

Book Reviews

PIPPIN, ROBERT. *After the Beautiful: Hegel and the Philosophy of Pictorial Modernism*. University of Chicago Press, 2014, x + 159 pp., 36 b&w + 7 color illus., \$27.50 cloth.

The prospect of reading Robert Pippin's latest book, *After the Beautiful: Hegel and the Philosophy of Pictorial Modernism*, was an exciting one. On the one hand, his interpretation of Hegel's philosophy had always struck me as illuminating and original. But then, on the other hand, the book's promise of a "re-assessment of the modernist project" (back flap of the hard cover edition) through the lens provided by the German's philosophy of art could only add to my excitement given my own project to explore its relevance in understanding our experience of contemporary art forms.

The essay's introduction rapidly convinced me that we would once again gain access to some of Hegel's most difficult theses under Pippin's careful guidance. There, the author first exposes and explains defining traits of the modern evolution of pictorial art. He then moves on to clarify how he means to appropriate Hegel's understanding of art in order to account more specifically for the historical and artistic accomplishments of Manet's novel paintings. In so doing, he immediately singles out two controversial claims that lie at the heart of his project and structure the book's argument.

The first, a consequence of Hegel's approach to the meaning and purport of art, is that modernist paintings ought to be viewed as intelligible achievements of a particular kind. That is, Pippin wants to argue that modernist paintings accomplish a distinct and necessary form of the self-understanding of the *Absolute*—a fundamental and oft reputed opaque Hegelian concept that Pippin's explanations make accessible to most readers. The issue is that Hegel had (famously) claimed a number of years before the advent of modernism in painting that art was a "thing of the past." The expression was meant to voice his conclusion that the philosophical concept of the Absolute achieved by his philosophical system

had made its representation by artistic means obsolete. Hence the following problem, which Pippin will have to address: if, early in the nineteenth century, Hegel's philosophical system had led to him to think that art was no longer significantly relevant, what purpose could there be to mobilizing his approach in trying to understand later art forms?

Following from the first claim and the question it raised, Pippin's second claim bears on the purported necessity of a philosophically informed perspective to the proper understanding of the kind of accomplishment that is modern art. What is really at stake, here, is the value and relevance of a Hegelian approach to the significance of modern paintings relative to other available approaches, historical or philosophical.

We can now see how these two claims structure the progress of Pippin's argument throughout the book. The first chapter begins by bringing into relief how Kant's critical work, and more specifically that accomplished in his third *Critique*, has set the stage for Idealist retrievals of the problematic relationship between sensibility and understanding—an issue that will be central to Pippin's own argument. To the Idealists, he argues, the question raised by our relation to the beautiful had to do with the meaning and value one should award our aesthetic experiences, including those elicited by artworks. What kind of intelligibility do these experiences make available to us, and how? One possible answer, one that was offered by the Schlegel brothers and Schelling, for example, is that the essence of beautiful art is to accomplish the manifestation of meaningful contents with an objectivity that surpasses what any philosophical discourse could ever hope to achieve. Hegel, however, disagreed with that essentialist definition of art, arguing instead that its relevance and value were necessarily determined historically. Consequently, for Hegel, coming to terms with art's proper intelligibility, understanding its specific accomplishment, could only be achieved through historical considerations. For Hegel, however, this meant understanding how art's specific form of intelligibility is structured and conditioned by the historical realization of *Geist's*

freedom or, in other words, by *Spirit's* concrete and effective attempts at understanding itself. The resulting approach to art thus demands that we analyze and describe art's accomplishments as being structured by a determinate regime of *Geist's* efforts toward the reconciliation of the "inner and the outer" or, in a way that anticipates future developments, of "intended meaning" and its manifest realization for a particular consciousness—whether that of the artist or that of the beholder.

The second chapter, "Philosophy and Painting: Hegel and Manet," is where Pippin presents the core of his thesis, his argument for the relevance of a Hegelian approach to the historical/normative transformations accomplished by modern art and, notably, by Manet. It starts with a rapid but well-argued analysis of the controversy surrounding the reception of Manet's *Luncheon on the Grass* and *Olympia* around 1863. Particularly interesting to me is the manner in which Pippin's analysis is built upon due attention to the paintings themselves. Too often do philosophers speak of visual arts without letting anything, any actual painting, be seen and invested by a rigorous and careful interpretation of the object. Not so here. In fact, the care with which Pippin guides his reader's gaze upon the paintings—the book contains over thirty-five illustrations as well as seven colored plates—makes me wish that he would have explored a few others before moving on to the philosophical issues he means to tackle.

As I have pointed out before, Pippin must here contend with a few obstacles inherent to his very project, not the least of which being Hegel's own infamous conclusion that art "is a thing of the past." Pointing the way out of this conundrum, Pippin asks: what if the "death of art" was not a necessary consequence of Hegel's aesthetics but, rather, a conclusion that followed from his *mistaken* interpretation of modernity's historical achievements? What if Hegel's claim was in fact conditional on modernity truly having accomplished the reconciliation of the "inner" and "outer" dimensions of *Geist*? In other words, Pippin convincingly means to argue that Hegel's declaration of art's obsolescence was not a result of his aesthetics *per se* but the consequence of his thinking that the issues artistic representations had historically made intelligible for spirit had been resolved in the "modern shape of spirit (*Gestalt des Geistes*)" which he saw as "a world of freedom realized, or reconciled social relations of persons who are free because they actually stand in relations of at least institutionally secured mutuality of recognition" (p. 37).

In a world Hegel thought had achieved the immediate and complete recognition of other subjects *as* subjects, of spirit as such in the face of its objective (material) reality, there was no longer a need for the material representation of spiritual reality by

means of artworks. But of course it is undeniable to us, who can look back on the achievements of modernity, that it never did achieve the mutuality of recognition Hegel believed it had. While it undeniably has marked a progress on that front, modernity has nonetheless failed to fully accomplish such reconciliation. Noticeably, Pippin argues, there is still a persisting dissonance pervading an individual's attempt to come to terms with who he is relative to the norms carried by his social institutions, the enduring feeling that one is being objectified by one's society in ways that do not properly correspond to the contents of one's subjective consciousness. And then there is as well the ever-looming dissatisfaction felt in one's interpretative response to the call of the "other," the sense that intentional deeds performed by other subjects are manifest as the promise of a meaning one cannot ever fully grasp. Dissonance and dissatisfaction are not, however, merely signs of a failed reconciliation of spirit with itself. They also and more importantly characterize the pre-reflexive consciousness of the processes whereby an attempt at such reconciliation is made. In other words, they are a truth of that process, and it is Pippin's claim that modernist paintings made that truth manifest and intelligible through artistic representation.

Pippin's central argument, then, is that modernity's artistic revolution, led in large part by Manet's work, was a possibility opened and structured by the particular conditions of modernity's failure at reconciling the "inner and outer" dimensions of spirit. As a result, Manet's paintings were shaped and conditioned by the specific manner in which the normative framework under which he was operating proved insufficient to render possible the complete and immediate shareability of meaning. Thus conditioned, his artistic accomplishments made the conditions of that failure intelligible to spirit, thereby offering it a means toward its eventual subsumption under a more satisfying conceptual attempt at reconciliation—even if the truth of the Absolute may very well be, as Pippin is found to say, the consciousness of this very process of attempted reconciliation and not its actual complete realization.

In the third and fourth chapters, Pippin sets out to demonstrate the relevance and relative value of his Hegelian approach. In the third chapter, "Politics and Ontology: Clark and Fried," Pippin furthers his account of Manet's historical accomplishment via a critical discussion of the contributions made by the two art historians. His ambition here is to analyze alternative interpretative frameworks in order to show how Hegel's approach to modern art proves more rewarding and thus more relevant in understanding the specificity of modernity's contribution to the intelligibility of the key problems just presented. More precisely, Pippin means to argue, first, that Clark's and

Fried's theses complete one another in a dialectical manner that only a Hegelian approach can properly highlight and, second, that his approach therefore serves to complete and further their work, thus offering a way to avoid the one-sidedness that threatens their historical interpretation of Manet's realizations. In a nutshell, Clark and Fried both have perceived in Manet's paintings something expressing the crisis of credibility, but their accounts respectively insist on only one side of the issue. While Clark focuses on the manner in which Manet's paintings challenge the norms of bourgeois self-representation, and thus evoke the resistance of the subject to its objectification under social norms, Fried rather concentrates on the problem of the beholder, that is, on how the work stands before an individual as the intentional promise of a meaningful experience that, while addressed to an audience that understands the norms that make such an intention possible, will nonetheless prove impossible to render in its entire intelligibility. In other words, both authors offer a partial explanation of the crisis of credibility represented in Manet's work, the first by insisting on problems tied to the objective world of conventions and values, the second on the existential quandary of understanding the meaning of an intentional deed that, for all our efforts, we cannot ever fully do justice to. But brought together under the favored Hegelian approach, the two accounts complete each other in a manner that provides a clearer view on how Manet's work makes manifest a truth of the dialectic structure of spirit's struggle toward reconciliation with itself.

In the book's penultimate chapter, "Art and Truth: Heidegger and Hegel," Pippin turns to Heidegger's philosophy of art. Heidegger, much like Hegel, understands an artwork's phenomenon as the possible manifestation of a truth about the intelligibility of our experience. Pippin is therefore keen to draw similarities and points of contention between the two views in order to obtain a more determinate account of the intelligibility accomplished by modern paintings. He notes, for example, how the two thinkers tie the meaning and relevance of artworks to their historical setting, and how they both reject the idea that the truth they make manifest is of a representational or propositional nature. Where they profoundly disagree, however, is just what truth comes to intelligibility through the artwork: while Pippin's Hegelian approach argues that artworks provide a window on the problem of the shareability of meaning, Heidegger's claim is that it is the very possibility and structure of the meaning of being that is unconcealed by the event of art.

Pippin's argument at this point becomes rather technical and may prove of interest only to those already well versed in Heidegger's (or Merleau-Ponty's) propositions on how artworks afford us the

occasion to gain some wisdom about the realization of meaning in a historical world. I will therefore limit myself to a few words and say that, much like Derrida before him, Pippin is here found arguing against Heidegger's contention that the encounter with great artworks opens up on the possibility of understanding how truth and meaning become possible in one's world. Artworks are never mere events, *Ereignisse*, but rather stand as particular realizations informed by social and historical conditions; paintings are intentional deeds that realize the intelligibility of unspoken possibilities in the painter's world. Because they are thus structured, and because what is thereby accomplished is not made propositionally nor representationally accessible, paintings become arresting events that, all at once, question the very possibility of the shareability of meaning while offering themselves as the very promise of that possibility.

In his concluding remarks, Pippin offers a summary of his Hegelian approach to Manet's work and reiterates his claim about its historical participation to the normative shifts that have occurred in how we intelligibly relate to and appreciate pictorial art. These passages provide one last and very illuminating light on Pippin's project and thus the chance for readers less versed in Hegelian thought to secure a proper understanding of the thesis they have just read. As such, this chapter does what most of the book already accomplished, that is: it makes readily accessible Hegel's aesthetics to all philosophers interested in modern art while aptly and rigorously demonstrating just what is to be gained by insisting on its persisting relevance.

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AUXIER, RANDALL E. and HAHN, LEWIS EDWIN, eds. *The Philosophy of Arthur C. Danto*. Chicago, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 2013, xxxii + 796 pp., 31 b&w illus., \$99.95 cloth.

A book like this comes once in a generation. With twenty-seven essays on the philosophy of Arthur Danto, ranging from his work on Nietzsche and the philosophy of history to his important theses on the definition of art, the end of art, and the theory-driven nature of art history, to his studies of the philosophy of action, knowledge, mind and body, this book is a milestone. That it arrived at the exact endpoint of Danto's life confirms its culminating role. The eighty-nine-year-old Danto, in poor health, was brought an advance copy of this book, which was over a decade in the making, and for which he had been waiting

for years. He stood up from the baroque king's chair in which he held court in his Riverside Drive apartment, raised his hands in a happy gesture of recognition (*the book has come . . . finally!*), then collapsed onto the floor and died. This book was literally the last thing he saw. And it contains the finest of him: the long autobiography he wrote for it is worthy of Rousseau's *Emile* as a story of his philosophical education. In the autobiography Danto explains why he gave up a successful career as a woodcut artist to turn exclusively to philosophy. He sketches philosophical influences on his work, provides a lively discussion of the context of Pop art in which his famous eureka moment, after viewing Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* at the Stable Gallery in 1964, took place. He speaks of the fortuitous circumstances that led to his becoming art critic for *The Nation* magazine and what led him to formulate his thesis about the end of art. He discusses the maverick character of his philosophy, his turning to Nietzsche when every else considered him a proto-Nazi, and the influence of Hegel, whom his brothers and sisters in analytical philosophy considered the epitome of Germanic obfuscation. He talks of his lifelong friendships with artists (two, Sean Scully and David Read, make appearances in this book). Written in his generous and captivating way, the autobiography has the narrative lucidity of his best art criticism. It is, however, nearly bested by the quality of his replies to the twenty-seven essays in this book, all essays of very high quality and some wonderful, as if each of the authors strived to do their absolute best for this book. These replies provide a conversational clarity to ideas central to his thinking, ideas sometimes formulated in his books with more baroque vivacity than that.

