

ers may want Grausam to cast a wider net and consider alternative methodologies through which the nuclear threat was handled, but Grausam engages diversity in a different form here, with thematic assessments of game theory, narrative closure, and signification.

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Carole Bourne-Taylor and Ariane Mildenberg, eds. *Phenomenology, Modernism and Beyond*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2010. xiii + 390 pp.

Phenomenology, Modernism and Beyond is a stimulating contribution to the understanding of the links between phenomenology and modern aesthetics. The thirteen essays in this dense volume offer penetrating insights into the theoretical works by Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Gaston Bachelard, Paul Ricoeur, and others. The authors of the essays work in a wide range of fields that include literature, philosophy, architecture, theology, and musicology. Their aim is to relate artistic experimentation to the innovative systems of perception, mass (re)production, and consumption that transformed all political, social, and cultural landscapes in the twentieth century. A common denominator is the investigation of the complex relation between phenomenology and art throughout the twentieth century. The essays are grouped in five parts that explore the tenets of phenomenology regarding issues like subjectivity, space, time, perception, and artistic creation observed through the prism of Modernism, Postmodernism, and Transmodernism.

In the preface, Kevin Hart contends that a phenomenological approach to modernist artworks provides better access to the artist's experience of the world. He also claims that it has broadened our critical scope, making us aware of the true nature of the rich artwork: it proceeds from a sense of being-in-the-world combined with imagination, perceptual knowledge, and intuition, independent of time and place. This argument is further developed in Carole Bourne-Taylor and Ariane Mildenberg's illuminating introduction that is both a *tour-d'horizon* and a thorough examination of a phenomenological rationale. There, the editors show how the crisis of modernity crystallized the preoccupations born from the quick expansion of industry and capital in the western world. Bourne-Taylor and Mildenberg

place the roots of phenomenology in the rift between the modern self and the age of commodity when art, deprived of its aura, was desublimated, and conventional values dissolved. The analysis of key notions like *epoché*, horizon, intentionality, and reduction, all central to phenomenological theory, is both instructive and justified, for it foregrounds the dialectic between the modern consciousness and the world, between the subject and the object of perception, and representation not as a mimetic enterprise but as a constructive apprehension of selfhood as an enigma shaped by the space and time continuum of physical phenomena.

Part 1 explores the paradoxes of "The Reduction," a concept that signals the will to probe the world differently, to adopt a new posture, which is a prerequisite for creativity. Mildenberg shows how Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, and Wallace Stevens's poetic diction relies intuitively on this bracketing of experience which is not synonymous with self-renunciation but with the acknowledgement of unknown territories of the self immersed in the world. H. W. Fawcner slants the definition toward a perspective embracing theology, phenomenology, and modernist art, which does not equate with a radical withdrawal to the inner self, but with a sound revaluation of the essence of the self and of its ethos and acts of consciousness.

Part 2, "The Invisible and the Unsayable," explains how modernist commitments shattered barriers between art, metaphysics, and life. Raymond Monelle contends that, because it articulates temporality to memory, the body to the world, signifier to signified, the musical phrase central to Proust's work gives access to a polymorphous experience that exceeds the here and now of phenomenological "reality" encapsulated in language. Hanna Meretoja argues that Robbe-Grillet was not a *chosiste* (objectivist), but rather a novelist whose work is marked by the fragmentary, discontinuous, chaotic flux that surrounded the modernist self; she makes connections between the loose texture of his fictional works and the meaninglessness of the referential world.

Part 3, "Paths of Appearance in Early and Late Modernist Poetry," is devoted to the poetic object. In his bold reassessment of Gerard Manley Hopkins's poetry based on Husserl's concept of "Thisness," Eoghan Walls argues that both the poet and the philosopher's enterprise combined scientific observation with a longing for transcendence, for a metaphysics apt to distil the essence of Truth vital to subjectivity and creation. Matt Ffytche discusses the resonances of philosophy and phenomenology in American modernism; he sees deep analogies between Oppen's "revelatory" poetry and the logical, perceptual, and ontological categories of human praxis analyzed by Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty (194).

