, tells a sweeping twenty-first-century story about play's redemptive powers in an affluent culture that can make people miserable because they have more things than they need and not enough appearances they can trust. This story is as old as romanticism, but Bogost reconfigures it with themes from philosophy, anthropology, and the history of technology. Interlaced with anecdotes from his professional and domestic life, the narrative does double duty as self-help advisory, with a piece of good news for the disenchanting. Much of our malaise is remediable, he is convinced, if we can see ordinary life as affording hitherto unnoticed opportunities for play.

Everyone lives a life rich in the basic materials for what, echoing Johan Huizinga, Bogost calls “play-grounds.” A playground is any situation that,

paradoxically, frees us to act in new ways by limiting action. Children (including Bogost's four-year-old daughter, who instinctively turns a boring trip to a shopping mall into a game by skipping every other step when she walks) are reminders of what most adults today need to relearn or remember. We create a playground by imaginatively drawing a "magic circle" around some area of activity. Even the most lackluster everyday situations, like cleaning the house, going shopping, or working out might fit the bill, although other more formally structured activities—gaming, athletics, artistic creation, Bogost's own domains of game design and programming—provide more obvious examples. We then exploit our psychological capacity for a gestalt shift familiar in all formal games and arts in which an initial foreground experience of restraints moves into the background. Doing this then allows us to freshly perceive the designated area as a positively constrained arena for free creative action.

This, Bogost grants, is not always easy. Playfully fertilizing one's lawn (at which he himself had mixed success) may for some require not only an openness to doing things differently but some kind of supplement—an iPod, self-medication, or Buddhist mindfulness. The last alternative comes close to what Bogost has in mind, but he feels that "mindfulness," construed as a quality internal to an actor's self-awareness, does not yet capture an essential quality of play experience: the feeling that it is the entire constraint-afforded situation, and not just oneself, that is doing the playing. Playing is not just mindful but *worldful*: it embraces things—one of Bogost's favorite themes—"as they are." It also, while having an intrinsically enjoyable autotelic quality, is not about what we often mean by having fun: "Fun is not only the delight in success, but also the panic of uncertainty, the agony of failure. It arises when figure and ground swap places and surprise us. The familiar turns strange; we no longer grasp it fully. There, facing the world's stark truth, we either throw up our hands in disgust or dread—or we persist and find something new" (p. 81).

This will be welcome to general readers who might be tempted by the simpler versions of Positive Psychology (which Bogost takes to task in chapter 7, "The Opposite of Happiness") to think that happiness involves transcending stress and feeling good all the time. Such visions of happiness can, after all, serve to idealize cheeriness in ways that can but further exacerbate the nonworldful attitudes that made escape desirable in the first place. This is a valuable point for anyone, although readers of twentieth-century philosophy and psychology may here detect the outlines of older conversations not noted by Bogost. Freud pioneered the search for a way of understanding how adults might learn to live "beyond the

pleasure principle." And Bogost's reconstructive definition of "fun" has a lot in common with what some other writers of the last century (for example, Dewey, Benjamin, and Adorno) meant by "experience" (or *Erlebnis* or *Erfahrung*) in its more normatively emphatic registers. The experiences that generate meaning within the narratives of our lives are often challenging or difficult ones, even while they also have an intrinsically prized autotelic character. To play in Bogost's sense, one need not have any hard-won skills, but in some cases, as in conventional arts and games, this might happen too. (Compare Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's theory of optimal experience as "flow.")

Bogost does not, unlike the first three writers above, see capitalism as creating major obstacles for playing and happiness in modern consumer society. (Benjamin and Adorno, echoing Schiller, in particular regarded play as an inextricably political phenomenon.) The villain in Bogost's story is instead an equal-opportunity hyper-ironic attitude he calls *ironoia*: "If paranoia is the mistrust of people, ironoia is the mistrust of things. It is our commonest but most infrequently diagnosed condition. And it comes with an equally common folk cure: to seek escape, to recede further way from a thing rather than to stop, and attend to one by circumscribing it in the zone of attention that might create a play-ground" (pp. 41–42).

Ironoia's escapist symptoms are legion in post-modern life: an uneasy longing for more things to alleviate experiences of lack, coupled at the same time with uneasiness about the emptiness of the objects we endlessly fantasize about and buy to get existential relief, and a defensive posture of irony towards the very idea that anything we can have or do can be meaningful in a deep sense. *Ironoia* denies the myriad possibilities of the creative-freedom-within-constrained-possibility-spaces that is the essence of play. At a deeper level, it is fueled by a mythic image of the self that, Bogost suggests, needs to be revised: the idea of the self as bearer of an autonomous interior life from which values and meanings are projected onto an intrinsically meaningless external world. *Ironoia's* low-grade symptoms show up in the winking, scare-quoting practices of hipster culture. They also have a more darkly satirical and nihilistic side exemplified in writers like David Foster Wallace, Don De Lillo, and Thomas Pynchon. (Wallace gets a nod for his deep insights into ironoiaic culture—epitomized in his story about the old fish who pleasantly asks two younger fish "How's the water?" whereupon one of them asks the other, "What the hell is water?"—even while he was unable to fully integrate them into his own life [p. 10].)

Ironoia robs lives of meaning by blocking our ability to form authentic relationships to things as they really are. Bogost is a big fan of *things* in a sense

inspired by Heidegger. A thing here is not just any old object but one that we manage to experience as meaningful and as being ready-to-hand for purposes of play. By way of illustration, he recounts a transformative visit to an Atlanta Walmart in which he was able to cut through some of his own ironioic perceptual habits: “The Hard Candy nail polish jars, the Dora the Explorer Cherry Berry Bubble Bath, the Whitewheat ‘healthy white’ bread—isn’t it possible to find such things deplorable and mawkish, while also being awestruck by their existence, individually and together? Can it be a ghastly foodstuff *and* a brilliant marketing ploy? . . . God help me for admitting it, but I enjoyed circulating through the Atlanta Walmart more than I enjoy visits to the Atlanta High Museum of Art—my hometown high mausoleum for culture rather than consumption. . . . Long after Andy Warhol turned the museum into a general store by transforming ordinary soup cans and Brillo boxes into rarified masterpieces, Walmart has turned the big box-store into a museum, an archive of the immediate present, a bible of prosaic miracles” (p. 32).

Bogost revels in “ontography” (his word for lists of objects like that in the first sentence above). Some readers, he is aware, may not be as open to Walmart’s aesthetic charms as himself, but here lies another therapeutic opportunity for them. If we can accept that Walmart-like places are fixtures of reality that are not going away soon and work through the ironioic mindset that leads us to roll our eyes at lists of things like Cherry Berry Bubble Bath, we can experience such things as rich in affordances for any number of further lusory uses. Bogost reports experiencing a version of the Kantian sublime in Walmart’s “overwhelming collection of entities that somehow, improbably, all made it here, and the terrifying sensation of physical power such an enormous warehouse erects over us” (p. 33). Self-respecting neo-Marxists should really be wincing now, but it is also true that no less a revolutionary than Fredric Jameson once said similar things, minus the rhapsodizing, about a “postmodern sublime” running throughout global civilization’s networks of distribution and consumption.

What really gives Bogost ontographic *jouissance*, however, are electronic gadgets and computer programs. Here he describes an Atari Television Interface Adapter: “The Atari was made by people in order to entertain other people, and in that sense it’s only a machine. But a machine and its components are also something more, something alive. . . . I found myself wondering, what is it like to be an Atari or a Television Interface Adapter, or a cathode ray tube television? . . . The sensual ether of the television becomes as much an object of concern as the characters and scenes represented upon it. . . .

Not because it feels fashionable to prefer the fuzzy static of a tiny tube television in the era of high definition, or the blocky nuance of Atari games in the era of Grand Theft Auto, but because the television offers its own intrigue, no matter what it displays” (p. 231).

Such gadgets may not be for everyone (including perhaps some less techno-optimistic aficionados of high art and aesthetic theory). But Bogost in any case is more interested in how things of all artifactual kinds lend themselves to playful use in virtue of having properties that tap into our paradoxical ability, once again, to have fresh experience precisely when the parameters of experience are limited.

The book’s fullest treatment of this theme occurs in Chapter 6, “The Pleasure of Limits,” where Bogost turns to a subject about which he knows quite a lot: the creative uses of computer programs. He begins with an overview of how the creation and lusory use of possibility-spaces is a ubiquitous feature of various kinds of artmaking, from Homeric epics through Shakespearean sonnets through Oulipian palindromes. Then comes an array of increasingly sophisticated examples, including PechaKucha (a PowerPoint-like slideshow presentation strictly based on the displaying of twenty slides in twenty seconds apiece) and a computer programming technique known as “multiple coding.” This employs a programming language known simply as C: “A multicoded work is legible and meaningful on multiple registers all at once: as a sharp commentary on the ambiguities of C syntax; as a tiny fiction; as a daisy oracle; as a fortune-teller for romance. . . . Admittedly, the first [of these registers] is a little hard to understand outside the world of computer programming, but, suffice it to say that C is a difficult language to love and a difficult language to leave . . .” (p. 193).

A more familiar example of digitally circumscribed playgrounds is Twitter. Its 140-character message format, which has been around in commercial form for just over a decade, has since become the playful possibility space platform of choice for everyone from schoolchildren to (alas) presidents.

The book ends on an ontographically poetic note: “[O]ur lives are surrounded by stuff of all stripes, all the stuff ironioia demands we resist rather than commune with: Smithfield half hams and cheeseburger-flavored Pringles and Old Spice deodorant, ceramic tabletops and heathered sweaters and quilted metals, cities and meadows and kudzu, evening and chipmunks and silence. . . . To stave off ironioia, we need not resist the crass material world nor transform it into artisanal affectation. A gentler touch is needed, a more careful physical therapy: to spend time with things, to visit with them, to give them a chance to be exactly what they are. . . . This is the pleasure of

limits, the fun of play. Not doing what we want, but doing what we can with what is given” (pp. 235–236).

