

## Book Reviews

GUYER, PAUL. *A History of Modern Aesthetics, Volume 2: The Nineteenth Century*. Cambridge University Press, 2014, vii +478, \$355.00 cloth [for 3-volume set].

Paul Guyer's *A History of Modern Aesthetics* is essential reading for anyone interested in aesthetics or the history of modern philosophy. In this review, I consider the second volume of Guyer's *History*, which surveys the history of aesthetics in the nineteenth century. Guyer divides the volume into three parts, the first and third of which are mostly devoted to German aesthetics. In between there is a second part devoted to several British, French, and Russian figures. After reviewing the contents of the three parts of the volume, I offer some general reflections on the way Guyer approaches the figures and works he discusses, his conception of aesthetics, and the way he presents his history. Each of these aspects of Guyer's *History* merits serious consideration, though it would be difficult to do justice to a work as broad and deep as the one Guyer has written.

In the first part of the volume, Guyer focuses on Kant, German and British romanticism, and German idealism. Drawing on a lifetime of scholarship, he presents Kant's aesthetics as a combination of two different approaches: one that regards aesthetic experience as a form of cognition and another that emphasizes the free play of the imagination. Despite its promise, Guyer thinks Kant's synthesis was soon eclipsed by romantic and idealist aesthetics, which promoted a more "metaphysical" aesthetics (p. 13). After reviewing some of the contributions of Hölderlin and Schlegel, he turns to Schelling, who is noteworthy for the tremendous influence he exerted on romanticism and idealism. Guyer even characterizes high romanticism, which he associates with Jean Paul, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley, Mill, and Emerson, as aesthetics in "the penumbra of Schelling" (p. 83). Moving on to "the high tide of idealism" (p. 106), Guyer focuses on Schopenhauer and Hegel. He also discusses Schleiermacher's aesthetics as a neglected alternative to the cognitivism of

the idealists, but continues to emphasize the Hegelian legacy in the works of Solger, Vischer, Rosenkranz, and Lotze at the end of part one. While they share Hegel's cognitivism, Guyer praises these thinkers for trying to accommodate "the emotional impact of art" in their theories (p. 152).

Guyer concentrates on nineteenth-century British aesthetics in the second part, though he also discusses some French and Russian figures. The first chapter is almost entirely devoted to Ruskin, who is discussed at greater length (34 pp.) than any other figure in the book—only Hegel (25 pp.), Bosanquet (20 pp.), and Nietzsche (20 pp.) are granted nearly as much attention. At the end of the chapter, Guyer laments that Arnold failed to overcome Ruskin's cognitivism. He then considers French, British, and American aestheticism, which "eschewed the explanation of the value of aesthetic experience in terms of any other theoretical or practical values" (p. 228). The figures he discusses in this chapter—Cousin, Gautier, Poe, Baudelaire—represent a protest against moral and religious valuations of art and aesthetic experience, though Guyer is not sure they are able to formulate a viable alternative. Pater and Wilde seem to fare better in this regard, as they emphasize the independence of aesthetic experience from conventional values as well as the freedom of the imagination and the emotional impact of art. In the last chapter of this part of the book, Guyer discusses Bosanquet's expansion of Hegelian aesthetics and Tolstoy's moralism. While Bosanquet nearly achieves a perfect synthesis of truth, feeling, and play (p. 289), Tolstoy reduces art to a means of communicating a very narrow set of moral and religious sentiments.

Finally, in the third part, Guyer turns his attention to German aesthetics in the second half of the nineteenth century. He considers Nietzsche's debts to Schopenhauer and Wagner in *The Birth of Tragedy* in the first part of the chapter, as well as Nietzsche's later criticisms of Wagnerian opera and his remarks about artistic creativity. Guyer sees in von Hartmann's "metaphysical" aesthetics an anticipation of Heidegger's "existential" aesthetics

(pp. 323–324), but ultimately thinks it fails to take emotion and imagination seriously enough. The Neo-Kantian aesthetics of Fechner, Cohen, Cohn, and Münsterberg make a more concerted effort to explain the role of feeling in art and aesthetics, though they tend to discount the Kantian conception of “free play” (pp. 345, 350, 362). Dilthey’s poetics fares considerably better. According to Guyer, “Dilthey re-established connections among the aesthetics of truth, the aesthetics of feeling, and the aesthetics of play that a few of the greatest aestheticians of the previous century had established but that many of the aestheticians of his own century had rejected” (p. 376). Dilthey’s aesthetics is certainly more comprehensive than the psychological approaches to aesthetics that Guyer considers at the end of this part of the volume. Although Spencer, Robert Vischer, Lipps, Volkelt, Groos, Puffer, and Lee sought to achieve a synthesis similar to the one found in Dilthey, Guyer thinks they struggled to preserve the balance between the three dimensions of aesthetic experience that Dilthey brought together. Guyer singles out Lee for special praise at the end of the chapter because she provided “a model of complexity of aesthetic experience that avoided the reductionism that had dominated the nineteenth century” (p. 436), and which would continue to plague twentieth-century aesthetics.

In each of the three parts of this volume of his *History*, Guyer is concerned to show whether the authors and works he discusses treat aesthetic experience as a kind of knowledge, an emotional experience, or an exercise of the imagination. While many of the figures he discusses could be said to employ more than one of these approaches, Guyer tries to determine which one predominates in their works. He maintains that the cognitive dimension of aesthetic experience is dominant in Hölderlin, Schlegel, Schelling, Jean Paul, Coleridge, Emerson, Schopenhauer, Hegel, Solger, Rosenkranz, Ruskin, Arnold, Cousin, Nietzsche, Von Hartmann, Fechner, and Cohen; emotion is of primary importance for Wordsworth, Shelley, Mill, Schleiermacher, Vischer (I), Poe, Baudelaire, Wilde, Bosanquet, Tolstoy, Cohn, Münsterberg, Vischer (II), Lipps, Volkelt, Puffer, and Lee. Only Lotze, Pater, Dilthey, Spencer, and Groos emphasize the free play of the imagination. It could be argued that his focus on the aesthetics of truth, feeling, and play too narrowly constrains Guyer’s analysis; yet its value as a heuristic device should not be overlooked. Guyer’s approach allows him to bring order and clarity to the interpretation of diverse and often very difficult texts. I imagine there are also scholars who will take issue with some of Guyer’s interpretations, but their disagreements are to be welcomed. Debates about Guyer’s interpretations have proven enormously productive in Kant

scholarship because Guyer can be counted on to define his terms clearly, provide substantial evidence, and clearly explain the reasons that motivate his interpretations. In the process, he sets the stage for a productive scholarly debate. One has only to look at the literature on Kant’s aesthetics to realize how many scholars have defined their positions in relation to Guyer’s interpretations and how fruitful the exchanges between Guyer and his interlocutors have been.

If I have any concerns about Guyer’s *History*, they have less to do with the particular interpretations he proposes and more to do with the conception of aesthetics he employs. In the first volume of his *History*, Guyer claims that British, French, and German philosophers were all “practicing the same subject”—aesthetics—when they wrote about beauty, art, literature, and criticism during the eighteenth century (Vol. 1, 3). I very much doubt that to be true, and I think there is substantial evidence to the contrary in the texts Guyer considers. British and French philosophers in the eighteenth century were not only unfamiliar with the term “aesthetics,” they also would have rejected many of the premises, the methodology, and the conclusions of the new science that Baumgarten and Meier proposed. Even when German philosophers like Kant and Hegel started using Baumgarten’s terminology, they rejected his account of the subject matter of aesthetics. So, it is by no means clear that works we now regard as part of the history of aesthetics did or were thought to belong to “the same subject” during the eighteenth century. Any claim that they did would require considerably more argumentation to demonstrate than Guyer provides. And I suspect it would be better to consider aesthetics the product of a series of ongoing debates about what philosophy is, what parts it has, and how different subjects and discussions ought to be organized and classified within the discipline.

The definition of aesthetics poses a less serious problem in the second volume of Guyer’s *History*, since the term was more commonly used and was used in more familiar ways during the nineteenth century. Yet it is still not clear to me that romantic poetics and idealist philosophies of art really are works of aesthetics. Hegel famously denies the appropriateness of this description at the beginning of his lectures on the philosophy of art, though he concedes that it had become conventional to call philosophical discussions of art “aesthetics” and grudgingly employs the term in his lectures. Still less apt does it seem to characterize Emersonian essays or Nietzschean polemics as works of aesthetics. Certainly we might recognize the significance of what these authors have to say about the experience of beauty or the creative genius of the artist. But it might be better to say they have inspired aesthetic reflection

or that they have proven to be crucial resources for aesthetics in the years following their publication. That would justify their inclusion in a history of aesthetics while also respecting the genre of these works and the different, often singular, contexts from which they emerged. Guyer's own discussion of Ruskin seems to adopt this approach. Although he acknowledges that Ruskin was a critic of art and society and not a philosopher, Guyer insists that "the history of aesthetics can hardly be told without an account of Ruskin . . . who would in turn become both an influence on and target for much of British aesthetics into the twentieth century" (p. 191). This suggests that Guyer has departed from the history of aesthetics proper in order to discuss ideas that turned out to be important for later aesthetic theories. His decision is entirely reasonable and perfectly appropriate, though it does raise questions about what does and does not belong to the history of aesthetics, strictly speaking.

A few more words about the kind of history Guyer has written are in order, since he devotes several pages to defining the nineteenth century in the "Introduction" to this volume (pp. 1–4). Guyer is willing to characterize the nineteenth century as being both shorter and longer than one hundred years, depending on the events that took place during the period he considers and their relation to earlier and later events. He recognizes that one must give reasons to justify the decision to include or exclude something from consideration from the period he is addressing—reasons for including works from the first decade of the twentieth century while excluding those from the last decade of the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, Guyer only addresses this problem in exceptional cases—his decision to discuss a work written in 1898 by Tolstoy while delaying discussion of a work written by Santayana in 1896 until the third volume of his *History*. He does not provide a general principle of selection that explains the inclusion of the vast majority of the figures and works he discusses in his *History*. Nor does he present any general arguments that justify the exclusion of other figures and works from the same period. These choices are presumably what distinguish Guyer's history of aesthetics—which is presented as "a" history of aesthetics, rather than "the" definitive history of the subject—from other histories that might be written. However, I am not sure they are sufficiently explained or justified in the text. I would also be eager to see how a philosopher of Guyer's stature would justify general claims about what does and does not belong to the history of aesthetics. The current conventions of the discipline just do not seem adequate to that task.

This brings me to a final point about the history of philosophy. In general, I think it is time that histories

of philosophy begin to look less like their nineteenth- and twentieth-century predecessors and more like works written by contemporary historians—fewer summaries of great works by great men (need I mention their demographic characteristics?) and greater appreciation for the material contributions of philosophical, textual, and literary studies; the methodological innovations of the history and philosophy of science; and the use of diverse sources that characterize intellectual, institutional, and social history. If it does not update its methods and expand its horizons by incorporating these approaches, I am afraid the history of philosophy will continue to rely on a very limited canon and descend into an indefensible form of traditionalism. To be sure, there are tendencies in the history of philosophy that work against canon worship and traditionalism, but they are most often found in technical scholarship by specialists in the history of ancient, medieval, and modern philosophy as well as in historical studies of the various philosophical sub-disciplines. They are rarely found in works as broad in scope as Guyer's *History*, though his inclusion of relatively unknown post-Hegelian and neo-Kantian figures, as well as nonphilosophers who made important contributions to aesthetics is an important step in the right direction. It is my hope that future works on the history of aesthetics and the history of philosophy will follow Guyer's example.

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CHAKRABARTI, ARINDAM, ed. *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. 417 pp., 5 color + 37 b&w illus., \$176.00 cloth.

