

simulates a personality by dramatizing how that personality came to be: we make the persona's fate our own. When a pianist plays a classical score, the pianist's own persona "becomes a vehicle for the persona whose career the music imagines" (p. 140). Kramer examines many familiar musical examples, largely Romantic, to bolster this approach.

Kramer acknowledges that his remarks may be viewed as arbitrary and too subjective, and he admits that they may not even go deeper than a program note in their technical detail. He wants to speak personally, yet with a focus on "indispensable human concerns, the stuff of real life" (p. 9). The musical examples are strongest from film and nineteenth-century music, that is, those musical styles powered by melody. However, the serious challenge of listening to late-twentieth-century and new music is part of the reason that classical music's appeal is fading, and it would be enlightening to hear his thoughts on listening to difficult, contemporary pieces.

There are many moments of resonance, where Kramer manages to articulate some of the deepest feelings musicians have about classical music. He describes our sentience of musical works with affection, noting that great works gather a life of their own over the years, acquiring their own tangible personalities. Their very presence in artistic life has changed us: "The Western world is not only richer for preserving Sophocles' *Antigone* or Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, but different" (p. 33). Even in our fragile times, classical music still has a healing power we urgently invoke in days of communal sorrow—witness the surge of commemorative concerts and specially commissioned works after September 11, 2001.

It feels wrong to pick apart Kramer's ecstasy. Parsing music's exhilarating power to make the world meaningful is a monumental task, undertaken here with care and passion. Kramer is a master of documenting cultural practice, and that is the joy of this little book. And many observations ring so true: "Part of the problem with the culture of classical music is that it receives all this with too much solemnity. It stifles its own energy with too much ceremony" (p. 74). Certainly book reviewers can be guilty of this as well.

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SHUSTERMAN, RICHARD. *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*. Cambridge University Press, 2008, ix + 227 pp., \$85.00 cloth, \$24.99 paper.

Throughout the history of art from classical times to the present, visual artists including draftsmen and

painters have made the human body a privileged subject matter. Sculptors from ancient Greece to Michelangelo and beyond to Degas and Rodin have made the body their central theme. Since the 1970s, with the beginning of video art, and into the present, video art, performance art, and installation art have offered new platforms for reexamining the role of the body in human experience. In the process of developing their art, contemporary artists have raised interesting questions about the body. These queries have gone beyond early video artists' narcissism to asking such questions as: What is the body? How does it fit into our identity? And how can the body best be presented in contemporary art? While many philosophers have contemplated the body, mainly in a role subordinate to and apart from the mind, few have so boldly proclaimed the primacy of the body and the positive benefits of its cultivation as a means for enhancing our experiences of the arts and indeed all of life as has the philosopher Richard Shusterman.

Shusterman's latest book, *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*, is a continuation of his efforts to develop and defend his theory of somaesthetics. Somaesthetics is a form of reflective bodily awareness intended to show the importance of paying serious attention to the body's role in enhancing knowledge, improving performance, and increasing the pleasures of living. It considers the body as our primary means of engaging with the world, including structuring of our mental life, and is intended to fill a gap in the philosophical and practical understanding of the body's role in experience, including the making and experiencing of the arts.

Perhaps it is useful to think of Shusterman's philosophical reflections on the body as a venture parallel to the efforts of contemporary artists to better understand and celebrate the human body and to use it as a means of improved self-understanding in the changing world of today. Or perhaps his theoretical work on the body will serve as a bridge between the work of the artists and philosophical aesthetics. Of course, readers will find a much broader scope than aesthetics covered in this book: issues in philosophy of mind, insightful critique of major philosophers' views on the body, and an approach to philosophy that embraces both theory and practical life.

On the technical front, Shusterman distinguishes three aspects of his subject: analytic somaesthetics, pragmatic somaesthetics, and practical somaesthetics. Analytic somaesthetics offers a descriptive and theoretical account intended to explain our "bodily perceptions and practices and their functions in our knowledge and construction of the world" (p. 23). Pragmatic somaesthetics provides for specific methods of somatic improvement as developed in body disciplines such as the Alexander Technique and Feldenkrais Method. Pragmatic somaesthetics is

divided into representational somaesthetics, concerned with developing the exterior forms of the body, and experiential somaesthetics, focused on shaping inner experience. Practical somaesthetics, its third aspect, is concerned with the actual practice of one or another means of body training (pp. 26–29).

