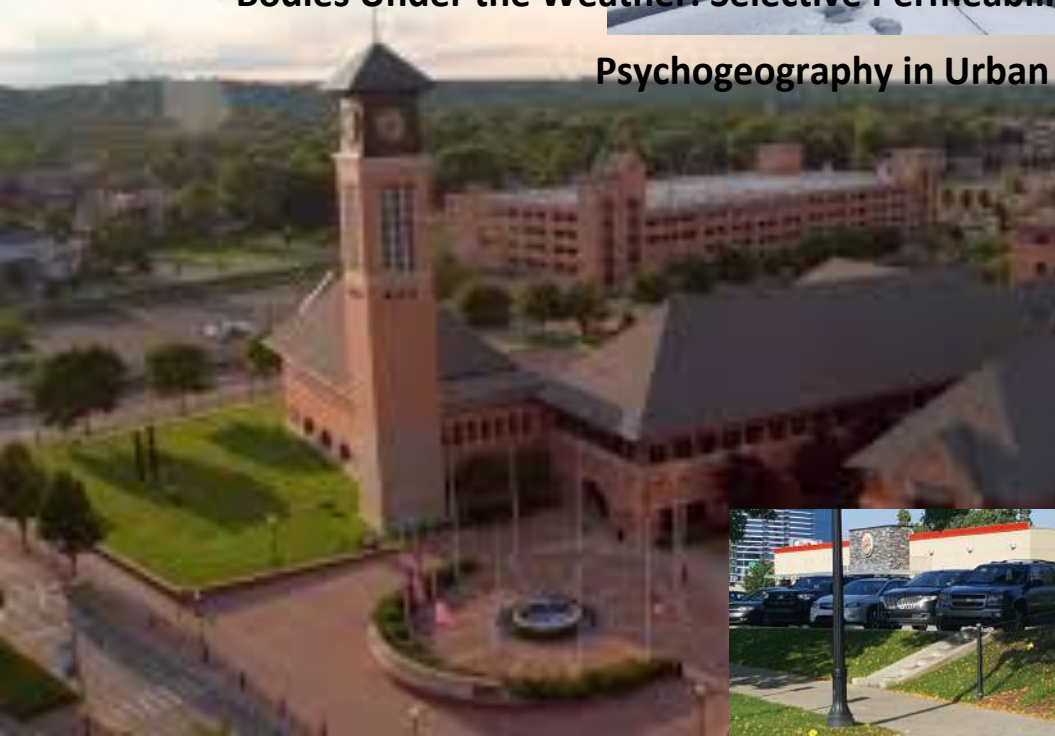


Bodies Under the Weather: Selective Permeability, Political Affordances and Psychogeography in Urban Design



Bodies Under the Weather: Selective Permeability, Political Affordances, and Architectural Hostility

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1 Introduction

Architectural design corrals bodily movement and access. Examples include aesthetically pleasing decorative walls, elevation changes, and other latent territory markers that, in the words of one enthusiast, make “both inhabitant and stranger ... perceive that an area is under the undisputed influence of a particular group.”¹ While such is widely recognized and sometimes criticized,² too little attention is paid to the fact that tacit boundaries are more severe for people somatically under the weather in the threefold sense of suffering from inclement conditions, ill-health, and oppressive social climates. Also neglected is the extent to which exclusionary design can inflict exhaustion, which has the self-feeding effect of strengthening implicit boundaries.

Somaesthetics, which aims at enhancing wellbeing by cultivating aesthetic body-practices,³ supplies a lens for critically explicating exclusionary design. To offer an illustration, pink lighting accentuates teenage acne, selectively repulsing youths from certain settings.⁴ The result is just the opposite of what somaesthetics advocates: the lighting imposes humiliating bodily experiences, inflicting negative self-representations and reducing ability to function optimally;⁵ it thereby puts young adults under the weather, increasing susceptibility

1 Oscar Newman, *Defensible Space: Crime Prevention through Urban Design* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 2–3.

2 See Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Vintage, 1961), Part 1; William Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (Washington D.C.: The Conservation Foundation, 1980), Ch. 5–6.

3 Richard Shusterman, “Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 57, no. 3 (1999): 299–313.

4 Vladan Klement, “Moral and Political Implications of Urbanism” (PhD diss., Masaryk University, 2020), Ch. 6.

5 For the positive, meliorative thrust of somaesthetics, see Richard Shusterman, “Thinking Through the Body, Educating for the Humanities: A Plea for Somaesthetics,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 40, no. 1 (2006): 1–21; hereafter “A Plea for Somaesthetics.”

to the initial effect. Other forms of exclusionary design do similarly, for example, through architectural gestures recalling standoffish bodily postures.