This anthology on Indian Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art is part of a larger series of Research Handbooks on Asian Philosophy brought out by Bloomsbury. The goal, as stated in the description of the overall series, is to "provide up-to-date and authoritative overviews of Asian philosophy in the twenty-first century" (p. ii). The volume under review here is an instructive example of how this goal may be satisfied. It is a compilation of eighteen essays by contemporary aestheticians on a range of theories and artistic practices that are rooted in India. In this volume, the authors treat a dizzying, diverse array of topics, including the legitimacy and relevance to global culture of the Indian *rasa* (taste) theory of aesthetics; applications of *rasa* theory to specific genres of Indian art such as painting, music, and dance; cross-cultural comparative treatments of global art, literature, and film; and the socio-political implications of the

aesthetics of festivals, of touch, and of celibacy. These essays, taken together, simultaneously demystify and expand the range of application of the classical Indian aesthetic concept of *rasa*, even as they illuminate the tensions that continue to exist in twenty-first-century post-colonial India on the subject of caste, untouchability, and the fraught aesthetics of touch; of the “indigenous” versus the “foreign” in the aesthetic imagination; and of what is essential and what is accidental to Indian aesthetic theory. Since there is no other handbook quite like it in the field of contemporary Indian and cross-cultural aesthetics, it is worth giving the reader a sense of each of the chapters.

The guiding narrative that holds together the different chapters is in author and editor Arindam Chakrabarti’s introductory essay. His essay separates out for the reader two broad sections of the book. The first offers historical, creative, and critical reconstructions of the meaning of *rasa* and its different theorizations, from Bharata’s *Nāṭyaśāstra* of the fifth century—the earliest treatise on aesthetics and the arts—to theorizations in the present day. The second section addresses a range of current artistic practices and genres in India and subjects them to philosophical scrutiny. Leading thinkers approach their artistic subject matter from phenomenological, ethical, epistemological, ontological, and sociopolitical perspectives.

In this excellent introductory essay, Chakrabarti offers his own proposal for how one might most productively understand the concept of *rasa* (understood roughly as “tasted” aesthetic emotion). While the received view in Indian aesthetic theory is that there are eight *rasas* that correspond roughly to eight primary mundane emotions (love, fear, disgust, wonder, sorrow, humor, anger, and courage, and a disputed ninth, serenity), Chakrabarti identifies the *rasa* of wonder (*adbhuta rasa*) as the common evocative response that brings together the other *rasas*. This is an intriguing proposal that has the salutary effect—especially for the reader who is a nonspecialist—of cutting through a thicket of analysis and discussion about the number and kinds of *rasas* and their relationship to one and other and securing a reasonably clear starting point for understanding *rasa*. Chakrabarti concludes his introductory essay with another intriguing, albeit cryptic, proposal: that while Indian aesthetic theory is typically regarded as one that offers “unification” in some sense—of subject and object—it may be better regarded as more about equality. In a hierarchical society—especially like India—the possibility that aesthetic approaches to persons and their work may offer a way not just to *transcend* the usual divides (e.g., between subject and object), but also to allow subjects to see one another as *equals* is a powerful and productive insight.

The first chapter by Laurence McCrea focuses on the concept of resonance (*dhvani*) in Indian poetics and on classical debates about articulable and ineffable meaning in Sanskrit poetry. It is hard not to hear echoes in Western debates—as for instance the ones initiated between Max Black (“Metaphor” [1955]) and Donald Davidson (“What Metaphors Mean” [1978])—on the meaning of metaphor. In the second chapter entitled “*Rasa* Aesthetics Goes Global: Relevance and Legitimacy,” Priyadarshi Patnaik argues that while *rasa* theory may not be comfortably extended to include every individual work of art, it may legitimately be extended to include art works beyond the boundary of “Indian” art. His argument is based on what he takes to be the source of *rasa*, namely, mundane (and universally experienced) human emotion, which, in turn, gives *rasa* theory a “provisional universality” (p. 47). Chapter 3, by Parul Dave Mukherji, aims to recover the concept of mimesis (*anukṛti*) for Indian aesthetic theory, arguing that while the dichotomy of Western “naturalism” and Indian “spiritualism” may have been strategically important during British occupation in pre-independence India, it is in fact a false dichotomy. Recovery of the history of this concept in Indian aesthetics opens up new space for a comparative aesthetics that examines anew the use of the concept of mimesis across cultures.

With Chapter 4 we turn to the specific case of music in the Indian tradition. Mukund Lath argues that the *prima facie* distinction between thinking and music as inhabiting two different realms—the discursive and the nondiscursive—cannot upon reflection be sustained. Lath engages his reader in a fascinating discussion of the relation between *rāga* (roughly, scales) and *alāp* (roughly, the extemporaneous process in actual performance that, in effect, builds up the *rāga*). This leads him to conclude that we ought to consider music as thinking and thinking as music, and that in this experience of nonduality we experience its *rasa*. Chapter 5 by Nrisinha P. Bhaduri brings together the erotic and the devotional in classical Indian poetry and music. It argues for the possibility of experiencing the *rasa* of erotic devotion in the context of a devotee’s love for the Lord Krishna expressed through song (in “Song of the Gopi”—or *Gopī-gīta*—in the *Bhagavata Purana*).

Chapter 6, entitled “The Impersonal Subjectivity of Aesthetic Emotion,” by Bijoy H Boruah, contains perhaps the most sustained analysis in the volume of the possibility of aesthetic emotion, using fiction as its case study. As Boruah argues, “in disengaging itself [when reading fiction] from the perspective of actuality, the self attains a form of freedom to turn itself into a field of detached consciousness. . . . What is significant about this perspectival shift of consciousness is the possibility of a *new form of*

*subjectivity* in the fictionally engaged field of consciousness” (pp. 130–131). This notion of freedom, which allows for a new form of subjective experience, is then connected to Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya’s seminal analysis of *rasa* in his 1930 essay “The Concept of *Rasa*” (reprinted in Bhushan, Nalini and Jay L. Garfield, eds., *Indian Philosophy in English: From Renaissance to Independence*, [Oxford University Press, 2011]). Boruah goes on to articulate the complex phenomenology of aesthetic experience, first reconstructing Bhattacharya’s argument for a first-personal phenomenology experienced as impersonal or centerless and going on to argue that these experiences are nonetheless anchored in particular subjects.

Chapter 7, by Arindam Chakrabarti, also takes as its point of departure Bhattacharya’s influential essay and, in particular, the underexplored second half of that essay, which explores the aesthetics of the ugly. In “Refining the Repulsive: Toward an Indian Aesthetics of the Ugly and the Disgusting,” Chakrabarti’s goal is “to enrich the Indian aesthetics of the hideous” (p. 159). Accordingly, he proposes six different perspectives on the ugly that would allow one to have an experience of *rasa* (*bibhatsa rasa*) in this domain. This essay is, however, more suggestive than it is substantial in its analysis.

Chapters 8 through 10 address topics on art and time. How does one create novelty from a community’s past (Sudipta Kaviraj)? How does one create an aesthetic of borrowing (or theft) in a culture that values originality (Sibaji Bandyopadhyay)? How does time enter into the stillness of an Indian miniature painting (B. N. Goswamy)? The link between time and aesthetic experience is further examined in David Shulman’s essay entitled “Deep Seeing: On the Poetics of *Kūṭiyāttam*.” In the summer of 2012, Shulman witnessed the twenty-nine-night performance of a Sanskrit drama in Kerala, South India. Based on his shifting experience in the performative space of each successive night’s evolving drama, Shulman argues that the play or dance-drama “becomes its own self-created world, far more comprehensive, elastic, and effective than ours. For one who enters into that other world, recognition—including self-recognition—issues into something like a plenitude of awareness” (p. 245). This world is not the linear world of a narrated text; rather, “a forward-moving sequence collides with the pre-existing story” (p. 244). Crucially, it is not the words but the embodied movement that in the end expresses and evokes that world, a world rendered real via the collaborative expression and evocation of its actors and devoted audience. Throughout the chapter Shulman uses concepts like time, attention, immersion, distance, and nondifference or nonduality—concepts that could be regarded as nodes in the network of

*rasa* theory—all of which contribute to an embodied aesthetic experience that he terms “deep seeing.” These three chapters give the reader a rich sense of the way in which a quite different culture connects temporality and aesthetics in its approach to the arts.

In Chapter 12, Rimli Bhattacharya examines the role of another central Indian aesthetic concept, *līlā*, i.e., divine play or manifestation, in understanding the aesthetics of dance or *natya* in the Indian artistic tradition. She documents the role of the Shantiniketan School of Rabindranath Tagore in the early twentieth century in recovering the sense of play as essential to the life of a modern aesthetic subject. She focuses in particular on the role of *utsava*, or the festive in Tagore’s school, and on its significance for modernity in breaking down the boundary between the festive occasion (one that typically celebrates divinity) and the occasion of the everyday (one that typically registers the mundane) and that between the individual and the collective.

In chapter 15, Tapati Guha-Thakurta continues the theme of boundary overlap in her case study of one of the major religious festivals of Kolkata, namely, Durga Puja. Guha-Thakurta addresses several dilemmas raised for traditional and contemporary Indian aestheticians by the modern urban festival. In the end, she argues that the many features of the contemporary Indian urban festival, in virtue of its “staging and affect within the body of the urban spectacle” (p. 348), warrant its inclusion in the category of the modern aesthetic. The urban festival may be construed as a public art event where the traditional overlaps with the contemporary, the devotional with the commercial, and where the artist and the craftsman are synonymous with festival designer. This is a sharp, succinct, and thoughtful essay; a must-read for anybody interested in debating the aesthetics of the urban spectacle.

Chapter 16, entitled “The Sky of Cinema,” addresses what is arguably the most prominent of aesthetic spectacles in the Indian context: cinema. Moinak Biswas argues that the liberalization of the Indian economy in the 1990s has led to the collapse of the boundary between high and low taste, between the social and aesthetic spheres, and, specifically, between “art house” films and “commercial” cinema. The dominance of Bollywood cinema notwithstanding, Biswas chooses to engage in a close reading of filmmaker Ritwik Ghatak’s films from the 1960s and 1970s and makes a case for the continuing relevance of films for a post-colonial and post-modern India that refuse a centering on a person’s individual feelings and that use formal elements of frame, sound, and empty cinematic canvas to achieve their effects. Biswas argues that these more aesthetic elements combine to provide an opportunity for a de-centering of the experiencing human subject, thereby creating

a space within which the imagination can access emotions not otherwise accessible in the mundane and all too familiar realm of the everyday.

Chapters 13 and 17 each address the aesthetics of renunciation (an abandoning) and asceticism (the taking on of a lifestyle of striving). In “The Aesthetic Paradox of the Hermit’s Hut,” Kazi K. Ashraf discusses the extraordinary ability of the ascetic individual to use his or her yogic powers to transcend mundane human sensibility and to experience the extra-mundane. The “beauty” of the hut itself—a “structure of ‘constructed poverty’” (p. 269)—is evoked in virtue of it being a space that embodies the ascetic sensibility of the spirit who dwells (or dwelled) within. In “Toward a Gandhian Aesthetics: The Poetics of Surrender and the Art of Brahmacharya,” Tridip Suhrud invites us to envision Gandhi’s lifelong and all-too-human experiments with celibacy and the simple life of poverty as the experiments of an *artist* par excellence. While the first essay focuses on the many different abodes of Buddha the renunciant in an aesthetic register, the latter discusses the daily struggles of Gandhi, the renunciant, who aspired to inhabit the aesthetic space between the imperfectly mundane and the perfectly transcendent.

