Review Essay: Phenomenology Goes to the Movies

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Malin Wahlberg, *Documentary Time: Film and Phenomenology* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), xvii + 170 pp., $22.50 (paperback).

Jennifer Barker, *The Tactile Eye: Touch and the Cinematic Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), xii + 196 pp., $24.95 (paperback).

Julian Hanich, *Cinematic Emotion in Horror Films and Thrillers: The Aesthetic Paradox of Pleasurable Fear* (New York and London: Routledge, 2010), xi + 301 pp., $118 (cloth).

Building primarily on the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, a number of film theorists have developed varied and sophisticated ways of utilizing the philosophical method of phenomenology to discuss embodiment, film technology, aesthetic techniques, realism, spectatorship, and contexts of film reception over the past two decades. Soon after a special issue of *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* was dedicated to phenomenology in 1990, Alan Casebier published *Film and Phenomenology* (1991). This monograph was swiftly followed by Vivian Sobchack's groundbreaking study *Address of the Eye* (1992), a book that came to define the field and influence a stream of journal articles by film scholars and philosophers such as Laura Rascaroli (1997) and Havi Carel (2007).

By the turn of the millennium, phenomenology was emerging as an alternative to neo-formalist, cognitivist, ideological, and psychoanalytic interpretations of film narrative, spectatorship, and screen aesthetics. In 2000, Laura U. Marks employed phenomenology to account for the sensory impact of experimental, intercultural screen media in *The Skin of the Film,* then in *Touch* (2002) and her pioneering work on hapticity informed Sobchack's second powerful contribution to phenomenology, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and Moving Image Culture* (2004). This body of work provides the foundation from which new scholars in the field are developing contemporary phenomenological ap-

proaches to the moving image including Malin Wahlberg's phenomenological theorization of temporality in documentary, *Documentary Time* (2008); Jennifer Barker's sensuous approach to the cinematic experience, *Tactile Eye* (2009); and Julian Hanich's impressive account of genre, aesthetics, and audience affect in *Cinematic Emotion in Horror Films and Thrillers* (2010).

Timely Theory: *Documentary Time*

Malin Wahlberg's thoughtful, theoretically informed meditation on documentary cinema and time demonstrates that a phenomenological account of film must grapple with the aesthetic and narrative textuality of the screen as it describes and documents events and experiences of the past, while also contending with the real-time experience of the film viewer, as mediated by technology and memory.

Wahlberg begins her welcome phenomenological contribution to documentary theory with a barrage of baffling temporal terminology that is complex and repetitive enough to make Heidegger proud, distinguishing between ocular time, pragmatic time, image time, experienced time, the time-image, and time-measurement. Then, more helpfully, she introduces an illuminating concept that grounds her argument and travels through the book: the trace. Referring to the material and existential meaning of the image as imprint, archive, or index, she writes that "The trace opens up to time experience and recollection; it designates the transcendental impact of an image-memory, the aporia of memory and imagination, the now of reminiscence, and the then and there of the historical referent" (xiv).

The concept of the trace is familiar from theorists such as André Bazin and Roland Barthes: "From the perspective of existential phenomenology Bazin's account of the uncanny experience of watching repeatedly the not-yet-now of a past event brings attention to the difference between the index and the trace, which tend to be confused in the predominant discussion about cinematic temporality" (34). *Documentary Time* explores connections between Bazin's realist theory of film aesthetics and the project of existential phenomenology, focusing not on the indexical relation between the photographic image and the photographed object, but on the lived duration of the image (that is, the temporal continuity of the long take) and the phenomenology of the trace. The trace is salient for documentary scholarship because it refers to the "material vestige of the past" (34) and "its uncanny presence of absence" (35), which relates to "the status of the film image as archive memory" or a mnemonic sign (36).

In articulating the theoretical and methodological grounding of her study, Wahlberg uses "semiotic phenomenology" to refer to projects "that address phenomenological problems of subjectivity, time, perception, and ethics from the horizon of the intellectual conquests of both semiotics and post-struc-

turalism" (xi). By critically engaging with this approach, Wahlberg draws adeptly on the phenomenological inheritance of classical film theory to support her major assertion, namely that "the sensory and affective implications of temporalization in moving images are crucial to the attraction and pleasures of film viewing" (xiv–xv).