These are fine words, as is the whole book, for anyone recovering from ironioic depression. But should we really just take, existentially speaking, whatever is “given”? In today’s hyper-networked, hyper-technologized world, people are no longer simple recipients of practically anything. Human beings made most of the things on Bogost’s list above, just as some humans created the global systems of production and consumption that make them possible. And what of all the folks (including not a few non-First World residents) who still, for reasons of choice or circumstance, manage not to spend large parts of their days online or in places like shopping malls and Walmarts and whose desires run toward playing with *living* things, human and nonhuman, in ways not captured in lists like the above? These people need more representation than they get here (as do the many nonhuman species that do quite a lot of playing without us unless we stop them and that remain blessedly free from ironioia). What do the playground choices of today’s gadget-addicted, ecologically oblivious masses entail for them?

Anyone who, after such thoughts, is still tempted to believe that human playing essentially floats free from politics should note that the year and country of this book’s publication saw particularly alarming examples of corporate and political players—whose activities also exemplify Bogost’s account all too well—who are depressingly good at gaming the system at the expense of others. Even if we can play virtually anything (and play anything in virtual space), this does not mean that it is good to play just anything in the real world.

Sensibly, *Play Anything* does not claim to have the last word on its subjects. I suggest we apply its own argument to itself, reading it as a move in our ongoing reason-giving game of debating what play—a cultural and not natural kind of activity—is and does. This game resembles and is historically intertwined with others we cannot stop playing about art, beauty, and similar aesthetic subjects. Such games are “infinite” in the sense set out in James P. Carse’s thoughtful book *Finite and Infinite Games*. An infinite game is not, unlike finite games, about zero-sum competitions and unilateral victories; it aims, rather, to sustain play as long, and with as many players, as possible. In these lusorily politicized times, this infinite game needs all the fresh voices it can get. Bogost here draws (and describes) its magic circle in a way that leaves lots of room for others to join in.

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HOGAN, PATRICK COLM. *Beauty and Sublimity: A Cognitive Aesthetics of Literature and the Arts*. Cambridge University Press, 2016, ix + 286 pp., \$110.00 cloth.

On the one hand, this is an extraordinarily ambitious book. Of note for philosophers of art, it aims to speak to some of the central questions about the following topics: aesthetic experience, the nature of beauty and sublimity, the nature of ambiguity and metaphor, aesthetic judgment, aesthetic argument, aesthetic properties, and the definition of art. Hogan clearly conceives of the domain of aesthetics broadly, as his examples of aesthetic objects include *Mrs. Dalloway*, Bollywood film and film music, *Othello*, the Indian actress Tanuja (not her acting, but her appearance—often in comparison with his wife’s appearance), a drawing and a painting by Matisse, and George Crumb’s setting of Lorca poems. And it is an interdisciplinary book, presumably aimed to speak to an audience that includes philosophers, literary scholars, and cognitive scientists.

On the other hand, the perspective of the book is quite constrained, for it thinks of all those many topics as functions of the first, aesthetic experience. Further, there is a marked tendency toward reducing aesthetic experience to experience of beauty and sublimity; indeed, as we shall see below, Hogan uses his technical term “personal beauty” as a synonym for “aesthetic response.” And though Hogan draws on a wide array of aesthetic objects, his thinking about them is focused on a fairly narrow class of cognitive properties. (The “cognitive” in the title refers to the cognitive sciences, and not to any of the various forms of literary or aesthetic cognitivism.)

Works of such breadth benefit greatly from a clear announcement of the terms of the inquiry. Unfortunately, the introductory chapter is among this book’s greatest disappointments, in part because it contains relatively little guidance about how to read the book and no self-conscious reckoning with its methods. Instead, there is a suggestive *pro forma* outline of the book’s seven chapters and afterword, preceded by a section titled “Aesthetics and Politics.” This discussion is initiated with the question of whether there is “something politically wrong about aesthetics” (p. 2). Hogan’s strategy for responding to this question is—to put it not in Hogan’s own terms, but in terms familiar to recent philosophy of art—to maintain the autonomy of the aesthetic, as against the ethical and political. So, for instance, when Hogan considers Hitler’s “manipulation of aesthetic response” (p. 4), he rejects the idea that this is an aesthetic problem. Rather, Nazi propaganda really turns on prestige (by identifying some as of the in-group and casting others into the out-group) and

the manipulation of other emotions (such as group pride) through aesthetic means.

Hogan makes similar arguments in response to the concerns (1) that “beautiful people have unfair advantages” (p. 5), (2) that standards of women’s beauty are “highly distortive and ultimately cruel to women” (p. 6), and (3) that beauty is problematically identified with femininity. To be clear, Hogan does not deny that any of these is a problem, but he denies that they are *aesthetic* problems. Attractive persons have advantages because of prestige standards that are out of whack; standards of beauty—and the popular conception of beauty as a feminine virtue—may be harmful to women, but that is the result of the ethical problem of women “not being treated as ends in themselves” (p. 10).

The upshot of this discussion, for Hogan, is that there is not a political problem with *studying* beauty. That may be one of the preliminaries this book needs to get off the ground, but it is quite a weak conclusion (that aesthetic theory is politically defensible) to draw from such a strong and controversial claim (that aesthetic and political concerns can be systematically separated).

Nevertheless, it is fairly easy to isolate the book’s main aim, which is to give an account of aesthetic experience. At the heart of this account is Hogan’s distinction between “public” and “personal” beauty. Public beauty is “defined by standard categorizations of targets as beautiful” (p. 108). The judgment that an object is beautiful in this sense is determined by cultural factors, such as prestige, convention, and the judgment of experts. Personal beauty, by contrast, is synonymous with “aesthetic response,” and refers to “our feeling of aesthetic pleasure” (p. 108). It is the experience of an object as beautiful, and, as such, it is determined by subjective taste.

To be sure, this is an important distinction. As Hogan rightly notes, it may be the case that an object that meets a conventional standard may not produce an actual aesthetic response, but may nevertheless be judged as beautiful. But the terminology, rather than clarifying, is often obscuring. First, Hogan’s use of the terms wanders a bit. Sometimes “public beauty” refers to a shared standard by which things are judged, sometimes it refers to properties that such a standard prizes, sometimes it refers to objects of beauty, and sometimes it refers to aesthetic judgments. “Personal beauty” is used somewhat more consistently to refer to aesthetic response, though it is also occasionally used to refer to objects of aesthetic experience.

Second, the two terms of the distinction (in their most common usage) are not the same kind of thing. Public beauty is a socially determined *standard* by which aesthetic objects are judged (or, again, favored properties). Personal beauty is not an individually

determined standard, but rather an *experience* of an aesthetic object. But in speaking of these as two types of beauty suggests that they are importantly related.

Indeed, two chapters are aimed at solving “paradoxes” that arise because beauty can be both public and personal. Chapter 2 puzzles over the “idiosyncrasy of beauty.” How can beauty be *personal* when it is also public? Chapter 3, addressed to the topic of aesthetic universals, works the question the other way around: How can beauty be *public* when it is also personal? Put in these terms, this looks very much like a problem that is created by the thought process that sets out to solve it. The simplest solution to these apparent puzzles is to deny that there is any one genus of which (a) a socially determined standard of aesthetic approbation and (b) aesthetic experience are species.

Hogan does not consider this objection, and if he gives a decisive argument for thinking of (a) and (b) as species of beauty, I could not find it. Nevertheless, it is fairly easy to imagine how he might respond. Both (a) and (b), Hogan suggests, are underwritten by the same cognitive processes. The book’s main contribution to aesthetics is its “componential” account of personal beauty or aesthetic response (p. 12). On this view, aesthetic experience is constituted by two types of components: information processing components and emotion system components.

Hogan focuses his attention on two information processing components: nonhabitual pattern recognition and prototype approximation. For me, many of the book’s most interesting insights were related to the former. Though it is not entirely clear what Hogan counts as a pattern, he maintains that aesthetic experience is often constituted by pattern recognition. Crucially, spectators move from a state of disorientation to recognition, and, to maintain audience interest, these objects must have patterns that are complex enough that solving them is not simply habitual. The feeling generated by this process Hogan calls “non-anomalous surprise” (p. 20). Objects whose patterns are too simple are experienced as boring; objects whose patterns are too complex are experienced as chaotic. But Hogan makes two particularly interesting points: first, especially in music, the complex pattern that gives rise to the pleasant surprise is often juxtaposed against a simpler pattern. Thus the background of a given piece of music is often simplest when the foreground is at its most complex, and vice versa. Second, acculturation is sometimes necessary for recognizing the complexity of a pattern. His several discussions of teaching students in an American university about Indian classical music illustrate the point: they have to be taught to recognize the pattern, lest their attention light on the simple background and boredom ensue.

The other main information processing component is prototype approximation. Hogan's treatment of this is somewhat more opaque, in part, again, because of the terminology. At various times it seems to refer to (1) a feature of an object (i.e., how closely it resembles a prototype), (2) the cognitive process of comparing the features of an object to the features of a prototype, and (3) the process of constructing a prototype through averaging. This ambiguity is by no means a terrible flaw, but it does occasionally make for frustrating reading, especially because thinking carefully about all three senses could be quite valuable.

