This is a book on aesthetics and education—an “untimely meditation” intended to save aesthetics from its fall into aesthetization in an age of globalization and technology. In the Introduction this danger is encapsulated by Yasuo Imai and Christoph Wulf as the “de-materialisation and fragmentation of the human body” and where aesthetic experiences become “suffused with technology” (p. 9). In the chapter by Manabu Sato, he writes of the way that, in the discourse of the global market and a culture of accountability, “[t]he language of art is moribund in current educational reform,” with imagination in eclipse. The consequence is the virtual disappearance of authentic self-expression (p. 28). Similarly Paul Standish points to the degeneration of the aesthetic in a “privitisation of feeling” within the current of globlisation: “on the one hand, MacDonaldization and a sameness that extends around the world; on the other, the differentiation of markets, with subtle profiling of customers, the artificial creation of desire, and individualization of bubbles of satisfaction” (pp. 19, 22). If one of the foremost tasks of this book is to reclaim the role of the aesthetic, especially in education, this is to be undertaken against the background of this shared concern, peculiar to our age—a concern, as this book shows, that is plainly shared by those in Japan and in Europe.

Imai and Wulf clarify that the book “attempts to present an alternative that will make it possible to break out of this dilemma” (p. 13)—namely the dilemma of sustaining their “profoundly Schillarian” approach to the aesthetic, an approach that is inseparable from subjective feeling and sensuous experience, while at the same time resisting the “subjectified and psychologized aesthetic,” the dangers of which Walter Benjamin warned in his criticism of “the aestheticizing of politics” (p. 12). The philosophical challenge that this book answers to is the task of presenting an

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alternative, say, an authentic sense of the subjective and of sensuous experience, and this involves going beyond the interrelated dichotomies of the private and the public, the inner and the outer, the subjective and the objective, and mind and body.

To meet this challenge, two main "methodologies" and a distinctive tradition in art are highlighted in the book. These methodologies are "ordinary language philosophy" and "performativity studies"; the distinctive tradition is that of Japanese aesthetics (p. 13). Within these broad frameworks, the chapters are divided into three parts: Part I centers on theoretical perspectives on the aesthetic and the public; Part II on historical perspectives; and Part III on the perspectives of performativity. The scope and structure of the book are thus clear. One of the book's most significant attractions, however, is its suggestion of the diverse possibilities of aesthetic education that can be elucidated through cross-cultural dialogue between Japanese and (some) European traditions.

The chapters brought together in this book represent influential and sometimes original points of view that are germane to its general theme, and they have their various merits. Space precludes detailed appraisal, so I shall instead concentrate mainly on the predominant concerns of the book as a whole, especially as these are advanced by Imai and Wulf. I would like to focus, from a philosophical perspective, on a factor that seems to be in tension with the agenda of the book. My own view is that, in spite of the book's main goal of presenting an alternative vision of the subjective by avoiding the disease of subjectification, in the Introduction and in some of the chapters, at least, the very source of the disease seems to be retained or at best muffled. First of all, what the authors mean by the "aesthetic" tends to be identified with the "sensuous" as opposed to the "conceptual" (p. 7). The sensuous is also associated with the inner. It is claimed: "In mimetic processes, the contemplator, as it were, takes an image of the work of art and incorporates it into his own inner world of images, where it is linked with other mental images" (p. 10). Such innerness seems to be given a privileged status, as something unapproachable and unknowable, a region of "ambiguousness" (p. 144). The aesthetic then is something "whose specific character cannot be anticipated" (p. 10). The mystification, and even purification, of the realm of the inner fails in my view to give a sufficiently radical response to the psychologizing of the aesthetic—the very problem that the book promises to answer.