In chapters 1 and 2, "The Phenomenology of Image and Time" and "The Time Image and the Trace," Wahlberg's focus is on philosophical problems of time and film, seeking conceptual reconciliation of the instant of the image with the flux and flow of movement through time, including the fragmentation of temporal linearity with memory and imagination. After providing a perceptive introduction to Bazin's work on the ontology of photographic images, Wahlberg works through a range of examples in which the film image performs "simultaneously as an image of the present and a trace of the past" (6). She argues: "Cinema provides a model of perception according to which the film frame metonymically refers to the mental image of a past event, inscribed by the mnemonic process of our brain" (27). Because documenting events implies archiving, mediating, and preserving, this point is particularly pertinent to documentary time rather than to the immersive immediacy of narrative time, for even when narrative time involves flashbacks the moving images have the feeling of co-presence in time and space.

Wahlberg's work makes an important and, dare I say, a timely intervention in the field by extending philosopher Paul Ricoeur's theories of temporality from a consideration of the ethics of written narratives to an examination of the documentary form and its complex negotiation of narrative imagination and representation of the historical world. This gets especially interesting when, in chapter 3, "Frame-Breaking Events and Motifs Beyond Representation," she applies the concept of the trace to instances of death on screen, extending ideas from Sobchack's essays "Inscribing Ethical Space" and "The Charge of the Real" in *Carnal Thoughts*. Footage of an actual death on screen functions very differently from staged death in film fiction. Wahlberg's interest is in the "frame-breaking" moment of a body transforming into a corpse, but her insights also apply more broadly to some instances of fiction film. For instance, film scholar Lisa Bode's (2007) work examines the uncanny celluloid trace of life and death in footage such as the unnerving digital resurrection of Marlon Brando, who posthumously reprises his role as Jor-El in *Superman Returns* (2006) by means of the reanimation of historical footage from *Superman* (1978). Actual death "contaminates the fictive time-space in terms of an authentic ending of lived time and the eerie transformation from moving body to inert object" and such images represent "a poignant trope of time, where the irrevocable ending of lived time is screened without any deeper insight into the question of death and decease" (Wahlberg 46). "In film," Wahlberg writes, "aspects of recording, reframing, and narration posit the im-

age-imprint as a dramatically refracted sign, disclosing its existential impact as presence of the past. In the context of reframed vestiges and marks in land-scapes and faces, the trace constitutes a recurrent iconography of pastness, which often fuses with violence and death" (60).

Chapter 4, "The Interval and Pulse Beat of Rhythm," interrogates visualized rhythm in experimental cinema dating back to the 1920s in which "rhythm is a tool to control the creation of meaning as well as the affective response of the audience" (69). This section also examines pedagogical impulses and the defamiliarization and abstraction of natural objects in the cinematic experiments and journal articles of J. C. Mol, which recognize the significance of aesthetic experience in science and in educational filmmaking.

Chapter 5, "Velocity and Duration," explores how the symbolism and iconography of fast-paced urban space is invoked in the cinematic manipulation of motion using time lapse, varied frame rates and other poetic expressions of spatio-temporality in city films, particularly in relation to Yo Ota's work. The chapter also questions how temporality and spatiality function in the intimate observations of domestic and public spaces and the monotony of everyday life in the films of Frederick Weisman, Andy Warhol, and Chantal Akerman. Wahlberg's analysis of velocity and duration concludes with an analysis of fragmentary abstraction and the ethnographic gaze.

Chapter 6, "Telling Signs of Loss: Beginnings of Possible Stories," returns to the concept of the trace in a consideration of how the meaning of an image often changes over time, and how the intersubjective meaning of cinema is palpably affected by the soundscape as well as the image track, which function together to bridge past and present. Wahlberg offers a rich critical interpretation of the significance of time and the haunting presence of the past on film in a series of case studies, the most noteworthy of which concerns the history of New York's immigration station in *Recits d'Ellis Island: Histories d'errance et d'espoir* (Stories from Ellis Island; 1979).

The final chapter, "The Trace in Contemporary Media," opens out from documentary film onto other realist media in order to question the phenomenology of the trace in relation to extratextual historical knowledge, truth claims, and digital media forms such as Gulf War reporting, surveillance footage, computer-simulated imagery, and a website called Ghost Town dedicated to Chernobyl.