Many of the essays in this book are the product of long-standing conversations between Danto and the writer and carry the sense of an uncompleted conversation about important matters. I refer to essays by George Dickie, Fred Rush, Lydia Goehr, Noël Carroll, David Read, Sean Scully, Frank Ankersmit, and any number of contributors. His responses often acknowledge this. This conversational approach lends the book a provisional cast, rather than the grandeur of an archival tomb for the last words of/on the master. Related to its conversational character is the fact that it is datable to a moment in ongoing history thirty years after Danto's ideas came to fruition and serves as among the first of what will be many further re-visits to Danto's work. Danto's philosophy is nothing if not rooted in the contemporary world in which he lived; his autobiography revels in this. Like so much of the best of the philosophy of art, the ideas Danto developed are datable to a specific moment in history and are developed and generalized in the light of that moment. As history moves forward, ideas staked on the contemporary-now-past may lose their

sell-by date. This is one of many subsequent books examining Danto's ideas in the light of the thirty years that have passed since their formulation. This book is not merely a culmination; it is among the first acts of retrospective return.

One of the reasons why Danto was included in the library of living philosophers (most no longer alive) is because of the systematic character of his thought. His philosophical aspiration was to connect the philosophies of action, knowledge, and history to that of art. While he constantly bemoaned his inability to do this (can anyone?), this book has some excellent essays (by Fred Rush and Frank Ankersmit, for example) about the intersection between his work on history and on art. Gerard Vilar writes well and critically about links between his art criticism and philosophical project of defining art, Susan Feagin about art and language in his thought. Lydia Goehr brings out previously unnoticed connections between his work on Nietzsche, his philosophy of history and his philosophy of art. These links have been insufficiently captured before. Another of the book's values is its inclusion of two artists in the mix, David Read and Sean Scully, both of whom Danto had written extensively on and who were important intellectual companions of his. Sean Scully, perhaps the most important living abstract painter, turns out in these pages to be his own finest and deepest critic, seconded by Danto.

In the course of these essays some genuinely new approaches to Danto's thought emerge. To take one example that will have to stand in for others, George Dickie and Arthur Danto have a discussion about whether art must always be "about something." In the course of this discussion (and in other places in the book) a genuine advance is signaled about how Danto might approach the definition of art in relation to the old question of the "aesthetic." It is well known (and oft repeated in this book) that Danto sidelined aesthetics, understood as the study of beauty, sublimity, and expression in the arts, with his reading of Warhol. If Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* were, he reasoned, art, whereas their supermarket counterparts were not, then there could be nothing in "what the eye could descry" (or the heart might feel) which would spell out the difference. The indiscernibility meant only an invisible background could explain how the Warhol work could, in 1964, be understood as art, while its supermarket counterpart could not. Danto went on, in subsequent work, to focus on two things about the Warhol work, which caused it to be art, and then the context (a theory-driven art world), which allowed this to happen. First, Warhol's work is *about something* in the way the supermarket varietal is not. It has meaning, the other merely branding. Warhol's work "speaks" to the world and the world of art (then as now) in a comic/audacious voice.

Second, its meaning, or voice, is achieved through what he called “embodiment,” through the use of its materiality and form, through its physicality, through, one wants to say, the gesture of exhibiting it and the features of it which stood out when so exhibited. In this case what stood out was its indiscernibility from the supermarket varietal and its unlikely place in the gallery. In the case of Duchamp’s work, Warhol’s predecessor in the game of reflection on art, it is the way his *Readymades* are uncanny simulations of sculpture, playing a game of chess with sculpture’s smooth surfaces, tactile values, exhibition pedestals, and anthropomorphic resonances of the human body, in the form of poor relations (of sculpture) admitted into the class of museum things like some immigrant that manages to “pass” in a Ralph Lauren suit for the moneyed classes and so become a member of the Yacht Club.

In his replies to Dickie and others about whether all art has to be about something Danto adds a substantially new idea to the mix. He suggests that aesthetic features—beauty, sublimity, and, indeed, expressive power—can be among the ways the features of a work conspire to embody meaning. Suddenly, after thirty years of denial, Danto admits the aesthetic into the core of his thinking in the philosophy of art. And he is, I think, right. It is through a work’s capacity to solicit aesthetic experience from its audience that it comes to have the meaning it does. Mondrian, Titian, and Piero della Francesca all invoke a strange and overwhelming experience of beauty merged with a sense of the sublime; they all transport or transfigure the viewer to a place that cannot really be described. And the intensity of this experience is then fused with the meaning found in the work’s pictorial narrative or textual background to produce deepened meaning and, indeed, myth. Through a transfiguration of the viewer or overwhelming of him or her, these great artists then allow the viewer to read their experience of being overwhelmed/transfigured back into the pictorial or abstract or theoretical meaning of the work in a way that deepens it. Without the aesthetic, art’s capacity to *mean something* would be severely disabled.

This is but one example of a genuinely new approach to Danto that comes out of this book if one can read between its lines and put remarks uttered in disparate places together.

Lydia Goehr’s essay is another. She explores Danto in a way that connects him to historicist traditions and the history of politics and ideology. Danto was a great and humane democrat. His vision of a pluralist postmodern/contemporary art world is nothing if not democratic. It is about diversity and the need for the critic to be open to it. What Goehr shows is how important his early work on Nietzsche was for his anti-totalitarian views about culture. Goehr

points out that in spite of the Hegelianism in his thesis about the end of art, Danto never believed that the histories of art, science, and society could be assimilated into a grand historical vision of progress. This crucially frees him from what Goehr, amplifying remarks she has made in her important book *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* (Oxford, 1991), calls the museological vision of the past which arose in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and links the aesthetics of the aura—the beauty of lost/ruined things—to the ideological heritage of origins, which, suitably rediscovered and celebrated, would, according to the historical ideology, allow Europe a newly found path to its modern destiny. The past proclaims the future, and with unity and inevitability. This thinking is central, Goehr reminds us, to the articulation of fascism (she has a wonderful discussion of Albert Speer). And so Danto’s democratizing instincts importantly surface in his resistance to a systematic vision of historical progress in spite of his instincts to systematize knowledge, actions, historical semantics, and art at the level of *theory*.

Goehr’s essay will have to stand in for a number of others which I cannot do justice to in the short space of this review but which allow for similarly new kinds of understanding of the inner pulse and connections of Danto’s thought. I will also, however, mention Noël Carroll’s essay, because it raises some very interesting questions about Danto’s famous thesis concerning the end of art. Carroll asks if Warhol’s achievement and Danto’s philosophical reconstruction of it truly completed the project of art history, which was, on Danto’s view, a philosophical project, one in which art searched for an understanding of its own essence and finally got it with Warhol, then all the arts should have ended. The thesis of the end of art does not say art will stop dead, of course, but rather that it will go on, having culminated its historical mission, in a way freed from the burden of having to contribute to the big project of history. Danto’s thesis is that the end of art is a liberating moment, not simply a deflationary one. Freed from the burden of contribution to the grand project of art history, artists were, in the 1970s, liberated to pursue their own individualities, explore whatever they liked.

Carroll’s question has a certain bite. Because if art with a capital *A* was over in the philosophical sense Danto meant it, then it was over in dance, music, literary fiction, film, and even architecture—unless somehow the historical news of Warhol’s achievement failed to travel to these other arts, which would have been unlikely. And there is a question about whether, across the arts, there remains the sense of the burden and big shoulders of art history, to which one must continue to contribute or not.

The question is how to understand the deep contributions made to art history across the arts and *since*

the announcement Danto made of the end of art back in the 1970s. A longer review could list these (and the list would be long); suffice it to say that visual art has achieved entirely new media (installation), multi-media ensembles (Kentridge's fusion of drawing and film), the novel deep innovations in form (Sebald), and so on. Danto himself wrote on Cindy Sherman, whose work evolved a new relationship between performance art, film, photography, and the history of painting. Do these achievements signal that art history is not ended?

Given that art history seems to be driven variously forward, the idea that it nevertheless ended depends on a particular story: in this case, Danto's. That story pitches philosophy at the center of visual art, with modern and avant-garde art occupied (implicitly, without entirely knowing it) in the singular and overriding project of self-discovery, and self-discovery understood as finding out philosophically what makes you what you are, of defining yourself. Then was the history of art really a project of modernist/avant-garde self-definition? Was this the overriding aspiration of art history, culminating in Warhol's work and ending the connection between the artist, the creation of new art, and the driving of larger history forward? If not, how shall the very real changes that happened between the end of the Second World War and the 1960s in the way innovation was understood in relation to the driving of larger historical processes be understood? What has ended?

My own view is that what was ended between the Second World War and the 1960s was a certain precocity of vision central to the modernist and especially the avant-garde project. This was the belief, or ideology, that art could carry forward on its big shoulders a singular history, riding the crest of history like a surfer and through its experimentalism, buttressed by equally strong experimentalism in theory through the combination of new visual form and a *movement* with its manifesto and proclamations, not to mention subversive antics, could change the world. But the history that art believed it could and must carry on its shoulders was not a philosophical project of self-discovery but something much larger, a vast change in the very character of modern life. The project of the avant-gardes was utopian, to turn the artwork into an exemplar of the coming age and thereby help to bring that age about, and to design the landscape of the future in advance of its happening, to build the buildings, plan the cities, create the typeface and photography, rethink the places of cultural worship (no longer the museum or the gallery but the place of spectacle, the street, the world). The role of philosophy in this was to articulate the relationship between art, knowledge, new media, and the future. Discovery of the medium, self-knowledge about art, was at

the service of experimentalism: finding new ways to inhabit the medium or new media.

The avant-garde, and modernist projects both ended sometime between the end of the Second World War and the end of the 1960s, although the avant-garde belief, ideology, narrative, or dream (call it what you will) of politicizing art courtesy of linking experimentation to politics continued into the politics of the happening and the identity politics of art in the 1980s and 1990s. But the belief that there is a singular, all-encompassing route from the past to the future, a historical grand narrative to which art is singularity linked, so that one is uniquely picked out to ride the crest of history in one's own artistic innovations, has pretty much gone away with the collapse of the big pictures of history which the right and the left offered Europe in the first half of the twentieth century.

An important source of avant-garde aspiration was also that of Duchamp and Warhol, whose games played in and around art were an absolute boon to philosophy, soliciting reflection on the practice of art, the relation between medium, desire, product, machine, creation, profiling, celebrity, and a host of other things, including the question of what an artwork is and what makes it so. This will to (critical) reflection on art and art practice from within art has been an important strand in modernist art from Manet to the present. It is linked to the history of modernist art criticism from Baudelaire on. It can be called a philosophical strand in modernist art if one wishes. But its goal was never the universalization of a definition of art, but, rather reflection on the practice and status of art. This strand of critical and reflective art is still going strong. It has in no way ended and has much more to say than was said by Duchamp, Warhol, and Danto, who have not had the last words.

Nor can one anymore believe that the stakes of one's rediscovery of the core elements in a medium will drive an art forward for the next hundred years, as Schoenberg famously said about his discovery of the twelve tone method of composition in music. The medium is now understood as a multiplicity, with various routes to innovation being possible and none predominant.

Danto's democratic celebration of the contemporary age is accurate, simply not well posed (in terms of his grand narrative about the end of art). Put another way, philosophy has been of importance to modern and avant-garde art but never of overriding importance, implicit or otherwise, if by philosophy one means the project of knowing a thing abstractly and universally. It is rather the other way round. Art is of overriding importance to philosophy.

Without the extraordinary work of Arthur Danto, these themes could never have been discussed in

anything like the way I am doing now, and which, in various ways, this book does. And to twist the words of Andy Warhol, the worst thing in life is not having anything to talk about. New times call for bold ideas. Danto has provided the best of them. And this book is a perfect place to revisit them.

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BONDS, MARK EVAN. *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea*. Oxford University Press, 2014, xiii + 375 pp., \$35.00 cloth.

This book is intended as a history of the view that music is empty form. According to this view, music does not represent, it does not arouse ordinary emotions (perhaps it arouses aesthetic or musical emotion), and it does not express emotion. It is appreciated as pure (beautiful) form. In short, this book is a history of formalism in music. Bonds disclaims all philosophical pretensions. He writes that, “the purpose of this book . . . is not to advocate any particular philosophical point of view” (p. 5). He explicitly declines to engage with contemporary advocates of formalism, such as Peter Kivy and Nick Zangwill. Still, this is a book that will be of considerable interest to philosophers of music. A book of immense erudition, it can provide grist for any number of philosophical mills.

Absolute Music begins with a brief survey of music theory from antiquity until 1550. Not much in the way of formalism is to be found in this period. Many ancients considered music a representational art and for much of the Middle Ages music was thought somehow to reflect the cosmos. The story becomes more complex after 1550, and the huge number of data points makes it difficult to form a coherent narrative that tells the history of music theory from 1550 up until 1850. Bonds opts to order music theory according to five general themes: expression, beauty, form, autonomy, and disclosiveness (that is, music’s capacity to disclose “higher truths”). At times, this arrangement is a little awkward. Philosophers of music and music theorists are introduced in one section whose work could just as easily fit under another rubric. Moreover, so many figures are discussed in the course of about 80 pages that little attention can be devoted to any of them. Philosophers will quibble with the presentation of certain philosophical views. Still, these chapters of *Absolute Music* are interesting in that they introduce a wider range of music theorists than those with whom philosophers are normally conversant. The history of music theory is a much

more many-splendored thing than most philosophers know.