In developing the arguments of the present work, Shusterman draws on his previous writings, as well as his own applied experience in Western and Eastern body training. For example, his book *Pragmatic Aesthetics* (Blackwell, 1992) “establishes the body’s role in the creation and appreciation of the arts, including the art of self-styling” (p. xii). In *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life* (Routledge, 1997) and in *Performing Live* (Cornell University Press, 2000), he develops “the notion of somaesthetics as a field of theory and practice” (p. xii).

While one finds in these earlier works the main structure of somaesthetics, *Body Consciousness* offers a closer look at the subject in the context of the writings of major twentieth-century philosophers. It thus probes deeper into somaesthetics with a critical examination of select twentieth-century philosophers whose writings address the role of the body in human experience. Chapters devoted to each of these philosophers form the main structure of the book: Michel Foucault, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Simone de Beauvoir, Ludwig Wittgenstein, William James, and John Dewey. These philosophers were selected because of their interest, if flawed or deficient, in addressing some aspect of the soma problem. This approach allows the reader to see how the respective philosophers have dealt with the body and how their views both lend support to and differ from Shusterman’s account of somaesthetics.

Shusterman’s critique of Foucault’s pragmatic somaesthetics is part of an effort to show that pleasure itself is not a trivial issue, but is an important part of aesthetic and ethical notions of care of the self. This point is of particular importance to Shusterman’s main argument in the book. He finds in Foucault a commitment to the somatic and aesthetic as principal elements in the art of living. For example, Foucault examines the connections between bodily disciplines and oppressive sociopolitical institutions. As an antidote to repressive social institutions, he advocates alternative social practices, including consensual homosexual sadomasochism and the advocacy of pleasure-producing drugs. Shusterman finds value in Foucault’s affirming the priority of pragmatic somaesthetics, for example, his critique of somatically based social domination. Yet he finds Foucault’s particular choices of unconventional somaesthetic means focused on sexuality and drugs in conflict with Foucault’s own professed aim of desexualizing bodily pleasures. By concentrating only on these in-

tense sensuous pleasures, Foucault limits the range of somatic pleasures and the scope of awareness available though a fully developed understanding of the body.

In the chapter on Merleau-Ponty, Shusterman acknowledges his role as a champion of the place of the body in human experience. Yet he is troubled by Merleau-Ponty’s treatment of the body as a silent, primordial consciousness and his unwillingness to acknowledge somatic perceptions at a higher level of cognitive experience. For Merleau-Ponty, the primordial experience of the world consisting of unreflective habits of the “lived body” resides below the level of reflective consciousness. It nevertheless serves fundamental needs and is the foundation for higher reflective activities taking place in the form of images, symbols, or logical propositions. Shusterman argues that Merleau-Ponty’s resistance to the contributions of reflective somatic awareness is due in part to his overestimation of these unreflective powers and his resistance to changes in basic experience by introducing representational experiences not originally present in primordial perceptions. While Shusterman finds much to admire in Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological analysis of the body and his recognition that philosophy is a way of life, he criticizes his failure to appreciate the use of practical somatic actions to improve awareness of the real body. In contrast to Merleau-Ponty’s emphasis on the primordial past in prereflective experience, Shusterman advocates striving for better future experiences through pragmatic practical efforts to advance body consciousness.

The chapter on Simone de Beauvoir’s contributions to somaesthetics deals mainly with its application to the social disempowerment of women and the elderly. Shusterman finds in de Beauvoir’s treatment of the body an ambiguity that prevents her from embracing cultivation of somaesthetics as a way of empowering women and the elderly. De Beauvoir prefers social empowerment to bodily enhancement as a means of liberating women and the elderly from the constraints of a male-dominated existence. In this respect she finds an emphasis on cultivation of individual bodies a distraction from the societal aims of freeing women and the elderly from their respective states of weakness. Shusterman brings a critical reading and analysis of de Beauvoir’s views that shows respect and also suggests the need to reconsider some key points in her approach to feminist aesthetics and the elderly.