A conceptually related, body-oriented framework that lends further insight is J. J. Gibson's ecological psychology. As with somaesthetics, Gibson's work has pragmatic and phenomenological underpinnings.⁶ Gibson is best known for his affordance theory, which holds that organisms perceive in terms of the ease or difficulty with which their bodies can realize environmental actions,⁷ so that a river is walkable to water striders, but not humans.⁸ Gibson stresses health-related aspects of affordances, arguing that layouts afford benefit or injury and in this sense have value.⁹ He occasionally orients his work aesthetically, in this way too emphasizing valuative dimensions.¹⁰ Gibson's ideas, therefore, dovetail nicely with somaesthetics, and also value sensitive design, which, as the name suggests, maintains that artifacts embody values.¹¹ Thus marble in banks proclaims trustworthiness, security, reliability, prestige, and wealth.¹² These aesthetic features organize emotional atmospheres and behavior into what Guy Debord called psychogeography,¹³ albeit a selectively welcoming-hostile

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- 6 Anthony Chemero and Stefan Käufer. "Pragmatism, Phenomenology, and Extended Cognition," in *Pragmatism and Embodied Cognitive Science: From Bodily Interaction to Symbolic Articulation*, eds. Roman Madzia and Matthias Jung (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 55–70; J. J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1979), Preface.
- 7 See Gibson, *The Ecological Approach*, Ch. 8; J. J. Gibson (1966). In *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems*. (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1966), Ch. 13.
- 8 Eleanor Gibson and Anne Pick, *An Ecological Approach to Perceptual Learning and Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 16; Matthew Crippen, "Aesthetics and Action: Situations, Emotional Perception and the Kuleshov Effect," *Synthese* [issue unassigned] (2019); Matthew Crippen, "Embodied Cognition and Perception: Dewey, Science and Skepticism." *Contemporary Pragmatism* 14 (2017), no. 1: 121–134.
- 9 Gibson, *The Ecological Approach*, throughout. Gibson, *Senses Considered*, Chs. 8 and 13.
- 10 J. J. Gibson, "Pickford and the Failure of Experimental Esthetics," *Leonardo* 8, no. 4 (1975), 319–321. For more thoroughly aesthetic rendering of affordance theory, see Rachel Kaplan and Stephen Kaplan, *The Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Part 1.
- 11 Friedman, Batya, Peter H. Khan and Alan Bornin, "Value Sensitive Design and Information Systems," in *The Handbook of Information and Computer Ethics*, ed. Kenneth Einar Himma and Herman T. Tavani (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley and Sons: 2008), 69–101; Jeroen van den Hoven, "Architecture and Value-Sensitive Design," in *Ethics, Design and Planning of the Built Environment*, ed., Claudia Basta and Stefano Moroni (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013), 135–141.
- 12 See Rajiv Shah and Jay Kesan, "How Architecture Regulates," *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 24, no. 4 (2007), 351.
- 13 Guy Debord, "Introduction to a Critique of Urban Geography," 1955, trans. Ken Knabb, in *Critical Geographies: A Collection of Readings*, ed. Harald Bauder and Salvatore Engel-Di Mauro (Kelowna: Praxis (e)Press, 2008), 23.

variant of it since the décor may invite the affluent in, and emotionally ward off those of modest means.

Such design decisions and their impact highlight what could be called *selective permeability*, and reiterates the opening thesis that being under the weather enhances exclusionary design, a position reinforced by studies showing that illness, fatigue, and dour mood make environments seem more forbidding, for example, increasing perceived steepness of hills.¹⁴ Such outcomes follow insofar as poor health and depressed mood bring exhaustion, decreasing ease of action. An argument can accordingly be mounted that weariness – say, of the homeless – heightens the severity of implicit boundaries. Freezing temperatures, heavy rain and other forms of bad weather – inasmuch as they are depleting – should do the same. So too should political fatigue in the context of authoritarian architecture. Some selectively permeable features can therefore be regarded as action and body corraling *political affordances*, defined as normative openings and closures that filter, and hence segregate, according to an agent's social position.¹⁵

A key tenet in somaesthetics is that “body, mind, and culture are deeply codependent.”¹⁶ Likewise in Gibson's framework: it holds that body, values, and environmental affordances are codefined. Thus, for example, a cliff-edge affords falling and looks threatening and is dangerous to most humans,¹⁷ albeit less so to skilled climbers with requisite equipment, who therefore value it differently.¹⁸ The same pattern occurs in cultural-political environments: a woman may see an urban setting as more threatening than a man because it puts her at greater bodily risk; citizens in an authoritarian society may face more danger than tourists, and experience a space accordingly. That agents

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- 14 For example, Mukul Bhalla and Dennis Proffitt, “Visual-Motor Recalibration in Geographical Slant Perception,” *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance* 25, no. 4 (1999): 1076–1096; Dennis Proffitt, “Embodied Perception and the Economy of Action,” *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 1, no. 2 (2006): 110–122; Cedar Riener et al., “An Effect of Mood on the Perception of Geographical Slant,” *Cognition and Emotion* 25, no. 1 (2011): 174–82; Simone Schnall, Jonathan Zadra and Dennis Proffitt, “Direct Evidence for the Economy of Action: Glucose and the Perception of Geographical Slant,” *Perception* 39, no. 4 (2010): 464–482; Jonathan Zadra et al., “Direct Physiological Evidence for an Economy of Action: Bioenergetics and the Perception of Spatial Layout,” *Journal of Vision* 10, no. 7 (2010): 54.
- 15 Matthew Crippen, “Contours of Cairo Revolt: Semiology and Political Affordances in Street Discourses,” *Topoi* [issue unassigned] (2019).
- 16 Shusterman, “A Plea for Somaesthetics,” 2.
- 17 *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, 142.
- 18 Matthew Crippen, “Enactive pragmatism and Ecological Psychology,” *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11 (2020), 2598. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2020.538644a.

face objectively different obstacles in the same environment is precisely what allows for selectively permeable design. It also allows for the imposition of political affordances that manage bodily movement, sometimes oppressively.