Despite the complexity of the story, a fairly clear picture begins to emerge. Few writers seriously entertained formalism during the period from 1550 to 1850 until fairly late in the eighteenth century. At that point, several philosophers, among them James Beattie, Adam Smith, and Kant appear to embrace formalism. (Strangely, the musicologist Charles Burney, who can also be seen as an early exponent of formalism, does not figure in Bonds’ narrative.) This first, brief flourishing of formalism was, however, short-lived. Formalism was quickly abandoned by philosophers such as Hegel and Schopenhauer as well as by composers such as Beethoven and Liszt. (Bonds devotes a short chapter to a discussion of Liszt’s program music.)

We then come to Wagner. Wagner was a staunch opponent of “absolute music.” (He coined the term and intended it pejoratively.) Ironically, however, Wagner, by denying that purely instrumental music could have expressive content, can be seen as paving the way for formalism. If purely instrumental music cannot be appreciated for its expressive content, we need another account of why such music is an object of aesthetic appreciation. Formalism has just such an account. And it was not long before a great champion of formalism emerged. In 1854 Hanslick published *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*. The core of Bonds’ book is an examination of Hanslick’s work, its context, and its fallout.

Bonds does much more than provide an exposition of Hanslick’s views about music. He does a masterful job of revealing the origins of Hanslick’s ideas and showing that many of them are much less original than is often thought. Hanslick simply gave a classic expression to ideas that were floating around in several quarters. Bonds also demonstrates the tensions and inconsistencies in Hanslick’s thought. The record shows how Hanslick’s thought became more consistent. (Bonds provides a detailed history of how the concluding paragraph of *On the Musically Beautiful* evolved as Hanslick shed some of his metaphysical baggage and became more consistently a formalist.) Bonds shows how Hanslick frequently misrepresents the beliefs of his opponents. A picture emerges of a man characterized by mendaciousness and “mean-spiritedness” (p. 169). Bonds shows how Hanslick’s theoretical commitments drove his aesthetic judgments. He was willing to see the works of Schütz, Palestrina, and even the sonatas and concerti of Bach “go up in flames.” He found the final movement of Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony “unbeautiful.” (When someone finds himself writing such things, it is time for him to go back and find the flaw in his reasoning.) Finally, Bonds investigates the connection between Hanslick’s formalism and conservative politics. (The

connection between formalism and right wing politics continued, Bonds notes, during the cold war when the CIA supported formalism in the arts.)

In the short term, Hanslick was unsuccessful in converting many composers to formalism. (Earlier generations of composers, as Bonds points out, were usually resolutely anti-formalist, a point that Hanslick conveniently avoids.) Mahler, Richard Strauss, and the other major composers of the second half of the nineteenth century usually believed that music is expressive and has content. (Contrary to what Bonds suggests, Mahler was pretty resolutely anti-formalist. He wrote that a composition originates in “something the composer has experienced” and his symphonies sometimes have detailed, though not public, programs.)

All of that changed come the twentieth century. Under the influence of Walter Pater and Clive Bell, in addition to Hanslick, formalism began to flourish in all of the arts. Schoenberg, writing in 1909, spoke of the “flowering of so-called absolute music.” Other major composers, including Stravinsky, embraced formalism. (For some reason, today’s defenders of formalism seldom refer to the composers whose work should most successfully illustrate the contentlessness of music.) Bonds discusses in some detail the growing appeal of formalism, in all of the arts, from the beginning of the twentieth century on. According to Bonds, the heyday of formalism stretched from 1945 to 1970. He believes that formalism began to lose its cachet in musical circles after 1970, and he attributes its demise to the rise of post-modernism. (If this is true, it is the only good thing I have ever heard about post-modernism.)

Prior to the dominance of composers who embraced formalism, Bonds believes, there was a period when composers and theorists alike sought a compromise between formalism and anti-formalism. I think that it is more accurate to say that there was a period when a variety of views about music were current. Some writers embraced formalism, others anti-formalism. It is pretty hard to reconcile views that are, after all, contradictory. It must be said, however, that some formalists, not ones discussed by Bonds, have tempered their views somewhat. In particular, the enhanced formalism of Kivy allows that music can be expressive of certain emotions.

One consequence of formalism is that musical beauty is ineffable. Hanslick certainly believed that we cannot capture in words what makes a work of music beautiful. Contemporary formalists also typically take musical beauty to be ineffable. Bonds pays comparatively little attention to this consequence of formalism. *Absolute Music* is a good book that would have been even better had it paid more attention to ineffability. In my view, formalism is unsatisfactory

precisely because it makes the beauty of music inexplicable.

In the end, Bonds is a little disingenuous when he disclaims any philosophical agenda. By the end of his book, it is clear that he does not have a great deal of sympathy for formalism. He takes it to be “self-evident” that “music is an art of expression” (p. 41). He concludes by saying that “the idea of wholly a autonomous art . . . finds relatively few adherents today” (p. 298). In my experience, it is still pretty widespread in philosophy of music circles, as the examples of Kivy and Zangwill suggest. I agree, however, that the worm seems to have turned again, and the fortunes of formalism are in decline. I am not so sure, however, that post-modernism is undermining formalism in philosophy of music. Rather it is threatened by a return to empiricism: a focus on the experience of music and on psychological research into the experience of music.

Bonds has written a meticulously researched and informative book on the history of formalist thinking about music. It is mercifully free of jargon and the sort of “theory” that philosophers often find off-putting. While it is not a contribution to philosophy of music, it will nevertheless be of interest to many philosophers interested in music. It brings to the attention of philosophers a wider range of examples from the history of music theory than commonly comes to their knowledge. Moreover, it deepens our understanding of Hanslick by placing his work in its historical context.

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MARTINON, JEAN-PAUL, ed. *The Curatorial: A Philosophy of Curating*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013, xix + 255 pp., 5 b&w illus., £65.00 cloth.

Curating, as a profession, is the assumption of responsibility for the care of methodical collections of tangible things, such as are found in museums. This is a demanding undertaking involving a mixture of practical and scholarly skills. Without a foundation in continuing intellectual enquiry, curating of any kind is sure to be stunted. Various institutions around the world have recognized the merit of attending to curatorship as a scholarly and self-reflective activity, offering graduate courses designed to prepare curators in a range of fields. Among them is the Curatorial/Knowledge program in the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, a college of the University of London, aimed at what its website describes as “researchers who are already working in the

field and are interested in theorizing their practice.” *The Curatorial* emerges from this particular milieu. It is a collection comprising an introduction, twenty-seven essays, and a coda by the experienced curator and museum director Charles Esche.

The field in question is not the curatorship of collections generally, nor even of art as a whole, but solely contemporary art. Helmut Draxler, in his chapter, “Modern Art: Its Very Idea and the Time/Space of the Collection,” is one of the few contributors to mention art beyond the contemporary. Further, as so often occurs in discussions of contemporary art curatorship, the focus is almost exclusively on display. Thinking clearly and methodically about issues raised by exhibiting contemporary art is certainly a worthy goal, but to do so to the exclusion of other, equally pressing and problematic curatorial issues (such as systematics and conservation) reveals a certain myopia and complacency. Most of the contributors to this collection relentlessly over-theorize this one area while ignoring others. Furthermore, that many of the chapters originate from people in a single institution who share certain obsessions may well have exacerbated a tendency to monotony. At least fifteen of the thirty-one contributors are associated with Goldsmiths.

Where is the philosophy in this book? Philosophy is prominent in its title. Its use there might lead a reader to expect some consistent and competent appeal to philosophy, whether analytical, continental, or both. The chapters contain plenty of theory, but precious little philosophy. According to the “Notes on Contributors,” only three of the thirty-one claim formal acquaintance with the discipline. I therefore take “Philosophy” in the title to be employed colloquially, much as one might speak of a particular club manager’s philosophy of baseball. As for “The Curatorial” in the title, you may wish you had not wondered. In his editor’s introduction, Jean-Paul Martinon confides that “the curatorial” is “quintessentially of our time and, inevitably, a difficult thing to define” (p. 3). However, he soon attempts a set of definitions: “The curatorial is a jail-break from pre-existing frames, a gift enabling one to see the world differently, a strategy for inventing new points of departure, a practice of creating allegiances against social ills, a way of caring for humanity, a process of renewing one’s own subjectivity, . . .” and so on for a further seven lines ending in “etc.” (p. 4). So “The Curatorial” appears to be a miscellaneous selection of ideals that it might be unkind to point out have long been associated with romantic, youthful self-assertion of the early Wordsworthian “Bliss was it in that dawn” kind. The hopefulness of youth has much to be said for it, and youthfulness certainly characterizes the majority of the contributors to this book. Indeed, at the time of publication

nine of the contributors were recent Ph.D.s or graduate students, all but one of whom studied at Goldsmiths.

What about the acknowledged philosophers? One of these is Stefan Nowotny, currently a lecturer in the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths. In “The Curator Crosses the River,” he writes of Gaius Julius Hyginus’s Latin fable of Cura (“Care”) and the creation of humankind from clay (earth: *humus*), cited by Martin Heidegger as “an ancient fable in which Dasein’s interpretation of itself as ‘care’ has been embedded” (Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Oxford: Blackwell, 1962, ¶42, p. 242). Here is a taste of Nowotny’s philosophical prose. “Hence, what we might imagine to open up in the interruption of Cura’s journey is not simply a new set of orientations, a new imaginary, but rather a new field of possible explorations into both the objects and the potentialities of disengagement: the uses and disputed status of pictoriality, the materiality at hand and on the ground, creativity and the ways it is enabled or absolutized, contingency and animation, orderings of ‘high’ and ‘low’ and their horizontalization, the (re- and de-) configurations of the human, non-human and the *humus*, the debates about the origins and properties of common names, the fragile commonality of those involved, concerned, making claims, etc.” (p. 63). He calls—like others in this volume—for yet another new epistemology (“... to be young was very heaven!”), sharing with his editor faith in the power of a concluding “etc.,” etc.

There is something admirable, as well as naïve, in the way that the hope and high energy of youth can even lead to proposals to harness exhaustion. One of the Goldsmiths student contributors, Leire Vergara, considers “An Exhausted Curating.” This, she writes, “should be about acknowledging what is considered today to be possible within the field. Not unlike Deleuze’s proposition for the exhausted, that is, someone who is caught by exhaustion is also able to exhaust its own exhaustion, an ‘exhausted curating’ should unravel its own exhaustion as a way of stimulating new possible forms of curatorial production” (p. 74). Is “exhausted curating” an epistemological novelty, or the contemporary equivalent of counting angels on a pinhead?

In her contribution, “The Expanded Field,” Irit Rogoff, an experienced scholar who directs the Curatorial/Knowledge program, proclaims an “epistemological crisis, exiting from previous definitions, refusing former meanings, refusing moral inscription, refusing the easy stability in which one thing is seemingly good and the other potentially threatening” (pp. 43–44). This so-called “epistemological crisis” according to Rogoff “seems a much more fertile ground from which to think the notion of an

emergent field. An epistemological crisis would allow us to think not competing interests but absent knowledges, it would allow us to posit a proposition that would say that if we were able to find a way to know *this*, it might allow us not to think *that*. So it is a question of the loss or sacrifice of a way of thinking, as opposed to the cumulative proliferation of modes of operating" (p. 45). Leaving aside the question of precisely who Rogoff's "us" and "we" might be, I am left wondering whether there is, in truth, any epistemological crisis whatsoever, rather no more than a failure to think clearly. To declare an epistemological crisis need be no more than a maneuver to interject panic-mode theorizing.

In spite of the skepticism bordering on the curmudgeonly that I feel in the face of the aggregated relentlessness of these essays, I acknowledge that there is an issue here well worth exploring. The most effective means on offer in this volume would appear to be, by turns, the most poetical and the most empirical.

The most poetical account is provided in the first essay to follow the editor's introduction. This is "On the Curatorial, From the Trapeze" by the ever-interesting Raqs Media Collective, founded in 1992 by Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula, and Shudhabrata Sengupta, based in New Delhi. Its members elide distinctions among artists, curators, and what they charmingly term "philosophical agents provocateurs." In their contribution, they construct a series of thirteen meditations, each headed by the initials of pairs of words chosen to take the reader through what they term "a book-ending of successive alphabetical extremities, A-Z, B-Y, C-X, D-W, E-V, right up to M-N, as fly bars from which it suspends 13 word-pairs" (p. 17). The first is "AZ Advantage ~ Zeitgeist," the last "MN Morphic ~ Nirvana," and they define each term. They show that there is still plenty of mileage in the much discussed blending of art making and curatorial practice, at least in the absence of philosophy and probably in addition to it. They present a fine balancing act between analysis and poetic allusion, posing such questions as "How to irrigate a minefield?" (under "CX Collision ~ Xeriscape") (p. 19). They conclude: "The acrobat on the trapeze has to let go of the fear of reaching for the other's hand. What is at hand is the liberation of forms from themselves. We could call this possibility, the curatorial; at least for now" (p. 23).

