see Shusterman's first attempt at literary fiction as a move to realize the dream of an out-of-body state in which one can shed the inhibitions of one's repressed and compromised physical body and be reborn with 'improved somatic mastery' (p. 8) for the better appreciation of art and for experiencing the joie de vivre that arises out of the union of yin and yang. I have only one problem with it and here I return to the caveat from Eagleton I alluded to earlier in the review. I frame it as a question: how likely would a person from a background less privileged than that of Shusterman and from a location other than the developed First World be to experience the kind of bodily liberation that the book talks about? If the untrammelled conversation that the book celebrates is sustained by the aphrodisiac of freely flowing wine and a plentiful salmon dinner, how likely is that to happen over 'a dinner of herbs'?

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STANLEY CAVELL ON AESTHETIC UNDERSTANDING. By Garry L. Hagberg (Ed.). Series: Philosophers in Depth. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. 365 p.

Hagberg's edited volume traces the legacy of Stanley Cavell's philosophical understanding of the role of language and aesthetics in the shaping of individual identity and relationships. It emphasises the idea that knowledge of the other is not achieved through the discovery of their most intimate secrets; rather, Cavell's primary ethical principle in building meaningful relationships is based upon accepting the fact that human finitude is a condition that cannot be overcome. Cavell remarks that acknowledging the other without demanding knowledge is the only way to avoid frustration and to overcome unnecessary barriers between individuals. The present reviewer finds some similarities with John Keats's "negative capability," namely "when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason," a quality that Keats, similarly to Cavell, thought "Shakespeare possessed so enormously" (see Keats's letter to his brothers George and Thomas, 22 December 1817). The essays of this volume show how Cavell's idea of acknowledgement, as opposed to knowledge, interacts with a few philosophical traditions from Austin to Wittgenstein. The volume explores various texts across literature, films, and music that mirror human finitude as a form of tragedy that can lead to the most extreme form of skepticism, namely solipsism, "where a person takes hermetic isolation from every other human mind" (xi).

Part I, "Understanding Persons Through Film," gathers three chapters: two of them explore Cavell's ethical concept of acknowledgement in films; while the third chapter discusses Cavell's philosophical production in parallel with his own memoir *Little Did I Know*. Francey Russell's "Under-standing Persons Through Film" explores Cavell's ethical difference between knowledge and acknowledgement through a close analysis of Roman Polanski's movie *Chinatown* (1975). Russell maintains that the noir genre supports Cavell's need for acknowledgement "primarily through its failure" (5). Polanski's *Chinatown* shows an excessive desire of knowledge perversely "concerned with the desire to bring to light … what ought to remain hidden" (8). The perverse secret is the incestuous abuse that the

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female protagonist has repeatedly undergone on the part of her father. Russell suggests that by Jake learning Evelyn's secret "very little is gained"; instead, Jake misses the opportunity to acknowledge Evelyn as a person.

Jay R. Elliott's "Other Minds and Unknown Women: The Case of *Gaslight*" traces Cavell's approach to other minds from his book *Pursuits of Happiness* (1981) to his subsequent study *Contesting Tears* (1996). While in the former Cavell contends that a few comedy films produced in the 1930s portray marriage as the paradigm of "genuine interpersonal knowledge" (38), in the latter Cavell remarks that melodrama movies such as *Gaslight* "depict the possibility of … knowledge of a woman… outside of marriage" (ibid.). Yet Elliott points out Cavell's "failure to fulfil his promises" (ibid.). In *Contesting Tears*, Cavell enters in conversation with feminist ideas about marriage as a source of violence and unhappiness for women. Yet Elliott does not view the choice of melodrama women to abandon marriage as a way to "integrity" and "possibility" (46). Rather, Elliott sees it as "a loss of … the prospect of a relationship of trust and vulnerability in which their desires could be expressed and understood" (46). Recognising gender as a structure that limits the possibilities of melodrama women to be "properly acknowledged" (51), Elliott remarks that in melodramas, failure to acknowledge "subjectivity" is not the mere consequence of "human finitude" but the result of gender "injustice" (52).