2 Implicit Hostility

Hostile urban design is common. Notable instances include features that thwart skateboarding and “anti-homeless” spikes or sprinklers that prevent sitting, reclining or loitering.¹⁹ Affluent residents have petitioned against subway extensions that would open their neighborhood to poorer minorities.²⁰ Similarly, low overpasses were likely calculated to impede bus travel from poor and especially black neighborhoods to beaches in Robert Moses’s plans for New York City.²¹ Some of these arrangements entail selective permeability, and the same can be psychologically engendered via implicit, symbolic boundaries.

The Richard M. DeVos Center at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) in Michigan serves as an extended example. Erected in downtown Grand Rapids in 2000, the DeVos Center is a minimalist medieval imitation that forms a pleasant if corporate space. A puzzle is this: the DeVos Center abuts a Burger King property that informally doubles as a homeless shelter during bad weather; yet the homeless avoid university grounds. This is odd because security rarely patrols the campus, which only has hidden and unmonitored forensic cameras, and some DeVos buildings remain open after Burger King closes for the evening. The complex has comfortable seating and padded benches suitable for sleeping, along with nooks offering more privacy than Burger King, even though most sightlines are fairly open. The university also offers high quality, publicly accessible internet, which can be important for the homeless since

19 Sarah Johnsen, Suzanne Fitzpatrick and Beth Watts, “Homelessness and Social Control: A Typology,” *Housing Studies* 33, no. 7 (2018): 1106–26; Jeremy Németh, “Conflict, Exclusion, Relocation: Skateboarding and Public Space,” *Journal of Urban Design* 11, no. 3 (2006): 297–318. James Petty, “The London Spikes Controversy: Homelessness, Urban Securitisation and the Question of ‘Hostile Architecture.’” *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy* 5, no. 1 (2016): 67–81.

20 Sarah Schindler, “Architectural Exclusion: Discrimination and Segregation Through Physical Design of the Built Environment.” *The Yale Law Review Journal* 124, no. 6 (2015): 1934–2024.

21 Robert A. Caro. *The Power Broker: Robert Moses and the Fall of New York* (New York, Knopf, 1974); Langdon Winner, “Do Artifacts have Politics?” *Daedalus* 109, no. 1 (1980): 121–136; for contesting opinion, see Bernward Joerges, “Do Politics Have Artefacts?” *Social Studies of Science* 29, no. 3 (1999), 411–431.

smartphones are common among them and said to be lifelines.²² Given these amenities, one wonders why the homeless do not make the 15-second trek into the campus.

A partial explanation is that the DeVos Center adheres to defensive design models emphasizing symbolic cordoning and latent territoriality.²³ Oscar Newman prominently recommends curbs and decorative fences, followed by lawns, gardens, and walkways with brickwork altering near to entrances, all combined with a small number of paths into an area. These layers suggest increasingly private space, making outsiders feel conspicuous.²⁴ Standing out more too, outsiders may be greeted with questioning glances or queries,²⁵ elevating visceral unease. Though less enthusiastic about symbolic cordoning, William Whyte's time-lapse recordings show that in addition to features listed above, an extra half meter elevation repels entry,²⁶ even while not physically impeding most people (See Figure 6.1.).

The DeVos Center follows these prescriptions exactly. Three out of four sides have only a single, feudal-style arched entrance, embedded in lightly ornamented but austere façades. Decorative brick walls and mock-iron fences hem the south and west sides. The north face that abuts Burger King's drive-through has another fence: a black chain-link barrier stretched along a tree line and steep run of lawn. These enclosures symbolically cordon space, as opposed to physically preventing access, since all have unobstructed entryways and most of the decorative wall can be stepped over. While imposing an aggressive aesthetic, the chain-link fence only covers a small portion of the property. Even here, it does not block pedestrians since this is already achieved by the trees and the brisk incline facing the drive-through. Practical considerations prevent the inclusion of fences or walls on the east side because the building complex opens directly onto a sidewalk, followed by a road devoid of businesses,

22 Maria C. Raven et al., "Mobile Phone, Computer, and Internet Use Among Older Homeless Adults: Results from the HOPE HOME Cohort Study," *JMIR MHealth and UHealth* 6, no. 12 (2018): e10049. <https://doi.org/10.2196/10049>; Harmony Rhoades et al., "No Digital Divide? Technology Use among Homeless Adults," *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless* 26, no. 1 (2017): 73–77.

23 Newman, *Defensible Space*, 3.

24 See Oscar Newman, *Creating Defensible Space* (Washington, DC: Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, 1996), Chs. 1–2.

25 Newman, *Defensible Space*, 60.

26 Whyte, *Social Life*, 58; also see Arnold Berleant, "Aesthetic Perception in Environmental Design," in *Environmental Aesthetics*, ed. Jack Nasar (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 95.