One of the drawbacks of phenomenology, in Wahlberg's view, is that it can be an intensely personal or exhaustively and inconclusively descriptive methodology. That is, the phenomenological approach is marred by its propensity to lead to murky introspection. "At its worst," Wahlberg writes, "the wider sociocultural and historical aspects of both film and film experience are subordinate to an exclusively personal *hic et nunc* sensation of cinema. . . . The question remains whether this excessively personal perspective really in-

creases our knowledge of the sociopsychological mechanisms and shared desires and expectations that direct our reception of filmic representations" (145). Given her position, I imagine Wahlberg might cringe at work such as Anne Rutherford's phenomenological reflection on her own cranial pain in "Cinema and Embodied Affect" (2003) and Amanda Trevisanut's (2009) use of personal memories of film spectatorship to interrogate the aesthetic legacy of *Psycho*. However, these authors' personal memories and felt, subjective responses to the films do, ultimately, add value to their arguments. As Barker's work amply demonstrates (see below), and as Wahlberg herself acknowledges, semiotic phenomenology contributes conceptual tools for explaining embodied, affective responses to film that have been sidelined in cognitive, structuralist, and psychoanalytic film theory. Indeed, Wahlberg's own case studies of documentary time reveal the expressive possibilities of creative emplotments of historical time, memory, and experience by offering a thought provoking consideration of how film aesthetics and the narrative imagination together define documentary film as a "temporal art and a technology of memory" (150).

Touchy-Feely: *Tactile Eye*

In *Tactile Eye,* Jennifer Barker's thesis is that "Particular structures of human touch correspond to particular structures of the cinematic experience" via shared "texture, spatial orientation, comportment, rhythm, and vitality" (2). Drawing on a phenomenological approach to film studies, Barker argues that filmgoers and the film share tactile experience and that spectatorship is a close and intimate experience, not simply the distant observation of bodies, objects, actions, and spaces on screen. Supporting this thesis is an understanding that tactility affects more than skin surfaces. Touch, Barker argues, affects the entire body: it is irreducible to contact and it includes feelings like tension and languor. Further, it occurs on different levels that are explored in the book's different chapters.

The first chapter, "Skin," examines tactile surfaces and haptic (indistinct) imagery; chapter 2, "Musculature," discusses the spectator and the film's spatial and kinaesthetic orientation and responses to screen action and camera movement; chapter 3, "Viscera," moves further inward to explore the involuntary functions associated with the blood, the breath, the pulse, adrenal responses, and proprioception. The book culminates in an unusual use of the term inspiration, suggesting that the film experience is tactile and inspiring in the sense that inspiration means to breathe in and incorporate into oneself, just as a form of mutual incorporation of the film and the viewer occurs while watching and responding to the screen.

When Barker writes: "Cinema is a technological metaphor for the body— that is, drawing its forms from the human body and expressing them back to

us in cinematic form" (136), the influence of Sobchack's concept of the filmic body[1] advanced in *Address of the Eye* and extended to a theory of embodiment and spectatorship in *Carnal Thoughts* is evident, as is the legacy of Marks's *Skin of the Film* and *Touch*. Where Sobchack sees both films and humans as involved in an embodiment relationship with technology, Barker sees film in more anthropomorphic terms, arguing that "The film's body models itself on human styles of bodily comportment, and the viewer's body in turn mirrors the muscular behavior of the film's body" (77). Barker's work is therefore distinguished from that of Sobchack and Marks by its detailed and personified elaboration of the relationship of embodiment that exists between the spectator and the screen.

Chapter 1, "Skin," takes up the increasingly popular concept of the "skin of the film" which, in the work of Marks, Rutherford, Tarja Laine (2006), and Kaisa Hiltunen (n.d.), figures the cinema screen as a tactile interface between film and viewer. Barker articulates the importance of texture in textual and textural film analysis, focusing not on "visual and visible" elements of the film experience, but on "tactile and tangible" patterns and structures of significance" (25). Barker uses the term "skin" to refer to the perceptual surface of the film's body. The film's skin, she claims, is celluloid and more; it includes technical, aesthetic, and even thematic elements because "the perceptive and expressive boundary between self and other is . . . achieved by different mechanical parts of the apparatus and cannot be equated with just one of those components" (29).