Especially provocative in this anthology is Gopal Guru’s essay “Aesthetics of Touch and the Skin: An Essay in Contemporary Indian Political Phenomenology.” In this essay, we have a distinctive critique of a received genre of aesthetic theory, namely, one that separates out the maker/worker, process of production, resultant object, and the appreciative audience, a genre that, Guru argues, makes possible the aesthetic appreciation of an urban spectacle such as the cricket match detached from its roots in the labor and material of the Dalit (lower or outcaste) worker. Guru’s approach to this genre of theory reminds this reviewer of Tolstoy’s critique of attempts to approach a work formally, except that Guru’s theory operates in reverse. Tolstoy (*What Is Art?* [1897]) proposes an infection theory of art according to which, since one cannot insulate the evaluation of the art object from its origins, one has to ensure that the origins are not tainted; this brings together the aesthetic and the moral. Guru argues for an alternate aesthetic (a Dalit aesthetic) whereby the aesthetic value accorded to the “purified” cricket match be conferred (retro-synthetically) on its hitherto unaesthetic origins (that is, to the “impure” leather material and the “impure” leather worker who belongs to the Dalit caste and who renders the hide fit for shaping into cricket balls that form the core of the urban aesthetic spectacle of sport in India). Guru also illuminates familiar tensions between politico-ethical content and aesthetic modes of presentation, but in a different cultural register, via poignant poems and songs created by Dalit

artists/activists. Although the essay itself is uneven in terms of its clarity and focus, there is much here to provoke further thinking and writing about the relationship between truth, the world, and the function of the aesthetic in a human’s mode of being in the world.

Gayatri C. Spivak begins the final essay in the anthology, entitled “Aesthetic Judgment of Disgrace,” with the following sentence: “This chapter represents my highest hopes for the humanities as the institutional teaching of aesthetic judgment” (p. 391). While she subsequently has occasion to rethink this earlier optimism, Spivak nonetheless proposes the kind of task that awaits a literary academic (a group of which she is a notable member) in a globalized world: “To restore reference in order that intertextuality may function; and to create intertextuality as well” (p. 394). She demonstrates how the restoration of critical historical and social reference which points for both a culture enmeshed in caste consciousness and creativity in seeking connections between texts as far flung as, for instance, a Rabindranath Tagore song and a J. M. Coetzee novel could constitute laudable twin goals for education in the humanities. This kind of educational focus, she argues, will help a globalized public acknowledge the “heritage” of “disgrace” (p. 405), as literature “displaces” itself into the struggles of the everyday and thus renders itself relevant and indispensable in the human aspiration to equality and justice. This essay is noble in its aspiration even as it disappoints in execution. A reader could have benefited from the insights of an intellectual of Spivak’s caliber; as it stands, it treats its topic at a level more casual and superficial than is warranted by its inclusion in the volume.

The quality of the anthology is uneven in several respects. There is variation in terms of clarity of argument; many essays meander as the reader desperately looks for the paragraphs that would capture its key insights. Even where there is clarity, one has, at times, to reach to find the relevance of certain discussions to specifically aesthetic concerns. One would have liked a firmer editorial hand throughout the collection. In addition, there is no list of contributors, an omission that is especially egregious given the fact that many of the contributors are likely to be unknown outside of India. There is no glossary, another unfortunate omission, especially given the number of Sanskrit terms used throughout the collection and the different meanings sometimes assigned to the same term. And the price is prohibitive for individuals who might wish to purchase it (\$176.00 for a hard copy; \$121.99 on kindle.)

This anthology, despite its uneven quality, is a positive contribution to the discourse on aesthetics from a cross-cultural perspective. It should be required reading for any academic who teaches and writes

on aesthetics and the philosophy of art. It should also attract any reader interested in seeing how a familiar topic in Western aesthetics—like the possibility and nature of aesthetic experience—is treated in sometimes unfamiliar ways in a cross-cultural context by aestheticians writing about Indian music, theater, dance, painting, and film. There is much to be inspired by, and to learn from, in a careful perusal of this volume.

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POLLOCK, SHELDON, trans. and ed. *A Rasa Reader: Classical Indian Aesthetics*. Columbia University Press, 2016, xxiv + 442 pp., \$80.00 cloth

*A Rasa Reader* cries out for a companion book that pulls together the wealth of material contained in its collection of excerpts from the writings of Indian masters from the third to the seventeenth centuries. The simplest translation of the *rasa* of the title is *taste* in its original sense of *savoring*, where what are savored are emotions. Although the word never loses this sense, it is subject to a myriad of varied accounts. Indian aesthetics limits itself to literature's representation of human emotion and our ability to get inside it, where various ways of doing this are laid out. In the first half of the period under review, 300 CE to 1025 CE, what is sought is the coition between language and the emotions it characterizes. After the aesthetic revolution of the eleventh century, however, it is coition between meanings and minds—between language-constructed emotions and readers—that wants explanation.

Over the years the site of *rasa* had moved from the actor who *plays* the part of the character to the text that *creates* the character and to the audience who *feels* the emotion of the character or the work as a whole. The move was from the linguistic to the phenomenological. This was challenged by Vishvanatha in the fourteenth century for making the categorical mistake of conflating the linguistic with the experiential. Whatever quarrels arose, however, classical Indian thinkers did analyze emotions in literature in a more fine-grained way than their Western counterparts, focusing first on their causes, objects, effects, and the contexts in which these occur in the text—on the textual production of emotion—and later on just how literature affects those of its readers who are sensitive, that is, neither too volatile to be able to focus nor so stolid as to be indifferent to anything outside themselves.

In writing on the role of emotion in stories seen and heard—drama and poetry—the Indian thinkers

touch on what goes deeper than culture, even as the relations among literature, philosophy, and religion, and the idea of the self as pure bliss, are distinctively Indian. That said, this jewel of a book unsettles some of our ideas about our being rational, self-interested atoms and about the depth of the cut between passion and reason; this even as Hinduism's doctrine of transmigration and its Gods having indefinitely many avatars fly in the face of our notions of personal identity. The role of experience in the encounter with stories is the crux of the texts here excerpted. Two things go some slight way to explaining why. One is that there was no printing press in India until 1712, so encounters with stories were either plays seen or poems heard; the senses were immediately engaged, especially in drama, which included music and dance. The other is the precedent set by the oldest scriptures of India, the Vedas, which are accounts of mystical revelations, direct religious experiences. It is apt, therefore, that literature is valued for affording direct experience of *rasa*, the definition and structuring of which is the task of the texts collected here.

Six chronological chapters weave themselves through some 1,400 years of Indian history beginning with the *Treatise on Drama* by Bharata (c. 300). The chapters are preceded by an "Introduction" that lays out the intellectual history of *rasa* after a brief account of the differences between Western and Indian aesthetics. Pollock begins by noting that questions asked in a 1997 Oxford University Press anthology on aesthetics are all about art and are, therefore, ones that no pre-modern Indian thinker would ask: there was for them no single category of art. Poetry and drama were separate domains. There were accounts of techniques in music and painting, but no theories of them and no impulse to make beauty, creativity, or genius the subjects of knowledge. This review of the two aesthetics ends with the observation that the most important account of the modern Western aesthetic revolution is that of Gadamer, who sees it as the result of the rise of aesthetic consciousness in Kant that devalued aesthetic knowledge and gave the palm to scientific knowledge.

Pollock says that, then, whatever art yields and aesthetics seeks to explain is not held to be knowledge, and the assumptions Western readers bring to classical Indian aesthetics reflect this. He claims that his reconstruction of the texts undermines the assumptions by showing how the texts school their readers in what and how to feel and gives them a chance to experience, in their encounter with literature, the limit of consciousness and the transcendence of themselves, which is bliss. The highly influential Abhinavagupta (c. 950–1016) likened literature to scripture in that readers actualize the contents of both in themselves by "tasting, savoring, rapture, relishing, absorption, 'experience,' and so on [where

this] . . . is on the order of direct awareness . . . and consists in the light of bliss that is one's own pure consciousness" (p. 190). Bliss here is pleasure, and the consciousness is pure in being completely folded into, and absorbed in, the savoring. There are not three things: the emotion or the story itself that is being savored, the savoring of it, and my awareness that I am savoring it. I too am absorbed in the story.

This is one of two things in Indian aesthetics that requires some imagination on our part to fully appreciate. The first is the sheer power of the physical, of what presents itself to the senses. Examples of this in India are the endlessly varied odors of the food, the dazzling colors of women's clothes, the way the music insists and near hypnotizes its listeners, and how dancers use heads, eyes, and fingers to invite the audience to feel the movements in their own bodies. The second has to do with the question of who experiences the *rasa*, the character or the audience, a question that is virtually undone by the success of readers in *getting inside* the literary artwork. Since one can do this as oneself or as an observer rather than as the character, the question of whose emotion has *rasa* is laid to rest only when one succeeds in becoming absorbed in a literary work, described as "a state of rapture that is the true nature of one's consciousness," akin to the ecstasy of religious self-transcendence" (p. 147), where the difference between self and other or between character and audience vanishes. The answer to the question of where the *rasa* lies is that it lies with both self and other, and character and audience. This is a more total identification than a Western audience typically seeks or achieves.

The book is difficult to navigate. Forty some texts are discussed. Each chapter has sections whose title introduces the issues covered and gives the titles of the excerpted texts. Because these masters lived in different parts of a large subcontinent and had access to the work of others only through fragments and commentaries, the disagreements were not as straight on as when Aristotle objected to Plato or Kant to Hume. Contrary views persist over time and throughout different parts of India, and the lines connecting them—rarely straight—loop back and around themselves (signposts along the way are few in *A Rasa Reader*). The volume begins with the *Treatise on Drama* (c. 300) by Bharata. When drama was the primary literary form, *rasa* was brought about in part through the actor's motions, analyzed down to the movement of eyes and the turn of the head, costumes, sets, and so on. In poetry, on the other hand, there is nothing to show or to see, so language bears the full weight of creating *rasa*. A claim tacit in *The Treatise* is that the art of drama contains all the arts, which suggests that actions, events, and the stories they comprise will have a starring role in Indian aesthetic life. The *Reader* ends, after drama has given way to

telling rather than showing stories, with the secular sharing the stage with the scriptural. In *The Nector Ocean of Literary Art* (1592), Vishvanathadeva says that literature and scripture are both arts of language in which "direct awareness [is] derived from the meanings of the words" (p. 311), both different from any other uses of language in affording a transcendence of the self and the mundane.

In Pollock's discussion of the first text, pieced together and full of contradictions as it is, he finds the seeds of questions that will be raised over the years, including how many *rasas* there are and how they are made known. Of the number of *rasas*, Bharata identified eight as the only ones that could be shown on stage: erotic, tragic, comic, violent, heroic, fearful, macabre, and fantastic. Some later wanted to add a ninth, the peaceful *rasa*, but it was met with objection since peace is the absence of emotion and as such could not be staged. This difficulty does not exist for poetry, and the case was made to include the peaceful *rasa*, identified as the state where there is nothing but absorption into Atman, which is all that is. As to the number of *rasas*, some say there is no limit, others that there is one that underlies them all, the erotic or, as was claimed at the end of the period as the scriptural seeped into the secular review, the devotional. A second issue nascent in the *Treatise on Drama* is that of how *rasa* or emotion is made known. An answer in the *Treatise* is: "Rasa arises from the conjunction of factors, reactions, and transitory emotions," (p. 7) that is, from the conjunction of what are identified as aesthetic elements, the successful conjunction of which give rise to *rasa*. They are the leading male and leading female character, the *foundational factors* as the source of *stable emotions*; *stimulant factors* like moonlit nights that stimulate desire in the case of the erotic *rasa*; *psychophysical responses* like pallor and trembling; and since it was said that there are no experiences of pure basic or stable emotions, *transitory emotions* like ephemeral yearning in the case of erotic love.