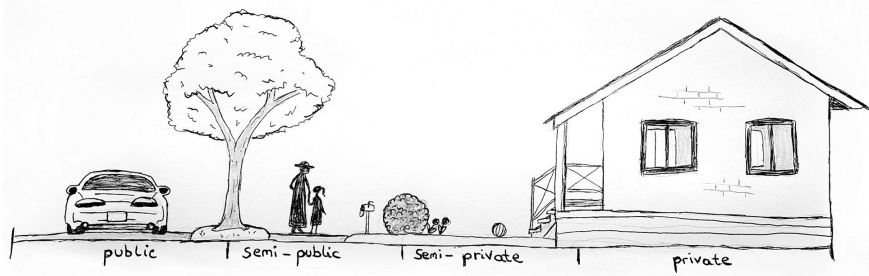


FIGURE 6.1 *Psychologically Cordoned Space*

Architectural layouts are customarily designed to keep people out by psychological means. A curb, barrier of shrubs, followed by a lawn and rise of stairs indicates movement into increasingly private space. Such design features generate unease in outsiders, making them conspicuous to those controlling the area, who therefore feel licensed to question them.

overlooked by a highway overpass. These external features repel public foot traffic, and the arched entrance in the austere façade adds hostility.

While all sides of the DeVos Center ward off outsiders by implicitly marking territory as non-public, the Burger King end is particularly effective in this regard. One reason is the elevation differential, bridged by an ugly concrete stairway slicing through what almost resembles a grassy ditch. The stairway runs parallel to the university complex, as opposed to leading straight into it. Walking from Burger King to the stairway to the nearest DeVos entrance involves a right-angle turn followed by a second nearly right-angle bend. The building's entrance is set in a protruding rectangular foyer that recalls a castle gatehouse. Approaching the foyer, the walkway changes from concrete slabs to ornamental red brickwork, indicating movement into increasingly private territory (See Figure 6.2).

The DeVos Center opens most where vulnerability is least. This is on the south end – farthest from Burger King – where the university owns faux-brownstone residences across the road, ensuring that foot traffic is primarily comprised of GVSU members. The layout enhances aesthetic possibilities since the complex has a courtyard with a southward-facing bottleneck view of the mock brownstones, which is preferable to seeing the overpass, Burger King or parking lot respectively to the east, north, and west. At the same time, the arrangement remains defensive. A wide, bricked, pedestrian area gently inclines from the public sidewalk. The walking area is flanked on one side by a minimalist, neogothic library, enfolded by a raised lawn and decorative barriers, implicitly closing off the space. On the opposite corner, a high, decorative wall protects what looks like a Victorian cottage, complete with leaded



FIGURE 6.2 *Burger King and the DeVos Center*

Although nothing prevents bodily passage between Burger King and the DeVos Center, elevation alterations, stairs, the half fence, tree line and the changes in walkway direction and tiling symbolically close the area to outsiders, so that they mostly stay out.

windows and an English garden. Just inside the university grounds, a semicircular wall splits the walking area. It looks low from a distance, but seems to grow as one approaches and in fact stands at about two and a half meters. It bears the name of Richard M. DeVos, the founder of Amway. A circle of international flags hugs the wall's interior. They surround a fountain, which remains hidden from the street because of the convex wall. Most of these features – while pleasant enough – tacitly mark the space as at least semi-private. The semi-circular wall also blocks sidewalk views of the fountain, thereby cutting of an aesthetic feature that might pull in pedestrians, who may simultaneously be discouraged by the elevation of the DeVos grounds (See Figure 6.3.).

A related reason that the DeVos Center wards off outsiders is that it incorporates feudal elements, loosely mimicking Cambridge University.²⁷ The features here entailed – however pleasing – express hostility because they were

27 Personal communication from James Moyer, retired Associate Vice President for Facilities Planning at Grand Valley State University.



FIGURE 6.3 *Main Face of the DeVos Center*

This side of the DeVos Center is the most open but also the most secure because the university owns the opposite-facing land across the road and has developed it with faux brownstone student residences and other buildings. Nonetheless, the architecture incorporates numerous elements that likely repel outsiders such as elevation changes, decorative barriers protecting the lawn and the high outward pushing round wall hiding the fountain behind it.

originally intended to thwart intrusion. A fortress castle, for instance, especially resists penetration at ground level, where it has no windows, limited entrances and rugged surfaces to deflect missiles. At levels higher and less vulnerable to invasion, delicate motifs, lighter masonry, and windows become increasingly common, and top spires can almost melt into air.²⁸ The *Medici-Riccardi Palace* – a Renaissance structure designed to repel incursion – follows these parameters. Rough brickwork dominates at ground level, and gets increasingly refined at the second and third stories, where the frequency of windows also grows.²⁹ These patterns repeat in the DeVos Center. The masonry is rougher at lower levels, and often gray, as opposed to warmer earth-tones higher up. Moreover, less glass pervades at ground level, albeit with some exceptions in more fortified areas,

28 Edmund Bacon, *Design of Cities* (New York: Penguin Books, 1967), 44.

29 Matthew Crippen, "Intuitive Cities: Pre-reflective, Aesthetic and Political Aspects of Urban Design," *Journal of Aesthetics and Phenomenology* 3, no. 2 (2016): 125–145.

for example, behind ornamental walls enclosing the library. Even here, heavy arches of the sort that might hold spiked portcullises frame the windows, and a clock tower guards the area. The tower's base is windowless and encrusted in course, gray masonry. Higher up, the brickwork is warmer and more refined, with cascading windows draping down (see Figure 6.3). The tower and building attached to the library both have small windows resembling gun slits. Viewed from the side street leading to the western parking lot abutting Burger King, this building resembles Harpers Ferry Armory.

