

precedent in Kant's aesthetics—according to McMahon's interpretation of the *CJ*. Pragmatist aesthetics as a successor to Kantian aesthetics should therefore be seen in the sense of temporally subsequent though—in McMahon's view—substantially similar to the earlier theory.

I have noted that the title and subtitle of the book indicate two arguments that are simultaneously defended throughout the text. The result is a very busy book: each chapter methodically introduces some components of McMahon's pragmatist framework and contains most of the following elements. First, McMahon introduces aspects of the contemporary pragmatist theory. As noted, she frequently enlists the research of other contemporary philosophers of mind to support her claims. Works of contemporary artists, including Olafur Eliasson, Bill Henson, Daniel von Sturmer, Mischa Kuball, Sean Cordeiro, and Claire Healy, are used to illustrate roles of the components she introduces in the activity of artistic appreciation. Second, she describes the relevance of each component of her aesthetic theory—typically couched in terms employed by Kant in the *CJ*—for moral judgments. Third, when relevant, she argues for a historical connection between Kant's *CJ* and the employment of Kant's term(s) in her contemporary pragmatist theory. Fourth, McMahon's claims of historical connections require her to provide evidence for her revisionist interpretation of the *CJ*.

McMahon's contemporary aesthetic theory is presented in a way that is isomorphic with—and employs nomenclature from—Kant's aesthetic framework in the *CJ*. If the reader is familiar with Kant's *CJ*, then they are presented with a modern pragmatist aesthetic theory that is couched in Kantian terms that are based on an unorthodox reading (for example, of *sensus communis*, “disinterested pleasure” and “aesthetic ideas”). Some might find that the exposition and defence of the modern pragmatist theory that McMahon proposes would be more clearly conveyed if the text were not encumbered with the concurrent goal of attempting to argue for the historical precedence of major components in Kant's framework. Further, there are some places in the text where either more textual support from the *CJ* would be useful in motivating the exegetical argument or where further defense of the selected philosophical accounts that constitute the modern pragmatist theory is called for. As an example of the latter, when considering theories regarding the interaction between beliefs and our capacities for visualization, McMahon sides against Langland-Hassan by endorsing what is labeled the “Impinging Generalization View” (pp. 131–135). This theory is preferred over its competitors because it fits within the overall framework and provides greater explanatory power

within the context of that framework than does its competitors. But the viability of McMahon's account would have been better supported by an argument that directly addressed Langland-Hassan's objection against the view that it is unclear how visualisations, construed as “commitments” can affect background beliefs (p. 133).

This is a book that presents an argument for the value of contemporary art practices—particularly installation art. McMahon's utilization of works by contemporary artists to provide concrete applications of her aesthetic theory is welcome and interesting. The various claims that McMahon makes regarding Kant's aesthetic theory will—in a way that seems to parallel her account of the function of art—provoke reflection on our preconceived understanding of the notions that Kant employs in the *CJ*.

DANIEL WILSON
The University of Auckland

BAILEY, JULIUS. *Philosophy and Hip-Hop: Ruminations on a Postmodern Cultural Form*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, xxii +196 pp., \$85.00 cloth.

Hip-hop is ubiquitous. Even in the extremely white mountain town where I live, if you roll down your window at a stoplight, you will typically hear rap streaming from the pickup truck pulled up next to you. If anyone still doubted the artistic legitimacy of the genre, Kanye West's *My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy* put the question to rest once and for all—few artworks have generated such broad critical consensus in this millennium. For so many of us, rap is the most dynamic and exciting musical genre in today's world. Philosophers have long found it fruitful to engage with particular media and genres. Why, then, have we seen so little philosophical engagement with hip-hop?

Julius Bailey's *Philosophy and Hip-Hop: Ruminations on a Postmodern Cultural Form* is an admirable and important step toward correcting this lamentable deficit. “Ruminations” is a key word here; it conveys the exploratory nature of Bailey's work. Bailey brings together a background in a wide range of philosophical traditions with an impressive knowledge of the history and present state of hip-hop (and an obvious and sincere love of the genre). He alternately applies philosophical ideas to and explores the philosophical content of hip-hop. Make no mistake: this is not a Barnes and Noble philosophy and pop culture comic book. This is a serious book by a scholar of both

philosophy and hip-hop, and it is meant for other scholars and for students of philosophy. It would serve well as a pedagogical tool, exploiting the popularity of hip-hop to show skeptical students that philosophy need not be an esoteric slog but rather can be vitally relevant to their daily lives.

