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Recent Publications

Contemporary Aesthetics does not publish book reviews. However, to inform our readers of new publications of interest, we do publish brief descriptions from information provided by the publishers. Readers are invited to send us such information about books they think will interest other readers of *CA*.

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Jos de Mul, trans. by Anthony Burrett, *The Tragedy of Finitude: Dilthey's Hermeneutics of Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004). 448 pp.

One of the founders of modern hermeneutics, German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) confronted the question of how modern, postmetaphysical human beings can cope with the ambivalence, contingency, and finitude that fundamentally characterize their lives. This book offers a reevaluation and fresh analysis of Dilthey's hermeneutics of life against the background of the development of philosophy during the past two centuries.

Virve Sarapik, Kadri Tüür, eds., *Koht ja paik/Place and Location: Studies in Environmental Aesthetics and Semiotics III: 'The City. _topias and Reflections'* (Proceedings of the Estonian Academy of Arts 14, Tallinn, 2003). 464 pp.

Virve Sarapik, Kadri Tüür, Mari Laanemets, eds., *Koht ja paik/Place and Location II* (Proceedings of the Estonian Academy of Arts 10, Tallinn, 2002). 544 pp.

Place and Location: Studies in Environmental Aesthetics and Semiotics is a periodical for interdisciplinary research concerning human-environment relationships and representations of environment. The publication series has been related to the international conference series *Place and Location*, held in Estonia every two years. It also has served as a forum for a wider community of researchers, not limiting the authors to the conference participants only.

The recent collection, *Place and Location: The City. _topias and Reflections*, focuses on the city and the built environment in its diverse manifestations. The collection is an attempt to create a forum for interdisciplinary study of the complex, dynamic and culturally meaningful landscape which, in addition to visible static objects, contains things invisible or beyond our reach via traditional methods of analysis. There are discussions of the aesthetic and ethical dimensions of city environment, theories of urban analysis, activism and site-specific practices, cities depicted in contemporary literature, film, and photography.

The theme of *Place and Location II* is culture and landscape. Its articles focus on the relationship between the environment and human activities and human experience, and landscape as a way of depicting, describing and perceiving the environment. Among the authors are geographers, art historians, environmental aestheticians, semioticians and literary scholars who write about the creative relationship of human beings with their environment, the relationship between the environment and art, the role of nature and culture in artistic texts, and the relationship between landscape and representation.

For more information, see http://www.eki.ee/km/place/place_publ.htm

Stefán Snævarr: *Fra Logos til Mytos. Metaforer, mening og*

erkjennelse (From Logos to Mythos. Metaphors, Meaning and Knowledge). (Kristiansand, Norway: Sokrates, 2003), 227 pp.

The themes of this book are the nature of metaphors, their possible cognitive functions, and the question whether or not they have a special kind of meaning. A substantial part of the book is devoted to a critical evaluation of leading theories in the field. The author divides them into three basic groups: a) the iconoclasts, those who think that there is no such thing as metaphoric meaning (Davidson, Searle, Cooper etc); b) the iconodulists, those who think metaphors are fundamental for language and knowledge (Nietzsche, Hesse, Pepper, Derrida, Lakoff, etc); c) those who are in-between these extremes (Black, Goodman, Ricoeur etc). Snaevarr then introduces his "alethetic theory of metaphors." According to this theory it is the cognitive function of metaphors that gives us a basis for understanding them. We understand a metaphor M if and only if we know what kind of conditions must obtain if M can be said to be correct.

Correctness or rightness of metaphors is a special "alethetic" (i.e. truth-like) value (hence "alethetic theory"). Then the author discusses the role of metaphors in science and develops a theory of analogics, i.e. analogical reasoning. In the last chapter, the author turns his gaze in the direction of literary metaphors. He says that such metaphors can throw light upon our more or less tacit knowledge of emotions. The conclusion is that metaphors play important, but varied roles in the human comedy of errors and knowledge.

Allen Carlson and Arnold Berleant, eds., *The Aesthetics of Natural Environments* (Calgary: Broadview, 2004).

The Aesthetics of Natural Environments is a collection of essays investigating philosophical and aesthetics issues that arise in our appreciation of natural environments. The introduction gives an historical and conceptual overview of the rapidly developing field of study known as environmental aesthetics. The essays consist of classic pieces as well as new contributions by some of the most prominent individuals now working in the field and range from theoretical to applied approaches.

The topics covered include the nature and value of natural beauty, the relationship between art appreciation and nature appreciation, the role of knowledge in the aesthetic appreciation of nature, the importance of environmental participation to the appreciation of environments, and the connections between the aesthetic appreciation of nature and our ethical obligations concerning its maintenance and preservation.