For Hogan, prototypes play a key role in both public and personal beauty. Prototyping, of course, is a sensible way of thinking about socially determined aesthetic standards (Hogan's "public beauty"), but, as philosophers of art have acknowledged at least since Kendall Walton's "Categories of Art," it is also a key component of aesthetic experience and judgment. Like Walton, Hogan holds that categorization (subsumption under a prototype) determines aesthetic response. For me, the most interesting of Hogan's many remarks about prototypes are those about the formation of prototypes. Cognitive scientific research suggests that some prototypes, such as that by which we judge the aesthetic value of human faces, are formed by a process of averaging across sets. (This, for Hogan, explains some of that idiosyncrasy of personal beauty, for different persons are exposed to different sets of faces.) Others, such as the conventional category of "diet foods," are formed with reference to the limit case: thus lettuce, a zero-calorie food, becomes the prototype.

These two information processing components are married to two emotion system components. One, activation of the endogenous reward system, is closely related to the information processing component of nonhabitual pattern recognition. Seeking after and then recognizing patterns activates this system and gives rise to pleasure. The related processes of interest and attention further support this seeking behavior.

The other emotion system component is the attachment system, by which, for example, parents bond with children. For Hogan, this system plays an important role in aesthetic experience, in part because it features in prototype formation. Reading an account of personal beauty out of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, Hogan emphasizes that Clarissa Dalloway's particular fondness for flowers issues from her attachment to Sally Seton, with whom she was in love and who once gave her a flower and kissed her on the lips. This he takes to be an exemplary case of prototype formation: an event of heightened attachment system activation fosters the formation of a new standard of personal beauty.

Because of the book's focus on personal beauty and personal beauty's close relation to idiosyncratic attachment feelings, a significant portion of the text is devoted to what might be called "aesthetic autobiography," sometimes lengthy passages in which he recounts and dissects his own experiences of various aesthetic objects. These are the most unusual and uneven parts of the book, but to my ear Hogan often comes across as a sensitive reader of an impressive array of artworks and a careful reporter of his own aesthetic responses. Indeed, most of what he reports about his own reactions seems, to me, plausible and even familiar. I am much less certain about the cognitive analyses he derives from these intuitions. For example, he regularly refers to his own aesthetic prototype as if it is something he has relatively easy access to. Of course, it may be the case that introspection can provide such access. But the reliability of introspection is a matter of dispute, and Hogan gives no indication from the cognitive studies of prototyping, nor other evidence, that personal prototypes are accessible in this way. In any case, philosophers of a certain stripe will find many of Hogan's arguments overly reliant on intuition.

This book comes closest to Anglo-American philosophy of art in Chapters 6 and 7, which deal with aesthetic argumentation and the definition of art, respectively. Focused as he is on aesthetic experience, Hogan advances the position that the object of aesthetic argument is not to "'triumph' in a debate" (p. 214) with one's interlocutor, but to encourage them to revisit the work under discussion. There is much that is appealing about this view, which is related to that in Alexander Nehamas's (unmentioned) *Only a Promise of Happiness: The Place of Beauty in a World of Art* (Princeton University Press, 2007), and Hogan uses his public–personal distinction to make the familiar points that aesthetic disagreement amounts to disagreement about property attribution and that arguments about disputed aesthetic judgments cannot, alone, bring about a change in aesthetic experience.

In his discussion of the definition of art, Hogan signals his wish to follow Robert Stecker and others in thinking that there can be multiple definitions of art. But the bulk of the chapter is spent setting out the differences between "art" and "entertainment" (artworks are more worthy of revisiting and more likely to exhibit technical innovation), so the view seems much more like a species of aesthetic anti-essentialism than a more thoroughgoing pragmatism.

With acknowledgment that it is all too easy for the reviewer of an interdisciplinary book to complain that his or her own specialty is underrepresented or maltreated, I find that I must say that this book's engagement with philosophical aesthetics, contemporary and classic, leaves much to be desired. Surely

some of the confusions in the chapters on aesthetic argument and the definition of art could benefit from consideration of the work of others who have tilled the same soil. Somewhat worse, the discussion of recent work on aesthetic experience (which is, after all, the main topic of the book) is entirely contained in a single footnote.

This book has its rewards, not least of which is that it moves us in the direction of meaningful conversation between what Hogan, in another book, calls the cognitivist and culturalist approaches to art and aesthetics (*Cognitive Science, Literature, and the Arts* [Routledge, 2003]). But readers on the culturalist side of things will likely find those rewards hard won.

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BANWELL, JULIA. *Teresa Margolles and the Aesthetics of Death*. University of Wales Press, 2015, 240 pp., 8 color + 39 b&w illus., \$160.00 cloth.

In *Teresa Margolles and the Aesthetics of Death*, Julia Banwell focuses on the importance of internationally awarded, Mexican conceptual artist and forensic scientist Teresa Margolles. Margolles's art is controversial for its incorporation of the human body in her artwork, art which uses actual parts of human corpses, fetuses, bodily fluids such as fat, and objects and materials that have come in close contact with the dead body. Ethical or controversial aspects of Margolles's art, Banwell advocates, are outweighed by effects of positive social activism. Banwell exhibits her expertise in Hispanic studies and Latin American art by offering valuable critiques of Margolles's work as well as providing the reader with historical context to explain where Margolles's work fits within both neo-contemporary Mexican and global culture. The use of the human body in contemporary works of art continues to grow, and Banwell provides readers a timely book that defends the value of Margolles's use of the corpse in art as well as opening up conversation for further ethical and philosophical exploration.

Prominent themes addressed by Banwell throughout the book are those of violence, absence, and distance. Banwell discusses the violence in the streets as well as the often unseen violence in the morgue. Lower-class and unnamed bodies are often stacked in metal storage drawers, and the unclothed bodies display the invasive cuts and stitches that occur during autopsy. Margolles's art, claims Banwell, aims to exhibit the absence of lower-class individuals from society, which is noticed by Margolles's emphasis on the anonymous bodies in her projects. Banwell also notes

the absence of the physical body from some works of Margolles's art, but that her art is still able to invoke the image of the corpse in its viewers. The theme of distance is prevalent in Banwell's evaluations, as she notes the space we commonly place between ourselves and death as well as between art and reality. Banwell's incorporation of color plates and halftones of Margolles's art helps the viewer emotionally connect to these themes, and her vivid descriptions and interpretations of the art connects even the unfamiliar reader to the art from afar.

Banwell begins by providing readers with a brief background to Mexico's recent history of drug trade and violence. Such a background is not only informative but also necessary if one wishes to situate and best understand the art produced by Margolles. The popularity of the narcotics trade resulted from a failed attempt at economic stability in Mexico in the early 1990s. In 1992, NAFTA was signed, and what followed was political corruption, drug trafficking, and enormous spikes in violence. Another contributing factor was the opening of computer parts factories in northern Mexico. These factories mainly employed women, and as a result women in these areas faced more violence and often their unemployed husbands were recruited as drug mules. Corpses became a common public sight, and the way death was presented and understood in Mexican culture was directly influenced by the prevalence of narcotics-related deaths. Additionally, Banwell relates Margolles's art to traditional religious representation of death in Mexican religious art, mentioning the similarities in tradition but also the universal applicability of her art through the use of corpses. Banwell also notes that although Margolles claims her art to be nonspiritual, one can notice parallels to religious art through her use of relics and rituals.

Banwell then moves on to explain the social significance Margolles's art serves, highlighting the social injustices in Mexican streets that carry over to the morgue, tracing the narrative of the dead body beyond the physical point of death and focusing on the life of the corpse from the morgue onward. The bodies used by Margolles are unnamed, and they are mostly victims of violence related to the Mexican narcotics trade. These people, while alive, are often viewed as human waste; they are "the other who have fallen through the gaps in the social fabric and disappeared from view" (p. 13). Families of victims are rarely able to pay for burials, and the corpses are to be disposed of in mass graves in an act of final disappearance. Margolles's art brings to public attention the violence as well as the often ignored victims, exhibiting the serious and mortal consequences of the drug trade. Through the use of anonymous bodies, Banwell claims that Margolles "challenges the traditional centrality of naming to acts of

commemoration and memorialization" (p. 103). She lets parts of bodies, residues of bodies, and materials like cloth and water that come in close contact with the corpse represent the victims in efforts to facilitate visibility of victims, corpses, and corruption.

The philosophy of death offered by Banwell is brief, but it properly emphasizes the modern fear of the corpse. We often view the corpse as manifesting the abject, as something that threatens and causes discomfort when viewed. It is a thing of disgust because of its decay, but it is also feared because it threatens individuality, a value highly praised in modern culture. The corpse traditionally represents an endpoint, and we fear this end because it "threatens our unique identities and our bodies" that we worked so hard to define (p. 41). Banwell describes Margolles as aiming to show that we are not equalized in death and that dead bodies are still subject to social inequalities and unjust treatment. Death does not erase and make everything okay.

Banwell emphasizes the "life of the corpse" in the works of Margolles; the body still has a trajectory after the time of death. It decays, it forms bacteria, it springs new life. The "life of the corpse" can also invoke emotion in the viewer. For example, in the work "Cards to Cut Cocaine," photographs show a person cutting cocaine with a card that features the bloody face of someone killed due to the Mexican drug trade. It invokes in the viewer feelings of empathy, guilt, and responsibility. The "life of the corpse," therefore, can have an effect on the lives of the living. Margolles's use of the corpse in art, however, is still ephemeral. For example, the graphic cards were left at artworld parties and were likely lost or discarded, and the body parts she uses in her art are not preserved. Margolles lets her works face natural decay. Banwell clearly points out that the corpses in Margolles's artworks minimize the distance we place between ourselves and death specifically to confront the viewer with the social inequalities and "uncomfortable realities" (p. 1) that we often ignore or of which we are simply unaware.