Bailey's ruminations go off in many different directions, but if he has an overarching thesis, it is that hip-hop is by nature a form of resistance. His first rumination, "Of the Beauty and Wisdom of Hip-hop," is a philosophically informed history of the genre's rise, tracing it from its origins in earlier Black American culture to the birth of the DJ and the MC in the 1970s and on to the popularization of the form in the 80s and the fracturing of the genre with the advent of the "gangsta" subgenre in the late 80s and early 90s. The central theme of this historical account is that rap arose as a means through which Black people expressed resistance to the dominant socio-political paradigm but was eventually co-opted and in some of its manifestations served to reinforce the very power structures it arose in opposition to. "Hip-hop, on the whole, may have been flourishing, but its commercial success commodified Black anger in a way that did little to address this anger in a constructive, community-sensitive way" (p. 41). What started out as a path of seeking authenticity and meaningful experience in harsh socio-economic conditions became, in many of its most popular instantiations, a celebration of conspicuous consumption.

Bailey's second rumination, "Firebrands and Battle Plans: Jean-Paul Sartre, Friedrich Nietzsche, and G.W.F. Hegel," is a lively discussion of the phenomenon of "battle rap." Bailey suggests that this phenomenon can be traced to the struggle for recognition of the Black artist. He writes, "Hip-hop has ever been a platform that provides a space in which individuals can use art . . . to carve out a space of their own that either utterly rejects what the nameless, faceless powers of under-representative democracy and soul-crushing consumerism would make of them or turns negatives into positives. In true liberatory fashion, those who use hip-hop in such a way are recognizing who they are, validating their own autonomous existence" (p. 46). Bailey makes the very interesting case that this function of rap as a locus of self-asserted Black autonomy is the root of the omnipresent trope of the MC's claim to ultimate mastery (and the battle rap tradition where this mastery is verified through virtual combat with other MCs). Rakim—inarguably one of the greatest MCs in the history of the genre—raps more often than not about how skilled he is at rapping. This "snake that eats itself" approach to lyrical mastery has seen countless manifestations (Lil Wayne and Blueprint come to mind as more recent examples), and Bailey's analysis of it is compelling. The claim to be the

ultimate lyricist is, according to Bailey, a transcendence of Battle Rap's reliance on recognition from an Other through the autonomous assertion of the MC's ascendancy.

Bailey's third rumination, "Conscious Hip-Hop versus the Culture Industry," picking up where his first rumination left off, draws a dichotomy between conscious or reflective hip-hop on the one hand and mainstream rap (including, but not limited to, gangsta rap) on the other. This is the one place where I take significant issue with Bailey's viewpoint. His dichotomy is familiar. Both conservative and progressive critics often indict rap music for its promotion of violence, misogyny, and materialist excess. The enlightened hip-hop fan responds that this criticism only holds for mainstream rap music (which is subject to pernicious market demands), and that there are many, many reflective hip-hop artists who reject this discourse and use their music to express penetrating socio-political criticism and exhort their communities towards progressive action.

I do not believe that this dichotomy holds up under scrutiny (at least, not any more). The ostensibly objectionable tropes of mainstream rap have become so pervasive in the genre that they have become integrated in the very form of rap music, and reflective artists in general manifest their enlightenment not by avoiding them entirely, but by interrogating them in interesting ways. Bailey seems to recognize this in his Rumination 5 "Lost in the City and Lost in the Self," in which he explores the ambivalence in the viewpoints of mainstream rappers such as Kanye West (N.B., his principal example is a track from Kanye's GOOD Music collective on which Kanye himself does not appear, but his overarching analysis clearly applies to Kanye). On the one hand, Kanye celebrates the decadence of his lifestyle and brags at great length about money, partying, and copious sexual conquests. But on the other hand, he expresses a solemn sense of remorse and a desire for spiritual redemption. Kanye is a mainstream rapper, but he is a reflective one who has taken the moral vacuity of the culture he is very much a part of and made it a central subject of his artistically ambitious oeuvre. On the other side of the coin, even the most reflective, anti-commercial hip-hop artists out there touch upon the tropes of mainstream rap in various ways. It is hard to imagine a less commercial group than the Death Grips, who caused a heated conflict with their record company when they posted an album online for free download just days before its scheduled release without the record company's consent. The Death Grips' MC Ride frequently delivers violent, aggressive lyrics without much context. It is not often clear what his rage is directed toward or what it is founded upon. The surreal quality of his imagery beckons interpretation from the listener, but remains

impenetrable. It all seems too creative and intelligent to be taken at face value, but it does not lower itself to announcing a message or moral or viewpoint. When MC Ride raps, “I need money, drugs, a ride, and a spot with hot ones inside” in the track “I Want It I Need It (Death Heated)” and goes on to say that he is “pondering rape,” the listener assumes that there must be some deep irony in play, but Ride does not condescend to spelling out the implicit critique. The disturbing quality of this dark exaggeration of the lifestyle idealized by many rappers is left to speak for itself.