Peter Dula's "The Melodrama of the Unknown Man" explores Cavell's philosophical production side by side with his memoir *Little Did I Know*, arguing that while "the women of the comedies and the melodramas have a decision to make about whether a particular man is worth spending a life with," in his memoir "Cavell has a decision to make about Lady Philosophy" (63). Dula contends that similarly to the couple in the remarriage comedies, *Little Did I Know* shows Cavell's isolation from the wider community, contending that "it is not Cavell alone who is isolated but philosophy … from a culture unwilling or unable to put itself in question" (64) even though, as Cavell suggests, "[i]n each of these comedies some element of melodrama variously makes an appearance without … getting to the point of shattering the comedic universe" (*Pursuits of Happiness* 1981: 151; cited in Dula, p. 64).

Part II, "Shakespeare, Opera, and Philosophical Interpretation," joins three chapters that discuss Cavell's sense of tragedy arising from the human condition of finitude. David A. Holiday's "Cordelia's Moral Incapacity in *King Lear*" proposes a Cavellian reading of Cordelia's words "Nothing, my Lord" at the beginning of Shakespeare's tragedy. Holiday contends that Cordelia's response to her father has been misinterpreted by its two major critical traditions: the followers of Coleridge, who view her words as "proud and wilful"; and Johnson's tradition, who insist "on her … sainted goodness." Holiday contends that "both readings are instructively flawed" (xiv), as Cordelia's words are instead "the expression of a *moral incapacity*" (76, emphasis original). Conversely, Holiday points out that "Cavell's re-reading of the play concentrates on its central metaphor of sight and blindness" (77). According to Cavell, Lear wants to avoid the "penetrating gaze of love" (ibid.) because "to be seen by someone who genuinely loves you is to be seen for what you really are" (78). In Lear's case, "being seen lovingly" means to be ripped off his "political power" and "fearsome reputation," and thereby exposed as the ageing and feeble man he is becoming (ibid.). In order to avoid genuine love, Lear purchases a "false semblance of love from his daughters" (79-80), bribing them with a dowry to incite their expression of love for him in public. Cordelia cannot flatter her father as her sister does, and her few words "Nothing, my Lord" express her moral incapacity to contribute to her father self-destruction.

V. Stanley Benfell's "Disowning Certainty: Tragic and Comic Skepticism in Cavell, Montaigne, and Shakespeare" remarks that the notion of skepticism that Cavell discusses in Shakespeare's tragedies can be extended to his comedies. For Cavell, a primary example of skeptic in Shakespeare's tragic tradition is the character of Othello, who cannot accept the lack of complete knowledge of Desdemona's intimate feelings. Rather than accept and acknowledge Desdemona "as a separate, autonomous individual who exists outside of his control" (113), Othello kills her. The solution, both for Cavell and Shakespeare, is acceptance of "the finite knowledge available to us" (121). Benfell maintains that the same dilemma before human finitude pervades Shakespeare's comedies too. In *Twelfth Night*, "the question of mistaken identity as applied to twins proves to be particularly interesting within the skeptical tradition" (124): while Malvolio, who mistakes' Maria's handwriting for Olivia's, seeks revenge, Viola accepts the events and "suspend[s] judgment" (127).

Ian Ground's "Must We Mean What We Sing?—*Così Fan Tutte* and the Lease of Voice" contends that though Cavell's philosophical attention focuses on *Don Giovanni* and *Le nozze di Figaro*, his "themes of skepticism, sincerity, and alienation" are particularly present in the third Mozart/Da Ponte collaboration, *Così fan tutte* (xv). Ground points out that opera makes the psychological aspects of a character "manifest in music" (138). In other words, "singing is the realisation of a 'signature'—a unique way of showing oneself in the world" (140). Ground points out that with female characters in particular, opera reveals the patriarchal nature of societies because "singing exposes [the female protagonist] as thinking," thereby "expos[ing] her to the power of those who do not want her to think" (Cavell, *A Pitch of Philosophy*, p. 146; cited in Ground, p. 142).