Not until the final chapter, "Coda: The Curatorial," is a mature voice of experience and empirical reason raised, that of Charles Esche, the director of the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, and the co-curator of the 2014 São Paulo Biennial. He succinctly summarizes the prevailing working conditions for curators that inevitably lead them to

compromise their ideals as they have to meet a host of often conflicting expectations on the part of artists, patrons, and bureaucracies. "If we are honest," he writes, "we curators generally grease the wheels of whatever vehicle will allow us to make our 'project' and then hope against hope that we can still produce a critical surplus while keeping the funders happy" (p. 243). In his experience, curating entails a "balance of negotiation, stubbornness, submissiveness and clear thinking" (p. 243). This may not be philosophy, but it is none the worse for it, being the result of the clear thinking he advocates. Esche calls for the retrospective analysis of exhibition projects, a rare enough practice that he sensibly proposes need not be confined to curators' voices alone, but that can involve others. "Curating as an act needs to become less visible as the curatorial as a system of collective knowledge production takes the stage" (p. 244), his vision of "the curatorial" being the simplest and most persuasive offered in this volume. Esche's essay alone rescues *The Curatorial* from my temptation to apply to it Richard Wollheim's strictures on a book by T. J. Clark: It "theorizes into existence something which, as far as I can see, is unsupported either by evidence or by general plausibility" (Richard Wollheim, *Painting as an Art*, Princeton University Press, 1987, p. 10). In the absence of philosophy in this book, the Raqs Media Collective's "verbal acrobatics" (Martinon's apt phrase) and Esche's elegantly argued position derived from careful reflection on experience will have to do.

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TANSMAN, ALAN, *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism*, University of California Press, 2009, 368 pp., \$57.95 cloth.

TANSMAN, ALAN, ed., *The Culture of Japanese Fascism*, Duke University Press, 2009, 496 pp., 24 illus., \$99.95 cloth.

There are at least three reasons why everyone interested in visual arts and/or literature—not to mention fascism and/or Japan—should read Alan Tansman's insightful study *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism*, which definitively documents and masterfully analyzes Japanese uses of aesthetics to inculcate fascism from the pre-war years to the end of World War II and after, namely, his discussions of fascism, the power and appeal of Japanese aesthetics and arts, and the functions and power of art in general. (There may be more, but I am trying to keep this short.) In addition, there are at least four

reasons why *if* you read it, you will enjoy it, but I will save those for afterward; I discuss Tansman's edited volume, *The Culture of Japanese Fascism*, at the end.

I. WHY YOU SHOULD READ THIS BOOK

I.A. *Fascism*

Grounding his study in close literary analysis of fiction, essays, a propaganda tract, and film, Tansman shows that “fascism was one means to enchant a culture stripped of its magic by modernity. Intellectuals argued for, and creative artists made attractive, the abandonment of individuality—an abstract modern notion, seen as perniciously Western, festering at the core of the crisis—and searched for an identity grounded in native culture and life, mediated through absolute identification with ‘the people’ (*minzoku*) and the state” (*Aesthetics*, p. 9). While fascism attempted to remedy the failures of modernism, aesthetics played a strong—possibly determining—role in undermining individual agency and independent thought and action necessary for fascism's triumph. As he says, “fascist aesthetics—including artistic evocations of beauty and the aesthetic response to them—... attempted to resolve the conflicts of modernity by calling for complete submission, either to absolute order or to an undifferentiated but liberating experience of violence. Such an aesthetic exalted mindlessness and glamorized death” (*Aesthetics*, p. 2).

Tansman argues that the determining features are (a) use of the aesthetic for the purpose of avoiding (in oneself) and/or preventing (in the reader) logical thought and questioning, (b) identification of the individual with the state and erasure of individual responsibility, and (c) glorifying violence and death. They are especially dangerous because (a) “writers can aesthetically sow the seeds of a fascist atmosphere without intending to do so”; (b) “this atmosphere was produced by a fascist aesthetic whose language was often complex and carried within it the seeds of its own undoing”; (c) “it is precisely those creations . . . most resistant to political reading that best reveal the aesthetic strains of fascism”; and (d) “a beautiful novel or a recondite essay could help form a fascistic sensibility precisely because fascist moments, embedded in literary or cultural works, emerged from within a medium that appeared to writers and readers as apolitical” (*Aesthetics*, pp. 1–2).

I.B. *Japanese Arts and Aesthetics*

The second reason to read this book is the fresh truths it offers regarding mid-twentieth-century Japanese

aesthetics and literature—fields many of us have enjoyed and even fallen in love with. It turns out at least four of these aesthetics have peculiar aesthetic links to fascism, as Tansman shows: *Zen* aesthetics, which is clearly related to a second—the earliest to influence American life—Okakura Tenshin's 1906 *The Book of Tea*, widely read in its time and still (justifiably) ordered by the hundreds for classrooms today (Okakura Tenshin, *The Book of Tea* [New York: Dover, 1964; originally published New York: Fox, Duffield and Company, 1906]). Yet a third example is the complex of craft movements, instigated in Japan by Yanagi Sōetsu (whom Tansman covers in Chapter 3: “Objects of the Sublime in Literary Writing: Yasuda Yojūrō, Yanagi Sōetsu, Kawabata Yasunari, and Shiga Naoya”), whose work with potters Bernard Leach and Hamada Shoji not only drew thousands to Japanese ceramics and to the aesthetics of imperfection and of daily life, but influenced hundreds of American potters and helped inspire America's own return to hand crafts and folk art. (There is a demonstrable line of influence, although I will not go into it here.) This fascination with and influence of Japanese crafts continues today. (I just got back from a powerful show on Japanese lacquer at the tiny but mighty art gallery at the East-West Center, curated by Michael Schuster, with yet another riveting Japanese craft documentary with superb production values—the last time I went to one of this gallery's shows I had to stop everything I was doing and write two articles on Ainu aesthetics.) And while the West's all-time favorites still seem to be eighteenth-century Ukiyo-e (the paintings and woodblock prints of the floating world) and Hokusai's and Hiroshige's nineteenth-century landscape prints, their twentieth-century replacements in our hearts are the new prints and photographs of *furusato* (“home village”) and Japanese temples and gardens which, like the Ukiyo-e and landscape prints, fascinate with their alternatively bold and subtle coloration, their detailed portrayal of an exotic world minutely observed, and their semblance of tranquility combined with heightened passion, conveying many of the same qualities (physical, visual, aesthetic, moral, emotional) to new generations. (The excitement and titillating exoticism combined with luxury and tradition was just as integral to the prints' appeal to original Japanese viewers as it is to outsiders, although Japanese viewers would, of course, have the additional layer of familiarity to make things a bit more complex. I subscribe to a couple of art galleries' e-lists and regularly get such work in my mail—and beautiful it is!)

The fact that all of these can be linked to fascism makes Tansman's convincing insights for understanding how aesthetic fascism functions and how it can be distinguished from other similar uses all the more important. Tansman explores the nature of these links in depth—the facts that not all these

authors colluded intentionally (some being used by others in ways they themselves never intended) and that some contributed (without payment) to journals founded to combat fascism (see Richard Torrance's essay on the literary journal *The People's Library* in Tansman's *Culture* . . .), and that many of the aesthetics played, or could play, just as strong a role in countering fascism and/or developing individuality and individualism.

Tansman's contributions here are (a) showing us how they achieve their effects (Tansman's interpretation of the use the fascist essayist Yasuda Yōjūrō made of this book in his paradigmatic and influential essay "Japanese Bridges" should be required reading), (b) clarifying the fascist dimensions where they exist, and (c) exonerating the writers—like Yanagi and Kawabata—whose work shares some of these characteristics but does *not* contribute to fascism—because it does not glorify death and violence. (See, making that distinction was not so hard.)

Tansman's work is also extremely valuable in illuminating the role(s) of transcendence in Japanese art and culture. I have often argued that one of the greatest contributions of Japanese art and aesthetics is that they show us how deeply meaningful and—beautiful? awe-inspiring? compelling?—life can be in the absence of transcendence. (This argument relies on ignoring the evidence of esoteric Buddhism.)

The point is that these arts continue to enchant many of us—and it is imperative to understand the role of art in equating violence and transcendence and in undermining reason, especially when, after all, reason can be treacherous, too—and has played its own roles in fascism and genocide.

I.C. *Art in General*

Third, Tansman's methods and insights on these works are often germane to literature and art in general, particularly those on transcendence, the specialists in the Japanese "Sublime," Japanese theory and use of incantatory language (*kotodama*), and Yasuda's use of Romanticism, language, and literary style (*Aesthetics*, p. 55ff). His close readings of prose, from the Nobel Prize winner on down to government propaganda, will reawaken you to the delights of language. Regarding Kawabata's novel *Snow Country*, he points out, "Sound, or language, is not merely figurative; it is literal; it infuses a body with color. Sound is not merely expressive; it is transformative. It creates through enunciation, like Yasuda's *kotodama*" (*Aesthetics*, p. 121). Analyses such as Ōishi Yoshinori's "attempt to connect German notions of the sublime to the mystery and depth of *yūgen*," which depend on

certain usages of language (*Aesthetics*, p. 127), may be informative for students of primarily European aesthetics as well.

II. THE FUN PART: WHY YOU WILL ENJOY READING THIS BOOK

I promised there were four reasons that if you read this book, you would enjoy nearly every minute. The first is the introduction *The Aesthetics* offers to a wider-than-usual range of works and writers (including non-fascists and hidden fascists as well as those who paved the way for fascism). (The fiction is by Akutagawa Ryūnosuke—names here are in Japanese order, family name first—Kobayashi Hideo, Kawabata Yasunari, and Shiga Naoya; essays are by Yasuda Yōjūrō, folk arts champion Yanagi Sōetsu, and Kobayashi Hideo, the propaganda tract *The Essence of the National Polity* (*Kokutai no hongī*) (published with 300,000 copies in 1937 and distributed by the millions by 1945); the film is *Mother under the Eyelids*.) Many are well worth discovering but not well known outside Japan—influential but also more difficult to approach than Western favorites such as Mishima Yukio, Abe Kōbō, and the Nobel laureates. They include Akutagawa, author of the two short stories ("Rashomon" and "In a Grove") used by director Akira Kurosawa in *Rashomon*, his 1950 film that made "Rashomon" an everyday English word and ushered in the worldwide popularity of Japanese film when it won the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival and an Honorary Award at the 1952 Academy Awards. The film made the notion of relativism intelligible (if not, for everyone, credible) to Western civilization, which, in the shadow of both Platonic idealism and the Judaeo-Christian-Islamic tradition, had believed that ultimately truth had to be absolute. (Not to imply that this debate is over!) While Akutagawa is a tragic figure (he committed suicide in 1927 at age thirty-five), reminiscent in some ways of Kafka, readers can have a hard time reconciling his sophistication, seriousness, and pessimism (some of his stories could serve Freud's theories as parables) with his seemingly simple-minded short stories that appear to take folklore seriously (I am thinking here of "Kappa," about a water-imp) or retell historical tales. Tansman's conclusion is that Akutagawa's "melancholy modernism of fragmented, musical moments provided glimpses of things to come and set into motion the beginnings of the fascist aesthetic in its literary form" (*Aesthetics*, p. 39).

Far less puzzling on the surface is Shiga Naoya, a novelist "known [to fellow writers] as 'the God of Japanese Novelists,'" of whom Tansman concludes: "It was Shiga's very solipsistic focus on self and

ego—the lack of social awareness for which he has been criticized—that saved him from making the leap from the imagination to action, from art to politics. In certain historical contexts epiphanies can be dangerous; one needs to walk away from them. By disrupting the seamless, transcendent narrative of [his protagonist] Kensaku's journey with the basest and most irresistible of bodily demands [Kensaku has diarrhea], Shiga resists that danger" (*Aesthetics*, p. 142).

Yasuda Yujiro's "Japanese Bridges" essay is valuable on three counts: how it affected the development of Japanese fascism, the beauty of its prose, and the seduction it is able to accomplish as a result of that beauty. In conjunction with the mystical hogwash it entices us to believe, it becomes ferociously dangerous.

Equally enjoyable are Tansman's fresh perspectives on well-known writers and topics. They include Kawabata Yasunari, best known as Japan's first Nobel laureate for literature (1968), but a pioneer of literary modernism and a writer of mesmerizing power: "Kawabata's moments of beauty . . . compel us into an 'eerie silence,' repairing us and making us whole again in the process of aesthetic gratification. Kawabata was a shaman with the power to revive the spirit of ancient poetry" (*Aesthetics*, p. 129). Tansman's analysis is original—rare in Kawabata studies. While he argues that Kawabata himself is not a fascist writer, he shows how his writing could be used by others, such as Yasuda, to incite the fascist spirit.