This volume is for scholars and students focussed on nature, landscapes, and environments in areas such as aesthetics, environmental ethics, geography, environmental studies, landscape architecture, landscape ecology, and the planning and design disciplines. It is also for any reader interested in and concerned about the aesthetic quality of the world in which we live.

Arnold Berleant, ed., *Environment and the Arts: Perspectives on Environmental Aesthetics* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 192 pp.

"The environment raises basic questions about many of the fundamental concepts and doctrines in aesthetics and the arts. Including new work by thirteen leading international contributors to environmental aesthetics, this book deals with the relations between the arts and environment and how the arts bear on the environment. It explores the implications of environmental aesthetics for understanding both aesthetic theory and the aesthetic of individual arts."

Emily Brady, *Aesthetics of the Natural Environment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003), 287 pp.

"In the first systematic account of aesthetics in relation to the natural environment, Brady provides critical understanding of what aesthetic appreciation of nature involves and develops her own aesthetic theory. In particular, she develops a theory of aesthetic appreciation which integrates subjective and objective approaches." Brady brings together philosophical aesthetics and environmental philosophy in discussions of "the nature of aesthetic experience; aesthetic value; theories of aesthetic appreciation of nature; art and environment; imagination, emotion and meaning in aesthetic appreciation of nature; the justification of aesthetic judgments of nature; and the role of aesthetics in nature conservation and environmental policy."

Landscape Design and the Experience of Motion, ed. Michel Conan (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2003), with essays by Stephen Bann, Michael Charlesworth, Anette Freytag, Stanislaus Fung, John Dixon Hunt, Patricia Johanson, Norris Brock Johnson, Ann Kutner, and Linda Parshall.

Landscape Design and the Experience of Motion breaks the silence on an important but largely unexplored topic in scholarly texts in the field of Landscape Studies: the experience of motion through a garden or designed landscape. As Conan suggests in this introduction, human movement-- circulation-- takes place partly in response to or in accordance with the designer's intentions.

This broad topic is categorized into three sections. "Beyond the Picturesque" looks at unconventional modern designs in France, the United States, even the Amazon rainforest, all examples of a new aesthetic. "Modalities of Movement in a Garden and Their Representation" explores nuances of unique choreographed landscapes: ancient Zen monasteries, Roman elite water gardens, the impact of the railway on nineteenth century urban parks in Europe, among other settings. It focuses in particular on how culture impinges on behavior. Lastly, essays in "Culture and Meaning" take on the role landscape design plays within the framework of cultural change.

The volume's contributors have diverse backgrounds and fields of specialization ranging from anthropology to art history.

Maarten Doorman, *Art in Progress: A Philosophical Response to the End of the Avant-Garde* (Amsterdam and Chicago: University of Amsterdam Press and University of Chicago Press, 2003), 181 pp.

Maarten Doorman analyses a once omnipresent concept--the idea of progress. He demonstrates how the idea arose in the eighteenth century, how it became all-qualifying during the avant-garde, and how with the end of avant-garde it went under. Doorman pleads for a reappraisal of some concepts of progress in order to deal with the noncommittal climate of postmodernist and posthistorical art.

The book is available in Europe through Plymbridge Distributors Ltd. (www.plymbridge.com), and in the U.S. and Canada through the University of Chicago Press (www.press.uchicago.edu). It is available worldwide online (www.aup.nl).

Pieter Duvenage, *Habermas and Aesthetics: The Limits of Communicative Reason* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2003), 209 pp.

"Duvenage reconstructs Habermas's aesthetics in terms of two intellectual phases. In the first, Habermas follows an open-ended model which emphasizes the communicative and societal relevance of art. In the second, the idea of a communicative aesthetics is worked

out in terms of a theory of rationality. In this process Habermas assigns aesthetic rationality to a more restricted place within his overall model of communicative rationality. In the last part of the study, Duvenage offers a critical perspective on the role of aesthetics in Habermas's work and proposes alternatives. He contrasts Habermas's early writings on aesthetics, which viewed art as a material force of public illumination, with his more mature writings, which revolve around art as a form of subjective expression. He shows that Habermas's later work offers a third, albeit undeveloped, alternative that suggests convergence of these two views."

Aleš Erjavec, ed., *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition* (University of California Press, Berkeley 2003), with contributions by Boris Groys, Misko Suvakovic, Ales Erjavec, Peter Gyorgy, Gerardo Mosquera in Gao Minglu.