Quasi-military features such as those found at the DeVos Center are peculiarly pleasing, but outsiders – including the homeless – may not feel invited into the grounds. Thus the feudal character arguably enhances the latent cor-doning that is already in place, regulating bodily movement, hence delineating somatic space and indicating the area is “under the undisputed influence of a particular group,”³⁰ to reuse Newman's words. Insofar as all this is so, the design closely resembles hostile measures such as low overpasses in Robert Moses's city plans. Only where overpasses physically prevent bus traffic and hence exclude marginalized individuals, the DeVos center selectively filters by appealing to implicit territoriality.

3 Malaise, Movement, and Social Filtering

“Affordances” are environmental features that allow or limit certain actions. Gibson coined the term “as a substitute for values” to avoid subjective connotations. “Values” here connote “simply what things furnish, for good or ill.”³¹ Gibson stresses his position “implies that the ‘values’ and ‘meanings’ of things in the environment can be directly perceived” and are therefore “external to the perceiver.”³² He recognizes that use-values are relative to agents, but nonetheless sides with realists by holding, for example, that what a chair affords “is independent of me in the respect that it is in the next room; nothing that I do from here will affect it.”³³ However, this is overstated since actions change physical properties, so that a lake surface has different affordances or values depending on whether one hits it at slow speeds or terminal velocity.³⁴ It can be

30 Oscar Newman, *Defensible Space: Crime Prevention through Urban Design* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 3.

31 Gibson, *Senses Considered*, 285.

32 Gibson, *The Ecological Approach*, 127.

33 Harry Heft, “Ecological Psychology and Enaction Theory: Divergent Groundings,” *Frontiers of Psychology*, 11 (2020), 991, para. 41. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00991.2020.

34 Crippen, “Enactive Pragmatism.”

added that things are objectively less approachable when undergoing energy-draining orientations such as depression. Studies in fact show that such moods make hills look steeper and more distant,³⁵ with like occurring when we are tired, sick, suffering low blood sugar or laden with heavy backpacks.³⁶ On similar grounds, implicit territory markers, which – like affordances – limit bodily movement, ought also to show up as more forbidding to people somatically under the weather. This includes the homeless, who generally experience ill-health, poorer nutrition, and negative mood,³⁷ supplying an additional reason as to why the DeVos center likely appears especially impermeable to them.

Something similar holds for GVSU staff and students in relation to one of the most aesthetically pleasing – but empty – portions of the DeVos Center: The Lumber Baron Bar. Located beside the entrance facing Burger King, the Lumber Baron Bar is called such in deference to Grand Rapid's past timber tycoons. The room is patterned after a bar with the same name-sake in the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel where Ronald Reagan, Pierre Trudeau, and José López Portillo met during a summit. With décor donated from the original, the GVSU replica features soothing wood paneling, shaded lamps, a hearth, armchairs, framed paintings, and a modest chandelier. It also has a traditional bar with padded stools, albeit without alcohol and no staff manning the room except during special events. Despite the cozy features, remaining unlocked and being explicitly designated as a student and university commons, the space is nearly always bereft of students and faculty. One reason is that the room feels like an exclusive club. The emptiness increases the forbidden aura,³⁸ while removing an aesthetic attribute – people – that draw others into environments.³⁹ Compounding these exclusionary effects is the fatigue suffered by students and faculty. This is perhaps more so at GVSU, which is

35 Riener et al., "Perception of Geographical Slant," 174–82.

36 Bhalla and Proffitt, "Visual-Motor Recalibration," 1076–1096; Proffitt, "Embodied Perception," 110–122; Schnall, Zadra and Proffitt, "Glucose and the Perception of Geographical Slant," 464–482; Zadra et al., "Bioenergetics and the Perception of Spatial Layout," 54.

37 John Belcher and Frederick Diblasio, "The Needs of Depressed Homeless Persons: Designing Appropriate Services," *Community Mental Health Journal* 26, no. 3 (1990): 255–266; Josephine Seale, Rosalind Falaise and Julie Lovegrove, "Nutrition and the Homeless: The Underestimated Challenge," *Nutrition Research Reviews* 29, no. 2 (2016): 143–151; Amanda, Stafford and Lisa Wood, "Tackling Health Disparities for People Who Are Homeless? Start with Social Determinants," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 14, no. 12 (August 2017): e1535.

38 Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Ch. 2; Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, Ch. 6.

39 See Whyte, *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*, 19.

not a pampering environment for either students or staff. It seems, then, that being somatically worn out makes the Lumber Baron Bar less permeable, just as exhaustion makes the DeVos Center's implicit markers more severe to the homeless.