Banwell offers an aesthetics of death that attempts to explain how Margolles's work helps minimize the "aesthetic distance" between art and reality (p. 47). While I do not disagree with the reality present throughout Margolles's works, I question if contemporary art adheres to a strong motif of "aesthetic distance" or the idea that art is rather detached from reality. Conceptual and postmodern art with underlying social meanings are quite popular in Western culture, and many viewers have been exposed to such art before. Even other mediums of art, such as film and music, often challenge people to engage with "uncomfortable realities" in efforts to bring awareness to problems present in the world around us. It may be the case that many viewers do not

separate art from reality as often as Banwell seems to suggest.

An area worthy of expansion is Banwell's approach to the ethical concerns directly related to both Margolles and cadaver art overall. Only seven pages are devoted to ethical issues. Banwell contrasts Margolles with British artist Anthony-Noel Kelly, who was found guilty of stealing body parts from the Royal College of Surgeons, as well as with Body Worlds creator and anatomist Gunther von Hagens, who has faced a slew of ethical issues in his anatomical exhibitions of "real human bodies." Margolles, like Kelly, has obtained body parts without permission. However, Margolles has never faced legal action. The excuse Banwell cites is that Margolles, given her forensic science background, is a professional who is allowed in the space of the morgue, and that Margolles's obtainment of bodies is beneficial because it reflects on the corruptness of the Mexican political system. The corruption of Mexican politics does not satisfy the ethical question Banwell poses: "whether her [Margolles's] use of corpses, and the imprints and matter they leave behind in the morgue after death, is ethically justifiable?" (p. 34). Nor should we confuse Margolles's professional qualifications with the ethical questions involved in her artistic pursuits. Banwell also asks, "how can it be useful to show brutal images of human remains for the audience to view with perverse pleasure, if the aim is to raise consciousness about social inequalities?" (p. 38). Phrasing the ethical question in terms of "use" strikes me as the wrong question to ask about cadaver art, as it assumes the practical to be the ethical. Banwell appears to ethically excuse (or at least not ethically condemn as severely as other artists using cadavers) Margolles because her artwork is just that—effective at bringing awareness to inequalities. If this is the position Banwell truly wants to take, I think a larger defense incorporating a utilitarian framework would be beneficial. Additionally, Banwell refers to the association the discipline of anatomy has with mistreatment of the dead and illegal body procurement. I found this unfair, as artists often worked closely with anatomists in the height of grave-robbing days. Ethically charged fingers should not be pointed primarily at anatomists in place of artists since the use of cadavers is a growing trend in contemporary art.

Overall, Banwell successfully acquaints the reader with the art of Teresa Margolles and the work her art serves in exhibiting social injustices. A historical narrative of Mexican politics is given, focusing on the signing of NAFTA, to help understand how the injustices arose in Mexico. An explanation of Mexican art is also offered, which helps situate Margolles's conceptual works as responsive, resistant, and still rooted in Mexican tradition. While the focus is largely of the social value, Banwell attempts to address

philosophical and ethical issues arising from the use of cadavers in contemporary art. The philosophical exposition is not robust, but it does the work that is needed to understand the modern resistance to the human corpse. The ethical issues surrounding cadaver art are immense, and Banwell only barely scratches the surface. However, Banwell's book opens up a lot of opportunity for conversation and investigation into the use of cadavers in art, and it will surely be of interest to anyone concerned with artistic representations of death, the philosophy of death, and the intersection of the body, art, and anatomy.

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COOPER, ANDREW. *The Tragedy of Philosophy: Kant's Critique of Judgment and the Project of Aesthetics*. State University of New York Press, 2016, xvi + 298 pp., \$90.00 cloth.

Philosophy, Andrew Cooper tells us in the first sentence of his ambitious *The Tragedy of Philosophy*, is “obsessed with tragedy” (p. 1). This means, for Cooper, two distinct but dovetailing things. On the one hand, it means that many thinkers have attempted to develop a philosophy of tragedy, an account of the meaning and importance of tragic art. Cooper's book offers a careful, critical account of several modern European philosophies of tragic drama and poetry, focusing on the work of Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Castoriadis. On the other hand, philosophy's “obsession” with tragedy means, for Cooper, that philosophy itself suffers a tragic condition, a *tragedy of philosophy*. By this Cooper means the “inevitable” ruin of philosophy's hubristic ambition to attain perfect knowledge of the world, “the failure of philosophy to determine all truth in the paradigm of *techne*” (p. 212). For Cooper these two senses of the philosophical obsession with tragedy come together in post-Kantian aesthetics, which, he argues, attempts to discover in tragic art a solution to the “tragic” condition of “technalized” thinking.

The tragedy of philosophy, Cooper argues, first arises in eighteenth-century attempts to reconcile the then-predominant rationalist understanding of nature as mechanistic with new discoveries concerning organic reproduction and generation, which seemed to demand openness to contingency, reliance on sensuous experience, and recourse to principles of teleology and self-formation. The nascent life sciences, in other words, pointed toward the insufficiency of a merely technical conception of nature and experience. Cooper argues that the

similarly nascent discipline of aesthetics offered an approach to judgment that, in its search for a kind of sensuous reason, provided a model for the new, nontechnical form of thought demanded by the life sciences. Aesthetics thus appeared capable not only of accounting for judgments of taste but of providing a response to the newly discovered tragedy of philosophy. Cooper traces the dialectical development of this discourse during the eighteenth century through discussions of the aesthetic work of Alexander Baumgarten, David Hume, Jean-Baptiste Dubos, James Moor, Edward Young, and Johann Gottfried Herder, but he primarily focuses, as the subtitle of his book suggests, on Kant.

Kant, Cooper argues, goes much further than his eighteenth-century predecessors and contemporaries—much further, indeed, than many of his successors—in understanding and formulating a viable response to the tragedy of philosophy. For Kant, the first glimpses of this tragedy appear in the gap between theoretical reason's mechanistic determination of nature and practical reason's free determination of moral judgments. In order for philosophy to constitute a unified system and for the moral law to be grasped as realizable within the order of nature, this gap between the theoretical and practical must be bridged. Kant recognizes the full urgency of this problem, Cooper argues, only after completing the *Critique of Practical Reason*. The *Critique of Judgment* is thus Kant's attempt to solve the problem. Over the course of two historically and conceptually careful chapters examining the third *Critique*—the first chapter devoted to Kant's account of reflective judgment and the second to the connections he draws between aesthetics and ethics—Cooper argues that Kant bridges the theoretical and practical by locating their common ground in the supersensible. Kant then discovers in aesthetic experience and artistic creativity the means for making this supersensible ground present to feeling and available for thought. Aesthetic experience—judgments of beauty and sublimity, artistic genius, the communication of aesthetic ideas—demonstrates to us the compatibility of nature and freedom, the possibility for realizing morality in the empirical world, by presenting us with an “enlarged” vision of nature: not a determinate vision of nature as mechanism, but a reflective, symbolic vision of nature as art. Because aesthetic experience turns on reflective judgment, i.e., proceeds in the absence of a determinate concept, this enlarged vision offers us no knowledge of nature. In other words, Cooper argues, the unification of critical philosophy is won only at the point where critical philosophy fails to legislate rules for realizing this unification. It is on the ground of art, and not philosophy, that determinism and freedom find reconciliation. Here, then, is Kant's

articulation of the tragedy of philosophy: philosophy's inability to unify satisfactorily the theoretical and the practical. But this tragedy does not spell doom for philosophy; to the contrary, Cooper argues, it reorients philosophy: "The task of the philosopher is not to unify the theoretical and the practical spheres in conceptual thought but to identify the symbolic realm outside ourselves in which this unity appears. . . . [Kant's] acknowledgement of the tragedy of philosophy undermines philosophy's traditional hegemony over the aesthetic sphere, thereby transforming the task of philosophy from one of legislating society according to philosophically defined ends to one of outlining the procedure by which society can give law to itself" (p. 97). Crucially for Cooper, Kant's account of the aesthetic procedure by which society gives law to itself implies important political ramifications. By positing a *sensus communis*, Cooper argues, judgments of taste "generate an intersubjective perspective" (p. 99) through which "the aesthetic sphere becomes the means by which a community is set on the path to autonomy" (p. 101). Thus in securing the unification of the theoretical and the practical, aesthetic experience at the same time provides a ground for community and collective meaning-making.

The question for philosophers following in the wake of Kant's insights, Cooper argues, concerns the form of art best able to provide this ground. Many, he observes, turned explicitly to ancient Greek tragedy. Thus, he argues, the Kantian articulation of the tragedy of philosophy sets philosophy on a path to grapple with tragic art. In the second half of the book Cooper identifies and critically examines two distinct directions this path takes after Kant: the "Idealist" direction, whose exemplar for Cooper is Hegel, and the "Nietzschean" direction, whose representatives are Nietzsche and Heidegger. Both of these approaches, Cooper argues, abandon the complexity of Kant's response to the tragedy of philosophy, thereby misunderstanding and undercutting tragic art's capacity to orient collective human action. Hegel, Cooper argues, rehabilitates speculative philosophy in order to complete Kant's systematic ambitions, but in so doing "seal[s] philosophy's hegemony over the aesthetic sphere" by making the contemporary task of tragic art the mere dramatization of philosophical problems concerning ethical life (p. 108). Where Kant saw art as the domain in which what philosophy could not achieve is achieved, Hegel sees art—at least contemporary art—as the domain in which philosophy's achievement is beautifully depicted. Cooper spells out his critique of Hegel through a reading of Walter Benjamin's *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*.

Standing in stark contrast to Hegel, Nietzsche sees tragedy, Cooper argues, as revealing truths that philosophy not only fails to grasp but obscures.

