

words, the relationship between folklore and modern (contemporary) art is not clear or, at least, not well developed.

Second, throughout the book, it seems that Hill strongly advocates a return to “context” which is thought to be the basis of art criticism and interpretation. Also, as mentioned earlier, Hill bridges art and life (context), which, in many cases, is art itself from an art-historical perspective, Hill did make an effort to trace back how the ideas of art have been changed historically, but his discussion is limited to the field of art history, instead of reaching for a more complicated and meaningful sociocultural–economic context, as folklorists or anthropologists might. In addition, according to Hill, the introduction of “context” to art history can help better understand the process of artwork-making and how every participant contributes and negotiates in this process of production. Taking contextual factors as playing the most critical role in meaning-making actually aims at challenging the colonial sense of traditional Western art history which often neglect other cultures’ traditions which are frequently appropriated arbitrarily. As an attempt to avoid decontextualized cultural appropriation, many contemporary artists begin to employ ethnographic methods adopted from disciplines of empirical studies, such as folklore and anthropology, to complete their production of artworks. This trend, which started in the second half of the twentieth century, is termed the “ethnographic turn” (or “anthropological turn”) (see, for example, *Site-Specificity: The Ethnographic Turn*, ed. Alex Coles [London: Black Dog Publishing, 2000]). This paradigmatic shift in art practice, to a large extent, makes it possible for non-Western cultures and artists to use their voices, which might rarely be taken seriously in the past. Today, as Hans Belting observes, this shift stimulates the development of art history from the “world art” mode to the “global art” mode, in which the supremacy of Western art is largely overthrown (“From World Art to Global Art: View on a New Panorama,” in *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds*, eds. Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, Peter Weibel [MIT Press, 2013], p. 184). The emergence of the so-called “postcritical” art actually can be seen as one of the consequences of this mode shift in today’s postcolonial context. However, Hill does not further his discussion to this aspect in depth and stops his exploration as a brief and unfinished description.

As a folklorist who is very interested in the interplay between my discipline, art and aesthetics, I believe that many of my peers would appreciate and welcome Hill’s work which allays our worries about the current decline of folklore as an academic discipline and its crisis in theory and practice.

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SHUSTERMAN, RICHARD, ed. *Bodies in the Streets: The Somaesthetics of City Life*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2019, xii + 321 pp., 27 illus., \$144.00 cloth.

Richard Shusterman’s edited volume, *Bodies in the Streets: The Somaesthetics of City Life*, consisting of thirteen essays, represents Volume Two of *Studies in Somaesthetics: Embodied Perspectives in the Arts and the Human Science*, a series of works also edited by Shusterman. The contributors to *Bodies in the Streets* include thirteen international scholars representing multiple disciplines, including “philosophy, urban theory, gender studies, political theory, and literary theory to visual art, criminology, and the interdisciplinary field of somaesthetics” (p. 1).

The essays in this volume thus cover a wide range of urban experiences referencing experiences in major Asian, African, American, and European cities, with a predominance of attention directed to European cities. Topics addressed by the authors include applications of somaesthetics to diverse aspects of city life reflecting the interests of aesthetics, philosophy, cultural theory and cultural studies, criticism and art theory, and literature. Chapters included in the volume consist of selections from a conference on the topic held at The Florida Atlantic University Center for Mind, Body and Culture in January 2017, with the greater portion of the essays collected to reflect the theme of this volume. Authors represented here include scholars from across the world, including Berlin, Copenhagen, Cypress, Rome, Taiwan, Vienna, and the United States.

In his introduction to this collection, Shusterman argues that the “physical presence and bodily actions” of persons on city streets, though often differing, form the elements of city life (p. 1). In his characterization of bodies, Shusterman cites ambiguities in the term “body,” which extend the term to include living and dead bodies, as well as objects in the world shaped by culture that participate in the art of living. Shusterman, a pioneering exponent of somaesthetics, understands “Somaesthetics as the critical study and meliorative cultivation of the body as the site not only of experienced subjectivity and sensory appreciation (aesthesis) that guides our action and performance but also of the creative self-fashioning through the way we use, groom, and adorn our physical bodies to express our values and stylize ourselves” (p. 15).

The book is divided into four sections: “Part I: The Soma, The City and The Weather,” Part II: “Festival, Revolution and Death,” Part III: “Performances

of Resistance, Gender, and Crime,” and Part IV: “Bodies in the Streets of Literature and Art.” Shusterman’s essay, “Bodies in the Streets: The Soma, the City, and the Art of Living,” in Part I sets the scene for examining the diverse activities that engage the body in the city by drawing analogies between body and city as explored in writings as separate in time and thought. For example, Aristotle, who looked favorably on the city as being essential to achieving the good life, is contrasted with Friedrich Engels, who found the crowded city streets of London unfeeling and lacking in real human social relations (p. 24). Shusterman continues his examination of cities and the art of living with reference to familiar authors on this topic, including Georg Simmel, Charles Baudelaire, Walter Benjamin, and Lewis Mumford, in order to show support for the dynamic interactions of body and city streets necessary to stimulate aesthetic richness and political vitality in urban life.