This book describes a singular period in the history of world art and a critical moment in the cultural and political transition from the past century to our own. Authors present the ways in which artists in the 1980s marked their society's traumatic transition from decaying socialism to an insecure future. In-depth perspectives on art and artists in the former Soviet Union, the Balkans and Central Europe, China, and Cuba reveal how, in these countries, politicized art emerged as a distinct form of postmodernism.

Ronald W. Hepburn, *The Reach of the Aesthetic; Collected Essays on Art and Nature* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 170 pp.

"This book focuses on the rich web of interrelations between aesthetic and wider human concerns. Among topics explored are concepts of truth and falsity (within art and aesthetic experience generally), superficiality and depth in aesthetic appreciation of nature, moral beauty and ugliness, the projects of integrating a life, of fashioning life as a work of art, experiments in the aesthetic re-working of the 'sacred,' the role of imagination within religion and in our attempts to place and identify ourselves within the cosmos.

Grazia Marchianò ed., *Aesthetics & Chaos. Investigating a Creative Complicity* (Turin: Trauben, 2002), pp. 213, Euros 15,00.

This is a collection of essays by eleven specialists from Israel, Japan, Russia, Europe, and the US engaged in shedding light on chaos as a powerful source of multiple meanings and interpretations: in contemporary art theory (Ben-Ami Sharfstein), abstract painting (Véronique M. Fóti), early Chinese philosophy and Leibniz's thought (Brian Bruya and Masaru Yoneyama), the Buddhist theory of emptiness (Kenneth K. Inada), the wind-motif in a Chinese poem (Yves Millet), calligraphy as the locus for abstract significance (Akiko Tsukamoto), chaos as expectation of beauty in mathematics (Alexander Voloshinov), chaotic multiplicity in Celtic literature (Melita Cataldi), unknowability in the new physics (Pranab K. Das II), and an aesthetics of matter (Kiyohiko Kitamura and Tomoyuki Kitamura). Out of such a vast array of treatments and winkings at chaos, Grazia Marchianò writes in her introductory lines, a new position about human creativity seems to emerge and break the age-long hegemony of order over chaos, form over matter, linearity over non-linearity. Available electronically on the International Association for Aesthetics website: <http://davinci.ntu.ac.uk/iaa/iaa6/index.htm>. Printed copies can be ordered at: orders@casalini.it.

Kenneth Robert Olwig, *Landscape, Nature and the Body Politic: From Britain's Renaissance to America's New World* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002), 299 pp. With a Foreword by Yi-Fu Tuan.

Olwig offers an extended exploration of "two contesting but intertwined

discourses that persist today when we use the words 'landscape,' 'country,' 'scenery,' 'nature,' 'national.' In the first sense, the land is a physical and bounded body of terrain upon which the nation state is constructed (e.g., the purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain)... In the second, the country is constituted through its people and established through time and precedence (e.g., land where our fathers died, land of Pilgrims' pride)." Olwig "opens up new avenues of thinking in the areas of geography, literature, theater, history, political science, law, and environmental studies [as he] tracks these ideas through Anglo-American history....He uses a royal production of a Ben Jonson masque with stage sets by architect Inigo Jones as a touchstone for exploring how the notion of 'landscape' expands from artful stage scenery to a geopolitical ideal. Olwig pursues these concepts of the body politic from Europe to America and to global politics," and deals with topics such as national parks and environmental planning, theories of polity and virulent nationalistic movements.

The Hyle *International Journal for Philosophy of Chemistry* has produced the first collection of essays ever published to explore aesthetic aspects of chemistry from a variety of perspectives. Authors from the disciplines of philosophy, art theory, chemistry, history of science and linguistics contributed to the special issue, "Aesthetics and Visualization in Chemistry" (Vol. 9, No. 1, 2003) . Nobel laureate Roald Hoffman, pioneer in the field of molecular aesthetics, wrote the introductory essay, "Thoughts on Aesthetics and Visualization." Other contributions include "Foundations of Chemical Aesthetics" by Pierre Laszlo and "Sensual Chemistry: Aesthetics as a Motivation for Research" by Robert Root-Bernstein.

The special issue comes with a virtual art exhibit, "Chemistry in Art," on CD-ROM. Fourteen artists from North America and Europe were selected by an international jury to present their perspectives on chemistry. In their introduction to the virtual exhibit, Tami Spector and Joachim Schummer write that "since 1986, when the entire Biennale de Venetie was devoted to 'Arte e Scienza,' the relationship between science and art has been the focus of the art world." Tami I. Spector of the University of San Francisco and Joachim Schummer of the University of Karlsruhe and the University of South Carolina were editors of the special project.