Part III, "Aesthetic Understanding and Moral Life," addresses pivotal philosophical themes such as ethics, aesthetics, and humanity, as well as discourses arising from the contrast between life as opposed to death and sanity to madness. Sandra Laugier's "Aesthetic Understanding and Moral Life" contends that experience for Cavell is paramount because it helps "to perceive … what matters" (182). Philosophy allows us to "discover importance" not only when we are able to perceive it, but also when we fail and miss it. The duty of philosophy and film is thus "to overcome skepticism, defined as our inability to see what matters" (188). Laugier concludes remarking that "the recognition of our failures to acknowledge importance" is one of the legacies that Cavell has left.

David LaRocca's "Achilles' Tears: Cavell, the *Iliad*, and Possibilities for the Human" questions "whether it is possible to genuinely weep over others, or whether tears are necessarily only shed over one's own pain and losses" (xvi). It is more plausible to talk, LaRocca explains, about a form of "narcissistic grieving," namely when "our emotions for others are motivated by our feelings about ourselves" (203). This is what we learn, LaRocca contends, from the overwhelming feelings that in the last scene of the *Iliad* Achilles experiences for Priam when grieving his son Hector, whom Achilles himself killed. "In this revelatory encounter", LaRocca explains, "we find men—who are sworn enemies … share a moment of weeping" (206). Yet Achilles is crying for himself, as he projects Priam's ordeal to his own father Peleus's crying for him, whose death his mother foretold.

Richard McDonough's "Wittgenstein 'in the Midst of" Life, Death, Sanity, Madness—and Mathematics" finds a link between Wittgenstein and Cavell regarding their shared view on "the threat posed by scepticism to the sanity of reason" (239). Regarding the connection between madness and mathematics, McDonough explains that according to Wittgenstein, "mathematics arises out of the same kind of mad inspiration that produces poetry and philosophy" (253). This is not to say that poetry and mathematics are the same; rather, that both originate from "the same sacred source of 'divine madness' that is the source of all human greatness" (256).

Hagberg dedicates Part IV, "Reading Fiction and Literary Understanding," to how Cavell's notion of acknowledgement can illuminate some literary works. Alan Johnson's "Reading Fiction and Literary Understanding" provides a Cavellian's analysis of John le Carré's spy novel *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy* (1974), arguing that this text portrays a counterfeit reality where Western and Soviet practices are not that far apart. Johnson remarks that le Carré's novel succeeds because "it unflinchingly casts the typical Cold War spy's post-imperial world not as knowable, because previously mapped and colonized, but instead as a truer reflection of what Stanley Cavell calls an inherently contingent, unknowable world" (266). Johnson individuates a serious trend of spy fiction that poses some ethical questions "about the characters' afterlives" (270). Here spies do not have a predictable aftermath, as their lives have been profoundly influenced by "the break-up of Britain's empire" (ibid.) and by the contingency of the post-imperial world in which they live.

Erin Greer's "Must We Do What We Say? The Plight of Marriage and Conversation in George Meredith's *The Egoist*" remarks that Meredith's novel anticipates some of the principles explored by J. L. Austin's speech act theory in *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), as it equally "interrogate[s] the mutual reinforcement of linguistic and social convention" (294). Greer finds rather surprising that, given the influence of Austin on Cavell's formation, the latter did not use speech act theory in his philosophical production. Greer observes that the performative nature of language could illuminate a novel such as Meredith's *The Egoist*. Austin's principles "signal that speech operates somewhat independently of the intention of its speakers" (308). Likewise, Clara finds herself entangled in a marriage promise that she cannot avoid any longer. On the contrary, Willoughby, the male protagonist, "appears to intuit that linguistic and social convention are both on his side, as a male of the ruling class" (309). The eclectic field of pragmatics linguistics has developed further Austin's speech act theory: according to discursive (im)politeness theory, categories such as class, gender, and race determine how face needs and social distance are maintained (see S. Mill, *Gender and Politeness*, 2003). Greer notes that *The Egoist* exposes "the multivalent connections between language, gender, and power" (317). Discursive (im)politeness theory could expose how this happens and how language, gender and power are profoundly entangled in Meredith's novel.