In a style strikingly different from Wahlberg's controlled theory, Barker's first chapter opens with a discussion of the female orgasm and the "caressing touch" of the eye as distinct from a "penetrating gaze," suggesting that an optical caress can be expressed through haptic imagery, textures such as scratched celluloid, and images such as motes of dust caught in beams of sunlight (24). These ideas are developed in sections on eroticism and pleasure in which Barker argues "the tactile relationship between the film and the viewer is fundamentally erotic" (34). For Barker, the viewer's skin touches the skin of the film in the sense that light touches the viewer's body like the imprint on the film negative (30). This discussion of contact between surfaces could usefully be extended to analyze the physicality of cinematic sound, which palpably touches the bodies of film audiences by beating on eardrums, resounding in the hollows of the thoracic cavity, circumnavigating the theater in Dolby surround speakers, and even sometimes rumbling so low as to shake the cinema seats (see Sobchack, 2005). Sadly, the three books in this study give scant attention to sound by comparison with visual aspects of the film experience.

Barker offers a sensitive interpretation of a wide range of mainstream films from the glossy plastic surfaces of *Toy Story* (1995), through Charlie

Chaplin and Buster Keaton's physical comedies, to non-mainstream films including a powerfully evocative analysis of *Eraserhead* (1976) and the abject baby that is the protagonist Henry's own flesh and blood. Although some case studies such as the parallels drawn between Road Runner and Coyote's relationship and the spectator's relationship with the screen left this reader in the dust, the majority are insightful and thought provoking.

Barker makes a strong case that haptics is an aesthetic mode that makes us "come to the surface" of ourselves and of our sensory awareness (35). Though the desire for contact with another does explain some of cinema's pleasures, the association that Barker draws between haptics and eroticism seems overstated in passages such as the following: "Haptic touches—including the caress, the scrape and the smear, for example—involve an opening of one body onto another that is erotic" (39). Could this erotic interpretation be sustained in relation to the unrecognizable patterns of light and texture that shift across the car windscreen, fading in and out with little focus or meaning in the haptic opening sequence of *Crash* (2006), for instance?

Barker sometimes lapses into an assumption of symmetry between the film, its characters and its viewers, making assertions about the mutuality of attitudes to the filmed object that seem to map the film onto its characters and its audience: "We and the film are mutually contagious, contracting each other's desires, fears, repulsions, sorrows, and styles of touch through direct skin contact. Thus the caress that moves between our skin and the film's skin is borne of a mutual desire for the object filmed" (68). Though film may mimic general human responsiveness, it remains unclear until the closing pages of Barker's book how film might, in her view, catch and respond to the sensations of its audience.

Chapter 2, "Musculature," reframes the distinction between film and viewer that seemed to occasionally be elided in the chapter on "Skin" by arguing that "viewer and film are two differently constructed but equally muscular bodies, acting perhaps in tandem or perhaps at odds with each other, but always in relation to each other" (72). Barker's definition of musculature includes what she terms the "ecstatic body," which is subject to conscious control and includes muscular movements such as gestures, and the "recessive body," which refers to involuntary actions such as the heartbeat.

Barker goes so far as to conceive of empathy as a relationship between the film and the viewer (rather than the viewer and film characters) and she sees this type of response to cinema in terms of an empathic muscular reciprocity: "Our emotional sympathy for [film characters] derives from our muscular empathy with them" (92). This empathy is not just character-based for, in Barker's view, we empathize with the films themselves. "Empathy with the film's body" can be understood to stem from "mutual investment in shared projects" and the recognition of familiar actions "such as seeking, fleeing, chas-

ing" (109) as forward movement and uprightness are expressed via camera position and movement in car chase scenes. This radical rethinking of the concept of empathy makes sense if empathy is understood as "feeling with,"[2] and if "feeing" itself remains very loosely defined. However, it does seem something of a stretch to say we empathize with the shared feeling of motion through space rather than with a character's emotional experience. It seems to me that empathy requires attunement to the affective life of a sentient being, rather than simple epistemological and spatial alignment.