He also illustrates the effects such writing had on others, like novelist, folklorist, and classicist Orikuchi Shinobu (1887–1953), for whom "Kawabata was the channel through which the poetry of the ancients and the vibration of the world of the spirit were reborn. The sound of death that Orikuchi heard in Kawabata's novels after the war was the same one that he heard in 1936: 'Stopping to listen I would sense such a silence in the mountains that I doubted my own ears. . . . I . . . remember thinking that the meaning and diction of the ancient songs had become extinct, had died a parched death, like moss between rocks'" (Orikuchi Shinobu, "*Yama no oto o kikinagara*," in *Orikuchi Shinobu zenshū* [Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1968, 27: 130–131], p. 313, n. 34).

Tansman's clear and elegant prose is a third reason. It is astonishingly jargon-free in spite of its philosophical depth and theoretical sophistication. In one transition, he links three writers by means of a question the protagonist asks at the end of *Snow Country*, a novel by Kawabata, whom Tansman does not consider fascist: "A labor unto which the heart has poured all its love—where will it have its say, to excite and inspire, and when?" (*Snow Country*,

p. 157). Before proceeding to the next section, on Shiga, he writes, referring back to Yasuda, the principal author in this chapter, "The question seems only half-answered in Yasuda's essay on Kawabata, which twists toward violence just at the moment it seems most possessed of ethereal beauty. The answer is that a heart may pour its labor into a moment of death or a moment of art—or a moment that confounds both" (*Aesthetics*, pp. 136–137). Herein, by the way, lies the ultimate truth of so much of Japanese aesthetics and literature of that time—and later (for as several authors of the companion volume make clear, many of the same tendencies preceded fascism and continued well after the war). The point is this: the attraction is that one's whole being is being drawn to beauty, and the fascist treachery is that it can replace it with violence—or can confuse the two so one barely knows what has happened.

Fourth, the precision of Tansman's analysis and the penetration of his insights are truly laudable and the more noteworthy for being on such a difficult topic. His mastery of the theory of European fascism and its aesthetics makes his comparisons illuminating. He avoids getting bogged down in specifically historical and political issues, deftly handling such complex debates as that over the contributions of Zen Buddhism to fascist ideology and to the war effort and the debate over whether the term "fascism" is useful or not—whether what we mean by it in describing what happened in Italy or Germany is what we see in Japan at that time.

III. THE CULTURE OF JAPANESE FASCISM

Tansman's second book on this subject, his edited anthology *The Culture of Japanese Fascism*, presents, along with a foreword by Marilyn Ivy, Tansman's introduction, and a "Concluding Essay: The Spanish Perspective: *Romancero Marroqu* and the Francoist Kitsch Politics of Time" by Alejandro Yarza, three essays in each of four areas related to fascism: theory, daily life, literature, and "Exhibiting Fascism." The latter contains essays on pre-war film and Axis film in Japan, architectural movements and the Diet building, expositions, and Ellen Schattschneider's study of bride-dolls given by families to the souls of deceased soldiers and sailors at Yasukuni Shrine (in explicit defiance of Shinto principles). Not all authors agree on definitions—or even that what Japan went through was fascism—nor do they all agree with Tansman's views on particular thinkers as he presents them in *Aesthetics*. Ivy's foreword on the questions "Is it fascism yet?" and "How do we recognize fascism?—Do we know it when we see it?," with its succinct defining summary: "To erase class divisions by appealing to the nation as an organic community

that transcends these divisions while keeping in place existing property relations—that, perhaps, is the core vocation of fascism” (*Culture*, p. viii) is as elegant and thought provoking a five pages as I have read in a long while—one that also manages to summarize the major theorists of fascism from Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno on.

Readers of this journal will be especially interested in the essays on everyday aesthetics, which include Aaron Skabelund’s study of the loyal dog Hachiko, immortalized in Japanese and American films (the 2009 *Hachi: A Dog’s Tale* (Hallström), starring Richard Gere), who “played a prominent role in the culture of fascism as experienced in Japan,” and a study of fascists’ plan to make textile factory girls’ dormitories more aesthetic “as a means of increasing industrial productivity for total war” (*Culture*, p. 15) by means of *mingei* (by Kim Brandt). (For a study of a more radical examination of aesthetics in textile factory girls’ lives, see my article on Kishida’s play *Thread Hell*, “Agency, Identity, and Aesthetic Experience in Post-Atomic Japanese Narratives by Kawabata and Rio Kishida and the Film *Barefoot Gen*” in Minh Nguyen’s *New Essays in Japanese Aesthetics* [Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, forthcoming].) Noriko Aso argues that “while Yanagi’s writings have generally been perceived as humanist, often of a romantic cast but with liberal moments, striking similarities exist between his folk-craft discourse and fascist aesthetics of the wartime era. Second, Yanagi’s discursive strategies were organized by a particular consciousness of the importance of the ‘masses’ in the modern world, a group he sought to ‘represent’ in an aesthetic and, broadly speaking, political sense. This form of discursive mediating agency constituted a bridge between a kind of reform-oriented humanism and fascism in the historical context of Japan in the 1930s and 1940s” (*Culture*, p. 139).

IV. CONCLUSION

In spite of overlapping essays on two authors (Yanagi and Kawabata), *The Aesthetics* and *The Culture of Japanese Fascism* differ considerably in their compass. Both provide both new insights on familiar work and solid analyses of at least some material that will be new to most readers.

The greatest difficulties in understanding modern Japanese aesthetics stem from the facts that the same aesthetics may be used to either fascist or non-fascist effects, that fascist effects are not always intentional, that so many of the same aesthetics have been used both to support and to undermine fascism—and that they continue into the present day. Readers will both enjoy and learn from these two thought-provoking

and knowledgeable books that render these seeming paradoxes intelligible.

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COCHRANE, TOM, BERNARDINO FANTINI, and KLAUS R. SCHERER, eds. *The Emotional Power of Music: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Musical Arousal, Expression, and Social Control*. Oxford University Press, 2013, x + 381 pp., 22 b&w illustrations, \$99.00 cloth.

The first sentence in the Introduction to this book is, “The field of music and emotion research is burgeoning.” The statement is correct, both with regard to the old and new scientific disciplines increasingly active in this field and to the number of philosophers latching on to the advances. The first sentence on the back cover is, “How can an abstract sequence of sounds so intensely express emotional states?” But pure instrumental, absolute music, dear to formalists, is one of the least concerns of the book. Furthermore, since music is not a sentient being, more accurate phrasing would have been “expressive of”—and this is also telling. Instead, the Hegelian “emotional power of music” in the title is close to an *idée fixe* of most of the contributors, forgetting that, in *Aesthetics*, Hegel’s music-induced grief is “assuaged at once” by music, which suggests a quasi-emotion that would be switched off by someone’s cough or a phone ringing—unlike real-life grief (which was experimentally demonstrated by Konečni, Brown, and Wanic in *Psychology of Music* 36 [2008]: 289–308). The book has no space for the opinions of Hanslick, Hindemith, and Stravinsky, nor for formalists like Kivy and Zangwill, nor for other contemporary skeptics: obeisance to music’s alleged emotional and other powers ignores contemplation, rational enjoyment, and dispassionate analysis completely. Oxford University Press (OUP), a leading publisher of “affective science” (one of the series editors is Klaus Scherer), should be congratulated for publishing this unique, technically complex, multifaceted, and extreme expression of *emotivism* in music (not to be confused with emotivism in ethics), which I have defined elsewhere as a culturological stance that promotes—at the expense of reason and evidence—the insertion of emotion, feeling, and sensitivity into every crevice of human life and behavior, especially in the arts. OUP boldly did this despite publishing a 1000-page compendium on “music and emotion” in 2010.

The book under review is divided into three sections, “Musical expressiveness” (seven chapters),

“Emotion elicitation” (eight), and “The powers of music” (seven). Each is preceded by an introduction from one of the editors. There are twenty-three contributors, of which close to a half have been affiliated with the Swiss National Center for Affective Sciences in Geneva (Scherer was a long-time director). Others are equally from continental Europe and England. There are two essays by U.S.-based scholars (one deceased in 2001, the music historian Claude Palisca). The range of their specialties is impressive and includes philosophy, musicology, psychology, cognitive neuroscience, history of music and medicine, and more. As always, this is a mixed blessing and leads to various conceptual and terminological collisions. That the editors, from three different disciplines, were able to inspire adherence to a single overall point of view by virtually all the contributors means one of two things: a widespread acceptance of the emotivist thesis or a careful selection of contributors. The fact that the book is based on conferences and workshops in Geneva (and one in Durham) testifies to the latter explanation, and it is supported by the total exclusion of naysayers—in contributions, citations, and the index.

There are more contributions than there is space to discuss them. In the section on “Musical expressiveness,” the most significant effort is Scherer’s. Here he applies his previous first-rate contributions, offered within the mainstream psychobiological emotion theory, with an emphasis on appraisal and the synchronicity of systems, to the Diderot–Stanislavski–Brecht question of the stage performer’s approach to a convincing display of a character’s emotions. However, especially with regard to Scherer’s main concern, opera singers’ behavior, he sets up a false dichotomy between a singer’s truly experiencing a protagonist’s emotion and imitating one. The dichotomy has been questioned in numerous articles on “method” acting and “distancing” (*Verfremdung*). But Scherer fortunately includes a summary of interviews with four fine opera singers. Tenor Thomas Moser says: “The emotion in the music has an influence but it’s not ruling me. . . . I know that I have to know what it is that I’m trying to express” (p. 57). All four singers talk of the enormous technical constraints of execution on any “emoting.”

Yet this important issue is not properly acknowledged by either Michael Spitzer or Daniel Leech-Wilkinson in their chapters. Spitzer, a *Lieder* specialist, adequately discusses the expressive devices of Schubert’s “Trockne Blumen” in terms of descriptive musicology, but when he steps out of emotional cruxes and cathartic releases, one finds him misinformed about emotion research and attributing the origination of the concepts of basic emotions to P. N.

Juslin, of mood as a response to music to J. Robinson, and of regression to the mean to D. Huron. Leech-Wilkinson’s untiring attempts to make considerations of music ontology bear on performance rather than the composer and the score continue here unabated. Cochrane’s attempt, in the introduction to this section, to find a tension by contrasting Spitzer’s and Leech-Wilkinson’s views of expressiveness and score versus performance rings hollow: it is obvious to any musician (if not scholar) that both are important. The best composers of all epochs create architectural perfection that moves in time, and the best performers stand in awe. Leech-Wilkinson also plunges into contagion (in a different sense than Stephen Davies) and empathy (along with a 2008 paper in *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* by Cochrane on expression and “extended cognition”), but there is a substantial literature critical of their views to which I have contributed.

The first of Cochrane’s two chapters consists of interviews with several notable composers. Their comments, especially Jean-Claude Risset’s and Brian Ferneyhough’s, would have perhaps been more valuable if Cochrane’s questions about the unlimited power of music were less leading and assertive. His second chapter, “On the resistance of the instrument,” is of limited scholarly potential but introduces the “mood organ,” borrowed from science fiction, as the music emotivist’s aural equivalent of “mood rings” from the 1970s. The mood organ is seriously described as a vehicle for “emotion-sharing.” The section concludes with two very interesting music-historical essays by Christine Jeanneret (on gender ambivalence in the performances of cantatas in seventeenth century Rome by castrati and female singers) and (posthumously) by Palisca on the ethos of modes in the Renaissance. Both, among many other issues, speak of music as a totality comprising poetry, drama, and sexual stimuli, but neither speaks of the effect of music *qua* music.

Scherer’s introduction to the eight chapters of the second section, “Emotion elicitation,” half-heartedly challenges the strong claims of emotion induction and overstates the disagreement on this issue across the chapters in the section. In fact there is little, and it is a pity that more fundamental differences are not here represented. Scherer’s own chapter, with Eduardo Coutinho, is ambivalent. The authors never clearly state something very simple and almost certainly true: *some* music *may, sometimes*, in *some* people, under *some* circumstances, elicit *some* psychobiological emotions, but never nearly as powerful as the correspondent emotions in social life. Furthermore, there is, again, the neglected issue of music *qua* music—as opposed to the mediation by

extramusical factors such as the evoked visual images and episodic memories and evaluative conditioning. Scherer and Coutinho broaden the definitions when it is convenient, artificially expand the domain of “affective sciences” (p. 125), and attempt to find support for “aesthetic emotions” in Kant’s notion of aesthetic experience as disinterested pleasure. But these are not obviously closely related concepts.

One may disagree with several aspects of Davies’s idea of music-to-listener “emotional contagion,” but his stands as the most cogent essay in the book. Davies is rare (including other philosophers in the volume, such as Jenefer Robinson) in that he religiously tries to preempt criticism of each of his statements. But he does not solve the basic problem of emotion elicitation and ends up saying that experiencing sadness to sad music is more normal than experiencing joy. Well.

An interesting article is Luca Zoppelli’s on “Mors stupebit” in Verdi’s *Requiem* (which, contrary to the editors’ claims, seems to be a translation of Zoppelli’s 2003 article in the German journal *Musiktheorie*). A simple, but notable, contribution of Zoppelli’s sophisticated piece is his discussion that there have historically existed different listening styles and listening cultures regarding the induction of emotion. But to claim that *Mors stupebit* (at the end of *Tuba mirum*) instills genuine *fear* brings us back to the issue of quasi-emotions.