The last chapter of this collection, Garry L. Hagberg's "Within the Words of Henry James: Cavell as Austinian Reader," finds that a common denominator among Wittgenstein, Austin, and Cavell is the importance of linking the sense of questions (and thereby language) to their contexts of usage. In other words, "the content of a question is not pre-packaged" (328) "because without situating any real question into a setting of human life … we do not, in a very literal sense, know what we are talking about" (329). Again, there is a clear connection here between the early developments in the philosophy of ordinary language and the current field of pragmatics linguistics, which accounts for how language acquires meaning in a real context of use. This is borne out in Hagberg's example of the meaning that the subject pronoun 'I' acquires when Spencer Brydon, the protagonist of Henry James's "The Jolly Corners," returns to New York: the subject pronoun "I" is the same, but it now refers to a profoundly different self. As Hagberg explains, the female counterpart, Alice Staverton, "sees individual persons, not invariant or fixed-entity referents of pronouns" (341-42), and "[i]n Cavell's sense, she acknowledges" (342) Spencer's new self.

The four sections of this collection address Cavell's ideas about human finitude as a frustrating condition, supporting Cavell's notion of acknowledgement as a tool for overcoming the impossibility of epistemic knowledge of other individuals. The essays offer interesting connections with other concepts developed in both the literary and linguistic fields, such as John Keats's notion of negative capability and pragmatics linguistics. The volume as a whole will thus be of interest not only to postgraduates and scholars who study philosophy, but also to those interested in Shakespeare, gender, and media studies, as well as researchers in pragmatics linguistics for the volume's important connection with the latter's early stages in the philosophy of ordinary language.

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HEGEL'S AESTHETICS: THE ART OF IDEALISM. By Lydia L. Moland. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. 296 p.

Schopenhauer, the great miserabilist, famously described Hegel as a "clumsy charlatan", and his work as nothing more than "the hollowest, most senseless, thoughtless, and [...] most stupefying verbiage."[1] While Schopenhauer was doubtless being at least a little uncharitable, there is something to be said for the characterisation. Dense and recondite, the thick, barbed brambles of Hegel's prose stymie ready understanding. A typical example, from *Philosophy of Nature*, reads: "A rational consideration of Nature, must consider how Nature is in its own self this process of becoming Spirit, of sublating its otherness [...]".[2] Lucidity is not among its obvious virtues. And yet, in a corpus that includes sentences like the one quoted, Hegel's *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* offers a welcome reprieve. In stark contrast to most of Hegel's scholarship, *Aesthetics* is brisk, even breezy; both an eminently readable typology of artworks, and an analysis of how art functions within his philosophical programme.

Aesthetics was not published during Hegel's lifetime. Indeed, the only work on aesthetics that was published while Hegel was alive is paragraphs 556 to 563 of his *Encyclopedia of the Natural Sciences*; a relatively slim body of scholarship that is absent the analyses of specific genres or objects that typify what we now think of as Hegelian aesthetics. *Aesthetics*, though, was compiled posthumously by Hegel's student Heinrich Gustav Hotho from a number of source texts, including lecture transcripts and Hegel's own lecture notes (unfortunately now lost)'. It is due to this uncertain provenance that the breeziness of *Aesthetics* has long struck Hegel scholars as suspicious. As Hegel scholar Annemarie Gethmann-Siefert and her team have argued, there is good reason to think that the clarity and elegance of *Aesthetics* is thanks to some rather heavy-handed editing and interpolations on Hotho's part. Naturally, this poses significant questions regarding the status of *Aesthetics* within Hegel's broader programme.

Lydia Moland's excellent *Hegel's Aesthetics: The Art of Idealism* is, at least in part, a response to these questions. In the first comprehensive English-language exegesis of Hegel's aesthetics for thirty-odd years, Moland has taken on the monumental task of developing an authoritative reading of Hegel's aesthetics, correcting for Hotho's changes. Her efforts have resulted in a rich, hybrid analysis that makes clear what she takes to be

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