The chapter on Wittgenstein’s contributions to somaesthetics invites the reader to take a different look at Wittgenstein’s thought. His philosophy is known for critiquing the view that bodily feelings have a central role in philosophical understanding of such concepts as aesthetic judgment and human

action. Yet Shusterman argues, contrary to conventional readings of Wittgenstein, that notwithstanding his critique of bodily sensations, Wittgenstein nevertheless acknowledges the role of somaesthetic feelings in aesthetics and other fields, including ethics, politics, and philosophy of mind. Shusterman finds in Wittgenstein's writings support for his views on philosophy as working for self-improvement through self-knowledge. Expanding on Wittgenstein's treatment of the role of the feelings aroused by art, Shusterman argues that, since aesthetic perceptions are achieved through bodily perceptions, our appreciation of art might be sharpened through greater attention to the somaesthetic feelings involved in perceiving art (p. 125).

It is in the last two chapters, focused on William James and John Dewey, that Shusterman finds the strongest philosophical affirmations in support of his own pragmatist views of the body's central importance. James's interest in the body stems in part from his experiences as a painter, alongside his better known interests in medicine, scientific psychology, and philosophy. James's role as a painter drew his attention to "bodily form and subtleties of expression" (p. 136). In James, one finds recognition of the body's role in providing for change and unity in the stream of consciousness and also of the cognitive role of bodily feelings, which are central to Shusterman's views. However, James stops short of linking the will to bodily activities, perhaps to avoid compromising his belief in free will. Shusterman finds James's attempts to distance the will from the actions of the body inconsistent with his views supporting the bodily means underlying other cognitive activities (p. 156). On the other hand, he acknowledges James's ability to describe in great detail his own inner feelings as a notable contribution to somaesthetic introspection. This is so even though James may have doubted the importance of introspection for enhancing practical life actions outside the frame of his theoretical research.

Dewey's philosophy of body-mind embraces the idea that the body is an organ of the mind or transcendent soul and functions as a grounding for both mental and spiritual life. He acknowledges the influences of James's *Psychology*, but he differs from James in acknowledging that the will, as well as other aspects of cognitive life, is connected to the body. Dewey also extends knowledge based on somaesthetic introspection to practical life as well as to theory. In this respect he acknowledges the influence of F. M. Alexander's method of body training in practice and in theory. Dewey thus rejects dualism of mind and body in favor of the view that mind is a function of body. However, Dewey also recognizes the social dimension of human development that depends on

interactions and organization requiring the use of symbols, including languages, the sciences, and the arts. Hence Dewey's theory of mind extends through the body into culture. Borrowing from Alexander, Dewey also holds that cultivating self-conscious somatic habits is essential to the promotion of human growth and happiness.

The views advanced in Shusterman's somaesthetics would find favor among biologists such as C. Judson Herrick (*The Evolution of Human Nature* [University of Texas Press, 1956]). As a biologist, Herrick prefers to think of mind as a particular kind of process of performance of the body: "Mind is the body in action." Contrary to philosophers inclined toward idealism, who prefer to think of the mind as the primary defining feature of persons, he would be quick to point out that mind does not exist independently of the body.

How is this discussion of body related to aesthetics? Arguably, the body is the very foundation that makes possible the creation of the arts, as well as the articulation of philosophical reflections on the arts. Among the processes that artists draw upon to create, and those used by others to interpret art, are the somatically grounded verbal, visual, auditory, and kinetic means that emerge as creative expression in the arts. It follows that aestheticians stand to benefit from consideration of the body's role in the arts as a resource for working on the problems of creating and interpreting art.

Perhaps an example focusing on the art of dance would be useful to show how somaesthetics might contribute to understanding. When a person thinks of the body in reference to aesthetics, apart from its representation in visual arts and sculptures, what comes to mind is the fine art of dance. For the performer, whose preparation typically includes in-depth training in using the body to create and express feeling and meaning, knowledge of the body experience is crucial to achieving a satisfactory performance experience, both for the dancer and for the viewers. At the center of dance for the spectator is the moving body. To experience a dance, the audience member relies on, among other factors, information supplied by his or her own body as it interacts with the kinesthetic signals given off by the body of the dancer.

The readers of *Body Consciousness* will benefit from the clear and well-argued position of the author and will find much of relevance to contemporary aesthetics and art theory. Unlike most books written by philosophers today, this book is intended to offer practical benefits aimed at heightened living to those willing to heed its message. Yet the theory and critical analysis offered do not suffer from acknowledgment of its practical applications. In this respect the

outcome fulfills the aim of philosophy as a way of life.

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MANDOKI, KATYA. *Everyday Aesthetics: Prosaics, the Play of Culture and Social Identities*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007, xvii + 327 pp., \$99.95 cloth.