Joel Krueger’s “Empathy, enaction, and shared musical experience: Evidence from infant cognition” is one of several chapters in the book that have not been subjected to editorial oversight in terms of tentativeness and length. Here one has breastfeeding and lullabies, empathy defined far too broadly, and the shared musical experience of neonates and infants with caregivers being placed in a position far more important than language. (Whom, precisely, does Krueger have in mind as “caregivers” in contemporary England singing lullabies?) There is the obligatory criticism of Steven Pinker, the “music is auditory cheesecake” person, and music emotivism’s foe No. 1, for saying that “compared with language, vision, social reasoning, and physical know-how . . . music appears to be pure pleasure technology, a cocktail of recreational drugs” (p. 178). On the basis of serious child-development literature, one must stand with Pinker. But Krueger’s essay captures the spirit of this book: people do little but emote, most of the time in response to music; this is wonderful, but more would be better. Krueger favors the idea of soothing-music therapy for neonates, which would replace the clanking in their environment. In this music-therapy enthusiasm, Krueger is far from being alone; he joins, for example, the notable English social and developmental (empirical) psychologists Adrian

North and David Hargreaves in *The Social and Applied Psychology of Music* (OUP, 2008) book (my review essay appeared in *Psychology of Music* 37 [2009]: 235–245).

Colling and Thompson contribute a solid paper, “Music, action, and affect,” in a certain cognitive-science tradition: a grandiose pronouncement on music and emotion, followed by a sensible backing-off when it comes to experiments. Then comes the promise that the authors will prove that music, as “the paradigm example of an embodied signal, can be the *direct object* of powerful emotional experience” (p. 197). What this means in the conception and findings of the experiments is that minuscule gestures and facial movements influence evaluations of performance (*not* the listener’s emotional experience). On the theoretical plane, Colling and Thompson follow Leonard Meyer and David Huron in not subjecting to serious critical analysis the idea that genuine emotion can result from violations of musical expectancy: minor inconsequential surprise is objectively more likely.

There are two neuroscientific contributions. One, by Wiebke Trost and Patrik Vuilleumier, on “rhythmic entrainment as a mechanism for emotion induction by music” is largely didactic, highly selective in which experiments to discuss, and unremarkable in its failure to submit widely cited findings, such as those by Blood and Zatorre (2001), to a thorough critical analysis. The simple question regarding this positron emission tomography study would be: why is it that the most (physiological) thrill-producing piece of music for participant X (self-nominated) is used as the *control* stimulus for participant Y, producing no effect (and *expected* not to)? The answer is probably not simply in inter-participant music-taste variability, but in each person’s thrill-inducing bit of music being associated with a particular *extramusical* listening context, such as wine, sex (as in Plato’s Athens), and drugs—an important subject almost completely ignored in the book. This is odd, considering that “music” is treated indiscriminately throughout the book as a vast “stimulus” encompassing song, recitatives, dance (rarely), and all kinds of performance domains. However, the key to understanding the essence of the current music-causes-emotion avalanche will not be found in the madrigals, Bach, the late quartets, Schubert’s *Lieder*, or Verdi, but on p. A8 of the *New York Times International* on July 21, 2014, regarding a music event in Rotterdam: some 10,000 people attended the “Crazy Sexy Cool” outdoor festival, where electronic music fans paid the equivalent of \$35 to dance to the beats of different “acts.” This happened only three days after the July 17 crash of MH17, flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, and carrying 193 Dutch citizens.

Stefan Koelsch's chapter, "Striking a chord in the brain: Neurophysiological correlates of music-evoked positive emotions," is one of the most ambitious ones, but certainly not the strongest. One cannot help noticing the friction between causation and correlation in the very title, admittedly not uncommon in neuroscientific writing and inferences. Koelsch begins by stating that the range of positive "emotions" begins with "fun" and reaches its apex with *frisson* (thrills/chills), in which he uncritically follows the above-mentioned Blood and Zatorre. This is both theoretically and introspectively odd, because thrills have a very brief time course and occur, in many people, relatively frequently, whereas the states of being moved and, especially, (aesthetic) awe, are truly profound and memorable, although the latter, in the case of music, probably requires a majestic and acoustically superb performance setting of, for example, a mediaeval cathedral. Koelsch considers music an "important tool for studying emotion" (p. 227), a methodological approach which rests on several questionable assumptions about both music and emotion. Using X to study Y only to then infer something about X requires enormous experimental finesse and interpretive caution. (See my article "Does music induce emotion? A theoretical and methodological analysis," *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 2 [2008]: 115–129). It is regrettable to have to say that the chapter abounds in unsupported, overreaching claims, selective citing, conceptual and terminological confusion, naïve sociologizing, and occasional circular reasoning, with statements that begin with "everyone knows the experience of music-evoked emotion . . ." (p. 232) and "a particular advantage of music is that it can evoke a range of positive emotions; this makes music a useful tool for investigating neural correlates . . ." (p. 234). But perhaps the most important, although difficult to convey briefly, are the logical discrepancies. On one hand, there is the claim that activity in the ventral striatum (presumably in the nucleus accumbens, NAc, in the basal forebrain) during music listening proves that music causes emotion. On the other, Koelsch states (pp. 236–237) that "in three of the mentioned studies [one of which was his own, with colleagues], participants did not report 'frissons' during music listening, suggesting that dopaminergic pathways including the NAc can be activated by music as soon as it is perceived as pleasant (i.e. even in the absence of extreme emotional experiences involving 'frissons')." What this suggests is that music "experiences" of all sorts of intensity are neurally registered, from just listening to music to *frisson*, so that neural scanning observations cannot be used as a reasonable proof that profound responses to music (far exceeding the *frisson*, such as aesthetic awe) have taken place.

Without meaning to imply disrespect for the first two sections, it is in the third, "miscellaneous," part of the book that scholars interested in music will perhaps find most food for thought. However, to obtain the nourishment, the reader first needs to stomach lots of hyperbole and a neglect of contemplation and of enjoyment of beauty in music for its own sake (for example, in Bernardino Fantini's introduction). This accomplished, there is a fine array of essays by Fantini himself, Laurence Wuidmar, Brenno Boccadoro, Penelope Gouk, and Jackie Pigeaud to be enjoyed. There is no need to emote against the editors-imposed "The powers of music" title of this section, for these essays are a wonderful mix of the history of science, medicine, and law—all related to music in mediaeval, Renaissance, and Enlightenment Europe. Among the occasional blunders and exaggerations of academic striving, one finds rare jewels in these essays, for which the authors and the three editors should be congratulated. The finest essay, perhaps because of its musical touch of poignancy—in addition to being wise, measured, and open-minded—is Jean Starobinski's "On nostalgia." It addresses much more than its austere title discloses. (This chapter and four others in the third section were expertly translated into English by Kristen Gray Jafflin.)

What, in the view of this reviewer, is missing in this ambitious book that would have set it apart from many others on a similar topic? (1) A serious attempt at a genuine vertical theoretical integration from neural correlates to the rare, peak emotion. (2) More concrete information about the routes of emotion induction by music—and to which emotion (if any). At present one has a flood of "might" routes, promoted by Scherer, Koelsch, and Juslin, among others, but nothing based on indisputable research findings. One needs to inquire into where the various "induction routes" originate—is it in sound science or in theorists' introspection (nothing to be ashamed of)? (3) A rational attempt to understand when, how, and whether music-induced emotions occur. In the din created by music-elicits-emotions books, the solitary contemplative music lovers are mostly forgotten, as are their rare but very profound emotional experiences to music. (4) Finding an empirical solution to one of the mysteries of the hedonic trajectory of people's voluntary (and involuntary) *repeated exposure* to a piece of music over sometimes very long units of time. (5) A concerted return of both laboratory and field investigations to the effects of naturalistically induced emotion and mood on listeners' *choice* among music-listening alternatives. (6) An analysis of the possibility of an evolutionary impact of music via *dance* (including sexual selection), by ordinary men and women, in which health, endurance,

coordination, and body symmetry are displayed for all candidates to witness. (7) A serious coming to terms with the fact that, apart from the contemplative music lovers, many effects of “music” on “emotion” occur in the constellation of intoxication and sexual arousal. Plato knew this well.

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SOMMER, DORIS. *The Work of Art in the World: Civic Agency and Public Humanities*. Duke University Press, 2014, 232 pp., 14 b&w illus., \$79.95 cloth.

In *The Work of Art in the World*, Doris Sommer considers the following question: Are the humanities useless? This question has been the subject of extensive debate both inside and outside academia. In the scholarly debate, Martha Nussbaum’s *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010) is the most notable recent contribution arguing for societies’ urgent need of the humanities. In the “Opinionator” section of *The New York Times*, a diverse set of discussants has been debating humanities’ value(s) and usefulness from different perspectives. Among those, Professor Stanley Fish has written several well-known and controversial pieces, all defending the idea that the humanities are useless. In this book, Sommer contributes to this debate by developing an original “pragmatic defense” (p. 1) of the humanities and their “utility” in contemporary societies. In her view, a humanistic education, with its traditional focus on artistic creativity and interpretation, is essential for acquiring those “intellectual and civic skills” (p. 114) that are instrumental in solving real-life problems within a democratic context.

Sommer’s pragmatic defense focuses on selected socially engaged art projects. Many of the projects discussed in her book were developed within the context of a multidisciplinary program that Sommer founded at Harvard, *Cultural Agents: Arts and Humanities in Civic Engagement* (<http://www.culturalagents.org/>). Since the late 1990s, this program has been building networks between academics, artists, and organizations promoting the use of arts-based project as strategies for solving real-life problems. Through an interesting mix of qualitative and quantitative strategies, Sommer analyzes the positive economic, social, and political impact that those projects have had on the lives of their targeted audiences. Sommer uses those projects’ positive impact as evidence in favor of her theoretical account of the “utility” of

arts and humanities. Such an account rejects the views of those who are skeptical about art’s civic possibilities. Sommer’s critical target is not limited to the philistine, but also includes the “pessimistic” (p. 6) academic and, surprisingly enough, the intellectual whose purpose is “protest” (p. 93).

The positive side of Sommer’s account argues for the central role that aesthetic experience plays in developing free thinking. It also proposes a genealogy of what one can call optimism about the arts’ civic possibilities. In other words, it traces the conceptual roots of the view that “creativity and aesthetic judgment are foundations for democracy” (p. 8) and public life. Starting with Friedrich Schiller, the genealogy encompasses a heterogeneous set of thinkers such as Walter Benjamin, John Dewey, Paolo Freire, Antonio Gramsci, Jürgen Habermas, Melanie Klein, Maria Montessori, Jacques Rancière, and Donald Winnicott.

Chapters 1 and 2 explore in detail the socially engaged projects that Sommer uses as evidence in favor of her view. These chapters constitute the most convincing part of the book. Their merit is twofold. First, they bring attention to interesting artistic projects developed outside the boundaries of the museum or the art gallery. Socially engaged art projects in the public domain are an important aspect of our artistic practices and surely “merit a more sustained reflection than they have gotten” (p. 3). Second, these chapters show how discussions of art and its impact on society can be fruitfully informed with insights from the social sciences. For their interdisciplinary nature, these chapters would appeal to many readers, including, among others, those with an interest in aesthetics and philosophy of art, art history and criticism, sociology of art, education, and public policy.

Chapter 1 discusses “top down” (p. 12) projects of socially engaged art. Envisioned “by high-ranking” political leaders, these projects show how governments and public institutions can profit from the arts’ civic possibilities. While discussing programs developed by Albanian Prime Minister Edi Rama and American President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, among others, the chapter emphasizes the initiatives of Antanas Mockus, who was mayor of Bogotá. Before Mockus’s election in 1994, the capital of Colombia was the most dangerous city in Latin America. Widespread corruption made it virtually impossible to mitigate violence through “conventional cures of money and more armed enforcement” (p. 16). In response, Mockus utilized unconventional strategies to address the conditions of social and political paralysis. He did this by sponsoring various works of “relational art” (p. 27), whose respective aims were to tackle specific issues afflicting the city and its inhabitants. Functioning as catalysts for social interaction, relational artworks are designed to generate

dialogue among viewers. Mockus used this capacity in order to raise awareness of Bogotá's pressing problems in the hope of changing the status quo.

Chapter 2 examines "bottom up interventions" (p. 13). These are grassroots forms of political and social resistance where artistic and creative elements play an essential role. In these projects, marginalized individuals empower themselves through artistic expression and creative activity. As the examples that Sommer discusses show, bottom up interventions can engender powerful dynamics of social change with effects reaching the level of state legislation. She interprets this kind of intervention in terms of the notion of "urban acupuncture" (p. 49) as developed by Jaime Lerner, the former mayor of the city of Curitiba in Brazil. Just like the small pressure of a needle can have larger effects on an organism, a small-scale bottom-up intervention can deeply transform an urban context.