Other essays in Part I include Mădălina Diaconu’s “The Weather Worlds of Urban Bodies,” as seen from the perspective of phenomenology of the senses and environmental philosophy, and Henrik Reeh’s “White on Black: Snow in the City, Skiing in Copenhagen,” from the perspective of urban studies and modern culture. Diaconu’s essay examines the effects of weather on shaping moods and movements of the body in the contexts of city life, while Reeh considers different ways in which snow transforms perception and engagement in city life. With reference to Shusterman, Diaconu argues that “a somaesthetic approach to the weather experience should include not only descriptions of experience and recommendations for individual improvement but should also take into account biopolitics or, alternatively, somapolitics” (p. 57). Taking a more poetic approach to weather focusing on snow, and with reference to Walter Benjamin, Reeh declares that “In cities, snow is a cultural feature that transforms urban culture. City life is not the same, if snow doesn’t fall, or when it melts or is hauled away” (p. 83).

Part II, “Festival, Revolution, and Death,” consists of three essays: Matthew Crippen’s “Body Politics: Revolt and City Celebration,” Noemi Marin’s “Bodies in the Streets of Eastern Europe: Rhetorical Space and the Somaesthetics of Revolution,” and Marilyn G. Miller’s “From Dancing to Dying in the Streets: Somaesthetics of the Cuban Revolution in Memories of Underdevelopment and Juan of the Dead.” In this section, the authors link their applications of somaesthetics to bodily experiences that relate to cultural and political concerns in various cultural sites from the Water Festival in Mandalay to the somatic dimensions of political protests in Cairo against the leadership of Mubarak during the Arab Spring of 2011.

Crippen views these developments from the perspective of somaesthetics drawing upon existential phenomenology, Eastern and Greek philosophy, and Ludwig Wittgenstein. (See Richard Shusterman, “Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 57, no 43 (2012): pp. 104–124). Common to these sources, Crippen proposes, is the view that the “body—in combination with the things it encounters—constitute experience” (p. 89).

Moving the discussion to another geographic setting, Marin employs somaesthetics to understand the role of bodies operative in the streets of Communist Romania as they seek to liberate themselves. The point here is to show how bodies in the streets participated in the post-Communist political social changes of the mid-twentieth century leading to modifying governance, politics, and civil rights.

In Chapter Five, Miller turns our attention to the application of somaesthetics to the Havana street and bodily actions in reference to the Cuban revolution. The focus of Miller’s essay is the efforts of the Cuban Revolution to redefine the cultivation of experience and the use of one’s body from “a site of sensory application (aesthesis) and creative self-fashioning” to service in the revolution (p. 136). Miller cites two films, *Memorias del Subdesarrollo* (*Memories of Underdevelopment*, Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, 1973) and *Juán de los Muertos* (*Juan of the Dead*, Alejandro Brugués, 2012), in her examination of the relationship of the physical body and the revolutionary state (p. 133).

Part III, “Performances of Resistance: Gender and Crime,” focuses on the role of the body with respect to gender hierarchy, feminism, women’s subjugation on the streets, and spatial confinements of women. Ilaria Serra argues in “‘Street’ is Feminine in Italian: Feminine Bodies and Street Spaces” that through the efforts of feminism, street spaces offer for women both a source of aesthetic experience and political power. Federica Castelli in “Bodies in Alliance and New Sites of Resistance: Performing the Political in Neoliberal Public Spaces” contends that neoliberal policies and ideologies of individualism have combined with narrowly functionalist approaches to space in ways that isolate people or connect them only in limited and predefined ways. The divisions that mark neoliberal cities (ghettos, expulsions, policies based on data, norms, and statistics), she argues, are in need of replacement by policies that acknowledge that bodies are political and able to contribute to the construction of new realities (p. 192).

Also included in Part III are Chung-jen Chen’s “East End Prostitution and the Fears of Contagion: On Body Consciousness of the Ripper Case” and Alireza Fakhkonandeh’s “Towards a Somaesthetic Conception of Culture in Iran: Somaesthetic

Performance as Cultural Praxis in Tehran.” Chung-Jen’s essay offers a somaesthetic rendering of bodies in the geological and biological representations of East End London, the source of urban violence, such as Jack the Ripper. This essayist sets forth a grim appraisal of the social or criminal victimization of bodies and problems pertaining to the body’s role in society.

Fakhrkonandeh explores applications of somaesthetics to “contemporary patterns of Iranian perceptions of the body in conjunction with the critical-creative possibilities for somaesthetic praxis in Iranian urban space” (p. 222). Somaesthetic performance undertaken in the streets of Tehran is offered as a means of altering community perceptions of urban social spaces by introducing new cognitive-affective practices aimed at transforming the “civil-subject from a spectator to a participant” (p. 242).