Chapter 3, "Viscera," "delves into the depths of the body to understand how the viscera—both human and cinematic—exhibit and inhabit a particular temporal structure that, in combination with the material/textural structures of the skin and the spatial structures of the musculature, forms the elements of our embodied experience of film" (124). Visceral effects of film are experienced in an inner region of the body that we rarely if ever see; thus Barker conceives of visceral reactions to film as a secret form of touch. Although visceral reactions are beyond conscious control, the inner organs of the body are involved in perception, action, and reaction as much as the external senses and voluntary muscular movements.

One concrete aspect of this unusual but fascinating thing that Barker terms the cinematic viscera is the movement of celluloid through the sprockets on the projector, a form of movement that we only notice if it is disrupted. Knowing that film is a sequence of intermittent still images, she contends, "contributes, however subtly, to the drama of the film experience" (135). If Barker's claim that, through these underlying mechanics of motion, "The film reminds us of our own tenuousness, bringing us with it as it teeters on the precipice between life and death, movement and stillness" (135) seems overstated or fails to reflect the felt experience of film-going, it nevertheless redirects critical attention to the technologically mediated and corporeally communicated dimensions of cinema.

Barker concludes that humans and films share "tactile modes of being in the world" and this is what "allows for communication to occur in the fleshy spaces between us" (145). She terms this communicative relationship between film and viewer "inspiration," meaning to breathe in and imbibe the other into oneself. For instance, she claims the audience "inspires" a close up when we desire detail (148). Overall the strength of *Tactile Eye* is not its testing of the limits of such corporeal metaphors but Barker's nuanced textual analysis and its ability, through this analysis, to elucidate facets of embodiment that emerge from the relationship between cinematic aesthetics and spectatorship.

Frightfully Perceptive: *Cinematic Emotion in Horror Films and Thrillers*
In this compelling and wonderfully readable volume, Julian Hanich seeks to analyze the specific pleasures of cinematic fear by first canvassing the generic

pleasures of cinema: the visceral thrill of adrenalized action sequences; the transgressive charge of forbidden fruit such as R-rated movies and identification with villainous characters; and the smug intellectual pleasures of film aficionados demonstrating their cultural capital through appreciation of intertextuality, genericity, and aesthetic strategies. Hanich rightly concludes it would be reductive to restrict the experience of frightening films to emotionality and embodiment (8); nevertheless, this is the arena in which his book makes a significant contribution. The difference between Hanich's work and much scholarship on film and embodiment is his superior ability to contextualize and qualify his claims, thoughtfully developing their implications rather than lapsing into the "subjectivist blather" (Hanich 41) that Wahlberg so deplores. Hanich seeks to offer "not descriptions of *specific* experiences of single viewers [or single films] but shared *types* of experience with a common structure" based on the "shared dimensions of embodiment underlying all our experiences—for instance, temporality and spatiality—[that] enable us to talk about a common structure (or core) of certain types of experience" (23). This quest to describe the invariant core of particular forms of experience is, of course, central to phenomenology.

Hanich begins by dismissing the Aristotelian notion of catharsis and its latter day psychoanalytic underpinnings, pointing out that we visit the cinema to experience emotions, not to rid ourselves of them (9). He moves on to offer a succinct literature review, noting "The most prolific work on emotionality, sensuality and carnality comes from three directions: cognitivism, Deleuzian theory and phenomenology" (12). Although cognitivism has a tendency to focus on aesthetic cues and intellectual responses in ways that abstract the affective dimensions of cinematic experience, Hanich correctly observes that many of the interests and goals of cognitivism and phenomenology are complementary. His overview of the strengths of these competing accounts of cinematic emotion is marked by intellectual generosity and a perceptive appraisal of the field, but his critique of the limitations of cognitivist and Deleuzian approaches are debatable. Deleuzians are accused of impressionistic, depersonalized theory that is neither scientific nor subjective enough, and cognitivists, he claims, dwell on abstract explanation rather than concrete description, thereby failing to grasp the lived experience of cinema (14). Certainly this is at least partially true of Deleuzian scholars such as Paul Gormley (2005) who emphasizes vague processes of mimesis, contamination, infection, and the dynamics of sadism and masochism in the viewing experience[3] and claims by cognitivists such as Gregory Currie (1990) and Kendall Walton (1990) that spectators experience "quasi-emotions" or "make-believe emotions" rather than authentic emotional responses.[4] However, readers who are deeply interested in philosophical and cognitive dimensions of emotion will wish these topics had received more attention.