These elements identify the kind of emotion that is felt, but cannot convey, however, what its savor is for the one feeling it. In curious contrast to the concreteness of *rasa*—its power to penetrate the one who experiences it and to cause him to be conscious of little but it—is the abstractness of the taxonomies of the elements that contribute to the experience: thirty-three transitory emotions, four kinds of leading male character, eight psychophysical responses, and so on, in a taxonomic frenzy, as when Abhinavagupta (c. 950–1016) joined the four ends of human beings to four basic emotions and the *rasas* to which they give rise, which I list to show the desire to relate feelings and their actualization in *rasas* with the ends of human life, that is, with the good life. The ends are love, wealth, morality, and liberation from

transmigration, where the best life is that of one whose consciousness is pure, objectless, and who is one with Atman, which is all there is. Except for such liberation, which is foreign to us, the other three make up a good life, assuming one takes wealth to mean reasonable access to the means of life and the pleasures of the body. The emotion love and the *erotic rasa* accompany the human end of love; the emotion anger and the *violent rasa* accompany the end of wealth; determination and the *heroic* accompany morality; and impassivity and the *peaceful* accompany liberation. The trio of anger, violence, and wealth are unintuitive; the others, not so much so. What this scheme shows, however, is the deep connectedness of emotions and ends, not the connection of means with ends or the connection of ends with the reasons for them. This work of Abhinava is like a manual for organizing one's feeling life so as to make it rich with love, wealth, morality, and, in the best case, liberation.

Meanwhile, in *Light on Implicature* (875), Anandavardhana introduced a third linguistic modality, implicature, to explain how meaning is communicated when a text's intended meaning is not expressed, either literally or figuratively. He was the first to center literary analysis around *rasa* when he likened literary works to sentences in having a single meaning or end, and identifying that end as the literary work's emotional core or *rasa*. The *rasa* here is the feeling the audience has when the artwork has been grasped as a whole. The work's intended but unexpressed meaning is made manifest by implicature in the way that an object in a dark room is shown by a lamp. This assumes that *rasa* preexists its manifestation in the text, whereas after the revolution in the eleventh century *rasa* will be held to emerge in the course of the reader's *getting inside*—we would say *engaging* with—the text and to consist in the actual savoring rather than the combination of aesthetic elements that offer up what is to be savored. The counterpoint appears in *Analysis of "Manifestation"* (1025), where Mahima Bhatta argues that *rasa* is implied, but because we infer the cause-effect relation between words and meaning instantaneously, we do not realize inference is at work. So, with the relation between narrative and trope we infer the trope immediately and hence think it manifests itself to us. Notice that *rasa* is here still considered a figure of speech.

Against the view that there are a number of *rasas* is the view that all are under the aegis of the erotic, either as enjoyed or thwarted, as laid out in *Light on Passion* (1050) by Raja Bhoja. In a grand synthesis, *rasa* is defined as love, which is what all forms of emotion are, and this is equated with the sense of self, defined as "the awareness that one is empowered to act with respect to one's experiences or thoughts . . . that no one but oneself is empowered to act upon

them; accordingly, that one exists" (p. 112). If what I do, feel, or think is not the result of anything like hypnosis or drugs, then it is an expression of me, and I am one with, bound to, my experiences and thoughts, as lover is to the beloved. This is self-love. Emotions are produced by the psychic energy that is at the core of all feelings. All feelings are portrayed as being driven by a psychic energy at the deep heart's core, and this energy is love and fuels all that I feel and do. Ontologically spendthrift as this is, it is the idea that nothing can evoke a feeling of anger, fear, amazement, and so on, unless one cares about its object, where caring is an erotic relation. This focus on the energy at the core of the self, and hence of all emotion, was preceded by what Pollock centers *A Rasa Reader* around, namely, the turn from the language of literature to its readers.

The turn was made by a scholar of scriptural hermeneutics, Bhatta Nayaka, who asked how literary language can make a story about the emotions of people you do not know into something that the reader somehow participates in and how this can afford a unique experience. Again, the literary is likened to the scriptural in that scripture gives commandments that "are meant for you and you somehow make your own and act upon" (p. 145). One does not act on literature but responds to what he calls its verbal force. Nayaka's *The Mirror of the Heart* (900) reflects what goes on in the reader, as Ananda's *Light on Implicature* (875) reveals how a text's aesthetic elements produce their effect.

In *The New Dramatic Art* (1000), Abhinava recasts Ananda's notion of manifestation. Whereas for Ananda *rasa* was manifested by the text's aesthetic elements, for Abhinava it was revealed by the sensitive reader's activation of her predispositions associated with "the stable emotions that preexist in the heart of the sensitive reader" (p. 189). This comports with the Western idea that the work of art plays us, tapping into what in us might not otherwise have been realized.

Wherein does the difference between classical Indian and Western aesthetics lie? The major difference lies in Indian notions of the boundaries of the self. The individual is liable to transmigration and capable of what we see only the mystic achieving, namely, leaving one's self and the world behind to become one with all that there is. But at the same time, its aesthetics theorizes the uncanny down-to-earth performance of what can only be called the dance of life, the sculpture and music and dance of India reaching far deeper into the postures and movements and sounds of the *quotidian* world than does Western art and its attendant aesthetics, which are to Greece, the Middle Ages, and the Enlightenment. That is to say, they are heir to the Apollonian, the Christian, and the Protestant ethic, while the Dionysian and the

polytheistic reign in Indian. All of that said, the two can be read in terms of each other.

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MARSHALL, CHRISTOPHER R. *Baroque Naples and the Industry of Painting: The World in the Workbench*. Yale University Press, 2016, 352 pp., 88 color + 115 b&w illus., \$75.00 cloth

NAPOLI, NICHOLAS J. *The Ethics of Ornament in Early Modern Naples: Fashioning the Certosa di San Martino*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015, 430 pp., 36 color + 64 b&w illus., \$120.00 cloth

To understand an art world you need to know how the artists are trained, the ways in which the art they make is displayed, and who buys this art and pays for its displays. To understand the present American art world, for example, you need to know that nowadays many artists get MFA degrees; that we have a well-developed system of commercial art galleries, with large museums devoted to contemporary art in every city; and that there are many prosperous competitive collectors and speculation in this art. You can read a great deal of the most distinguished literature of art history without encountering much discussion of patronage. And yet, unless you know something of the practical financial realities of art making, inevitably your view of art's history will be radically incomplete.

In seventeenth-century Naples, then the largest city in Italy, an immense number of artworks, a surprising number of them excellent in quality, were produced. A recent book about the Neapolitan philosopher Giambattista Vico, who was always a relatively poorly paid professor, notes that he lived with one hundred paintings (Malcolm Bull, *Inventing Falsehood, Making Truth: Vico and Neapolitan Painting*, [Princeton University Press, 2013], p. 17). Some of the art made in this period has migrated to museums in Naples or abroad and, of course, a great deal of it has disappeared or been destroyed. Still, a great deal was preserved. One recent guidebook to Naples, *Napoli Sacra: Guida alle chiese della città* (Napoli: Tribunale di Napoli, 2010), lists eighty-four churches or other sites, almost all of them with large displays including a great deal of baroque art. Traditionally the art of Naples has been marginalized by scholars—with much more attention devoted to Rome and Venice. Francis Haskell's massive, justly renowned pioneering study *Patrons and Painters. A Study in the Relations between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque*, first published in 1962, devotes just eleven pages to that city. His primary focus is, first, on Rome and then, in the conclusion, on the

development of patronage in eighteenth-century Venice. In Rome, Bernini, Borromini, and Pietro da Cortona created the architecture of the city center, which attracts art tourists today, and in Venice Canaletto and Tiepolo were working near the end of this period. In Naples, apart from Caravaggio, who made two very brief but highly influential visits, the leading Baroque painters—Battistello Caracciolo, Bernardo Cavallino, Luca Giordano, Salvator Rosa, and Massimo Stanzione, to name just five—were highly accomplished figures, but they are artists who are not yet well known to the larger public.

Christopher Marshall's book opens with a vivid description of the scene in an anonymous genre painting *View of the Palazzo Gravina, Naples* (1620s–1630s): "It is morning in the artists' quarter. . . . Two priests walk down the Via Monteoliveto. . . . Perhaps they are off to celebrate Mass in the nearby church of Sant'Anna dei Lombardi. If so, they would be able to pay their respects at the same time to three of the most important paintings by Caravaggio then to be seen in southern Italy. . . . Two fighting mongrels form a blur in the foreground, while a large black pig sniffs hopefully at the trestle table nearby" (p. 1). How surprising to learn that pigs ran wild in seventeenth-century Naples! And who would not want to join the priests to go see those Caravaggios, which were destroyed in an earthquake; we have no record of their appearance. Marshall elegantly animates the scene in this painting of the workshop of an art dealer, as if the painting were one frame of a movie we are watching.

*Baroque Naples and the Industry of Painting* is divided into three parts: an account of the workshops; a discussion of the art market, with a history of the local art dealers; and a description of Neapolitan art exhibitions. The paintings produced in Naples, most of them with images of religious scenes, landscapes, and still lifes, certainly are very different from the art in our contemporary art world. But already we can see in nascent form some familiar institutions. All that is missing are journals devoted to art criticism. Marshall offers a clear discussion of how a few artists established their reputations in this overcrowded art world, sometimes painting for anonymous buyers, "in other words—the general public in the modern sense of the term" (p. 85). He presents vivid accounts of such figures as Gaspar Roomer, a merchant dealer who sold art in Naples, and also of Flanders, The Dutch Republic, Spain, England—wherever his ships went. And he gives evocative accounts of the leading private collectors. The Neapolitan art world was home to many colorful personalities. We learn about Jusepe de Ribera, a Spanish-born painter who was very successful at attracting patrons, many of them dignitaries who took their acquisitions with them when returning home to Spain. We get

the story of the artist Jacob van Swanenburgh, who, trying to publicize his workshop by exhibiting a painting he thought would be eye-catching—a depiction of a Witches' Sabbath—attracted unwelcome attention of the Inquisition, who confiscated the picture. Marshall uses a comparison of two still life paintings of seafood, one with common sea mullet and squid, the other with expensive deep-sea swordfish and tortoises, to reveal the cost of food in Naples (p. 101). And he has a marvelous discussion about forgeries. At the start of his career Luca Giordano, who was a famously facile artist, “created a number of forgeries in the style of earlier masters that his father sold . . . as originals” (p. 126).

There were, Marshall notes, a great many very poor artists in Naples. And so, in this period, when travel to Rome or elsewhere was expensive and difficult, displays of art in the churches played an important role in educating local artists. He provides a surprising amount of detail in his reconstruction of these exhibitions. And he also offers good accounts of the private collections and useful discussion of the role of the Viceroy, who ruled in the name of the Spanish King. These officials were foreigners, and after relatively brief stays in the city, usually four or five years, they departed with their art purchases. But if they thus did not build collections in Naples, they were responsible for “the growing interest in placing Neapolitan painting within an international arena” (p. 218). This book is a gold mine of fascinating, and often very revealing, information. Near the conclusion of the period under discussion, in the 1670s we witness the start of the grand tour, which means that patronage by visiting Englishmen becomes important. These rich visitors became generous supporters of the local artists. The Neapolitan artists, Marshall concludes, “all had in common a fundamental concern to optimize their position through an attentive and proactive attitude of industriousness and ingenuity, constantly recognizing and anticipating the interests of their audiences” (p. 252). *Baroque Naples and the Industry of Painting* offers a marvelously lucid, nicely concise summary of a great deal of evidence. Thanks to a deft narrative, it brings alive this period. Marshall has been generously supported by his publisher, who has provided very good illustrations, including many large color images.

