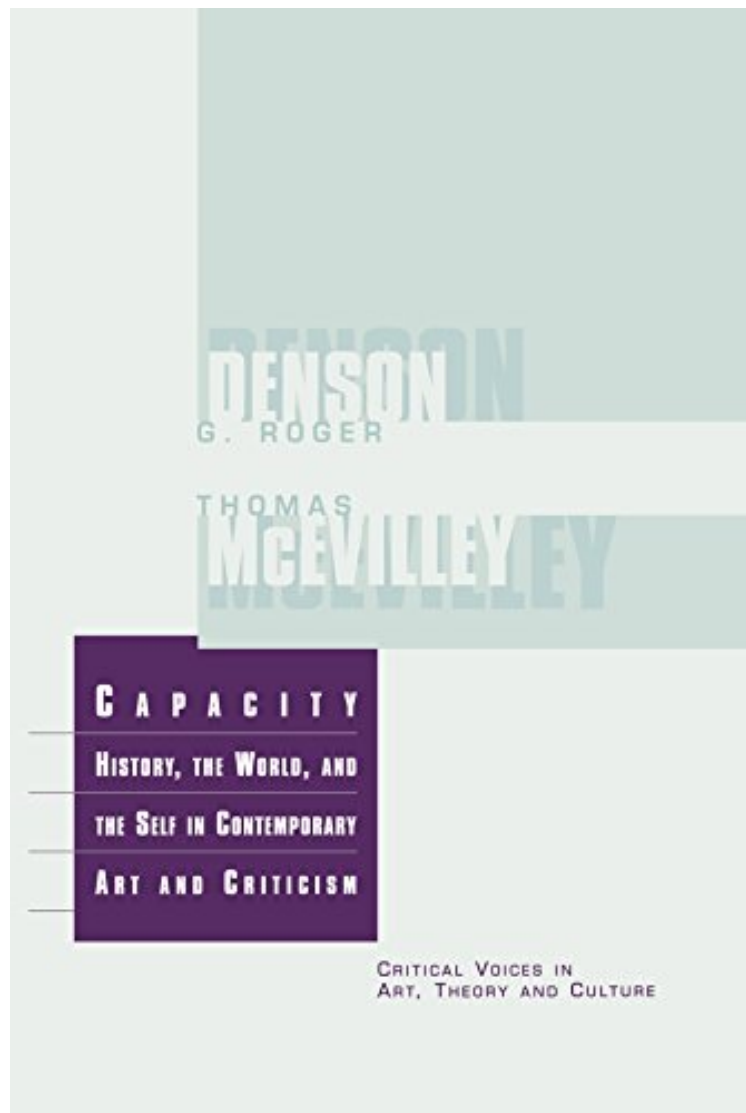


[FREE] Capacity: The History, the World, and the Self in Contemporary Art and Criticism (Critical Voices in Art, Theory and Culture)

## Capacity: The History, the World, and the Self in Contemporary Art and Criticism (Critical Voices in Art, Theory and Culture)

*Thomas McEvilley*

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**Thomas McEvilley : Capacity: The History, the World, and the Self in Contemporary Art and Criticism (Critical Voices in Art, Theory and Culture)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Capacity: The History, the World, and the Self in Contemporary Art and Criticism (Critical Voices in Art, Theory and Culture):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Model of Relativism and Nomadic CriticismBy Phillip

AnchorMichelle C. Cone wrote in her Art Journal, College Art Association review of this book that Thomas McEvilley "explores the idea that painting is in trouble not because formalism is dead (its philosophical bases are continually being reexamined), but because of [Clement] Greenberg's association of formalism with a Eurocentric tradition that falsely claims universality and eternal relevance. Indeed, the purpose of the essays reprinted in this anthology is not to kill off painting and sculpture and the transcendental beliefs associated with them, but to demonstrate the relativism of form and content, and of all aesthetic judgments about form and content. McEvilley argues that art that is non-representational or art that lacks clear representations of objects and figures in them "may still be representational of structures of thought, political tensions, psychological attitudes." "The unusual antiphonal structure of the book proves to be an interesting as well as novel way to reframe and 'add value' to previously published material. G. Roger Denson, a curator and critic who is McEvilley's commentator throughout the book, perceptively analyzes the relativist attitude. Denson's observations provide a particular edge to McEvilley's critique of Clement Greenberg's determinist interpretation of painting's evolution toward flatness. Exposing Greenberg's myopia toward ancient and non-Western cultures, he points out that 'In extending Greenberg's historicism and avant-garde logically in space and time, McEvilley takes us to societies that were the originators--the true avant-garde--of flat painting.'" -- Michelle C. Cone, Art Journal, College Art Association. I can only add that in this book we find two of the earliest champions of the nomadic approach to global art. We can actually see nomadism evolving as both McEvilley and Denson reach beyond conventional art criticism in their efforts to match the concerns of their subjects by entering into the cultural and ideological models presented to the viewer by an artist rather than carrying with them some pre-established criteria that is projected onto all art. Among the philosophical issues McEvilley and Denson address are those of pragmatism, historicism, cultural relativism, and mythopoetics, all of which are ideologically suited to dismantling the need for a master narrative or identity. In so doing, they effectively dismantle cultural, national, racial, sexual, and gender biases in the critique of art and culture, helping to ready art criticism for the globally diverse artistic productions it would receive in the coming decade.

First Published in 1997. Routledge is an imprint of Taylor Francis, an informa company.

"McEvilley explores the idea that painting is in trouble not because formalism is dead (its philosophical bases are continually being reexamined), but because of [Clement] Greenberg's association of formalism with a Eurocentric tradition that falsely claims universality and eternal relevance. Indeed, the purpose of the essays reprinted in this anthology is not to kill off painting and sculpture and the transcendental beliefs associated with them, but to demonstrate the relativism of form and content, and of all aesthetic judgments about form and content. McEvilley argues that art that is non-representational or art that lacks clear representations of objects and figures in them "may still be representational of structures of thought, political tensions, psychological attitudes." "The unusual antiphonal structure of the book proves to be an interesting as well as novel way to reframe and 'add value' to previously published material. G. Roger Denson, a curator and critic who is McEvilley's commentator throughout the book, perceptively analyzes the relativist attitude. Denson's observations provide a particular edge to McEvilley's critique of Clement Greenberg's determinist interpretation of painting's evolution toward flatness. Exposing Greenberg's myopia toward ancient and non-Western cultures, he points out that 'In extending Greenberg's historicism and avant-garde logically in space and time, McEvilley takes us to societies that were the originators--the true avant-garde--of flat painting.'" -- Michelle C. Cone, Art Journal, College Art Association. About the Author Thomas McEvilley is a professor at the School of Visual Arts in New York City, where he heads the department of Art Criticism and Writing. Previously, he taught at Rice University in Houston, Texas. McEvilley holds a Ph.D. in classical philology. In addition to Greek and Latin, he has studied Sanskrit and has taught numerous courses on Greek and Indian culture, history of religion and philosophy, and art. He has published countless scholarly monographs and articles on early Greek poetry, philosophy, and religion, including the monumental study, *The Shape of Ancient Thought: Comparative Studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies* (2002).