Second, an apparently different approach to body-based performativity faces a similar difficulty. Here an emphasis is shifted from the inner "mind" to the outer "body." But the very source of the disease of psychologizing remains unaddressed by what is in effect a reactionary turn to the outside, to the body. This is most typically suggested by Satoshi Higuchi's representation of Richard Shusterman's "somaesthetics" (p. 94). Criticizing the postmodern ethics of taste and private perfection, Shusterman tries to solve the problem of privatization by returning the inner, private self to somatic awareness in "an aesthetic of full-bodied enjoying."? The political implication of this aesthetic is a call for the "enveloping folds of social solidarity." This echoes a remark by Imai and Wulf in the Introduction: "From the beginning the aesthetic is placed within social relationships, and seen as an avenue to the public sphere" (p. 13). In this utopian fusion of the aesthetic with the political, accompanied by the placid incorporation of the unknown mind into the holistic body, the psychoanalytical reality of the self, its sense of being riven, is covered over; the critical function of the aesthetic impulse is dulled. This may aggravate the danger of the "aesthetization of politics" raised by Benjamin, a theme that Imai expands upon in his chapter (p. 50). In any case, philosophical skepticism concerning mind-body dualism remains intact: the mind remains unknowable either by being sanctified as an impenetrable inside or being dissipated by a body outside.

In short, the questions I would like to raise concerning the general scope of this book are
how, first, it succeeds as a whole in responding to its professed task and, second, how far the chapters work together in contributing to an overarching goal. To raise these questions is not to ignore the distinctive and original virtues of particular chapters or to deny the thought-provoking effect of the collection as a whole; it is rather to respond to that provocation. From this perspective, the most radical response to the book’s challenging task, and perhaps the most disturbing contribution to the book, is Paul Standish’s account of Stanley Cavell’s aesthetics and ordinary language philosophy. Cavell’s ordinary language philosophy is criticized by Shusterman as “academic textualism,” whose linguistic approach can allegedly aggravate the privatization of the aesthetic. As Standish claims, however, Cavell’s ordinary language philosophy transcends the conventional dichotomy of the subjective and the objective (p. 24). Cavell’s Emersonian aesthetics is based upon the “explicit reversal of Kant” in “picturing the intellectual hemisphere of knowledge as passive or receptive and the intuitive or instinctual hemisphere as active or spontaneous.” In Cavell’s “epistemology of mood,” the “succession of moods is not tractable by the distinction between subjectivity and objectivity Kant proposes for experience.” His Wittgensteinian aesthetics serves to reveal the fact that “false views of the inner and the outer produce and sustain one another” and that “there is a need to restore a correct relationship between the self and its society” (p. 25). Cavell’s Freudian psychoanalytical approach does not evade or refute the inner but rather releases it from confinement inside, revealing the “mutual attunements” between the inner and the outer. Articulation of the aesthetic impulse through language is the condition of achieving objectivity: “objectivity in the realm of the aesthetic depends crucially on this public discourse” (p. 24). This is at the heart of participation in the public discourse of the linguistic community.

These characteristics of Cavell’s ordinary language philosophy constitute what Standish represents as Cavell’s attempt at “‘depsychologising’ psychology, of retrieving the psychological life from the effects of psychology (Cavell 1976; 91, 93)” (p. 25). Following this Cavellian aesthetics, aesthetic education will not encourage students to be absorbed either in the inner imagination or contemplation (without words), or in the outer bodily practice of meditation (again without words). Through language, students must be dissuaded from the temptation towards any purification, mystification or romanticization of the unknown in the name of the aesthetic, while remaining receptive to a spiritual excess beyond articulation. The prophetic and projective nature of language is a key to the production of the moment of “awakening” (p. 26), to allowing us to undergo, in the midst of the intensity of aesthetic experience, the moment of the sublime in the ordinary.

To save the aesthetic and the political from the “aesthetization of politics,” and to bridge the private and the public through the aesthetic, such linguistic activities must be a necessary component of aesthetic education. It is only then that the aesthetic imagination can be exercised for the creation and criticism of the polis.

Notes
1 Page references are to the book under review.
3 Ibid., 254.
6 Ibid., 127.