*The Ethics of Ornament in Early Modern Naples*, a more narrowly focused book, looks at the most lavish single monument of this period, the church of the Carthusian monks, Certosa di San Martino. (Marshall has a brief discussion of this site; unlike most of the churches he discusses, it stands a little outside the center city, on a nearby hill high above Naples.) Here, perhaps more than in the historic center—which is filled with slums—the seeming contradiction of the policy of a monastic order

devoted to austerity and simplicity taking great pains to create this consciously luxurious display of art seems apparent. Indeed, the evidence of the written commentaries surveyed by Napoli is revealing: “The Carthusians sought to balance mystical union, the central expression of piety in the order, while honoring their ascetic tradition. Neapolitan observers relished in the splendor of the monasteries while denouncing their temporal and economic preponderance in the city and the kingdom. Visitors outside of Naples sought to reconcile the dazzling impression of richness with the moral ambivalence presented by its seemingly non-classical taste and luxuriousness” (p. 266). It is fascinating to learn that these monks were fussy about their commissions, often being highly demanding, making sure that the artists, who were carefully selected and well paid, provided the best possible work. Napoli’s close analysis of the patronage thus provides a useful supplement to Marshall’s broader history. And his book, too, has been lavishly supported by the publisher—it is a generous act of patronage, a gift to every reader.

Neither Marshall nor Napoli is a speculative scholar—their goal is to reconstruct this complex Neapolitan art world as it really was. And so, it would be inappropriate, and radically ahistorical, to moralize about their pictures of Baroque Naples, imposing our present day moral standards on a culture whose visual culture now seems extremely exotic. That said, what is probably surprising to a modern reader is how much financial support that society devoted to contemporary painting and the other visual arts. Marshall discusses the commission of Caravaggio’s *Seven Acts of Mercy* (1607), painted for a chapel, Pio Monte della Misericordia, a painting which had a transformative effect on Neapolitan art. “The patrons” were lucky, he notes, “in being able to draw on the services of the just-arrived Caravaggio at precisely the moment that they began to turn their attention from the construction of their church to the decoration of its interior” (p. 148). That painting was commissioned by a group of very young privileged men who engaged in acts of mercy. But of course, they were not political activists—they did not believe that the social order, which kept most Neapolitans dirt poor, should (or could) be radically transformed. Three and a half centuries earlier, Saint Thomas Aquinas, who lived not far from this chapel, distinguished between mercy, which involves concern for those who are inferior to us, and charity, which is a higher virtue because it unites us to God. I believe that Caravaggio’s picture invokes this late-medieval ideal. Like his Naples, our cities have beggars. Often enough, indeed, you find them at the doors of churches. Ashamed that our rich society cannot better serve all of our fellow citizens, we too, like the figures Caravaggio depicts,

aspire to feed the hungry, give refreshment to the thirsty, take in the homeless, clothe the naked, succor the ill, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. But when itemizing charitable deductions on our IRS returns, we probably do not think of ourselves as paying homage to God. Nor do we believe that our fellow citizens who are in need of our mercy are below us.

Our world thus is very distant from that of Baroque Naples, which means that gifted scholars like Marshall and Napoli need to work hard to make its history accessible. Nowadays we want that our artists are politically critical, and of course almost all of our most-admired contemporary art expresses progressive secular values. What is then striking is how very distant this art from Counter-Reformation Naples is from ours. In his canonical survey of this period *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600 to 1750* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1973), Rudolf Wittkower ends by looking toward the future, which he finds anticipated in the art of Francesco and Gianantonio Guardi: "The two brothers opened the way to the 'pure' painters *di tocco* of the next century, the Impressionists, who like them thought that form was fleeting and conditioned by the atmosphere that surrounds it" (p. 505). Indeed, his last image is Francesco Guardi's *View of the Lagoon* (1790), the product of "a great revolutionary of the brush" (p. 505). It is there, and not in the historically backward looking world of the Neapolitan baroque, Wittkower argues, that we find anticipated the concerns of the great painterly secular modernists of the next century. By contrast, the artistic traditions of Naples led nowhere—only to Ludovico Mazzanti's (1686–1775) "pleasant but purely conventional art, a soft and feeble formalism without a hope of regeneration" (p. 467).

Our modernist art world was created elsewhere—not in Naples, but in France, starting in the late eighteenth century when during the Revolution, in 1793, the king's palace, the Louvre, was turned into a public art museum. "Despite its large human aggregation," the Neapolitan historian Giuseppe Galasso has noted, "Naples did not succeed in crossing the threshold of a decisive economic transformation. Its function as a consumers' market prevailed over that of a great production center" ("A Capital and Its Kingdom," *Bernardo Cavallino of Naples, 1616–1656* [Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1984], p. 45). Starting in the late seventeenth century, for reasons that historians are still debating, southern Italy became an economic and political backwater, leaving behind the magnificent art described in these two books for the edification and enjoyment of art tourists. Studies of patronage are very important—and they involve a great deal of labor. When done properly, they provide essential perspectives. These

two impressive books will provide essential guidance for everyone interested in the study of Neapolitan art. Thus, they are a major accomplishment.

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NANAY, BENCE. *Aesthetics as Philosophy of Perception*.  
Oxford University Press, 2016, 192 pp., \$65.00 cloth

Are the concepts of contemporary aesthetic theory stale and insufficiently empirical? Bence Nanay certainly thinks so. In this original and ambitious book, he draws on his voluminous scholarship concerning issues in perception and the arts to propose a major overhaul of aesthetics. He begins by distinguishing aesthetics from philosophy of art. Although his focus is on the arts—especially pictures—he aims to characterize aesthetics without any reference to art. He also rejects definitions of aesthetics in terms of beauty or aesthetic properties. How then is aesthetics to be characterized and connected to art? The connection he proposes travels through the concept of experience to theories of perception. We have many types of experiences of the arts, he says, and some of these are aesthetic experiences. Further, Nanay claims, some aesthetic experiences are at bottom ways of perceiving. The content of this book is about how such aesthetic experiences are explained by a theory of perception.

Nanay attempts to soften the implication of the rather grandiose-sounding title of his book by emphasizing that he is arguing only for the value of exploring aesthetics as philosophy of perception; he does not claim that aesthetics is nothing but a branch of philosophy of perception. He promotes this program in a number of ways. One is to suggest that such a research program, if successful, will take aesthetics out of, in his view, its current philosophical isolation, so that "maybe aesthetics can be considered to be more of a core discipline" (p. 3). His strategy is to demonstrate the fruitfulness of his approach by showing how it illuminates a number of concepts and debates in recent aesthetics.

The burden of the first two chapters is to develop a framework for investigating issues in aesthetics as perceptual issues. He follows this by two chapters that apply his pivotal concepts—centered on a theory of attention—to the perception of pictures. He follows this with three chapters that discuss debates in recent philosophy of art concerning (a) formalism, (b) uniqueness of artworks, and (c) the history of vision debate. He concludes with a chapter that applies his ideas about attention to the very different case of identification with a character in fiction.

Nanay bases his account of aesthetics on the notion of aesthetic experience. The aesthetic experiences which especially interest him are, he claims, ways of perceiving. However, he does not claim that the domain of aesthetics is exhausted by perceptual experiences: "I am not even saying that all questions of aesthetics can be fruitfully tackled with the help of philosophy of perception. But many, even most, of them can" (p. 9).

Unfortunately, Nanay does not provide a systematic account of aesthetic experience. Instead he relies on quotes from artists and writers (Proust, Camus, Huxley) describing experiences with which we are supposedly familiar and which we will agree are aesthetic experiences. This from *Swann's Way* gives the flavor: "But even the ugliness of faces . . . seemed something new and uncanny, . . . measurable by aesthetic coordinates alone, in the autonomy of their curves and angles" (p. 13) or this from Camus, "a little courtyard with arcades. Red flowers, sunshine and yellow and black bees. . . . I want nothing else but this detachment and this closed space — this lucid and patient intensity" (p. 14). Intuitively, these are aesthetic experiences. While accepting the Kantian idea of aesthetic experience as free of practical utility, Nanay endorses Hopkins's distinction between savoring beauty and judging beauty. Nanay favors the former, as he aims to treat aesthetics as about experiences rather than judgments. Mention of savoring, however, is a bit misleading, as there is little mention of pleasure or of positive or negative evaluations of what is perceived in Nanay's subsequent account of aesthetics as perceptual experience.

Having rejected traditional definitions of aesthetics, Nanay proposes that many aesthetic experiences can be explained in terms of a type (or types) of perceptual attention. To clear the ground for an attention-based account, Nanay confronts Dickie's influential argument that the aesthetic attitude is a "myth." Dickie's argument against a special aesthetic attention depended on claiming that there is in fact only one type of attention. But, as Nanay notes, this is simply false: there are a number of ways of (consciously) attending, and these have been widely studied and catalogued by psychological researchers. Nanay's proposed account is based on the distinction between focused and distributed attention. He applies this distinction to both perceptual objects and properties (including relational properties); for example, sorting a pile of socks solely by color would involve attention distributed across many objects but focused on one property, color. Hence, there are four different ways our attention can be exercised depending on whether attention is distributed or focused and whether on objects or properties. He then equates aesthetic attention of the Proustian sort with attention that is focused on one object but distributed

across properties. As an example, he suggests that an aesthetic experience of a landscape might be focused on the whole landscape as one object but distributed across various properties: "and among these properties will be relational properties connecting various parts of the landscape" (p. 25).

Applied to landscapes this is a puzzling idea: that the properties of objects are attended to (consciously noticed) even though the objects are not themselves attended to, at least not as the individual objects they are. That might work for socks, but not for the many types of object in a landscape. Nanay's account, as we will see, is especially designed to explain the perception of (representational) pictures and sculptures (his Chap. 3), so one answer to this difficulty is to suggest that the idea here is to treat the experience of a landscape as experience of a two-dimensional picture, what Allen Carlson has called the scenic model of nature appreciation. In that case, the natural objects become elements of an overall picture and the various types of relations contained in Nanay's account of pictures (see Chap. 3) can be invoked. To the objection that this is not an adequate model of aesthetic appreciation of a landscape, Nanay can make two replies. First, if his account is correct, this is *an* aesthetic experience, and second, he does not claim that such an experience is the only type of aesthetic experience or that it is the only correct or best way to aesthetically experience any given type of object.

Indeed, "the claim is not that [his account of aesthetic attention] is a necessary condition, let alone sufficient condition for all kinds of aesthetic experience" (pp. 27–28). What he claims is that the account of aesthetic attention as "distributed across properties but focused on one object" (p. 26) explains the Proustian kind of aesthetic experience. He further suggests that attention focused with regard to objects (e.g., focused on a painting, sculpture, or landscape) but distributed with regard to properties is a plausible updating of the notion of disinterested attention. However, a potential problem for the claim that this type of attention is at least sometimes an *aesthetic* experience is that it could be merely a causal or material basis of an aesthetic experience without being itself an aesthetic experience. Nanay supports the stronger claim by quotations from Robert Musil, Roger Frye, and the Russian formalists, all of whom describe aesthetic or artistic experience as an unusual sort of attention, which Nanay takes to be distributed attention. Expecting the question, "why we should care about such aesthetic experience?" he answers: "because aesthetic experiences allow us to see and attend to the world differently; in a way that we don't, and couldn't, otherwise" (p. 33).

In the thickly referenced Chap. 3, Nanay sorts out the extensive philosophical debate about perception of pictures by noting that both Gombrich and

Wollheim slide back and forth between asking how pictures are perceived and asking how pictures are to be aesthetically appreciated. What do we see when we see an object in a picture? At the very least we see the picture surface and the depicted object. A widely discussed view, labeled the “twofoldness” claim, is that we attend to the surface and the depicted object simultaneously. But a problem for this is that normally “we only attend to the depicted scene, not the picture surface” (p. 44). So is perhaps this claim not about the perception but rather the appreciation of pictures as pictures?