Hanich outlines his application of phenomenology as an attempt "to un-cover what is buried in habituation and institutionalization, what is taken for granted and accepted as given, or what we have never been fully aware of in the first place" (15). Unlike many phenomenological studies, his work is also distinguished by its attention to how the reception environment impacts on the film experience. (His term multiplexperience seems cleverer and less corny the more you think about it.)

Hanich's book is structured in relation to five variants of fear, each under-pinned by five interrelated components. He identifies the different forms of cinematic fear as direct horror, suggested horror, cinematic shock, cinematic dread, and cinematic terror, with the first three forms being rooted in the present and the last two being future oriented, frightening versions of the broader category of suspense. All forms of fear, he contends, are characterized by intentionality, appraisal, action tendency, physiological change, and phe-nomenological experience, and it is attention to this last component that sets his work apart from cognitivist theory. During the phenomenological experi-ence the lived body is foregrounded in our focal awareness and is "connected to the experiential closeness of the threatening object" (22). In this state tem-poral experience becomes augmented. Hanich also makes the more tenuous claim that frightened audience members experience the desire to dissipate their sense of isolation or phenomenological aloneness: "Precisely because we become psychologically isolated in fear, we look for intersubjective reassur-ance or even personal contact to re-gain a state of belongingness" (248).

The two introductory chapters set the stage for the detailed account of fear that follows. Chapter 1, "Why Phenomenology?" establishes the method-ology and introduces the work of German phenomenologist Hermann Schmitz, a philosopher little known in English-speaking countries whose work offers an account of emotional experience (49). Chapter 2, "Multiplexperi-ences: Individualized Immersion and Collective Feelings," examines how the multiplex cinema environment inflects experiences of cinematic fear. This consideration of the multiplex-viewing environment raises interesting ques-tions about how collectivity and subjective intensity play out in alternative re-ception modes (such as the use of viral marketing strategies, Chatroulette, and other forms of Internet dissemination to augment media horror and ad-vertise horror movies like *The Last Exorcism* [2010]).

Chapter 3, "Frightening Fascination: A Phenomenology of Direct Horror," sets out the preconditions for pleasurable fear. The "carnal intensity of so-matic empathy" (106), that is, the "partial parallelism between a character's and my own body's sensations, affects or motions" (103), is produced when we encounter "sound-supported moving images of threatening acts of violence or a dangerous monster" (82). Hanich's analysis of direct horror shows that audiences "oscillate between fascination and fear, between intellectual inter-

est and emotional captivation, between the pleasure and displeasure of fear" (186).

Chapter 4, "Intimidating Imaginations," deals with the role of imagination in relation to "suggested horror." Hanich argues persuasively that mental visualization is an "implicit part of the film's aesthetic structure" that functions to evoke what is implied through sound, dialogue, and off screen space (111). He insists on the vivid concreteness of visual imagination—not "vague, imaginative floating"—and at the same time acknowledges that the ephemeral, indeterminate visualizations of the imagination are "characterized by an intrinsic sketchiness and visual poverty" (113). Here the ways in which the audience's imagination fills in the gaps in film texts and the ways imagining differs from imaging would benefit from critical engagement with philosophical accounts of imagination.

In Chapter 5's phenomenology of shock—"Startling Scares"—Hanich gives a comprehensive inventory of startling moments, analyzing the aesthetic and narrative strategies that invoke shock and suggesting that the shared experience corporeally unites members of the audience with each other and with the experience of the character on screen.

Chapter 6—"Anxious Anticipations"—introduces the anticipatory feeling of dread, a new subcategory of cinematic horror characterized by "a gradual densification of time" (192) that Hanich elucidates by means of perceptive analysis of the mise-en-scène. This chapter takes up issues of atmosphere, empathy, and sympathy and the phenomenology of time, teasing out the different spatio-temporal and intentional structures of films that evoke dread from those that rely on direct horror or shock. Here Hanich's analysis of structures of expectation and uncertainty and the creation of dread by means of manipulating the knowledgeability of the audience in relation to the protagonists is deeply indebted to the work of established cognitivists such as David Bordwell, Edward Branigan, Noël Carroll, and Murray Smith. In this chapter Hanich's taxonomy of the forms of somatic empathy (sensation, motor, and affective mimicry) does much to illuminate the ideas about empathy that are so suggestively introduced in Barker's book.