Part IV, “Bodies in the Streets of Literature and Art,” extends the range of somaesthetics applications to fictional events and into the realm of art and Indian Aesthetics. Included here are Evy Varsamopoulou’s “Terrae Incognitae: The Somaesthetics of Thomas De Quincy’s Psychogeograph,” Robert W. Jones II’s “The Empty Spaces You Run Into: The City as Character and Background in William Burroughs’s *Junkie*, *Queer*, and *Naked Lunch*,” and Pradeep A. Dhillon’s “The Somaesthetic Sublime: Varanasi in Modern and Contemporary Indian Art.”

DeQuincy’s narrative of an opium addict living on the streets of London offers the subject for Varsamopoulou’s analysis of somaesthetics. The author proposes that “*The Confessions* offer an account of a somaesthetic praxis that encompasses all three dimensions . . . analytic, pragmatic, and performance” as distinguished by Shusterman (p. 252). Additionally, the author (following Martin Coverly) cites DeQuincy’s narrative of wandering through the streets of London as “the first actual practitioner of psychogeography” or the study of the effects of the geographical environment on the emotions and behavior (p. 256). References to DeQuincy’s engagement with Piranesi’s images of cityscape as allegorical representations of the sublime, and a means of escape from the constrictions of every day urban life, will be of interest to contemporary urban aesthetics.

Jones’s essay focuses on William Burroughs’s life and the place of city life in his novels. Inquiries into Burroughs’s interest in the body and experimental forms of life, often relating to language as a means of control, provide the basis for the approach to somaesthetics. Burroughs employed fringe sciences as a means for exploring alternatives to existing forms of culture, including language. According to Jones, “The link between Burroughs’s and Shusterman’s somaesthetics comes . . . (via Feldenkrais) but also

through application of somaesthetic theory to the use of drugs” (p. 277).

Dhillon considers somaesthetics with reference to the sublime as attributed to the paintings of Indian modern-contemporary artists (Ram Kumar 1924–2018, M. F. Hussain 1915–2011, and Paresh Amity 1965–). These paintings feature the ancient city of Banaras, a multireligious city of pilgrimage viewed by Hindus as “the center of the earth or the place of creation” (p. 294).

The paintings are examined here from the perspectives of Western theories of the sublime (Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant, and Jean-François Lyotard) and with reference to Shusterman’s essay (“Somaesthetics and Burke’s Sublime,” *Thinking Through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics* [Cambridge University Press, 2012], pp. 145–165). Dhillon concludes that without the aid of somaesthetics, it would not be reasonable to “to extend the notion of the sublime to the social and political dimensions” in the manner that Lyotard and other postmodern thinkers have attempted (p. 312).

Somaesthetics, a term in its present context coined by Shusterman and initially operative mainly in the domain of philosophical aesthetics, has become a multidiscipline undertaking as evidenced in the work being reviewed here. The particular focus of this volume assumes the relevance of somaesthetics to multiple applications of the body in city life, including social, political, and philosophical, as well as in cultural expressions in the arts. Shusterman’s introduction and opening essay, together with multiple references throughout to his writings on the topic, provide the philosophical groundings for connecting bodies, city streets, to somaesthetics.

The result here is a volume of essays showing parallels between the evolution of the human body and the development of cities across the world, each with its distinctive parts, features, and functions. “The city’s crowds and streets powerfully provide this theatre for social drama where people find rich resources for somaesthetically expressing and stylizing themselves . . .” (p. 32). Attached to the individual essays are generous bibliographies with references to other noteworthy studies of cities, such as Walter Benjamin’s “flaneur” (pp. 29, 64–76), Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (p. 32), and others.

A question that comes to mind in viewing this collection of essays is the seeming absence of a critical basis for evaluating the claims and methodologies of the particular essays. Among the thirteen essayists, we find practitioners of philosophy, literary theory, comparative literature, foreign languages, and urban studies each with its own internal practices. What appears common to the group here is their affinities with somaesthetics. The question remains, does

somaesthetics provide a basis for critical assessment? Shusterman makes a strong case for the importance of the body and its role in all aspects of human experience. But, does this mean that somaesthetics replaces the critical functions of rationality and language as a means of assessing critical theories aimed at understanding human life and its practices?

The audience for this book may include aestheticians, but it offers potentially a much broader scope of interest, including the place of the body in urban studies, feminist theory, revolutionary politics, as well

as literature and art. Readers interested in further expansions of somaesthetics may wish to consult the *Journal of Somaesthetics*, where recent issues have focused on such topics as somaesthetics and technology, kinetic energy and designers, and migration all with additional possibilities for experiencing the body and city life.

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