In addition to being repelled by virtue of feeling under the weather, actual bad weather arguably enhances implicit boundaries, too. Consider again the homeless, who disproportionately populate the Burger King to escape inhospitable elements. Unpleasant weather, in turn, has somatic implications: it affects bodily posture and attire;⁴⁰ the need to dress for bad weather makes going out more difficult; inclement conditions, moreover, lower energy and mood, and exacerbate headaches, joint aggravation and other somatic ailments.⁴¹ Given that pain and bad weather both make bodily movement more taxing; and given the aforementioned studies suggesting that things look steeper and more distant and hence less accessible when action capacities are compromised, it stands to reason that bad weather will amplify implicit boundaries cordoning the DeVos Center. This is more so to a population of outsiders suffering somatically from illness, fatigue, negative mood and malnourishment.

It is worth stressing that the DeVos Center was not planned with an expressly exclusionary agenda. For example, facility managers would like to encourage use of the Lumbar Baron Bar by leaving doors ajar, but fire regulations prevent this.⁴² Likewise, while security might intervene to prevent panhandling, defensive design features were not directed at the homeless. They were instead intended to make students and staff feel safe in a neighborhood that had poorly lit areas and derelict buildings when the DeVos Center first opened.⁴³

40 Mădălina Diaconu, "The Weather-Worlds of Urban Bodies," in *Bodies in the Streets: Somaesthetics of City Life*, ed. Richard Shusterman (Boston: Brill, 2019), 38–59.

41 Catherine Chan and Daniel Ryan, "Assessing the Effects of Weather Conditions on Physical Activity Participation Using Objective Measures," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 6, no. 10 (2009): 2639–2654; Asbjørn Fagerlund et al., "Blame It on the Weather? The Association between Pain in Fibromyalgia, Relative Humidity, Temperature and Barometric Pressure," *Plos One* 14, no. 5 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0216902>; Teresa Makowiec-Dąbrowska et al., "Climate Conditions and Work-Related Fatigue among Professional Drivers," *International Journal of Biometeorology* 63, no. 2 (2018): 121–28. Mihye Lee et al., "Weather and Health Symptoms," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 15, no. 8 (2018): e1670; Sherri Melrose, "Seasonal Affective Disorder: An Overview of Assessment and Treatment Approaches," *Depression Research and Treatment* (2015): 1–6.

42 Personal communications from Lisa Haynes and James Moyer, current and retired Associate Vice Presidents for Facilities Services at Grand Valley State University.

43 Personal communication from Brian Barkwell, one of the architects on the team designing the DeVos Center. The claim was independently reiterated by Shannon Sullivan, Director of Construction at GVSU, and by Lisa Haynes and James Moyer, current and

In short, none of the preceding is an attack, but is rather an attempt to elucidate how architecture selectively regulates bodily movement. Understanding this, in turn, can illuminate sinister applications of exclusionary principles, for example, as implemented by authoritarian regimes.

One such instance is the 2015 redesign of Tahrir Square, which was the sentimental heart of Egypt's Arab Spring and 2011 January Revolution that ousted the dictator Hosni Mubarak. About a year and a half after, the incompetent and autocratic Muslim Brotherhood was elected, only to fall in a popularly backed coup in 2013, led by the general the party had installed, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.⁴⁴ Pretty much every political figure following the Arab Spring claimed to be for the revolution, and Sisi's government was no exception. Thus in a move ostensibly commemorating the "January martyrs," but in fact closing opportunities for activism, exclusionary principles were introduced to Tahrir.

Little more than a poorly maintained grass roundabout prior to the January Revolution, Tahrir Square underwent three transformations in the period after. The first commenced in 2013, but was abandoned before completion. The most recent – inaugurated in 2020 – involves the installation of a pharaonic obelisk and statues. The 2015 redesign, however, is of primary interest because it stands as a textbook exemplar of Newman's model of implicit social control. Additions included an ornamental wall, less than a half meter high, with three access points, one eventually bricked over. The wall encircled a well-kept lawn, shrubs, and salmon polished pathways leading like spokes to a ringed walkway of the same color. Beyond it, a second decorative wall protected an elevated hub, this time finished with grey masonry and once more having three access points. Taken together, these measures engendered a feeling of entering a privately maintained and thus controlled space, more so in the Egyptian context where entry to manicured areas usually requires payment or passing checkpoints for gated communities. The effect was enhanced by a tapered circular lip at the center that protected an austere flag pedestal, almost creating a feeling of entering a restricted religious space (See Figure 6.4a-c.).

Thus while remaining physically accessible, these design features ensured that the square was nearly always vacant. This is out of place in Egypt, where people regularly occupy even grassy medians in busy roads because parks typically impose fees. As with the Lumber Baron Bar, moreover, Tahrir's emptiness

retired Associate Vice Presidents for Facilities. The facts bear out what they say since GVSU grants unrestricted access to the public, keeps restrooms open to any needing them, has freely accessible internet and non-intrusive security.

44 See Matthew Crippen, "Egypt and the Middle East: Democracy, Anti-Democracy and Pragmatic Faith," *Saint Louis University Public Law Review* 35, no. 2, 281–302.