Focusing on *The Birth of Tragedy*, Cooper shows how Nietzsche, influenced by but departing from Schopenhauer, understands tragedy as the aesthetic justification of what cannot otherwise be justified: the horror, pain, and meaninglessness of existence. Cooper turns to Franz Rosenzweig for a critical path beyond Nietzsche's anti-nihilist aestheticism, finding in Rosenzweig's insistence on our ethical duty to attend to the suffering of tragedy's victims a rejoinder to Nietzsche's abandonment of Kant's insights concerning the fundamentally moral value of art. From Nietzsche, Cooper turns to his second "Nietzschean," Heidegger. Tracing the development of Heidegger's thinking about tragedy from *Introduction to Metaphysics* to *Hölderlin's Hymn "The Ister,"* Cooper argues that Heidegger finds in tragic poetics—particularly the choral ode from Sophocles's *Antigone*—an important alternative to the "technalized" thinking that begot the tragedy of philosophy. But unlike Kant, who envisions the alternative offered by art as pointing toward an open, future-oriented, collective project, Heidegger sees this alternative as handed down, pre-given, from the ancient past. Following Karl Jaspers's criticisms of Heidegger, Cooper argues that the backward-looking and radically ontological character of Heidegger's philosophy of tragedy "constitutes a dangerous position of philosophical isolation" (p. 186), a depressing point of continuity with Heidegger's earlier enthusiastic Nazism. In his final chapter before the conclusion, Cooper takes up the tragic thought of Cornelius Castoriadis, in which Cooper finds an alternative to both Idealism and Nietzscheanism, a kind of return to and refinement of Kant's insights.

Cooper's wide-ranging treatment of modern philosophical reflection on tragedy is remarkably clear. Though he discusses some notoriously difficult thinkers, he never lapses into jargon or obscurantism. His philosophical reconstructions are lucid and his arguments sharp. Cooper's discussion of Kant and his predecessors in the first part of the book is particularly illuminating. His account of the philosophical challenge presented in the eighteenth century by the burgeoning life sciences is both concise and extremely rich, and his analysis of the ways in which the third *Critique*, and the field of aesthetics more broadly, responded to this challenge crackles with insights. The linkage Cooper makes in the second part of the book between Kant's diagnosis of the tragedy of philosophy and post-Kantian philosophies of tragedy is innovative and compelling.

This linkage, however, is not perfectly flawless, and it is with the coordination of the tragedy of philosophy and the philosophy of tragedy that my criticisms of Cooper's book lie. It takes a rather long time for Cooper to make clear just what the

“tragedy of philosophy” is. Given that this is the title of the book, I would have expected him to offer an explicit discussion of the tragedy of philosophy in the Introduction, but he does not. In his defense, he announces there his intention to argue “that tragedy is best understood as an ongoing philosophical problematic that seeks to expand the scope of philosophy in the paradigm of the ‘enlarged way of thinking’ (*erweiterte Denkungsart*) that Kant develops in *Critique of Judgment*” (p. 4). And two pages later: “This book’s central claim is that the transformative dimension of Kant’s thought is continuous with tragedy, and with the broader philosophical project that aims to extend the transformative mode of representation that is proper to it” (p. 8). These passages, and many others like them appearing throughout the first fifty pages of the book, indicate that Cooper sees a close imbrication between modern philosophy and tragedy. But the idea that tragedy is an “ongoing philosophical problematic,” or that Kant’s thought is “continuous with” tragedy is not quite the same as the idea that there is a tragedy *of* philosophy. It is not until page fifty that this notion of the tragedy of philosophy makes its explicit appearance, when Cooper attributes to Kant the inchoate recognition of “a distinctly philosophical kind of tragedy,” which he glosses as “the failure of an exclusively technical conception of judgment. . . , the inevitable failure of the understanding to legislate the whole of nature” (p. 50). With this we move from the suggestion that philosophy and tragedy are in some way tightly linked to a spelled-out concept of the titular tragedy of philosophy. But even still, it is not perfectly clear why this “tragedy” counts as such. After all, not all failures—even “inevitable” failures to realize grand ambitions, like legislating the whole of nature—are tragedies. We might think that the failure of philosophy to attain its lofty aims is less tragic than it is tragicomic, or even, to use Pope’s great term, bathetic (the art of sinking in philosophy. . .). It is only in the book’s conclusion that the full sense of the tragedy of philosophy becomes clear, when, after having developed in the preceding chapter a lengthy account of Castoriadis’s conception of tragedy, Cooper articulates the tragedy of philosophy in Castoriadian terms: “I have labored to show that where [idealists and Nietzscheans] emphasize the question of tragedy’s proper content unduly, both views distract from the underlying problem: that philosophy, the task we now undertake, is itself subject to tragedy. . . . [T]ragedy shows that human thought is prone to wander and to overreach itself, and that hubris is fundamental to human thinking” (p. 218). The slow development of the tragedy of philosophy over the course of Cooper’s book is probably due in no small part to his laudable insistence on “approach[ing] tragedy as a *living*

problematic” and refusing to “provide a definitive account of Attic tragedy or to identify a single tragic Idea ghosting history” (p. 15). But it has the effect of rendering what is ostensibly the central concept of his analysis less than perfectly perspicuous for much of the book.

I further wonder about the relation between the problem Cooper calls “the tragedy of philosophy” and the philosophy of tragedy. Cooper contends that a number of philosophers after Kant turned to ancient Greek tragedy as a resource for thinking through philosophy’s failure to develop a comprehensive determination of the world. This contention is compelling. But at the same time, many thinkers who recognized this failure (including some of the philosophers Cooper himself discusses) responded by turning to other art forms than tragedy, particularly modern (or proto-modern) art. Examples of this tendency are well known: Schlegel and Sterne, Nietzsche and Wagner, Adorno and Schoenberg, Benjamin and Kafka, Merleau-Ponty and Cezanne, Kristeva and Céline, Deleuze and Proust, Lyotard and Newman, Foucault and Roussel, and Derrida and Mallarmé. If one focuses on these responses to the failure of philosophy to realize its grand ambitions, rather than the responses Cooper focuses on, philosophy’s failure begins to appear less as tragedy and more as something else—perhaps *crisis*, a term ostensibly much closer to the spirit of Kantian philosophy than tragedy. Following this train of thought, the upshot of the third *Critique* is not the tragedy of philosophy but the crisis of philosophy, and the effect in aesthetics is a turn not toward ancient tragic art but toward modern art, understood as the art of crisis. I suspect that such a change would entail significant alterations to the way in which Cooper envisions art’s task in the face of philosophy’s failure. And this is just one alternative reading; there are surely other ways to interpret the meaning of the third *Critique* and the aesthetic inheritance it hands down. I point this out not to say that Cooper’s tragedy of philosophy thesis is incorrect or implausible, but only that the urgency of reading the history of aesthetics since Kant in terms of tragedy, rather than in terms of some other theme, is not obvious. While Cooper does not claim that there is a necessary connection between the problem he names “the tragedy of philosophy” and the philosophy of tragedy, he does seem to think there is some sort of privileged link between them. I wish that he had spelled out precisely the nature of this link, as well as the philosophical advantage of the theme of tragedy over other competing themes.

Similarly, I wish Cooper had addressed his singular focus on ancient Greek tragedy. His tragic sources are limited entirely to the works of the Attic tragedians. He discusses Shakespearean tragedy substantively

only once, noting that Herder interpreted it to belong to an entirely distinct genre from ancient Greek tragedy. Whether Cooper endorses Herder's view, and if so, why, is unclear. Given that Shakespeare was an important touchstone for Hegel and Nietzsche—and one of the most important tragedians in the history of drama—his omission from the book merits explanation. This omission becomes particularly glaring in the book's conclusion, when Cooper refers to “the tragic age inaugurated by Kant” (p. 219). Surely, if we can speak of a modern tragic age, it was inaugurated by Shakespeare, and Kant is one of its illustrious heirs.

These relatively small worries notwithstanding, Cooper's book is clear, compelling, and insightful. It will be valuable for those interested in theories of tragedy, the development of modern philosophical aesthetics, and Kant's critical system. It will also likely be valuable for teachers of upper-level or graduate-level courses dealing with the philosophy of tragedy.

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ZEIMBEKIS, JOHN, and ATHANASSIOS RAFTOPOULOS, eds. *The Cognitive Penetrability of Perception: New Philosophical Perspectives*. Oxford University Press, 2015, 376 pp., 14 b&w illus., \$99.00 cloth.

This anthology of fifteen essays and one afterword presents a public debate concerning the philosophical consequences of the “Cognitive Penetrability Hypothesis” (CPH), the philosophical view that cognitive states such as beliefs, desires, and emotions, among others, “causally influence perceptual processing in such a way that they end up determining subjects' perceptual contents or experiences” (p. 1). Or as the editors put it, “what we think literally influences how we see the world” (p. 1). As Edouard Machery explains, “Philosophers are largely concerned with the cognitive penetrability hypothesis because it seems to deprive perceptual experience of its distinctive role in the justification of beliefs” (p. 67). The editors consider this debate to be at the heart of “philosophical debates in several areas: the contents of perception, perceptual and cognitive phenomenology, nonconceptual content, consciousness and awareness, representationalism and realism, perceptual warrant, and action” (p. 32).

In addition to having epistemological and ontological dimensions, this debate is of particular importance to aestheticians, who tend to treat perceptual processing with great confidence. Could perception's susceptibility to internal factors (visual memories, color memories, “wishful seeing” (p. 29),

concept possession, attentional bias, pre-cueing, or practical knowledge) and external ones (perceptual learning) undermine the widely held view that an artwork's meaning is derivable from mutually accessible perceptual contents? If CPH prevails, does this mean that extra-perceptual contents (post-perceptual contents that play a role in aesthetic cognition, but were not availed during some perceptual experience) play far greater roles in meaning-making, thus threatening the “shared” nature of “embodied meaning” as well as the grounds for conceiving it thusly?