Nanay locates three elements of picture perception (not all apply in every case). There are two perceptual states involved in picture perception: the perceptual representation of the two-dimensional picture surface and the perceptual representation of the three-dimensional object the surface encodes. The twofoldness claim for *aesthetic appreciation* is not just that there is a simultaneous representation of both elements but that simultaneous *attention* is devoted to both (we attend to how the marks create the depiction). To this framework he adds a third element: if we recognize the object being depicted, then, he argues, we have a quasi-perceptual representation of that object (i.e., some sort of mental imagery which influences our perceptual experience [p. 57]). For instance, in a caricature of Mick Jagger we experience not just a representation of a grotesque Mick but (necessarily) also a quasi-representation (mental image) of Mick: “In order to explain the phenomenology of seeing this picture as a caricature of Mick Jagger, we need to take all three of these ... states into consideration” (p. 57).

Whichever state we attend to “depends on our pictorial interests” (p. 58). But to *appreciate* some pictures we need this third fold, and we must attend to the relation between it and the second fold (the encoded three-dimensional object) “when, for example, we want to assess how good the caricature is (or how naturalistic a picture is)” (p. 58). The three-folded framework fits in well with Nanay’s account of aesthetic attention. For example, he calls a “design-scene” property a “relational property that cannot be fully characterized without reference to both the picture’s surface and to the three-dimensional object visually encoded on the surface” (p. 59). Obviously, as Budd notes, the relation between the marks on the surface and what is depicted in them “is the crucial characteristic of pictorial art” (quoted p. 60). Nanay takes attention to design-scene properties as exactly fitting his account of aesthetic attention: attention that is focused with regard to objects but distributed with regards to properties (p. 61). (The surface and the depicted scene are one sensory object, for Nanay: they occupy the same region of the visual field.) But here he hints at an important admission: “when we

appreciate pictures aesthetically, this does not automatically count as aesthetic experience: it is possible that some other necessary conditions are not met” (p. 62).

Chapter 4 is about aesthetically relevant properties, and it turns out to be an extended argument that these are not aesthetic properties. In fact, in this provocative chapter Nanay has nothing good to say about the aesthetic properties of contemporary aesthetic theory. He implies that aesthetic properties fail to pass muster for perception theory. He says there is no principled way to answer the question of whether aesthetic properties are perceived or inferred (“Do we literally see things as beautiful or as graceful or do we just infer ... that they are?” [p. 70]). (He assumes that this is a problem about aesthetic properties rather than a difficulty with perception theory.) In contrast, aesthetically relevant properties are unproblematic: “a property is aesthetically relevant if attending to it makes any ... aesthetic difference of any kind” (p. 71). This has to do with whether attending to the property changes my experience of the object—not necessarily liking the object more or less, but rather “that attending to [the property] would make me appreciate *my experience* more (or less)” (p. 73).

Nanay’s rejection of aesthetic properties may surprise those who have taken aesthetic properties to be sufficiently unproblematic as to have featured judgments about them in arguments supporting their ontological accounts (e.g., Danto, Levinson) or their accounts of aesthetic appreciation (e.g., Walton). Nanay takes “the use of aesthetic properties in addressing problems in aesthetics to be a research program and the use of aesthetically relevant properties to be another research program” (p. 76). Echoing Lakatos’s approach to evaluating scientific theories, Nanay argues that the aesthetic-properties-based approach to aesthetics is a degenerate research program, whereas the aesthetically-relevant-properties approach is a progressive research program (p. 79). One point he makes in support of this claim is that the job of critics is not to point out aesthetic properties but to point out features of the artwork that affect how you experience it. Hence, contrary to widespread philosophical belief, critical discourse does not support the invocation of aesthetic properties.

He also argues that by investigating aesthetically relevant properties we can ask nuanced questions about how they relate to our perceptual experiences. We can ask, for example, whether a non-perceptually-represented aesthetically relevant property (e.g., the identity of the artist) changes our perceptual experience. Depending on our views about cognitive penetrability of perception we might think it can change what we see or that it can change

our interpretation of what we see (p. 89). He claims that “this question about the relation between perception and the domain of aesthetics can only be raised in terms of aesthetically relevant properties not in terms of aesthetic properties” (p. 89).

In spite of this criticism, he says that he is “not trying to exorcise aesthetic properties” (p. 79). So, perhaps the brief against aesthetic properties is merely that they do not lend themselves to study by philosophy of perception.

Using the explanatory elements thus assembled, Nanay addresses several problems in aesthetic theory: whether formalism is true, what accounts for the intuitive uniqueness of artworks, and who is right in the debate over whether vision has a history. As regards formalism, he defends an account he labels semi-formalism: “the only aesthetically relevant properties of an artwork are its semi-formal properties” (p. 99). Assuming a rough intuitive agreement about what formal properties are (traditionally “surface” properties: e.g., colors, shapes, tones, etc.) he defines semi-formal properties as either those formal (and hence perceptual) properties or properties that depend constitutively on those properties. As an example of how this works, it seems that “depicting a cat” would not be an aesthetically relevant, hence semi-formal, property, but “depicting a cat in foreshortening” or “depicting a cat with strong brushstrokes” would count as semi-formal properties (p. 101). Nanay argues that semi-formalism captures formalist intuitions but is superior because it is not obviously false (unlike some versions of formalism) as it accommodates background information insofar as this affects picture perception. He gives the example of “being influenced by Cézanne”: this is a semi-formal property if the brushstrokes are the way they are because of Cézanne’s influence on the painter; otherwise it is not. This fits the distributed attention model because “most semi-formal properties do involve distributed attention—distributed between formal properties and some other properties” (p. 103).

This position is attractive because it accommodates the aesthetic relevance of context of all sorts. But conceding so much to contextualism in philosophy of art seems to run counter to the motivating formalist intuition (Beardsley) that the artwork is to be appreciated independently of context, such as the artist’s intentions and the art-historical context. Nanay claims that despite appearances his semi-formalism is nonvacuous. It does have some opponents, namely, Freudians and Marxists, who consider social context and/or the artist’s psychology as aesthetically relevant even though they have no connection to the formal properties of the artwork. Semi-formalism would also not support moralizing critics whose aesthetic experiences could be affected by their attitudes toward the artwork’s content.

He follows this with an interesting discussion of the nature of uniqueness in aesthetics (Chap. 6). He suggests that the sense of uniqueness that strikes us when we experience artworks has to do with the type of experience he has already highlighted in terms of distributed attention. His thesis is that the aesthetic experiences he earlier highlighted (Proust et al.) are similar to the experience of treating an object as unique, as akin to encountering something for the first time.

Chapter 7 returns to the topic of perception with a careful discussion of whether vision has a history (Wölfflin says “yes”; Danto says “no”). He usefully transforms the debate into the question of whether (visual) *attention* has a history. He tentatively concludes that people in Western Europe exercised twofold attention when looking at pictures in the second half of the sixteenth century but did not do so a century earlier (p. 135).

In his final chapter Nanay pivots 180 degrees to examine focused, as opposed to distributed, attention. His example of focused attention is our engagement (“identification”) with a character, especially one in a movie. He illustrates such focus by contrasting modernist 1960s movies (Antonioni, Tarkovsky), which are not solely visually focused on the actions of a central character, with the claustrophobic attention on a protagonist characteristic of a Hitchcock film. He takes the focus on a character to be a different sort of aesthetic experience. Nanay bases his theory of identification on an account of vicarious experience, which he explains with the example of watching sports. If I see a ball bouncing toward a striker in football as relevant to what the striker can do (kick it at the goal), if, that is, “the content of my experience cannot be fully characterized without reference to the striker’s action,” it is a vicarious experience (p. 164). Some vicarious experiences are perceptual, some are emotionally charged (if “the content of our experience cannot be fully characterized without reference to someone else’s emotions”; p. 165). He next points to a problem of epistemic asymmetry between viewer and protagonist in which the viewer has important knowledge the protagonist does not have (“watch out, someone is hiding in the basement!”). Yet this does not block identification with the character, even if we do not sympathize with her. Nanay then argues that none of the widely discussed theories of identification (“imaging from the inside,” “sympathy,” “direct perception,” or “mirror neuron activation”) can explain this phenomenon. But vicarious experience can. In such cases “we experience objects around the protagonists in a vicarious manner, in a way that cannot be fully characterized without the protagonist’s action” (p. 178).

It could be charged that Nanay has not really explained vicarious experience but only defined it.

Even so, such experience and the related problem of epistemic asymmetry add important pieces to be explained by any robust theory of character engagement.

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PARSONS, GLENN. *The Philosophy of Design*. Polity Press, 2016, 192 pp., \$22.95 paper

*The Philosophy of Design* is an indispensable book in the discipline of contemporary analytic aesthetics. It is high time that aesthetics had dealt with the fascinating realm of design and approached it in its entirety. The philosophy and theory of architecture is exceptional, and has been taught and researched in departments of philosophy and art history due to its internal connection to art. In contrast, though it is a ubiquitous ontological and aesthetic phenomenon that furnishes our reality, design has not been widely analyzed by philosophy.

Parsons's book addresses this gap. It presents a scholarly, comprehensive, and analytic survey of many theories that pertain to design, either directly or indirectly. The book accounts for the ontology as well as for the experience of design. It covers both the experience of the aesthetics of the everyday and the ordinary objects, which applies to most pieces of design, and the extraordinary aesthetic experience of design, which is closer to art experience. In this respect, *The Philosophy of Design* may also serve as an introduction to aesthetics through the perspective of design.

The book includes what could be described as three main subprojects, (1) offering a definition of "design" and (2) a reformulation of the modernist-functional view of design using an analytic method (Parsons rightly presents the modernist view as paradigmatic to the discipline, regarding it as a starting point of its theoretical account) and (3) analyzing the main conceptual apparatus of design, both of atomic concepts and of complex ones, such as the modernist "form follows function." These subprojects are internally related to each other.

One of the main tasks a philosophy of design needs to fulfill is giving an account of the often subtle features that differentiate design from art on the one side and from engineering on the other. The wide peripheries of the realm of "design" converge with both these realms. These overlaps pertain to the functional properties of aesthetic objects, to the aesthetic elements that are contrived for rendering objects useful, to the aesthetic external properties of useful objects, and to aesthetic usefulness—which the

modernist theory of design marks as design's essence. Parsons's book takes on the complex mission of offering a philosophical delineation of the borders that encompasses design objects. He achieves this goal through what I see as a synthesis between mentalist and conventionalist approaches to design and its conceptual apparatus. *This synthesis is one of the most interesting theses of the book*, and a significant contribution to the philosophy of design and aesthetics. Achieving the synthesis is a complex feat that unfolds throughout the book. In the following I trace its main constituents.

Though inexplicit, Parsons's definition of design is rationalist in kind. Design, according to him, is the intentional creation "of a plan, for the surface features of a novel device or process that will solve some primarily practical problem" (p. 28). The plan should make sense and be rational—that is, exist within the realm of the possible. The condition of planning the surface features is the one that differentiates design from engineering, and classifies design as an aesthetic phenomenon.

The definition is founded on a cognitivist philosophy, which is dualistic, and classifies mental contents as privileged over public actions and matters. Parsons's attempt to draw a distinction between his foundational view and the mentalist aspects of the definitions of art given by Collingwood and Danto makes more sense in the case of the former. In his well-known distinction between craft and art, Collingwood marks mental contents as essential to the ontology of both art and craft. While in art, according to Collingwood, mental contents are the medium, and there is no division between planning and execution, in craft planning is crucial and distinct, followed by a public-material execution. The mental part in craft is the intention and planning. This is not unrelated to Danto's intentionalist definition of art, whose essence is mental content: the intention-idea-concept of the artist, formulated to meaning, which is materially embodied.

Still, parallel to Danto's account of the artwork's meaning and its embodiment as embedded in the (public) artworld, Parsons attributes to the design object social-relational properties as well. Consequently, the mentalist definition of design takes a conventionalist shift. This shift is achieved through two lines of thought: (a) Parsons's characterization of function, and (b) what Parsons entitles "The Epistemological Problem of Design" (pp. 35–36): the idea that given that design plans are for novel problems and new things, the designer cannot know that the artifact would indeed serve its purposeful function. Therefore, "the rationality of his act is thrown into question" (p. 101).