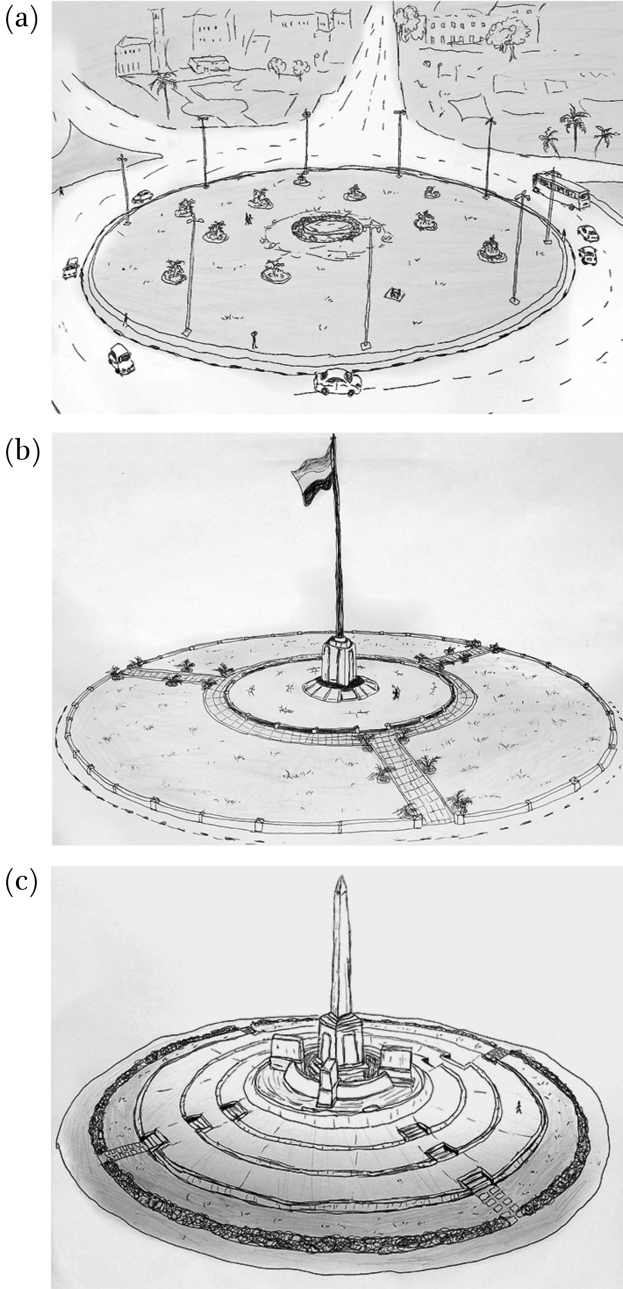


FIGURE 6.4A-C
Evolution of Tahrir Square

(a) Prior to 2011 January Revolution

(b) 2015 Redesign

(c) 2020 Redesign

Shortly before 2011, Tahrir Square was basically a roundabout. The 2015 redesign incorporated a decorative wall, limited access points, shrubs, and changes in tiling and elevation – defensive features that signal ownership and which were apt to sharply stand out to politically and economically exhausted Egyptians. The 2020 redesign retains a range of defensive features, but with erasure carried out in the subtraction of the flag, which was a protest symbol in 2011 that military authorities reappropriated in 2013 to fuel dissent and hence popular support for their coup against the elected government.

signaled it was forbidden. The reconstruction of Tahrir Square consequently shrunk openings for protests and hence ideological engagement. Or at least Tahrir's design features did this for an exhausted population whose capacities were diminished by a bad political situation leading to a weakened economy, with the dual hardship draining Egyptians. In other words, the square's newly introduced characteristics altered political affordances, defined again as normative openings and closures that filter and thereby segregate according to people's life circumstances, which invariably means their somatic situation.

Considered on an epistemological and metaphysical level, the Tahrir situation reinforces the pragmatic tenet, repeated by somaestheticians and ecological psychologists, that subject and object, perception and world, value and environment all build up in one and the same operation.⁴⁵ Political affordances exemplify this: they exist in relation to the ease or difficulty with which people can negotiate cultural settings. In cultures less under the weather – less burdened by malaise, fear, and political exhaustion – a space identical to the redesigned Tahrir Square might invite exploration. Even in the Cairo environs, tourists less politically and economically encumbered – in other words, people in the country but not culturally immersed – might regard such a space as welcoming. That political affordances and architectural values are relative in these ways does not make them psychological projections: they exist in urban and hence cultural ecologies, which includes the physical layout, things in it, histories, social dimensions and thus people too.

Gibson noted that a cliff “affords falling off” and “looks dangerous” and “is in fact dangerous” to humans.⁴⁶ For Egyptians, the square looked threatening because it was threatening to them. It was less dangerous to tourists, who are generally not harried by security and not as aware of the political context, and accordingly less apt to register threatening political affordances. Speaking in Gestalt terms, Gibson observed that things tell us “what to do with them.”⁴⁷ Just so with the political affordances of Tahrir: they told Egyptians what to do, namely, back away. Thus, as actual weather can inhibit political action,⁴⁸

45 John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Minton, Balch and Co., 1934), 177. For ecological and somaesthetic iterations, see Gibson, *The Ecological Approach*, C h. 8; Matthew Crippen, “Body Politics: Revolt and City Celebration,” in *Bodies in the Streets: Somaesthetics of City Life*, ed. Richard Shusterman (Boston: Brill, 2019), 89–110; Shusterman, “A Plea for Somaesthetics,” 2.