The editors begin by distinguishing cognition from perception “as a set of semantic information-processing systems” (p. 25). One virtue of the Cognitive Impenetrability Hypothesis (CIH), held by Jerry Fodor, Zenon Pylyshyn, and Athanassios Raftopoulos, is that the perception–cognition distinction remains clear (pp. 23–24). On one hand, such a distinction allows for “identical” perceptions to undergo different cognitions, recalling yesteryear's “qualia debates” concerning “introspectively accessible properties.” Unlike qualia, cognitive states such as beliefs, desires, and emotions are not necessarily introspectively accessible. According to Jack Lyons, “We don't have introspective access to the inner workings of our perceptual or intuitive processes, so when cognitive penetration does occur, we have no way of knowing that or counteracting it” (p. 118). Philosophers like Pylyshyn and Raftopoulos delineate the perceptual/post-perceptual border as early versus late vision, while others, like Susanna Siegel, see it as the point where “sensory phenomenology gives way to something else” (pp. 114–115).

Machery cautions readers not to confuse the roles played by (nonperceptual) cognitive states in swaying what we attend to with “cognitive penetration,” since attention-mediated influences are similar to “the direction of gaze, the location of touch,” but they do not count as instances of cognitive penetration per Pylyshyn's definition (p. 62). Machery remarks that it is difficult to know whether cognitive states influence the phenomenological or semantic content, or a bit of both (p. 63). In case after case, he either describes the flawed methodologies of various “New Look Psychology” (1960s) experiments recently cited by philosophers or remarks upon the difficulty of reliably replicating them (pp. 68–69), a common problem in psychology.

Dustin Stokes notes that philosophers disagree about the nature of the target problem, making it difficult for one to know what to test for “(and thus how experiments should be designed and controlled). As it stands, empirical data are interpreted differently by different theorists and by appeal to different criteria for what ‘counts’ as a case of cognitive penetration” (pp. 75–76). He argues for reframing cognitive penetration in terms of whether cognition

affects perception such that one or more unwanted consequences are realized (p. 90).

Applying Siegel's "pine-tree recognition" case, which supposedly enhances the recognizer's forest experience, Stokes speculates that viewers lacking "Rothko recognition" consider Rothko's *Four Darks in Red* (1958) as "dull or lifeless" (p. 83), while those possessing "Rothko-recognition" find it striking or vivacious. "These perceivers visually perceive the works differently by virtue of their differing art-knowledge" (p. 83). Stokes's Rothko case demonstrates that "pine-tree experiences" are rather unlike "painting experiences," since greater "art-knowledge" typically increase one's criticality, sometimes causing one to find newer examples unsatisfying, spurring on a pleasurable post-perceptual interpretive process (p. 83). The tendency for art lovers to prefer an artist's older work to his/her current show exemplifies the way "expectation conformity" rather than "art knowledge" engenders the spontaneous sort of cognition that cognitive scientists crave. As we shall see, expectation conformity serves as a classic example of cognitive penetrability (p. 114). Despite and because of "art knowledge," spectators experience routine glitches that spur analyses.

I do imagine "Rothko-recognition" sparking greater charity, motivating disappointed spectators to expend more time reflecting upon unappealing samples, rather than dismissing them out of hand. And time matters a lot here, since the kind of learning that impacts the phenomenology of perceptual experience modifies perceptual systems and their architecture *over time* (p. 84). Unlike tree lovers, art lovers are typically influenced by extra-perceptual contents, such as their mood, idiosyncratic concept attribution, or liner/program notes, and tend to rehash perceptual experiences post-perceptually. Post-perceptual rehashings can either distort or refine memories that penetrate later cognitive experiences. Indeed, Lyons remarks, "the epistemic worries that arise from cognitive penetration at the perceptual level arise from cognitive penetration at the post-perceptual level as well" (p. 117).

Lyons views the McGurk effect, whereby seeing the mouth positioned for "ga" causes one to perceive the sound "da" despite having heard "ba," as exemplary of lateral penetration, not cognitive penetration, since one perceptual system has influenced another (p. 108). He considers cognitive penetration more worrisome than lateral penetration, since the former "threatens to cut us off from the world, to render us less sensitive to the world around us," yet "[t]he whole point of perception is to put us in touch with the world as it actually is" (pp. 118–119). Lyons finds "belief bias," such that antecedent beliefs regarding an argument's conclusion (expectation conformity) affects one's judgments regarding its

validity to be the most "pervasive and insidious problem of penetration" of all (p. 120).

Ophelia Deroy relays a McGurk-like account whereby viewers watching movies with their eyes closed hear voices coming from the actual loudspeakers, not the characters's lips (p. 145). She thus wonders whether one's belief that lips make speech sounds informs the illusion. She explains that notions of "semantic effects," "prior knowledge," and "assumptions of unity" have been bantered about to explain this and other ventriloquist-like cases resulting from moving lips/speaking sounds integration (p. 146). Although Deroy does not discuss people perceiving red wine by sipping white wine that's been colored red, Lyon's "belief bias" suitably explains both moving lips/audible voices and red liquid/wine taste integration. One worry is that some psychological studies routinely cited by philosophers rather indicate participants' success at inferring with researchers' goals and then giving desired responses, yet another form of "belief bias."

Deroy discusses this example: "When an individual sees a kettle and hears a whistling sound s/he probably happens to believe that [steaming] kettles emit whistling sounds. There is a correlation between the increased tendency to perceive the whistling sounds and silent kettles as a single audiovisual entity, and the belief that kettles whistle" (p. 155). She remarks, however, that this correlation does not necessarily show that belief has penetrated cognition or that this belief "causally contributed to the perception of a unified whistling kettle" (p. 155). Finally, Deroy discusses the findings that people associate high-pitched sounds with brighter visual surfaces as exemplary of "crossmodal correspondence," which she characterizes as "nonconceptual representations of congruence," since subjects who respond thusly are unaware that such connections hold, so they do not qualify as beliefs (p. 156). Since higher pitches have shorter wavelengths (like dark colors), the link between high pitches and bright colors cannot be explained by comparison to wavelengths, further complicating this crossmodal example.

Fred Dretske considers Siegel's pine-tree case mistaken, since he imagines novices and experts having identical visual experiences; thus experts who report more have not necessarily had richer experiences. To make his case, Dretske appeals to ambiguous figures such as the duck-rabbit and vase-face, but here he is comparing apples and oranges, since 3-D pine trees are not simple 2-D drawings. Moreover, pine trees have botanically distinct features that experts are aware of, look for, and then notice. That anatomy students study function-distinct body parts and attend seminars prior to dissection suggests that "practical knowledge" aids seeing. Dretske counters: "Before I believe that experts

see things I don't see, I want a demonstration of the superior powers of discrimination this improved acuity confers on them Yes, they know a lot more than I do, and, yes, they come to know it by looking, but that doesn't mean they see more" (p. 172).

Two rather dubious assumptions underlie Dretske's "Goldilocks Test" whereby the expert criticizes the novice's painting for not being "just right": (1) Unlike realist painters who intensely study their subjects, these two spend little time looking, and (2) Dretske conflates photographic realism with pictorial representation, which could explain why the expert finds the novice's painting lacking, even though the novice painted it as realistically as a photograph. The expert would also reject the novice's pine-tree photograph if it failed to capture botanically distinct pine-tree features. Pictorial representation entails far more traits than replicating what painters see.

Although few contributors consider lateral penetration exemplary of cognitive penetration, Robert Briscoe presents cases whereby visual phenomena are altered by the additional presence of sounds, textures, or proprioceptive representations, occasions he views as demonstrating that "information outside the visual system can modulate the way an object's low-level properties visually appear" (p. 195). Briscoe describes patients suffering from visual agnosia, who cannot identify everyday objects (lighter, pipe, or large matchbook) by sight until they hear its name (p. 180). Unlike agnosia patients, who suddenly recall once known nouns, experts must learn technical terms for functions/concepts that they probably never before imagined.

Brad Mahon and Wayne Wu characterize the dorsal visual stream as cognitively penetrated, which initially seems a nonstarter since beliefs and desires often spark action, but they have in mind cognitive states like "practical knowledge," the "reach-to-grasp" components of action that require foreknowledge of object use. For them, the central question is: "Does the dorsal visual stream compute over semantic information from areas coding information about object use in tasks involving the appropriate action on those objects?" (p. 205). And it turns out that agnosia patients readily grasp objects, but they do so inappropriately since they cannot recall their use, suggesting an absence of information integration (p. 213). Although they characterize this know-how as "conceptual, given the tie between concept and thought," it is rather nonconceptual, since they credit the ventral system (a retinal state) with relaying "object use" (p. 215).

Christopher Mole claims that Machery, Fiona Macpherson, Deroy, and others dismiss attention-mediated cases because they erroneously view *covert* attention as "a mere orienting of perceptual

resources," a position he calls the "partition picture" (p. 224). Mole's "integrated competition theory" frames processing as biased in "favor of stimuli possessing a specific behaviorally relevant color, shape, texture, and so on, in parallel throughout the visual field, in addition to biases in favor of stimuli occupying a specific relevant location" (p. 233). He offers as evidence tests whereby reaction times to target events increase as the distance to misleading cues increases (p. 227). Cues' differing colors, shapes, and orthographics further slow down reaction times (p. 229). He thus claims that covert attention "requires some perceptual processing already to have been completed, in order for those object boundaries to be identified" (p. 228).