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Michael Ranta, *Mimesis as the Representation of Types - The Historical and Psychological Basis of an Aesthetic Idea* (Stockholm: Stockholm University Press, 2000), 285 pp.

A long-standing tradition in the history of aesthetics holds that the function of pictorial representation consists in the rendering of general or idealized types rather than particulars. Various versions of this view may be found from antiquity to the present. How can this tradition be explained or given any plausibility? Aestheticians, and perhaps most notably analytic aestheticians, have been rather reluctant to take empirical research into account. This study claims that empirical-psychological research may be of considerable importance for clarifying at least some aesthetic problems, including this one.

This book discusses several psychological research efforts, although its focus is on cognitive psychology and recent categorization research. A

basic tenet in cognitive psychology consists of the idea that higher organisms are capable of constructing and storing mental representations. Such representations can reflect general or exemplary characteristics of categories, but they may also involve ideal features defined in terms of goal-efficiency. Pictorial representations of general and idealized types may correspond to the stored mental representations of beholders. Based upon recent research in emotion theory, it is argued that matches and moderate mismatches between pictorial renderings of types and beholders' mental representations and schemata have hedonic effects and thus may have a bearing on aesthetic preferences.

Larry Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 362 pp.

Shiner explores the historical rift between art and craft and art and life. He invites a reconsideration of the history of art and "argues that the category of fine art is a modern invention—that the lines drawn between art and craft resulted from key social transformations in Europe during the eighteenth century. The idea of fine art was linked to the development of new market economies, the rise of the middle class, and the art museum where art could be viewed, digested, and contemplated. Critics became less interested in how art and literature functioned and more fascinated with art's aesthetic worth. At the same time, the performance of classical music shifted from places of worship and political ceremonies to more secular and commercial venues where it could be listened to silently. Accompanying these institutional changes were the dissolution of the patronage system for producing art and the advent of a new market system supported by consumers. Shiner looks at works by thinkers as varied as Hogarth, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Emerson, Marx, Dewey, and Benjamin and shows how the modern system maintains its dominance through the assimilation of artists and musicians who resist it and the distinctions it draws between artists and artisans, high art and the crafts."

Mirjana Veselinovic-Hofman, *Fragmente zur musikalischen Postmoderne* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2003), 180 pp.

"This book proposes one possible route through postmodernity, by presenting an intertextual treatise of postmodern music, postmodern theory and conditions constituting a postmodern musicological discourse. From a theoretical perspective - as a discourse about postmodern theory, art, music and musicology - this book is directed at a broader circle of readers who follow theoretical controversies of postmodernism. At the same time, in its narrower context - with an analysis of music material - the book is directed at the music professional.

The word 'fragment' in the title symbolizes the phenomenon of postmodernity itself in its polysemantic sense, as an essential notion, whose hypostasies are examined at the theoretical and compositional-technical level." This is done in the following chapters: "The Degree of Probability (Introduction)," "The Meaning of the Notion (the First Debate)," "The Music Paradigm," "Neoclassicism and the Phenomenon of the Paradigm," "Treatment of the Paradigm in Postmodernity," "Music Postmodernity and the Individual Compositional Act," "The Meaning of the Notion (the Second Debate)," and "Postmodernity and the Tripartition (Conclusion)."

Krystyna Wilkoszewska, ed.: *Aesthetics of the Four Elements: Earth, Water, Fire, Air*. Ostrava: Tilia Publishers, University of Ostrava, 2001).

This book is a collective work of scholars with various specific interests in aesthetics, which makes it an interesting cross-cultural and inter-

disciplinary work (art history, cultural theory, anthropology, psychology, religion studies) on the theme of the elements. Rich in color as well as in black and white illustrations, this study provides not only a comprehensive review of the appearance of these elements in art but also leads the reader through a number of different interpretations.

Aesthetics of the Four Elements consists of five chapters with an introduction written by the editor. Four elements suggested by the title are discussed separately "Earth," by Marzenna Jakubczak, "Water," by Zdenka Kalnicka, "Fire," by Maria Popczyk, "Air," by Malgorzata Sacha-Pieklo, and the concluding chapter, "Elements Return," by Krystyna Wikoszewska.

The major success of this study lies in showing that the symbolism of the elements doesn't belong only to the past. The elements are so well represented in art because they have always been contemporary. This notion is conveyed in each chapter and particularly in the last one, which points out the environmental art, body art, and ecological interests in art that make the elements part of our own visual culture. Secondly this book underlines the intricate interconnections between cultures in different representations of the oldest symbolic themes that seem to be universal in our multicultural world. Finally the book posits a very important question that also has a general sense: Can we encounter the elements without subjecting them to mediating aestheticization? (p. 382).