

“the ancient popular mind...puts tyranny outside normal politics and outside legitimate sexuality. The force of this assumption causes even the stories of tyrants’ innocence to have to claim that innocence” (111). This historical point here substantiates the subtle philosophical one. More specifically, it highlights the multiple levels at work in the exceptionalism that is characteristic of the tyrant’s soul: “what a soul unlawfully desires in its dreams can include *théria* ‘beasts.’...the tyrannical soul lets itself indulge those dreams. The erotic tendency in the tyrant finally expresses itself in bestiality” (113). This moment in the text is one of several that both furthers Pappas’s intervention and demonstrates his ability to connection between the various levels on which Plato’s dialogues simultaneously operate. In this manner, *Plato’s Exceptional City, Love, and Philosopher* echoes Glaucon’s attempt to simultaneously persuade his audience of the dangers of lust, moderate the explicit content of his own speech and highlight its metaphorical link to the soul and city. Like Glaucon, Pappas’s work is similarly an accomplishment in the balance it strikes between his shrewdness as a reader of Plato and the illustration of his insights through the clarity of his prose.

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AESTHETIC DIMENSIONS OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY. By Andrew Bowie. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. 296 pp.

In the opening chapter of the *Aesthetic Dimensions of Modern Philosophy*, Andrew Bowie puts forth a novel reading of Descartes that begins to adumbrate the division between cognitive and aesthetic judgements which in modernity, Bowie claims, proves to navigate the latter’s trajectory as a discipline. For Bowie, the process of Cartesian doubt lies and, in fact, demarcates the intersection between the arts and sciences; on the one hand, these “sceptical reflections follow from the emergence of modern scientific method, which puts the wisdom of the Bible and the Greeks into doubt by showing that many received explanations of natural phenomena are untenable” (30). Bowie finds in the *Meditations* attempt to mold an ontological foundation for the burgeoning natural sciences — “a grounding which turns out, though, to be elusive” — an elusiveness both symptomatic of modernity’s broader currents and pliable to the thesis of his project (29). On the other hand, he writes, “It is this elusiveness that I want to connect to aesthetics, which, rather than seeking to establish a stable subject–object relationship that can ground knowledge, responds to the shifting ways in which subjective and objective relate” (30). The passage instantiates a twofold claim of *Aesthetic Dimensions* that, firstly, a dynamism has characterized the nature of the relationship between subject and object and, secondly, why this relationship subsequently takes on its various guises as described by Bowie. To Bowie’s credit, locating this rift between a scientific sense of precision and a capacity of the work of art to preclude hermeneutic closure in Descartes indirectly reframes the divide between continental and analytic philosophy as a gradual, rather than recent, fissure. Such a perspective brings with it an additionally welcomed understanding of this divide from the vantage point of the objects of study relevant to each. “If maths is one form in which modern philosophy seeks transcendence,” Bowie remarks, “the other form, as various varieties of Romanticism and aestheticism suggest, is art. This is evident in the often radically differing understandings of language that have predominated in these approaches” — a difference he rightly sees manifest between Frege on the one hand and continental approaches to hermeneutics, on the other (9).

However, one consequence of describing and explaining disciplinary focus in terms of these objects is that such an approach threatens to attribute the second order effects downstream from each object of study to its respective discipline. This is occasionally hinted at by Bowie’s treatment of the

penchant for assuredness characteristic of the analytic tradition: “The latter claim can only be denied if one maintains that ‘reality’ is only what the physical sciences reveal, the position we questioned in terms of the notion of ‘world’. The very fact that such a claim can so dominate philosophical debate, and has effects in many domains of social, political, and cultural life, is itself a symptom of what this book has sought to question. . . . this claim itself is not a natural scientific claim and so involves meta-physical commitments outside its own scope, as well as having social and political effects by obscuring the kind of truth that is only accessible through art” (207-08). Whether claims regarding scientific objectivity are meant to extend beyond the parameters in which some fact may be understood as objective within the scope of such parameters and whether that claim remains intelligible “outside of its own scope” remain separate affairs. Although Bowie is right to point out that the particular world picture tacitly envisioned by such claims is not always made explicit, the direct contact between truth as it appears in this framework and “the kind of truth that is only accessible through art,” as well as the means by which the conceptual shape of the former can take hold of and obscure the non-conceptual shape of the latter remains to be elucidated.

This does not, however, outweigh the scholarly merit of the book, which is prominently displayed in the chapters devoted to Heidegger and Adorno. As is frequently the case, Bowie’s acumen on Heidegger is displayed with prominence. This comes to the fore directly through the focus of the book’s sixth chapter on the Heidegger-Cassirer debate, its reception and the ecological components of Heidegger’s discussion of the strife between earth and world in “The Origin of the Work of Art” in tandem with a number of additional topics in Heidegger scholarship. Bowie’s longstanding eminence on Heidegger’s relationship to aesthetics indirectly provides the reader with a newfound clarity that demystifies Heidegger’s claims while separating them from the plausible interpretations with which they are often conflated.

This penultimate chapter makes apparent the philosophical accomplishment of *Aesthetic Dimensions of Modern Philosophy*. More broadly, Bowie’s shrewd grasp of the history of philosophy allows him to highlight the repetition of philosophical debates whose recurrence often owes to a mistaken understanding of this history as an antiquated moment bereft of contemporary significance. “Again,” he writes, “we end up with versions of materialism/realism versus idealism. . . . and with the impasses of much modern epistemology” (35). Bowie takes care to delimit the scope of this problematic, often doing so through an extended engagement with the lexicon of Jürgen Habermas — a gesture which proves particularly useful when partitioning between cognitive and aesthetic judgements. Such an approach ultimately offers a substantive contribution to one of the central questions of the book and of our philosophical moment: “How, then, can we understand the sense that makes aesthetics so important, in ways which do not merely relegate it to the arbitrarily subjective, but also do not seek to give it the same objective status as warranted scientific claims?” (7).

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BUDDHIST ETHICS: A PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATION. By Jay L. Garfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021. 249 pp.

In the Preface to his *Buddhist Ethics: A Philosophical Exploration*, Jay L. Garfield suggests to the reader that the frame through which we are to read his work explicitly avoids a comparative approach to ethics as broadly construed in Eastern and Western philosophy. This is a subtle point that reads as a mere suggestion before it does an intention that foregrounds and directs his project. However, as the book progresses it not only becomes clear that the latter holds sway but, by exten-