Jérôme Dokic and Jean-Rémy Martin worry that philosophers confuse feelings (affective phenomenology) with perceptions, leading them to overlook perceptual phenomenology's dual sensory and affective dimensions (p. 244). As such, metaperceptual feelings such as feelings of reality, knowing (gut), familiarity, or confidence contribute to the overall perceptual experience. As evidence that feeling and perception are split, they discuss Derealization disorder, whereby the world appears picture-like to patients suffering detachment, and Capgras syndrome, whose sufferers suddenly find a relative unfamiliar (p. 248). Finally, they attribute the anchoring bias underlying people's categorizing or judging color experiences to feelings of confidence (p. 259). They note that anchoring bias even occurs in the absence of stimulus-driven representations (p. 258).

Because Raftopoulos worries that philosophers lack a term for the visual awareness of conceptually affected perceptual content, he offers CMVC (conceptually-modulated visual consciousness) to denote this sort of awareness as distinct from nonconceptual PC (phenomenal consciousness). During the first 120 milliseconds, vision is cognitively impenetrable, while during late vision (starts at 150–200 milliseconds), "top-down cognitive signals, mediated by attentional top-down control, . . . test the various hypotheses formed concerning object identity," followed by awareness at 300 milliseconds (pp. 279–280). As evidence, he offers specific hue recognition in higher neural regions, which entails attention following pre-attentive wavelength detection (pp. 286–287). Shedding further doubt on Dretske's novice's capacity for expert-seeing *sans* concepts, Raftopoulos observes that "once an object is categorized, some of its visible features may be highlighted and attended, and this changes the way these features look" (p. 292).

Treating pictures as ambiguous figures, John Zeimbekis explores five types of visual ambiguity that not only pose a "significant threat to the impenetrability process" but demonstrate how switching

from one experience to another at will (seeing a photograph as flat) leaves nonconceptual perceptual states unaffected, yet influences post-perceptual outcomes (p. 303). To defend penetrability, he notes how seeing David Marr's opaque cube as flat requires an agentively driven attention shift that actually changes *how* the visual data is processed, not just *which data* is processed (p. 310). He concludes that if "the processes which generate volume perception in object perception are cognitively penetrable" like those associated with picture perceptions, then there is no epistemic worry, since such states do not cause beliefs and therefore do not serve to justify visual perceptions (p. 325).

Macpherson develops the Cognitive Penetration Lite model to characterize token experiences resembling those caused by cognitive penetration (or not). As evidence of this possibility, she discusses the case of people overdetermining the "redness" of characteristically red objects such as hearts and lips, the Perky effect whereby people report imagining imagery that they do not realize they are actually perceiving, and the vase/face case (pp. 345–349). Her lite model aims to preserve a role for nonconceptual content, which covers fineness of grain, unit-free representations, analogue representation, children/animal experiences, concept acquisition, and contradictory experiences (p. 354). She demonstrates her model's greater compatibility with nonconceptual content, granting it an improvement over the classic version of cognitive penetration (p. 352).

Jonathan Lowe points out that the true driver of the CPH/CIH debate is not scientific interest but whether said philosophers defend realism against anti-realism. Realists such as Raftopoulos employ nonconceptual content to "fix the reference of perceptual demonstratives in a manner which does not rely on the perceiver's repertoire of concepts," posing CPH as a premise poison (p. 362). Taking issue with Raftopoulos's framing of realism in terms of object individuation, Lowe defends a version of realism that appeals to "the innateness of certain sortal concepts," and thus reflects the extramental external world's actual properties (p. 370).

Costas Pagondiotis introduces a way to resolve the vision (in)dependent on (of) cognition dilemma, while preserving realism. He worries that Pylyshyn's approach "disconnects early vision content from the world and from the cognitively penetrated visual content available to the perceiver" (p. 378). He recommends distinguishing thought from vision, which is cognitively penetrated by practical nonpropositional knowledge (p. 393). Unlike a camera, the vision system does not just register incoming light; it processes and transforms the information into perceptual content based on a "double consciousness," the perceiver's sensorimotor knowledge coupled

with one's bodily self-knowledge regarding its influence on the motion or rest of visual organs (p. 400).

Writing in the afterword, Siegel summarizes the "family of phenomena that differ depending on how each of these parameters is fixed": (1) the kind of perception at issue, (2) what counts as a *cognitive* influence, and (3) the relationship characterizing cognition's influence on perception (p. 405). In light of these pluralities, she opts to distinguish the "epistemically interesting phenomena and consider which psychological structures would give rise to them," but she does not really do so (p. 406). Instead, she introduces *perceptual farce*, a threat that routinely distorts social perception, since "perception seems to open our minds to the things around us, but doesn't" (p. 420). If we cannot check our thoughts against reality, "perceptual experience itself [remains] perfectly faithful to the external things that it helps us perceive" (p. 421).

In light of aesthetic data and philosophy of perception, this book introduces strategies to tease out the aesthetic implications of CPH and CIH. Even if cognitive states mediate spontaneous perceptual experiences, and thus deny the possibility of mutually accessible perceptual contents, aesthetics tends to focus on post-perceptual evaluations and extraperceptual contents, leaving audiences time to straighten out basic facts of the matter (via discussions, reading reviews, or repeat perceptual experiences) before leaping to judgment. Many of the ideas discussed in this book track aestheticians's continued efforts to refine thick/thin aesthetic concepts, pictorial representation, and meaning-making models. Rather than continuing to ascribe theory-neutral *deso* find greater consensus if they rather focused on extraperceptual contents. Some contributors already do: "[W]hat we perceive as belonging to perceptual phenomenology ... can reflect post-perceptual processes as well" (p. 263). Siegel seems to grasp its relevance for cognitive penetration, which she claims "relies on a distinction between extraperceptual and intraperceptual influencers" (p. 420).

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BICKNELL, JEANETTE. *Philosophy of Song and Singing: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2015, xii + 127 pages, \$49.95 paper.

In 1985 the singer Bette Midler sued the Ford Motor Company and the Young & Rubicam advertising agency over their use of the song "Do You Want to Dance" in an advertising campaign. However, in the suit in question, Young & Rubicam, having obtained the right to use the song, did not use Midler's

recording, as she refused to grant permission. Young & Rubicam then turned to Ula Hedwig, one of Midler's back-singers (the "Harlettes"), as Ms. Hedwig was able to do a credible imitation of Ms. Midler's performance. Midler sued for copyright infringement, arguing that Ms. Hedwig's performance had appropriated Midler's distinctive vocal timbre, as well as tempo, phrasing, and other aspects of her performance. The suit failed, for then, as now, while works are subject to copyright, performances are not.

Midler appealed, as she felt that the ad campaign improperly suggested her endorsement of Ford automobiles and was akin to unlawful use of her image. The appeal was affirmed, but it was not copyright or intellectual property that had been taken from Midler: it was a case of identity theft. As judge John T. Noonan noted in his opinion: "Why did the defendants ask Midler to sing if her voice was not of value to them? . . . What they sought was an attribute of Midler's identity. The human voice is one of the most palpable ways identity is manifested. . . . At a philosophical level it has been observed that with the sound of a voice, 'the other stands before me'" (549 F. 2d 460 [9th Cir. 1988]; the quote in Noonan's opinion is from Don Ihde, *Listening and Voice: A Phenomenology of Sound*, The Ohio University Press, 1976, p. 77).

In the *Philosophy of Song and Singing: An Introduction* Jeanette Bicknell recognizes the same special properties of the human voice and shows how songs, singers, and singing raise significantly different issues of musical ontology, value, and authenticity in contradistinction to "music alone" (Peter Kivy, *Music Alone: Philosophical Reflections on the Purely Musical Experience*, Cornell University Press, 1990). For unlike musical instruments, human voices are special: they do not simply transmit songs, but also convey a sense of personal identity, social identity, emotion-as-felt (as opposed to expressed), and pragmatic meaning that instrumental works simply cannot. Portions of and precursors to Bicknell's book have been published elsewhere ("Just a Song? Exploring the Aesthetics of Popular Song Performance" *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 63 [2005]: 261–270; "Reflections on 'John Henry': Ethical Issues in Singing Performance," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 67 [2009]: 173–180; and her chapter on "Song" in *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music*, Theodore Gracyk and Andrew Kania, eds., New York: Routledge, 2011, pp. 437–445), but their mutual interdependence is made clearer here. Each chapter in Bicknell's book takes up a particular topic and discusses a particular song in relation to it; in the summaries that follow, after each chapter title, I also list, in parentheses, the featured song.

Bicknell's first two chapters address the ontology of songs and singing (though ontological

questions are not limited to these chapters). Chapter 1 is about "Words" ("House of the Rising Sun," various recordings). Songs are often referenced by their words, especially for listeners and scholars who cannot read music. Here Bicknell points out that words for songs are not the same as words for stories or poems, most especially (but not just exclusively) due to the amount of textual repetition present in most songs, including songs that use pre-existent poetic texts. More broadly, how is the identity of a song tied to its text? Different versions or performances of a given song may admit wide variations in their words and/or music (e.g., is "Happy Birthday" the same song when sung in French?). Bicknell's larger point here is that the ontological status of a song—i.e., is it an instance, a variant, a derived work, or a different song—depends on "who wants to know, and why?" (p. 8); ontological distinctions will be cast differently for aestheticians, music historians, folk song collectors, or anthropologists (to which I might add copyright lawyers).

In her second chapter, "Music and Words" ("Dover Beach," poem by Matthew Arnold, music by Samuel Barber), Bicknell offers a corrective to the "hybrid" model of songs-as-settings-of-texts. The problem, as Bicknell shows, is that hybridity leads to a view of the music in a song as a form of literary criticism: how well does the music fit the words and/or how well does the composer or performer understand the text? In this approach, the words are always the dominant element in the hybrid pair (p. 23). Bicknell argues that songs are not hybrids, but a different sort of work entirely. The relation between music and words is mutually transformative, as Bicknell shows through her analysis of "Dover Beach," where the music changes the meaning of the words and vice versa.