Chapters 3 and 5 develop Sommer's theoretical account of the "utility" of arts and humanities, defending optimism about the arts' civic possibilities. This is the least convincing part of the book. While reading these chapters, one has the impression that the book is a work in progress rather than a completed manuscript. Sommer recognizes that "this is a 'Beta,' or experimental version of the project" (p. 12). However, this confession hardly justifies the lack of focus and clarity of her argument. By ignoring recent contributions on the same topic, Sommer obscures her theoretical account. She does not discuss in a sustained way the ideas of major scholars in the field of socially engaged arts such as Grant Kester, Claire Bishop, and Diana Boros, whose book *Creative Rebellion for the Twenty First Century* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012) uses Schiller's idea to discuss socially engaged forms of public art. By positioning her contribution within that literature, Sommer would have illuminated her results. Moreover, by ignoring the recent scholarly debate, it is unclear who could be the intended audience of these chapters, which seem too dense to be directed at the general public.

Chapter 3 discusses how art can be socially accountable. By engaging with the arts, individuals can develop "unbiased judgment" (p. 87) and accomplish "free thinking" (p. 88). And the exercise of both is crucial to democratic public life. In effect, by following the Kantian tradition, Sommer sees aesthetic judgment as autonomous and disinterested. Inspired by Schiller, she argues that judging aesthetically teaches us how to consider matters freely, that is, in ways that challenge socially established norms and conventions. In this sense, through aesthetic judgment we learn how to "override predetermined conclusions about values and concepts, personal gain,

party lines, or moral argument" (p. 88). Sommer, like other thinkers inspired by Kant's view of judgment such as Cavell and Arendt, takes aesthetic judgment as a model for judgment in general, including cognitive and moral judgment. In this sense, for Sommer, a training of aesthetic judgment also benefits the faculty of judgment in the theoretical and practical domains.

Sommer's idea is worthy of consideration. Hopefully, in the near future, more scholars will explore it. However, her argument shows at least two weaknesses. First, in light of recent discussions on the study of the public sphere, it is unclear whether disinterest can suitably ground public life and debate. As Michael Warner convincingly argues in *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Press, 2002), members of marginalized groups such as gay and queer groups can participate in public life only if they are allowed to publicly articulate their identities, interests, and needs and to make those matter in public discussion. Second, it is questionable whether Sommer should frame her discussion of socially engaged art and its possibilities in terms of the Kantian notion of the beautiful and the sublime. For it seems that many readers will not accept that the projects that Sommer discusses are instances of the beautiful or the sublime.

Chapter 5 develops the genealogy of optimism about the arts' civic possibilities that places Schiller at its starting point. Sommer reads Schiller's *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man* as achieving a synthesis between the French and the English Enlightenments. Schiller's account overcomes the tension between reason and sentiment that pervades both versions of the Enlightenment by introducing a third faculty: "the *Spieltrieb* or play drive" (p. 136). By appealing to both sides of human mind, play drive brings them into balance with each other. In this sense, as psychoanalysts Melanie Klein and Donald Winnicott will argue much later in the twentieth century, play—quintessentially expressed in art making—is crucial to personal development and structurally linked to an individual's well-being.

As a source of balance between reason and passion, play drive—especially understood as artistic creativity—is for Schiller also the source of freedom. (This discussion brings the reader back to Chapter 3.) Sommer develops Schiller's claim about play drive and freedom as follows: by "raising man above his dual and dangerous nature . . . playfulness creates multiple perspectives that bypass the mono-vision of sensuousness or of reason" (p. 137). In effect, play drive escapes the determinism of either parts of our nature while opening up a space of imagined possibilities. In her genealogy, Sommer emphasizes that Habermas's theory of communicative action draws from Schiller's account of play drive. She argues that

the possibility of overcoming conflicts in Habermas depends on a speaker's capacity to look at the world from multiple perspectives and "to imagine possible points of agreement and to try them out" (p. 149).

Unfortunately, this chapter ignores the nagging question: Is Sommer examining the role of the humanities and the arts in the world or the one of creativity broadly construed? I have the impression that this chapter (and the book as a whole) does the latter. In effect, Sommer makes the case for the use of unconventional creativity in civic life as a way to solve public issues and promoting political participation. But, of course, creativity is not an exclusive privilege of artists and humanists. And her book offers plenty of examples demonstrating that (among others) mayors, educators, and psychoanalysts can be creative, too. Moreover, to call the respective projects of Mockus, Boals, or Paulo Freire art—as Sommer does—stretches that concept. Many artists and humanists are likely to resist such a stretch, especially in the absence of a dedicated discussion, which the book never provides. Perhaps Sommer is not defending the humanities or the arts as they are, but is calling for a reform in how humanistic curricula and artistic practices function.

Chapter 4 seems to confirm the impression that Sommer advocates restructuring the humanities (and the arts) rather than simply developing their defense. This chapter discusses a pedagogical framework for the humanities that assigns three interrelated tasks to humanistic education: (i) advancing literacy, (ii) educating taste, and (iii) fostering civic participation. The chapter also offers an overview of classroom activities that are intended to serve those three tasks by "stimulat[ing] literacy and higher-order (interpretive) thinking" (p. 125). The activities that Sommer describes are in a certain way radical. They depart from mainstream academia by requiring students to exercise a greater level of participation and creativity. The content of this chapter is definitely interesting but, I hasten to add, centrifugal with respect to the book's central argument. It suggests possible consequences of Sommer's account as a whole, rather than providing further evidence. In this sense, a different collocation—perhaps at the end of the book as an appendix—would have better served its purpose.

In an academic world of skeptics and pessimists, one cannot but admire Sommer's optimism. Her choice to prefer the "rough ground" to the ivory tower is courageous—and perhaps necessary. By emphasizing the role that a creativity-nurturing humanistic education can play in civic life, this book offers both a refreshing rebuttal of any dismissal of the humanities as useless and a promising path that many humanists and artists will follow. Sommer's proposal would probably require restructuring the humanities

from within. But perhaps this is the best we can do to preserve their heritage in the twenty-first century.

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KANE, PATRICK. *The Politics of Art in Modern Egypt: Aesthetics, Ideology, and Nation-Building*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2013, xxvi + 247 pp., 59 b&w illus., \$80.00 cloth.

In recent years, and particularly following the so-called "Arab Spring," there has been a rather inflated interest in the relationship between the artistic and the political in the Arab world. However, this interest has tended to be limited by its presentist approach; there continues to be a dearth of scholarship that engages such questions historically. Patrick Kane's *The Politics of Art in Modern Egypt: Aesthetics, Ideology, and Nation-Building* is therefore a much needed intervention, one that is in conversation with a number of disciplines as it strives to carve out a place for the aesthetic in the political history of Egypt and vice versa.

While Kane's study broadly covers the period between 1908 (the date of the founding of the School of Fine Arts in Cairo and the well-established departure point for histories of modern visual arts in Egypt) and 1966 (the defeat of 1967 is often framed in such narratives as a moment of aesthetic and ideological rupture), his focus is primarily on the late 1930s onward. Readings of the earliest decades of the twentieth century largely serve as a point of contrast, one that allows him to highlight the ways in which artists and artistic movements in subsequent decades challenged and resisted the aesthetic structures erected by their predecessors. A gradual loosening of the elite's grip over cultural production and aesthetic discourse is paralleled with "the rise of mass political mobilization against the landowners and the old regime" (p. 2). Following the Free Officer's coup in July 1952, the state's relationship to cultural producers changes and is once again reformulated, Kane argues, through the prism of labor relations.

The Politics of Art in Modern Egypt is structured around a series of case studies that progress somewhat chronologically through the mid-twentieth century. In a comparative study that puts the visual arts in direct conversation with the intellectual and literary production of the period, Kane draws on a wealth of material, including painting, sculpture, novels, poetry, and caricatures as well as a range of archival and press sources and weaves an intricate narrative that

repeatedly highlights the place of the aesthetic within the unfolding of sociopolitical and economic unrest of the period. In doing so, Kane offers a corrective to existent literature that tends to engage the visual arts in isolation. He is particularly critical of the debates that have shaped and dominated the field thus far, namely, those that approach twentieth-century artistic production from the region as either Islamic or modern, the latter framed within shifting nationalist discourses. Instead Kane argues that the artists at the heart of his study have pursued “other paths that maneuvered around the paradigm of the nation-state,” ones that often involved a reconciliation of these two paradigms which are often viewed as separate and incompatible (p. xxiv).

In each case study, the author focuses on an individual artist or artist collective to demonstrate how these cultural producers responded to the tumultuous political climate of the period. In the first of these, Chapter 2 unfolds predominately during the interwar period and takes Muhammad Nagi, a wealthy Alexandrian diplomat, an established painter, and the first Egyptian director of the School of Fine Arts, as its focus. Educated in Italy during the 1920s, Nagi formulates a theory of art and education that Kane argues is formed by “fascist corporatist theories” and is especially influenced by the writings of Giovanni Gentile (p. 17). Nagi’s profile serves as an entry point to examine the establishment of the School of Fine Arts, an institution dependent on funding from its royal patron Prince Yusuf Kamal (one of the country’s largest landowners at the time) for its first two decades. Kane is correct to point out that the school’s aristocratic patronage shaped the kind of work that was encouraged among its students; “it favored portraiture as the genre of painting” (p. 26) while “painting served as a validation of status and class position” among graduates (p. 27). However, he tends to conflate the early graduates of the school with the first generation of the modern Egyptian artists more broadly speaking. In other words, Nagi, himself not a graduate of the school but instead educated in Europe and trained in private ateliers in Alexandria, cannot be seen as “illustrative of the new career in the arts made possible after 1908” (p. 27). While it is certainly true that many of the artists from this first generation came from landowning aristocracy, Kane portrays the institution as one primarily interested in attracting the elite, ignoring the fact that it was tuition free, allowing students from more modest backgrounds to attend. In fact, the school’s first, and perhaps most famous, graduate, Mahmud Mukhtar (1891–1934), was originally from a small village in the Delta and moved to Cairo especially to enroll in the school. His humble origins are a crucial part of the school’s founding narrative and were often highlighted as

evidence of the school’s mission to produce the artist as a middle-class professional category.

Class conflict remains crucial in Chapters 3 and 4 as Kane examines the Egyptian surrealist movement and the Contemporary Art Group (particularly the painter Abd al-Hadi al-Gazzar and the sculptor Gamal al-Sigini). These two collectives ultimately come out as the heroes of the book, for they are presented in “opposition to the state and large landowners’ dominance of cultural institutions and the disparity of material conditions between tenants and landowners” (p. 18). In responding directly to the sociopolitical and economic events of the time, these artists were offering both artistic and political alternatives to the existing systems; they were challenging the elite’s monopoly on multiple levels. They did so largely through the subject matter of their work, with a focus on “the everyday as the preoccupation of art” (p. 80). Peasant struggles, the *mawlid* festival, and the ‘*arusa* figurine all featured extensively in their work. While Kane highlights why such themes captured the imagination of the artists involved in these movements, we are often left wondering if the subject matter alone is enough to make the works radical. In his eagerness to present these groups in stark contrast to the establishment and their predecessors, the author at times exaggerates their impact; representations of the peasants and their struggles are not by default radical or relevant to these struggles. Kane seems to overlook the often times problematic attachment to the notion of authentic tradition (*turath*), identified here as village life, that haunts many of these artists, making them not unlike their predecessors. The book would have benefitted therefore from a more critical engagement with some of the presumptions informing the writings and artworks of both the surrealists and the Contemporary Art Group.

The last two chapters focus on “the southern question” with Chapter 5 examining artists’ and writers’ responses to the building of the Aswan High Dam (1960–1970) and the relocation and destruction of Nubian villages, and Chapter 6 considering the treatment of the labor force more specifically. Once again al-Gazzar and al-Sigini feature prominently; however, in these chapters Kane adopts a more actively comparative approach, drawing on literary texts, namely, the writings of Abdel Rahman al-Sharkawi, Naguib Surur, Salah Jahin, and Sun‘allah Ibrahim, for “inter-textual narratives of labor” (p. 167). (Perhaps incorporating literary texts throughout would have given the study more balance, for as it stands this addition feels like something of an afterthought.) What we see over the course of the final chapters is the transformation of the position of writers and artists from one of commitment (*iltizam*) to the goals and ideals of July “revolution” to one of increasing disappointment and disillusionment; they

go from being the state's most ardent supporters to its staunchest critics, a position many of them pay dearly for. Since earlier chapters were interested in challenges to established art institutions, an engagement with debates on the incorporation of colloquial Arabic, especially in the poetry of Jahin, would have further drawn out parallels between the written and visual arts during this period.

While *The Politics of Art in Modern Egypt* incorporates a variety of sources and a wealth of material, making them accessible for the first time to an English-language readership, worrying at times are the basic factual errors that come up in the text. One striking example is the claim that "as a sign of Cairo's importance, the School of Fine Arts relocated in 1927 from Alexandria to new facilities near Sayyida Zaynab Square" (p. 26). The school was in fact always based in Cairo and began its life in Darb al-Gamamiz, an area in the Isma'ilyya district that had become the cultural center since the expansion of Cairo in the mid-nineteenth century. The Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Alexandria was not established until much later, in 1957. There are also moments when Kane's references are either lacking or outdated, relying on dissertations rather than subsequent monographs. A discussion of the place of fascism in artistic discourse in Egypt should have certainly engaged with Israel Gershoni and James Jankowski's recent study *Confronting Fascism in Egypt: Dictatorship versus Democracy in the 1930s*. There are moments when the text drifts into repetition, drawing on the same set of examples while missing other intriguing opportunities. For example, Chapter 3 promises to address the fact that "the use of the arts and visual images by the Muslim Brothers has been neglected" in existing scholarship but instead presents a narrative that inserts the Muslim Brotherhood into the broader story without ever providing any direct examination of the group's position on questions of aesthetics. However, despite these limitations, *The Politics of Art in Modern Egypt* initiates an important conversation about the place of aesthetic within political history, one that has been largely absent from the field of Middle Eastern studies.