Interestingly, Parsons does not endorse a mentalist-intentionalist definition of function.

According to the intentionalist definition of function, an artifact possesses a function if, and only if, its creator has the intention for it to “do something.” That is to say, function is not founded on a public convention, but rather on a mental content of an individual. One could argue that this approach is counterintuitive, given that function of an object is a feature that renders it (publicly) connected to an external user. It is a feature that is dependent on the user. However, Parsons shows that the conventionalist version of the intentionalist definition (a sort of contradiction), which substitutes intention with “use plan,” and further on with “socially approved way of using an artefact” is too narrow (pp. 90–91). It applies neither to modified and novel functions nor to the uniqueness of what is named by many the “proper function” of an artifact.

Establishing the disadvantages of the intentional and conventionalist definitions of function, Parsons looks into the etiological or evolutionary theory of function, which characterizes the casual functional history of an artifact as the determinant factor of an artifact’s proper function. Parsons suggests a synthesis of the two theories that seem logically incongruent: the intentional and etiological theories. This move is impressive, as well as its supporting distinction between “functioning as an X,” a predication that is justified by the *intentions* of the creator or the user that the artifact do X, and “having the function of doing X,” which can be justified only by the artifact’s *casual history* (p. 96). While refraining from endorsing the etiological definition in its entirety, Parsons still uses it to dissolve the epistemological problem of design. This is a move that the intentionalist definition could not attain, being detached from empirical evidences. If the history of a use of an artifact, as well as of related artifacts, determines its function, then it is not logically impossible for the designer to supply a justification for planning it. The designed artifact is not fundamentally new and untested, and there is some empirical evidence that amounts to defend its creation: “The central feature of a Designed artefact—its proper function—is not something determined by the individual designer, but a social aspect of an already-existing artefact type that has evolved through its use and reproduction” (p. 101).

This is a substantial moment in *The Philosophy of Design*, since it sheds light on the intersection where design and art part ways. The distinction between those “two creative enterprises” (p. 101) is obviously significant. It is usually sketched around the functional nature of design objects, even though artworks are defined by many as functional as well. The difference lies in the *nature* of the function. Art and design are analogous in the sense that both are practices of novel problem solving. However, the artwork is

considered to be born from the individual artist’s mind or acts. In contrast, the design object is the fruit of a team effort, and its function is socially and causally oriented.

This account is helpful for Parsons in his “reconstruction of modernism,” whose main concern is the logical relations between function and form. Parsons gives a short delineation of the shift between the modernist paradigm of design, manifested mainly in Adolf Loos’s theory of design, and the postmodern one. The central argument of the modernist theories of design is nonetheless clear. Aesthetic predicates are founded on the functionality of the object and emerge from it. This is followed by a corresponding characterization of expressivity on the one hand and, on the other hand, the modernist “rational principle against expression in Design” (p. 83).

The kind of expressivity that modernism endorses is the symbolization of functionalist aspects of zeitgeist—the practical needs of an era. The expression theories that modernism rejects, Parsons explains, are ones that base the expressive aspect of design on the valuable nature of society and on the person who consumes the designed commodity. At times, the text confuses persons with things (“In all of them, the basic impulse driving the expressive dimension of Design is the same: the desire to render things attractive through ‘showing for the’ their valuable nature” [p. 76]). However, this confusion is informative, since the expressive theory of design that is formulated here claims that the valuability of a thing reflects the valuable character of its possessor. Parsons accordingly asserts that “the complex meaning of Design that emerges from these studies of consumerism is illuminating and important” (p. 74).

One problem with this presentation is that the boundaries of the extension of “*valuability*” are left too loose. “Valuable” shifts between a material value and attractiveness. Regarding attractiveness, Parsons reminds us that Loos argues against the ornamental expressive aspects of design, which render the designed object attractive, since they manifest the erotic impulse of both the creator and the consumer. Apparently, according to Loos, this impulse is foreign to the real essence of design. Moreover, he claims that objects are not the best vehicle to express the valuable aspect of a person, but rather her action. The conclusion is that the ornamental aspect of design is superfluous. Parsons names the structure of this syllogism the “Better Realization Argument” (p. 76). He refutes it, asserting that objects may relay ideas to “countless strangers,” and consequently realize values, while personal actions cannot reach the masses.

Parsons uses the “Better Realization Argument” (p. 76) as an optional critique of modernism itself. He argues as follows: according to modernism, design

objects ought not to be expressive of valuability because actions realize valuability better than objects. If this is true, then design should not aim at expression (or symbolization) of *zeitgeist*, since artworks do it better. This is so because, contrary to artworks, design objects are highly constrained by their functional nature. However, Parsons is not entirely accurate here. The kind of *zeitgeist* design modernist theories point to is a derivative (or a reflection) of the contemporary needs that functional objects are aimed at. Thus, the very functionality of a design object, its limits included, may be the symbol of its era.

However, by and large, Parsons is right in refuting the form of the better realization argument, and the reason for this lies deeper than what might be seen at first glance. I would like to note that the philosophy of culture that supports this method of thought sees optimization as the leading force of progress. It is an ill variation of the modernist imperative given by Clement Greenberg for disciplines to find out what is their best, or exclusive, contribution to culture. It is indeed beneficial for disciplines to reach their internal justification. However, this self-critique ought to end there, because the optimization attitude is harmful for material culture. A tendency to use only the most efficient medium for expression or symbolization might restrict aesthetic progress and innovations and reduce material and visual pieces to be mere tools. While definitely true regarding art and design, it is probably also the case when it comes to engineering and technology. The result of this insight is a following understanding that forms and aesthetic features are not as tightly related to function as the modernists would have.

To raise the “under-determination of form by function” (p. 106), Parsons presents Penny Sparke’s and David Pye’s refutations of the generality of “form follows function.” Sparke claims that this mechanism does not apply to objects whose mechanism is aimed to be concealed, but rather to ones whose structure does not open a gap between their functions and their outer surfaces. Pye argues further that almost every kind of design practice falsifies “form follows function.” Even when the function of an object is rigidly determined, many possibilities of appearance are open for the designer to execute in diverse ways. Nevertheless, as Robert Wicks, who is quoted by Parsons, claims, this contingency of form is the very feature of the design object that allows the aesthetic experience of it. Parsons marks that this condition is the one that dialectically yields the dependence of form and its aesthetics on the function of the object. The way the object materializes its function is appreciated through the comparison of the chosen form to other contingent forms. Thus, the modernist principle might still hold after all. Parsons rightly indicates the falsity of the assertion that we go through some

sort of slide show of aesthetic possibilities when experiencing the designed object. However, one may point out another aspect of beauty determined by the contingency of form. The fact that the form is chosen and cannot be fully determined by the abstract function of an object manifests another idea. It shows that the form of the design object is an artificial-intentional composition, rather than an almost natural, rigidly determined composition, which the modernist attributes to real design.

Parsons returns to a solution he reached with Allen Carlson in their 2008 *Functional Beauty*, following Kendall Walton’s prominent “Categories of Art” terminology. Parsons and Carlson apply the three kinds of category-oriented properties, standard, contra-standard, and variable, to *functional* categories, which, they argue, classify design objects. The expectations regarding the attribution of the different properties to the object “connect our aesthetic experience of objects with our understanding of their function” (p. 118).

This argument, while promising, has yet to be solidified. In modifying Jerrold Levinson’s aesthetic realism, Parsons explains that aesthetic properties are perceived not only as dependent on primary nonaesthetic properties, but that they are dependent also on functional properties as well as on their labeling as standard, contra-standard, or variable in relation to functional categories. In order to apply it to aesthetic properties yet again, thus contributing to Parsons’s project, I believe that Walton’s idea of the best-suited category is plausible here as well. The correct functional category of a design object would be the one that exploits the object’s aesthetic properties, rendering it functionally beautiful. It does not refer to ornamental features, which the modernists label as negating the essence of design. It rather refers to aesthetic properties that fit the functional category—heaviness for pickup trucks is one of Parsons’s nice examples. “Being heavy,” “chunky,” or “muscular” establishes the particular aesthetics of pickup trucks, because it makes them result in “looking suited to move heavy loads” (p. 119).

This theoretical move elegantly concludes Parson’s endorsement of the modernist intuition that the function and the form of design are internally connected, and his attempt to develop it to a full and complex theory of design. The next project, naturally, would be to return to the rationalist definition of design, formulated in the first chapter of *The Philosophy of Design*, and to relate it more firmly to the last condition of the definition—the condition of aesthetics, where appearance is a key consideration in planning the design object. The current definition leaves the condition of aesthetics as an atomic condition, distinct from the others. Nonetheless, Parsons further impressively shows the possible theoretical

account that will connect between function and its form—more accurately, between function and the appearance of the function. As Parsons puts it, the aesthetic quality of functionality “is not merely a matter of how functional things are, but a matter of how they look” (p. 120).

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SUKLA, ANANTA CH., ed. *Fiction and Art: Explorations in Contemporary Theory*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015, 416 pp., \$39.95 paper

Ananta Ch. Sukla presents a diverse collection of essays on topics relating to fictions and fiction making across different disciplines and artistic genres. Of particular note is that not all of these disciplines are artistic disciplines. Of the twenty-six essays included in this volume, only fifteen actually deal with fictions as they directly relate to works of art, and less than half specifically focus on literary fictions. This is a welcomed change from collections that purport to deal with topics related to fiction but only actually discuss fictions as they apply to literature, theater, and (sometimes) film. Essays here focus on sonic fictions in works of instrumental music, narrative fiction in nonfiction and true crime literature, pictorial fiction in cubism, gestural fiction in dance, and concepts of fiction making in film and still photography. Along with these essays, Sukla includes diverse perspectives on literary fictions with essays on fictions in several non-Western traditions such as literature in Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic cultures. These essays are both discussions of the history of fiction in these traditions as well as how this history shapes both modern conceptions of fiction and each respective culture’s contemporary fictional works. Included as well are essays Sukla refers to as “Interdisciplinary Perspectives.” These essays deal with more general topics related to fictions outside of works of art. Essays in this section address narrative fictions in Ancient Greek historical works, mathematical concepts as fictional entities, the fictionality of philosophical thought experiments, as well as instances of fictional “storytelling” in modern religious rituals. The diversity of topics both within and outside of the traditional discussion of literary fictions is what makes this collection uniquely valuable. The ability to move beyond the traditional scope of fiction in literature is what sets this work apart in what has become a large, yet rather homogeneous, field of philosophical interest.

The two essays included in Part I each examine the origins of Western fiction in Ancient Greek

literature. In “Fiction’s False Start,” David Konstan returns to the concept of “referential autonomy” in fiction that he addresses in a previous essay and amends some of his claims regarding which genres of Ancient Greek literature could be considered works of fiction. Due to the fact that genres such as tragedy, comedy, and epic poetry each traffic in themes, tropes, and archetypes familiar to the Greek audience, Konstan argues that such works lack the referential autonomy to be considered works of fiction. Instead, Konstan points to the relatively small subgenre known as the Greek Romances as the true origins of Western fiction. Claude Calame, using a less restrictive definition of fiction, looks to Greek myths as types of “referential fiction” in “The Poetic Pragmatics of Greek Myth: Referential Fiction and Ritual Performance.”

Essays in “Part II: Interdisciplinary Perspectives” shift away from fiction as it strictly pertains to works of art. In his essay on mathematical fictions, Jody Azzouni writes that “the most obvious cases of fictions—the most *famous* cases of fictions—Sherlock Holmes, Mickey Mouse, Hercules, and so on—are also in some ways the most misleading cases of fiction. For they really are cases where fictions pretty much play only an entertainment role in our lives. Focusing on cases like these, therefore, gives the impression that fictions are *only* involved in entertainment” (p. 76). Azzouni’s point is well taken. If one only focuses on artistic fictions and their ability to entertain, one may miss something important regarding the function or value of fiction more generally. Likewise, when we examine fictions outside of works of art, we may learn something that illuminates the function or value of artistic fictions as well.