Chapters 3 and 4 focus on the act of singing. Chapter 3, "Giving Voice (What Do Singers Do?)" ("Yesterday," manifold versions, including Lennon and McCartney's own), starts with two observations: (a) there is not a crisp boundary between song and speech, and (b) there are many occasions for singing beyond the concert hall. Bicknell lays out a functional taxonomy of songs: songs for performance, sung to an audience; songs for group participation, where the audience-performer distinction breaks down; and songs for practical or cultural purposes, such as lullabies, work songs, and the like. Focusing on songs for performance, Bicknell follows Godlovitch (*Musical Performance: A Philosophical Study*, London: Routledge, 1998), in noting that a performance requires an audience, along with the application of musical agency and skill. Thus not all acts of singing with or in front of others count as performances; an impromptu karaoke rendition of a song is not the same

act as singing the same song in a club or concert hall.

Chapter 4, “Singers and Audiences” (“Love for Sale” by Cole Porter; performances by Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday), continues the discussion of vocal personae but from the perspective of the audience rather than the singer. Touching on issues of physical appearance, race, ethnicity, and regionality, Bicknell raises the issues of audience expectations regarding “which songs are appropriate for which singers” (p. 52), and discusses the tension between the voice as an “instrument” of expression in a musical performance versus the voice as a “function as an instrument of biological response” (p. 49). Bicknell quotes Susanne Langer: “It [the voice] is the prime avenue of self-expression, and in this demonstrative capacity not really a musical instrument at all” (*Feeling and Form: A Theory of Art*, New York: Scribner, 1953, p. 141; quoted in Bicknell p. 49). Bicknell’s argument here suggests that with songs and singing “acousmatic” listening is never really possible, as we are keenly aware of the ecological origin of the sounds—i.e., another human voice—and thus the normative social/cultural significance of those sounds. We cannot listen to the voice just as sounds produced for their experience-as-sounds.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 get at some of the core issues of aesthetic and moral value in popular music and, as such, are likely to be deeply resonant with many readers. Chapter 5, “Three Ways to Think about Authenticity in Performance (“Blues in the Night,” Arlen/Mercer, sung by William Gillespie and others), addresses the thorny question of who has license to sing a given song. Bicknell’s three ways to think about authenticity for songs and singing are (1) faithfulness to the composer’s intentions and relevant performance traditions, (2) sincerity of emotional expression—having sympathy/empathy for the characters and emotional contexts created in the songs one sings, and (3) being a member of and/or recognized by the appropriate group as that group relates to a particular song. This last kind of authenticity is what is often most important to listeners and audiences (a reversal of the “which songs are appropriate for which singers” question noted above). This is more than just a division on racial or ethnic lines, as in the problem of white singers of African-American blues songs as discussed by Joel Rudinow (“Race, Ethnicity, Expressive Authenticity: Can White People Sing the Blues?” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 52 [1994]: 127–138). As Bicknell notes, the core audiences of almost every musical genre make boundary policing judgments about who should or should not sing in a given genre (p. 61), yet as her discussion of “Blues in the Night” shows, the complex origins and histories of many songs make boundary policing arguments difficult to sustain.

Chapter 6, “Authenticity, Value, Technology” (“Believe,” performed by Cher) is about “the auto-tune problem.” As Bicknell properly observes, auto-tune (that is, the real-time computer processing of the voice that corrects for poor intonation and also alters the timbre of the voice) is but the latest form of vocal enhancement technology, ranging from amplification itself to the use of reverb, compression, and equalization; these enhancements have long been used in both live and recorded vocal performances. For most critical listeners auto-tune is problematic because it seems to be an obvious form of cheating: if musical performance is supposed to be manifestation of practiced skills—and for a singer, singing in tune is *the* bedrock skill—then auto-tune allows a singer to misrepresent his or her abilities (e.g., discussions of the singing abilities of Rihanna, Britney Spears, or Kanye West). As Bicknell points out, what is perhaps a deeper problem with auto-tune is that it removes much, if not most, of the expressive quality and potential of the human voice, the very things that give singers their expressive power and immediacy, as well as their vocal identity—in short, the essential ways in which singers “give voice” to songs. Here I wish Bicknell had spent a little more time connecting the dots between this point and her earlier topics. For if auto-tune is an erasure of one’s vocal identity and thus impinges on issues of voice and persona that were critically examined in the previous chapters, how then can one stand in the right relation to one’s audience if one’s voice has been made electronically anonymous?

In Chapter 7, “Performance: Ethical Considerations” (“John Henry,” U.S. and U.K. folk song), Bicknell’s main point is that often to perform a song in an ethical manner requires moral deference. Drawing on the work of Laurence Thomas (“Moral Deference,” *The Philosophical Forum* 24 [1992–1993]: 233–250), Bicknell notes that “the morally significant experience of others will sometimes be opaque to us” (p. 83). Thus when a song is representative of the experiences of others, many times our ability to fully imagine their experiences is limited or incomplete, and this in turn affects a singer and his persona’s ability to stand in the right relation to the song and the audience he sings it to. Singing with moral deference requires one to recognize the inherent limitations of our understanding and to develop one’s moral sensitivities to the stories and emotional expressions a song conveys. Bicknell argues that moral deference trumps various kinds of authenticities discussed in Chapter 5, including group membership, for one can be a member of the correct or appropriate social group and still fail to show moral deference to the song and/or the musical tradition of which the song is a part. Again, here I wished for more discussion from Bicknell—perhaps through a few more musical case

studies or thought experiments—of how the application of moral deference can (and perhaps sometimes cannot) be used as a counter to boundary policing arguments, if and how moral deference can be manifest in a performance and a performer's relationship to a performance tradition, and what "listening to the music in the right way" (p. 90) entails.

In Chapter 9, "Meaning: Songs in Performance" (various examples), Bicknell argues that meaning in the performance of a song arises from the interaction of text, music, and performance context and that performance context—the interaction of performer, song, and audience—can radically change the meaning of a work. In this chapter she looks at a number of examples in different genres, showing how different performances of the same song can give rise to radically different meanings. As Bicknell rightly emphasizes, the meaning of a song is not simply transmitted but *performed*, and performance is a social act. I would quibble, however, with her claim that songs are not amenable to pragmatic analysis (p. 116), for the social context of performance allows one to understand the "speech act" of a song in the same way one can grasp the pragmatic aspects of speech—and indeed, in pragmatic analysis, the "paralinguistic" (read: musical) features of speech often are key to one's illocutionary uptake, along with mutual understanding of the cultural backgrounds of one's interlocutors (see J. London, "Musical and Linguistic Speech Acts," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54 [1996]: 49–64).

Bicknell's text is, as its title notes, an introduction. While a good text for the general reader, it is especially suitable for an undergraduate class or seminar, either as a unit in a course on the philosophy of music or aesthetics more generally or as a unit in a course on the aesthetics of song (thus this text may be especially useful to musicologists as well as philosophers). It is especially good for students who may not have formal training in music (i.e., cannot read notation) and/or may have a limited background in philosophy. It is an obvious alternative to Peter Kivy's *Introduction to a Philosophy of Music* (Oxford University Press, 2002), as songs and song repertoire are apt to be far more familiar to most students than symphonies, operas, and chamber music. Bicknell also provides copious URLs for YouTube videos and other Internet sources enabling readers to see and hear the various song performances she discusses.

The introductory nature of the *Philosophy of Song and Singing* is both its strength and weakness. Each chapter lays out a particular problem with its central musical example and with references to relevant philosophical literature old and new, from Kant and Adam Smith to Ted Gracyk and Andrew Kania. Readers of *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art*

Criticism are likely to want more extended engagement with this literature, and sometimes I wished for a bit more in terms of music analysis and/or musicological context. But to do so would have made this a different and much larger book and, more importantly, less pedagogically useful as a spur to discussion and further reading. My biggest criticism of the book has to do with its organization. Throughout the book aesthetic topics bubble up from chapter to chapter. For example, questions of aesthetic value appear in Chapters 2 ("judging songs"), 3 ("what counts as a *successful* singing performance?"), 5 (authenticity and value), and 6 (technology and skill). Of course, to show how a topic like "aesthetic value" is entwined with other presumptions and considerations is precisely the point, but as noted above, at times I wished Bicknell had made navigating these connections clearer.

The larger issue for aestheticians is the case Bicknell implicitly makes for a separate aesthetics of songs and singing, as opposed to other kinds of musical performance. While separate approaches to the aesthetics of popular versus classical music have garnered a good deal of discussion, Bicknell's arguments regarding the singer's voice as a fundamentally different kind of "instrument" and of singing as a fundamentally different kind of performance suggest that songs and symphonies ought to be regarded as ontologically distinct artworks, with different identity criteria, authenticity criteria, and value criteria. Moreover, her taxonomy of songs—songs for performance, songs for participation, and songs with "instrumental value" (e.g., work songs, lullabies)—raises further ontological and evaluative questions.

In the end, Bicknell asks "Why Sing?" (Chapter 10). She says this is a strange question, but I think it is a rather important one. While relatively few people play the piano or violin, almost everyone sings. Bicknell notes there are many reasons and occasions for singing: we sing for others because there is an audience and because it demands recognition; we may sing for ourselves because it is a means of artistic participation. And we may sing as a means of bring us together, in work, protest, or prayer. But as Bicknell observes, singing often seems more like a compulsion than a musical or aesthetic choice. For we also sing not for art's sake or for the sake of community but for our own sake, even when no one else is there. This, perhaps as much as anything, underscores the difference between singing and other forms of music making and the need for serious and thoughtful philosophies of song like Bicknell's *Philosophy of Song and Singing*.

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