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EVERETT, ANTHONY. *The Nonexistent*. Oxford University Press, 2013, 256 pp., \$65.00 cloth.

It is a bit hard to discern the scope of Anthony Everett's project in *The Nonexistent*. The title alone might make you think that his aims are to investigate

our thoughts and our discourse about all manner of things that do not exist, or at least present and defend his preferred way of dealing with all the variety of entities that he finds (and we ought to find) objectionable. And many of the comments in the introductory chapter and much of what goes on in later discussions would also have you believe that this is what he is after. Yet this appears to conflict with his explicitly stated aims: defending an antirealist, fictionalist account of some subset of the objects he finds (and all of us should find) objectionable, specifically fictional and mythical individuals, while also presenting arguments against recent realist theories of such entities. This felt tension between his stated aims and the project he actually carries out remained with me throughout; it really seems as though he wishes to have his cake and eat it too. There is at least one way, however, in which this may ultimately amount to more than just a stylistic failing. I will explain later.

Let me begin, however, by addressing the last three chapters of *The Nonexistent* first. This part of Everett's book is devoted to explicating realist theories of fictional individuals (henceforth: fictional realism) and some typical motivations for such theories, and then presenting his arguments against them. There is not much I wish to say about these chapters. Everett is revisiting and refining some earlier work here, specifically, "Against Fictional Realism" (*Journal of Philosophy* 102 [2005]: 624–649) and "Pretense, Existence, and Fictional Artifacts" (*Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 74 [2007]: 56–80). He presents powerful objections to fictional realism, and he does a lot to undermine arguments for the view; in Chapter 7, for example, we get a lengthy rehearsal and extension of his reasons against Meinongian and abstract-object theorists' explanations of (both positive and negative) existential discourse about fictional individuals, against their ability to handle "mixed perspective" sentences about fiction, against realist accounts of our imaginative engagement with fiction, and lastly against their ability to provide adequate identity conditions for fictional individuals. And in Chapter 8, Everett refines earlier arguments for the conclusion that fictional realism forces us to accept an ontically vague world or a world containing pluralities of indeterminate cardinality. No fictional realist should dismiss these challenges lightly. Everett replies here to some recent objections by Benjamin Schneider and Tatjana von Solodkoff ("In Defence of Fictional Realism," *Philosophical Quarterly* 59 [2009]: 138–149) as well as Amie Thomason ("Fiction, Existence and Indeterminacy," in John Woods, ed., *Fictions and Models: New Essays* [Munich: Philosophia Verlag, 2010], pp. 109–148), and his comments here are careful and often compelling.

There are, however, three quick points I wish to make about these chapters. First: his arguments stand

alone as powerful objections to fictional realism, but when taken in conjunction with the positive account he provides earlier, I think they reduce to some theoretically odd prescriptions. I intend to explain this below. Second: even given my confusion about the scope of his project, he at least explicitly says in the introductory chapter that he will deal with mythical individuals as well as fictional individuals. However, mythical individuals—alleged by mythical realists to be the products of our false theorizing—for example, Vulcan or phlogiston, are not obviously of the same ontological category as those entities that are alleged by fictional realists to be the products of our fiction making. (See Jeffrey Goodman, “Creatures of Fiction, Objects of Myth,” *Analysis* 74 [2013]: 35–40.) Everett must think that whatever we say about fictional individuals will apply to mythical individuals as well, and I suppose this is why we never again explicitly hear about mythical individuals. But this speaks to a worry I have concerning Everett’s entire project: fiction making and theorizing get run together in ways that seem problematic. Third: while he responds to the criticisms of Schneider and von Solodkoff and Thomasson, he never responds to Alberto Voltolini (“Against Against Fictional Realism,” *Grazer Philosophische Studien* 80 [2010]: 47–63). In my estimation, however, Voltolini’s objections are the most compelling, and I would have liked to hear Everett’s replies to them. While Everett cannot reasonably be expected to take on all comers, these are pointed objections by one of the most well-regarded, prominent fictional realists in the world.

Let me now address the first five chapters, where Everett presents his positive theory and attempts to defend it from some objections. He adopts the view of imagination developed by Shaun Nichols and Stephen P. Stich (*Mindreading: An Integrated Account of Pretence, Self-Awareness, and Understanding Other Minds* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003]) so as to develop a pretense-theoretic account of the production and consumption of works of fiction. The basic idea is that our cognitive architecture includes a belief box and an imagination box, and a proposition p may be found in either, but where p is located determines whether it is a belief, something taken to be true, or a make-belief, something we merely pretend is true. While there are important functional similarities between belief and imaginative states (e.g., inferential capacities are similar in each state, both generate emotional responses, moral sentiments are similar in both, both may be either occurrent or tacit, both may be monitored by higher order beliefs), the distinct functional role of the mental representation defines it as something we believe or imagine. Beliefs and imaginings are each logically quarantined from the other, intimately connected to our desires and behaviors in different ways, each

may trigger radically different kinds of emotions, and we have much more control over imagination than belief.

Our imagination is characterized functionally, not phenomenologically, and it is our imagination that underpins counterfactual reasoning, *reductio* reasoning, presupposition, and mere entertainment of scientific or philosophical hypotheses. So, when someone other than a Leibnizian comes across Leibniz’s monadology or a nominalist comes across a Platonic theory of numbers, she may make-believe certain propositions that she fails to believe, that is, take part in an extended pretense that such theories are true and understand the thoughts and discourse about monads or numbers as being thoughts or talk within a pretense. Following Kendall Walton (*Mimesis as Make Believe* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990]), Everett takes games of make-believe to involve principles of generation that govern what we will (or ought to) imagine. These are discussed at length in Chapter 2. He also distances himself here from some of Walton’s machinery and thus successfully avoids some of the relevant objections, e.g., those of Mark Richard (“Semantic Pretense,” in Anthony Everett and Thomas Hofweber, eds., *Empty Names, Fiction and the Puzzles of Non-Existence* [Stanford, CA: CSLI Publications, 2000], 205–232).

Crucially, the propositions we make-believe, those within the scope of a pretense, are not semantically expressed by assertions. And all discourse about fictional characters takes place within the scope of a pretense that they are real, even when we are unaware of this, and even when such discourse “piggybacks” information about the real world. (Piggybacking, discussed at length in Chapter 3, also serves as part of the explanation of why we may mistake nonassertions for assertions or why we mistake our imaginings for beliefs.) So, this sort of account applies to all of the following sentences:

Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character; he does not really exist.
 Holmes smokes a pipe.
 Holmes is a more popular fictional detective than Nancy Drew.
 Holmes was modeled on a friend of Conan Doyle’s.
 Conan Doyle created Holmes.
 Holmes is a more famous detective than many real detectives.

All of this strikes me, however, as a troublesome way of describing how fictions must be consumed and fictional characters thought about or discussed. Perhaps imaginative engagement is required to produce a fiction, but clearly one may consume a fiction without engaging in a pretense. Suppose Sarah reads a fiction that she wrongly takes to be a historical report. She is not engaging with the work *qua* fiction,

but she may nonetheless be a competent consumer of the work. But even competent consumers who realize they are consuming fiction need not imaginatively engage with the work. All that is required is the belief that work *F* says *p*. We could even imagine an alien psychology altogether lacking imaginative abilities that is nonetheless able to understand a work qua fiction. And not only do we not need to engage in a pretense to consume a fiction, I certainly do not think we need to engage in pretense to describe one. We may, *pace* Everett, access and individuate fictions by relating their contents in a third-personal sort of way, even if this means leaving off the ‘according to’ operator much of the time. (Relatedly, see his Chapter 3 for his defense of the claim that where a fictional work *F* is concerned, for any proposition *p* true in *F*, *p* is more fundamental than, and not an elision of, *according to F, p*.)

An upshot is that production and consumption of fiction should be treated differently, and it is the intentions of an author to produce a fiction (and not describe reality) that are at the core of the matter on the production side and determine whether the work is ultimately a fiction (or a theory or an attempted history). I think Everett, like Walton, errs here because he overemphasizes the analogy between producing or consuming fiction and participating in games of make-believe. We may need other psychological states besides cold, detached beliefs about what is true in a game in order to play a game (“Come on Billy, play along, you’re only going through the motions!”), but such detachment may occur at least when consuming a fiction.

Of course imaginative engagement is *typical* of both the production and consumption of fiction. But Everett would claim that even the following should be understood as nonassertions when uttered and are not to be believed because they make apparent reference to fictional individuals:

Holmes is a created abstractum.
Holmes is a Meinongian nonexistent.

We thus see that what he truly wishes to defend is a sort of revolutionary fictionalism about all fictional character discourse, even when that discourse is explicitly theoretical. His project is an attempt to provide a general recipe for how to treat not only discourse “internal” to fictions and discourse about fictions, but even philosophical discourse that positively aims to characterize the ontological status of fictional individuals. But once this is combined with the machinery he adopts regarding the imagination and its role in our engagement with all manner of scientific and philosophical theories we find objectionable due to their ontological commitments, we realize that fictional realism is just a case study. In this

sense, Everett’s book really does live up to its name. His ultimate recommendation seems to be that we adopt a pretense-theoretic account for all manner of nonexistent entities (that is, all nonexistent entities ought to be regarded as “fictional,” even when they are the posits of theories).

However, as I stated earlier, this desire to have a narrow-scope cake while simultaneously eating a wide-scope one seems to me more than just stylistically problematic. In Chapter 5, Everett attempts to respond to some of Jason Stanley’s (“Hermeneutic Fictionalism,” in P. French and H. Wettstein, eds., *Midwest Studies in Philosophy Volume 25: Figurative Language* [Oxford: Blackwell, 2001], pp. 36–71) criticisms of a general antirealist, fictionalist program; specifically, he wishes to reply, *inter alia*, to the “autism objection.” But, in addressing Stanley’s worry, Everett states: “Whatever the merits of this argument against mathematical and existential discourse, it is far from obvious that it can be extended to cover fictional character discourse, and I suspect Stanley would not wish to so extend it” (p. 108).

I cannot speak for Stanley, but I, for one, would at least wish to extend a version of this objection to cover fictional character discourse, and that is essentially what I had in mind above when I asked you to consider an alien psychology altogether lacking an imagination box. The larger point, however, is that Everett cannot simultaneously advocate a sweeping, revolutionary fictionalism for all manner of nonexistents and then retreat to the safety of a fictionalism merely concerning fictional individuals to avoid an objection of this sort.

Let me finish by making good on another earlier comment. The counsel to treat any sort of work as a batch of propositions to be imagined, whether it is a fiction or a theory, when that work would commit us to entities we otherwise find objectionable seems to amount to odd, if not straightforwardly bad, advice. Yet the wisdom in the counsel of a revolutionary fictionalism is what determines whether or not such a stance is ultimately worth adopting. Is it wise to counsel the fictional realist Thomasson, for example, to adopt this stance toward her theory? I do not think even Everett would counsel her to give up her beliefs in favor of pretending her view is true; he merely thinks she should believe that her view is false. And Everett would seemingly not even wish to take his own advice. Meinongianism is not a view he merely imagines to be true on occasion; “Holmes is not a Meinongian nonexistent; Holmes isn’t real” expresses a proposition he positively believes, and no make-belief of any sort is required. Moreover, he seemingly would not counsel mere make-belief to someone who (wrongly, in his view) objected to entities that his own pretense-theoretic view commits us to, for example, universals; he would counsel belief.

Make no mistake: I think there is tremendous dialectical value in Everett's arguments against fictional realism when taken on their own. However, his own pretense-theoretic account, if correct, seemingly forces an odd interpretation of their conclusions. Considered against the backdrop of his positive version of anti-realism, they ultimately amount to a prescription to not even take the tenets of rival theories seriously, that is, at face value. We ought not merely abandon realist views if Everett is correct, but further relieve the realist of the very force of her assertions when those assertions are constitutive of her theory.

Yet, following this prescription amounts to failing to follow much better advice: (try your best to) treat theories as theories and fictions as fictions. Realize that each is individuated by the distinct aims of the people formulating them and assess the thoughts and discourse related to each while respecting these distinct aims. Pretense theory fails in this regard, and it

thus does a poor job of addressing the thoughts and language that frame the very issue of whether or not to posit fictional individuals.

Obviously, none of my comments here amount to the claim that fictional realism is preferable to anti-realism. And as a matter of fact, I think the latter part of *The Nonexistent* is a *tour de force*; it is replete with powerful arguments for anti-realism, and I highly recommend that all fictional realists take a careful look at them. I mainly wish to maintain that when it comes to the sort of thoughts and discourse we theorists engage in, even when that theorizing concerns fictional individuals, we cannot plausibly construe such thoughts or discourse as pretense laden (or plausibly recommend that it become pretense laden).

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