All of this is to say that instead of drawing a dichotomy between reflective and mainstream rap, we should think of rap as existing on a spectrum. Almost all rap intermixes elements from both sides of the supposed dichotomy. Even the most unapologetically amoral mainstream rappers take a critical perspective at times (as in Waka Flocka Flame’s powerful exclamation, “when my little brother died I said ‘fuck school!’”), and even the most anti-commercial underground rappers are working in a genre that has been thoroughly pervaded by violence, misogyny, and materialism over the course of the last 25+ years. Conscious rappers transcend these objectionable elements in general not by avoiding them or voicing moralistic, literal critiques (I at least tend to find that when such literal critiques are voiced the result is bad rap music) but rather by taking them up and interrogating or subverting them. I would point to Killer Mike and Kendrick Lamar as paradigms of this type of conscious rapper. There might be nearly pure examples on either end of the spectrum (Immortal Technique on the one end and Birdman on the other come to mind), but the matter is too complex to be reduced to a dichotomy.

Bailey’s fourth rumination “Toward a Philosophy of Hip-Hop Education” explores the ways that hip-hop can function in the classroom. His persuasive point is that hip-hop resonates far more deeply with young people today than much of the historical canon and that in the hands of the right teacher it can be every bit as edifying (both through its own content and the connections it opens to canonical thought). By means of example, Bailey’s entire book can serve as an argument for including hip-hop in educational curricula.

I have already touched on Bailey’s fifth rumination, “Lost in the City and Lost in the Self: Sin and Solipsism in Hip-Hop’s Dystopia; St. Augustine, Toni Morrison, and Paul Tillich.” In this rumination Bailey explores the ambivalence at the heart of rap bragadocio and also articulates rap’s distinctive relationship with the urban setting from which it emerged. The sinful milieu of the city is the birthplace of hip-hop, and hip-hop cannot truly escape it, but it can seek redemption through deeper spiritual awareness.

Bailey’s sixth rumination, “Hip-hop and International Voices of Revolution: Brazil, Cuba, Ghana, and Egypt,” discusses the politically revolutionary character of rap music. Bailey asks why hip-hop has been employed on an international scale to challenge socio-political norms. The answer he develops is that the original nature of rap music as a defiant voice for the disenfranchised—performable at the bus stop when one person freestyles while another beatboxes (p. 113)—renders it both an accessible and powerful instrument for revolutionary movements abroad.

In his seventh rumination, “The Artist and the Image: Ervin Goffman, Marshall McLuhan, and Roland Barthes,” Bailey ponders the fascinating question of where the rapper’s image ends and where the artist begins. Bailey maintains that despite incessant claims of ‘realness,’ the “I” in a rapper’s narrative is not the person holding the microphone, but rather an image that is inextricably bound up with the media through which it is presented. I could not agree more with Bailey when he writes, “The underlying assumption [of rap’s moralist critics] . . . is that there is no distance between artist and expression that might allow [the narratives of mainstream rappers] to be seen as reflexive, satirical, ironic, double, or coded. This is a strange assumption indeed in the context of the history of Black rhetoric” (p. 135). I am unsure how this remark is supposed to interface with his own third rumination, which I criticize above on grounds that Bailey here seems to agree with.

Bailey’s eighth rumination, “Catastrophe of Success: Marshall McLuhan, Gilles Deleuze, and Felix Guattari,” is by far his most obscure, in large part due to the obscurity of Deleuze and Guattari that Bailey seems to inherit when he discusses them. In one of the clearer statements in the rumination, Bailey writes, “Artistic authenticity must be found, therefore, in the way the individual plays, resists, and, in short, constructs the tension between institutions and the self” (p. 147). There is no private self, prior to social reality. The self is originally and inextricably bound up in social relations. For the artist/celebrity, the path to authenticity is not to cultivate the true, interior self that exists prior to the artist’s celebrity (there is no such thing), but rather to embrace and interrogate the complex relations that the self is always already bound up with. The authentic artist/celebrity explores the tensions between artistry and celebrity rather than seeking vainly to distill the artist out of the celebrity.