In chapter 7—"Apprehensive Agitation"—Hanich suggests that unlike the slow, silent pressure of dread, "terror derives from the quick and loud perceptible temporal approach of a horrifying threat" (203). We "both feel for the endangered character and fearfully expect a threatening outcome that promises to be horrifying . . . to us" (204). Again, the shared spatio-temporal structure of screen action and audience emotion is key to the affective impact of terrifying scenes on the bodies of film spectators.

Chapters 8 and 9, "Moments of Intensity" and "Moments of Collectivity," situate the phenomenological appeal of horror cinema against the backdrop of advanced modernity and its malaises, arguing that the pleasurable experi-

ence of cinematic fear functions to help alleviate or counterbalance experiences of disembodiment, acceleration, and the loosening of social ties that dominate contemporary life (37). In chapter 8, "Moments of Intensity," Hanich draws on wide-ranging theories of modernity but, strangely, the book sidesteps Fredric Jameson's influential account of the waning of affect in *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991). Moments of subjective intensity and collective experience enable cinematic fear to counterbalance what Hanich terms "our disembodied way of life" (25). Hanich's account of "the waning of deep and comprehensive lived-body experiences" (224) is supported by a dishearteningly apt description of the amount of sitting involved in routine academic life. Cinema, he says, is one leisure activity among many "that brings the body back into play," drawing us, however temporarily, back into a sense of being in the world "via the specific lived-body experience of emotions" (236).

The least convincing aspect of Hanich's work is, in my view, the chapter titled "Moments of Collectivity: The Cinema of Fear and Feelings of Belongingness." Here Hanich pushes the broader significance of film-going to argue that "the collective experience of frightening movies is a possible answer to an urgent question raised by the rapid transformations of advanced modernity: How can we create bonds and soothe our desire for belongingness in the face of an ever-more individualized, pluralized and de-traditionalized lifeworld?" (241). This claim correctly identifies shared affective experience and the feeling of close connections to others as aspects that make film a potent cultural force, but the argument leans unnecessarily on a dramatization of feelings of alienation in contemporary life and, in any event, it may be better supported by a discussion of other affective film genres such as romance or family melodrama, or even the experience of attending music concerts, participating in social networking sites such as Facebook, or playing and watching team sports. The centrality of fear is lost in this final chapter—other than an unpersuasive account of collective screaming as implying "both actively reaching out to others and being passively reached by them" (248)—yet Hanich's ideas about horror film fandom and discursive communities do suggest provocative avenues for future phenomenological research.

In conclusion, I can only hope that these three fine authors take up insights from each other's work and go on to consolidate their strengths so that they may offer readers yet more research that develops the ideas established here. Taken together these books make an important addition to scholarship that bridges film and philosophy. The emphases emerging in this research indicate that the most significant contribution of phenomenology to film theory to date is the shift in emphasis from disembodied vision and cognition to corporeality and the affective side of film experience, yet the breadth of emerging work in the field also indicates that the phenomenological methodology is ro-

bust and flexible enough to illuminate many other dimensions of film experience including matters of realism, genre, space, and time.

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Notes

[1] Sobchack's concept of the film's body interprets filmic perception as an analogue of spectatorial perception; we relate to and engage with the film's technologically mediated mode of vision and with its intentional consciousness as it narrates the story and literally turns perception "inside out and towards us as expression" (1992: 12).

[2] Aesthetic philosopher Alex Neill defines empathy as a form of experiential or affective imagination, understood as feeling with a character in a way that "depends on our imagining what her beliefs, desires, and so on might be. . . . empathizing with another is at least partly a matter of understanding how things are with her" (2006: 252).

[3] Gormley claims "The language of mimesis with its emphasis on the undermining properties of contamination, infection and tactility seem a more productive route through which to explore the affective political power of Hollywood" (2005: 193).

[4] Responses to fiction are termed "quasi-emotional" by Gregory Currie (1990), and "make-believe emotions" by Kendall Walton (1990) because they do not rely on the belief that the fictional occurrence actually happened to a real person, or is occurring at the time of watching the film.

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