SAITO, YURIKO. *Everyday Aesthetics*. Oxford University Press, 2007, xiii + 273 pp., \$49.50 cloth.

It is no coincidence that two monographs entitled *Everyday Aesthetics* have appeared within months of each other. Katya Mandoki and Yuriko Saito have already established themselves in this emerging sub-discipline of aesthetics. Their common ground is the thesis that theories developed to handle the fine arts have limited relevance for anything else. Now we have their extended thoughts on how aesthetics might eschew art-centered theories in order to encompass all of our aesthetic experiences. (To be accurate, Mandoki is returning to the topic of her 1994 book, *Prosaica: introducción a la estética de lo cotidiano [Grijalbo]*.) Of the two, Saito's book is likely to have the greater influence, in part because her ambitions are more modest and thus more fully realized.

Mandoki's *Everyday Aesthetics: Prosaics, the Play of Culture and Social Identities* has a Byzantine organization, with thirty-two chapters grouped in six sections. Her argument is best understood as proceeding in three stages.

The first stage corresponds to Mandoki's Part 1, "The Labyrinths of Aesthetics." These four chapters are offered as a summary and then rejection of "mainstream aesthetic theory" (p. 43). One's likely response to her analysis can be estimated by one's response to this sentence: "Aestheticians continue to work alone in the museums, libraries and art galleries with their coffee table books and academic journals so as not to be disturbed by the smell, heat, and sweat of everyday life" (p. 13). Those who scoff at this sentence are likely to reject Mandoki's analysis; those who nod their heads in agreement are likely to embrace it.

Parts 2 through 5 constitute the second stage, in which Mandoki offers a theoretical *prosaics* as her preferred alternative to recent analytic aesthetics. "*Prosaics*" is, of course, opposed to "*poetics*." The latter emphasizes the construction and reception of objects that reflect an elitist, institutionalized art-world: the mere "tip of the aesthetic iceberg" (p. 51).

Prosaics, in contrast, examines "aesthetic activity, events and artifacts in daily life" (p. 51). Because Mandoki conceives daily life as more or less coextensive with social life, a robust *prosaic* theory requires a *semio-aesthetics*, that is, a theory of the social significance of the aesthetic dimensions of daily life. Mandoki's theoretical commitments fully emerge in Chapter 14, where it finally becomes clear that her version of *prosaics* is an extension of semiotics. It is as if her real goal is to work out, in detail, the full implications of Charles Sanders Peirce's undeveloped ideas about aesthetics. Mandoki proposes that socio-aesthetic analysis must attend to both the rhetorical and dramatic axes of daily life. Because both of these axes have four manifestations along two further dimensions, the aesthetics of everyday life betrays an extraordinary symbolic density, for almost every sphere of daily life is organized in terms of sixteen basic semiotic categories.

The book's third and final phase corresponds to the eight chapters of Part 6. Here, Mandoki identifies fifteen socio-aesthetic "matrixes" or anthropomorphic orders. She proposes that each is coherently organized around one dominant symbol, which plays out in all sixteen of the basic semiotic categories. Thus religion, for instance, is aesthetically very different from the world of medicine. She devotes independent chapters to six of these matrixes, offering detailed analyses of the complex symbolic displays of religion, family, school, medicine, occultism, and the artworld.

My general summary of the book barely hints at the contents of these three hundred dense, dense pages. Approaching the halfway mark, Mandoki requests the reader's patience (p. 135). Distinctions are made, subdivided, and then cross-referenced against other distinctions, as when her sixteen basic semiotic categories are revealed to be forty-eight categories by virtue of a more fine-grained analysis (p. 166). Readers who wonder about the efficacy of this approach might skip Chapters 11 through 24 and proceed directly to the theory's applications in Part 6.

I have reservations about each stage of Mandoki's central argument. The first stage, the attack on mainstream aesthetics, proceeds on the assumption that a Kantian, disinterested response to "aesthetic objects" is still the core topic of analytic aesthetics (p. 43). As a result, Part 1 is no more effective against contemporary aesthetics than are creationist attacks on evolutionary theory that argue that, because Darwin got some important points wrong, we must give up evolutionary theory. Both aestheticians and biologists have moved on.

The second stage, which links semiotics with an account of the aesthetic dimensions of daily life, has a different problem. Mandoki's argument appears to be that there is no perception without conceptual