Part 4 pinpoints the dialectic between "Space and Place" and a phenomenology of the gaze. Drawing on Husserl's works and architectural theory, Filip Mattens suggests that visual perception determines the framework of subjective experience where absence, a notion intrinsic to modernist compositions, can be transformed into aesthetic enjoyment. Discussing Joyce and McKay's poetics, Minna Niemi and Justin Parks argue that both writers revisit the notions of origins, and weave space and the body into a linguistic performance which subverts notions like "here" and "there," beginning and ending, physics and metaphysics, and shape them into an elegy to the lost unified subject. Martin Leer investigates the modernist landscape poised between a space determined by constructive, tangible rules of perception, and a space marked by disruption and emptiness. He also examines how it artfully controls the elaboration of meaning through the association of homogeneity and heterogeneity.

Part 5, "New Lyricism: Beyond Phenomenology," studies the patterns that inform the visual/literary/linguistic image. Jean-Jacques Wünenburger discusses how the prominence of the image in modernity affected both the poetic imagination and the sphere of the self. He posits the existence of a middle term that would conjoin consciousness, image, and the referential world, and that would depart from the conventional dichotomies between presence and absence, image and representation, being and non-being. Michel Collot considers literary experience with its multiplicity of interpretations as the locus where the visibility of the physical world is systematically challenged and transformed into its poetic recreation that encapsulates the invisible. Bourne-Taylor shows how the materiality and figurality of Michel Deguy's poetry articulate art into reality, and discloses both terms not as mimetic counterparts to each other, but as recipients of creative transformations necessary to both of them.

These essays may appear arduous and abstract, but this collection remains a valuable guidebook for scholars and students, for it demonstrates how phenomenology has shaped and reshaped critical assumptions, especially in the second half of the twentieth century when it was defined by its stance toward other currents of literary criticism and theory. It provides an impressive conceptual apparatus that highlights the polysemic and polyphonic dimension of the perceptual, empirical, and artistic experience of the decentered/fragmented modern subject. One may take a further step and wonder if and how phenomenology offers answers to the "hyper-reality" of the twenty-first century suffused, as it is, with computer-generated pictures and sounds, and where notions like immanence and transcendence, ipseity and alterity, stability and movement, have evolved radically, stirring up new and unexpected horizons of meaning. The collection also

provides an interdisciplinary forum for a wide range of scholars committed to the affinity between critical theory and artistic creation. Its major asset is to address the enduring concern with subjectivity and artistic performance shared by emblematic thinkers, theoreticians, and artists of the twentieth century. Its most remarkable feature is perhaps less its desire to reassess the validity of critical theory per se than, as the title astutely suggests, to go beyond the categories assumed by institutional data, debates, and currents, thus widening the *topoi* of modernism. Not only does *Phenomenology, Modernism and Beyond* underline the complex relationship between art and the human sciences, it reflects (on) our contemporary modes of perception, cognition and representation, and illustrates the continuity and renewal of human experience, thought, and aesthetic production.

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Agnes S. K. Yeow. *Conrad's Eastern Vision: A Vain and Floating Appearance*. New York: Palgrave, 2009. x + 236 pp.

Surveying the sites of Joseph Conrad's early fiction, Agnes S. K. Yeow maps out a critical terrain whose contours are at once recognizable and alien. Grounded in attentive and sustained readings of Conrad's still relatively underrepresented Malayan stories, most of which date from the early stages of his literary career, Yeow's study sheds some new light on the familiar perspectives of art, history, and empire as they have long dominated Conrad studies. With an early nod to Mikhail Bakhtin, Yeow argues that Conrad's Malayan stories, and presumably all of his fictional narratives, are inherently "dialogic" in that they foreground the contest between history and fiction as a "collision of indistinct ideas" (6). In borrowing this phrase from Conrad, Yeow means to draw our attention to how Conrad's stories balance a fidelity to history with an awareness of the ultimate insufficiency of narrative. Yeow finds that what is ultimately at stake in this double engagement with fictional text and historical context is a preoccupation with vision that runs through Conrad's Eastern tales and, arguably, beyond.

For Yeow, vision, whether authorial or readerly, enables a "surplus of seeing" (41) that surpasses both fiction and history and that consequently provides the empowered reader with greater insight