As I hope has been evident throughout this review, I enjoyed Bailey’s book very much and I find it to have both scholarly and pedagogical value. What I most appreciate about Bailey’s efforts is that he has made important progress in setting an agenda for further philosophical investigation of rap music. Many of the questions and issues that Bailey raises can (and

I hope will) support much further discussion and debate. Rap music has long occupied center stage in popular culture, and it is now finding its due place in academic philosophy.

MATTHEW STROHL
Department of Philosophy
University of Montana

PAUL, ELLIOT SAMUEL and SCOTT BARRY KAUFMAN, eds.
The Philosophy of Creativity: New Essays. Oxford
University Press, 2014, x + 326 pp., \$49.95 cloth.

Is creativity a worthwhile subject for philosophical inquiry? According to *The Philosophy of Creativity*, not only is it a worthwhile subject, it should also be a central issue of philosophical inquiry. Ultimately it is for the reader to decide; nevertheless the book does demonstrate that the subject of creativity is not only prominent in aesthetics and the arts but also pervades other philosophical fields, such as ethics, philosophies of mind, science, and education. While an interdisciplinary approach is taken, predominately philosophy and psychology, which may appeal to readers interested in, say, the cognitive sciences, the essays are adequately palatable for readers who are unfamiliar with the subject and for those who do not favor such an interdisciplinary approach. Additionally this book is not intended as an introduction to the philosophy of creativity; the target audience is not the general public, but other scholars and researchers, for it seems that many of the essays were either invited directly from the authors or submitted and modified conference papers.

The essays are sectioned according by theme. However, not all sections receive equal treatment; “Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science” contains the majority of essays. The first section, “Concept of Creativity,” contains only one essay, in which Bence Nanay provides an experiential account of creativity, which is to say that creativity is experiencing something once believed as not previously possible (p. 23). It is a purely descriptive theory, which holds original and creativity as separate concepts and contends there are many ways to be creative (p. 26). Nanay contrasts the experiential account against the functional/computational account; however, it may have been beneficial for the naïve reader such as myself if the editors had included an essay emphasizing the latter account.

Three essays comprise the next section devoted to “Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art,” specifically literature, audience interaction, and music. Gregory Currie argues that “the view that literature may give us insight into the mind and its workings” is not en-

tirely true (p. 40). Rather unlike science, “literature has no significant institutional constraints that push its creative activity in the direct of truthfulness or impose practical tests for truth on its outcomes” (p. 53). However, literature’s value lies in providing us with examples of normative behavior. Noël Carroll argues that “the audience’s response to fictional artworks is typically creative” (p. 63). Such a response is an exercise of what Carroll calls the *fictive imagination*, which “is rooted in our capacity to think counterfactually” (p. 66). So the audience responds by filling in gaps in the storyline or by inferring the character’s motives or thoughts that the author has not openly revealed. Christopher Peacocke turns to music and characterizes ways in which musical compositions are creative. He particularly attempts to answer what makes a piece of music Romantic in style. According to Peacocke’s expressive–perceptual account, to perceive a piece of music as Romantic is to perceive the action as an expressive action and expressing a particular emotion that is controlling action in such a way that the classical musical forms or conventions are overstepped, and this overstepping expresses the strength of the emotion (p. 90). However, Peacocke’s discussion is quite profound to the degree that the naïve reader may lose sight of any mention of creativity, unless one recalls the essay that immediately preceded Peacocke’s essay.

Only two articles comprise the “Ethics and Value Theory” section. Owen Flanagan discusses the idea that the self is an artistic production, especially different versions of the idea that life is a performance or narrative. Given that “personhood is best conceptualized as a psychopoetic performance, but now one without clear genre guidance,” Flanagan provides three conceptions of personhood, “day-by-day persons,” “ironic persons,” and “strong poetic persons,” in order to reveal the normative constraints on performing oneself (p. 113). On other hand, Matthew Kieran considers creativity as a virtue and explores the motivations to be a creative person. Motivation which “shapes attentiveness, the envisaging of possibilities and openness to revision of ends as a work proceeds,” comes in two varieties; extrinsic and intrinsic (p. 131). The latter treats the creation as an end, whereas the former treats it as means. Creativity prompted by extrinsic motivation is a virtue of character (p. 136).

The next section, “Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science” houses the majority of essays. In the first essay, Simon Blackburn argues: “We should remain skeptical about divine madness, poetic frenzy, and . . . supposing that a manifestation of genius in one dimension is any indication of equal genius in another” (p. 156). So instead of divine madness or poetic frenzy, it is experience and emotion that appear to guide us not only to organized conscious