In this spirit, Peter Heron begins this section with his essay, “Fictionality and the Absolute: On Truth and Lie in the Metaphysical and Aesthetic Sense.” Drawing on the works of Derrida, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein, Heron argues that we necessarily engage in fiction making when attempting to discuss and understand the nature of being. In “Mathematical Fictions,” Jody Azzouni claims that, contrary to the ways we intuitively categorize such entities, mathematical and geometric terms do not actually refer to anything real. Lines, points, and Euclidean figures do not, and cannot, actually exist. Despite this, a large part of Azzouni’s essay is dedicated to showing that such non-referential terms are epistemically useful in that they can still teach us things about the real world. This is a theme carried through many essays in this collection. Ivan Strenski focuses on how we distinguish between sacrifice and suicide in his essay “Why Suicide Bombers Bomb: Fictionality of Rituals.” Using Islamist extremism as his example, Strenski examines the religious fictions that can act as justifications for violence. Strenski looks at the fictions

Shia extremists tell themselves regarding the death of Imam Husayn that turn the passive sacrifice of historical martyrdom into violent action. Strenski then turns to the story of Abraham's problematic sacrifice of Ishmael as told in the Sunni tradition. Here, Islamist narratives redefine sacrifice, not as the traditional "giving of" oneself in the form of fasting, gifts, or charity, but the "giving up" of oneself that we find in the human bomber.

"Fiction and History" finds Allen Speight returning to Walter Benjamin's example from "The Storyteller" of Herodotus's description of the treatment of the Egyptian king Psammenitus at the hands of the Persians. Speight uses this example to show the similarities between historical recounting and fictional narration. Robert Stecker defends the cognitive value of literature against recent deflationary claims by showing the effect such fictions have on our norms and values. In "Cognitive Value of (Literary) Fictions," Stecker argues that if literature makes us better people, "it does so by making our moral judgments more open-minded, more sensitive to alternative points of view . . . more prone to consider alternative norms and values" (p. 119). "Fiction, Cognition, and Confusion" by Jukka Mikkonen is positioned as a response to the previous essay. Like Stecker, Mikkonen agrees that literary fictions have cognitive value. However, unlike Stecker, Mikkonen denies that this value is found in literature's ability to clarify certain positions. Instead, Mikkonen points to literature's ability to cause confusion in a reader and to thwart a reader's understanding of the text. It is specifically in this confusion that, for Mikkonen, literature acquires its cognitive value.

Aleks Zarnitsyn examines Parfit's fission thought experiment on personal identity in "Epistemology and Fiction: Thought Experiments in Personal Identity." Zarnitsyn contends that the methodology of thought experiments rarely fits what one would consider a scientific model of success. However, this does not make such experiments "mere fictions" from which nothing can be learned. Literary fictions like Thomas Mann's *The Transplanted Heads: A Legend of India* that take inspiration from such thought experiments show that one can still learn something from these hypotheticals even if this would not count as strictly scientific knowledge. "Semantics of Fiction: Naming and Metonymy," turns to questions of fiction as it applies to philosophy of language and proper names. Carl Ehrett rejects multiple Millian Realist attempts to describe the nature of fictional names and the existence of fictional beings. Ehrett argues that the common error is in the belief regarding "co-naming" that once a fictional entity is named in a work of fiction it then acquires that name in real life. Ehrett claims that such entities typically have no name in the real world and we only pretend to name

them much like a child pretends to name a handful of mud a "pie."

Sarah Worth writes in "The Fictional Truth: Non-fiction and Narration" that the ways we typically distinguish between fictional and nonfictional works are based on unfounded assumptions. Worth argues that we tend to think of nonfiction literature as being akin to photography in its transparency. We believe it allows us to metaphorically "see" into the past. However, there is no causal connection between the event and a writer's description of it as there may be between some object and a photograph of it. There is only an intentional relationship the two that is similar to the relationship between the subject and artwork in portrait painting. Thus, Worth claims that what is similar between fiction and nonfiction is that they are both narrative genres with intentional relationships to their subjects. In that they are both narrative genres, Worth contends that the similarities between fiction and nonfiction outweigh the differences with regard to their respective truth values. In "Fiction as a Creative Process," Amanda Garcia focuses on definitions of fiction and nonfiction based on the imaginative activity of the reader and the intentions of the author while Samuel Kimball ends this section on interdisciplinary perspectives with "Fiction and Emotion: The Relation of Consciousness to the Economy of Evolution." Here Kimball argues that the evolution of human consciousness and emotion are necessarily hidden from us so that our expressions of them are "irreducibly performative" or fictional (p. 203).

"Part III: Aesthetic Perspectives" begins with traditional topics related to literary fictions. However, the authors quickly move on to less traditional discussions of fiction as it applies to other artistic media such as painting, music, dance, film, and still photography. Lubomír Doležel opens this section with his essay "How to Reach Fictional Worlds." Doležel begins with the claim that although contemporary literary theorists are largely familiar with the analytic theories of philosophy of literature, the same cannot be said of analytic philosophers with regards to contemporary literary theory. Doležel then proposes several ways that communication between these disciplines can be fostered. I have elsewhere argued for more interaction between philosophy of literature and literary theory, so I am certainly sympathetic to Doležel's position. However, I am not sure this essay makes good on its promises. Though understanding differences is the first step in opening lines of communication, this essay only seems to highlight the differences between the two disciplines without addressing how these differences could be reconciled or how the concerns of one discipline help illuminate issues in the other.

Returning to themes of fictionality and the concept of the self, in his second essay in this volume,

“Literature, Fictionality, and the Illusion of Self-Presence,” Samuel Kimball claims that when we reflect on the self as both subject and object we are, in some way, engaging in an act of fiction-making. Christian Biet examines legal fictions in “Judicial Fiction and Literary Fiction: The Example of the Factum” in furtherance of the position that fiction and non-fiction have important similarities insofar as both are narrative genres. Biet defines a factum as a legal brief describing the nature of a criminal offense or the charges levied against a defendant. However, historically the factum also included the writer’s subjective opinions regarding the details of the crime, certain persons associated with it, and their motivations. Biet claims that the narrative aspects of their factums make them “proto true-crime” literature and, like true crime fictions, seem to question our sharp delineations between fiction and nonfiction.

Moving away from literary fictions, in “Pictorial Fiction: Imagination and Power of Picasso’s Images” Charles Altieri examines the actions of the imagination when engaging in works of fiction. It is Altieri’s claim that Picasso’s cubist works not only engage the imagination in the same ways as fiction, but that his works are expressions of the imagination when it is freed from the constraints of faithful representation. Geraldine Finn takes inspiration from Derrida’s *The Truth in Painting* in her essay, “Sonic Fiction: Truth in Music.” In an interesting approach, Finn asks the reader to listen to *Für Alina* by Arvo Pärt before beginning the essay. She then asks that the reader continue playing it on repeat but mute it while reading. When the musical note symbol appears in the text, Finn instructs the reader to suspend reading, unmute the song, and listen to a few minutes before muting it again and returning to the text. It should be noted that Finn does not discuss this specific piece in her essay. So, while I enjoyed Pärt’s composition, I did not find that listening to it illuminated the text in any significant way. Also, I imagine that Finn’s approach would be less successful were the reader in a cabin in a forest, a city park, a subway, or anywhere else without Internet access and a pair of speakers or headphones.

Turning to dance, Renee Conroy begins “Gestural Fiction: Dance” by outlining Susanne Langer’s claim that gestures, as used in dance, have only symbolic meaning. Even if the meaning of dance gestures is symptomatic of the internal states of the performer, Langer insists that it is most useful to always consider the meaning of gesture in dance as purely symbolic. Conroy looks at the implications this view has both for identifying certain performances as dance as well as evaluating dance performances. We do sometimes want to say that the gestures performed in a dance are symptomatic of the internal states of the performers. Conroy also points out that the term “gestural” is

often used in the pejorative to describe performances that seem too forced or unnatural. In “Fictionality of the Theatrical Performance,” Roderick Nicholls rejects the dualism of theatrical performances that claims there is both the performance itself and, at the same time, a work of fiction that sits behind or beyond such performances. Nicholls argues against the pervasive and resilient view that when we watch a theatrical performance we are watching actors perform one specific representation of a work of fiction that exists elsewhere.

“Fictionality in Film and Photography” attempts to distinguish between photography as an art form and photographs or films that are merely record keeping. David Fenner argues that what elevates photography and film from merely a method of keeping record of past events to an artistic medium is the medium’s ability to participate in fiction-making. There are interesting parallels between the claims here and the previous discussions of narration in nonfiction. Here the photographic artist is telling a story that is hers alone. This is the fiction-making that we do not find in photographic record keeping. An interesting implication of this is that viewing art photography in this way might preserve the intentional relationship between subject and artwork that photography is often criticized for lacking. Rob van Gerwen returns to themes similar to those found in Samuel Kimball’s two essays in the final essay of this section “Fictions Sharing Subjectivity” and defends the subjective value of fictional works.

“Part IV: Oriental Perspectives” presents four essays on the history of fiction in four non-Western cultures. Specifically, this section examines the emergence of Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and Arabic fictions from their various cultural and religious influences. Two concerns struck me when moving through this final section. First, though non-Western perspectives are certainly important, I was left questioning the shift made with these essays from talking about different types of fictions or genres of artistic fiction to a discussion in this section about literary fictions across different cultures. Though this is an important topic with respect to our investigations into the nature and value of fiction, it does not feel as though the themes of this collection leave enough space to do justice to this topic. This leads to a further concern regarding why these four specific cultures are highlighted. To say that these cultures are going to be highlighted should be defended by a position that they are uniquely qualified to give us insights into the nature of fiction that we would not find in the history of African, Caribbean, Aboriginal, or Native American fictions, for example. That is not to say that these are not interesting and engaging essays in their own right. They certainly are. However, the inclusion of

these specific four non-Western perspectives seems somewhat arbitrary.

That being said, “Fundamentals of Fiction in Indian Mythology, Poetics, and Dramaturgy” is an excellent introduction to the writings and theories of fiction of the seventh-century BCE Vedic scholar, Yāska. Ananta Ch. Sukla highlights Yāska’s claims that although proper names and events in Vedic texts do not actually refer to anything, they are not, in fact, semantically empty. Amy Lee presents a comprehensive overview of the origins and historical influences of Chinese literary fiction in “Fiction in the Chinese Mythical and Literary Traditions.” As the title suggests, Lee’s main focus here is on the Chinese mythology and the various cultural, religious, and political influences that formed mythology in the Chinese tradition. “Truth and Fiction in the Japanese Narrative: Sakaguchi Ango’s Critique of the I-Novel” by Robert Steen traces the history of literary fiction in Japan from its early marginalization in favor of broadly nonfiction works, through its growing popularity in the I-novels, its crisis during the build up to World War II, and its resurgence during the post-war period. Finally, Arkady Nedel examines the importance of social satire, humor, and

allegory in Arabic literature in his essay “Fiction in the Medieval Arabic Literary Tradition.”

Sukla has collected a wide array of excellent essays on different topics in philosophy of fiction. Devoting essays to topics in mathematics, history, legal studies, music, film, photography, and dance as they pertain to fiction certainly sets this collection apart from an aesthetics text focused on literary fiction. With this in mind, one should not be misled by Sukla’s title. Though a great many essays here address and illuminate issues in fiction as they pertain to works of art, this collection offers perspectives on fictions that go beyond the types of fictions we are familiar with in artworks. In conjunction with the essays on Western artistic fictions, the essays in Parts II and IV provide a reader different ways to think not only about fictions in works of art but how fictions play important roles in a variety of fields of study and have value in society including, but not limited to, their ability to entertain.

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