46 Gibson, *The Ecological Approach*, 142.

47 *Ibid.*, 138.

48 Diaconu, “The Weather-Worlds of Urban Bodies,” 38–59.

the weight of Egypt's social climate contributes to the appearance of political affordances that have restricted engagement with Tahrir's physical and ideological space.

4 Posture, Gesture, and Expression

Aestheticians have argued that we see emotional expression in things like weeping willows because they evoke demoralized postures.⁴⁹ It may simultaneously be that the ability to read human expression is part of a more general capacity to perceive action-organizing emotional values in environments.⁵⁰ As Gibson observed:

The gestalt psychologists recognized that the meaning or the value of a thing seems to be perceived just as immediately as its color. The value is clear on the face of it, as we say, and thus it has a physiognomic quality in the way that the emotions of a man appear on his face. To quote from [Kurt Koffka's] *Principles of Gestalt Psychology*, "Each thing says what it is ... a fruit says 'Eat me;' water says 'Drink me;' thunder says 'Fear me;' and woman says 'Love me.'" These values are vivid and essential features of the experience itself.⁵¹

Although this remark appears in passages in which Gibson endeavors to differentiate himself from his Gestalt predecessors to whom he also acknowledges deep debts; and although the Gestalt comment about the woman is stereotyped, the passage hints that affordances can be social-somatic openings and closures. This is such that standing up with arms folded can curtail and block a conversation, almost as forcefully as a wall, even while not physically impeding us. By contrast, an extended hand and smile invites grasping, shaking and

49 Stephen Davies, "Artistic Expression and the Hard Case of Pure Music," in *Contemporary Debates in Aesthetics and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Matthew Kieran (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006), 179–191; Jenefer Robinson, "Expression Theories," in *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music*, ed. Theodore Gracyk and Andrew Kania (New York: Routledge, 2011), 201–211; Saam Trivedi, "Resemblance Theories," in *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Music*, ed. Theodore Gracyk and Andrew Kania (New York: Routledge, 2011), 223–232.

50 Crippen, "Aesthetics and Action."

51 Gibson, *The Ecological Approach*, 138.

otherwise opens avenues for engagement.⁵² Gestures and postures, moreover, have value, which Gibson equates to affordances.

Indeed, affordances in social landscapes are emphatically value-laden, and urban form – itself a cultural phenomenon – takes advantage of this. One unequivocal instance is the “Babies of the Borough” project, executed in Southeast London.⁵³ The initiative involved painting large-eyed, round baby faces on roller shutters that protect shops after they have closed for the day. These physiognomies cultivate positive feelings,⁵⁴ and the hope was to reduce crime by evoking solicitude towards the neighborhood, a result achieved according to a government webpage.⁵⁵ The goal, in other words, was to change the local psychogeography, that is, the “effects of the geographical environment, whether consciously organized or not, on the emotions and behavior of individuals.”⁵⁶

Somatic gesturing in architecture and its psychogeography are typically subtler than baby faces on walls. The DeVos Center once again illustrates. As fortresses deploy “inward-looking convex forms” to deliver “the minimum surface exposure for the maximum interior volume,”⁵⁷ the DeVos Center is similarly introverted. Three out of four sides have only one entrance, each framed in a heavy arch, in turn set in a stern façade, combined with a lack of inviting gardens or shrubbery. These architectural faces are far removed from a smile or outreached hand, and closer to arms folded akimbo and other standoffish gestures that curtail opportunities for engagement. The remaining side across from the faux-brownstone residences is more welcoming. It has wide pathways, albeit combined with changes in elevation. There are some planters and shrubs, yet mostly hidden from the public street. The semicircular wall is

52 See Matthew Crippen, “Group Cognition, Developmental Psychology and Aesthetics,” *Pragmatism Today* 8, no. 1 (2017): 185–197; Joel Krueger, “Extended Cognition and the Space of Social Interaction,” *Consciousness and Cognition* 20, no. 3 (2011): 643–655; Arthur Still and James Good, “The Ontology of Mutualism,” *Ecological Psychology* 10, no. 1 (1998): 39–63.

53 See Klement, “Moral and Political Implications of Urbanism,” Ch. 6.

54 For example, Vincenzo Paolo Senese et al., “Human Infant Faces Provoke Implicit Positive Affective Responses in Parents and Non-Parents Alike,” *Plos One* 8, no. 11 (2013). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0080379>.

55 Local Government Association, “Babies of the Borough – Using Behavioural Insights to Reduce Anti-Social Behaviour,” *Communities: Efficiency and Income Generation* (November 29, 2017). <https://www.local.gov.uk/babies-borough-using-behavioural-insights-reduce-anti-social-behaviour>.

56 Debord, “Critique of Urban Geography,” 23.

57 Bacon, *Design of Cities*, 44.

convex, that is, outward pushing, as if to keep people from moving too close. This side accordingly remains hesitant, akin to someone formally extending a hand to prevent a hug.

The gestural topology of Tahrir Square – as it was between 2015 and 2020 – was more than just hesitant; it was flatly aggressive. Some of the hostility arose out of manipulating meaning already infused into the place. Tahrir, which means “liberation,” got its name with the ousting of the British in 1952,⁵⁸ and Egypt’s flag – known as the Liberation Flag – came into existence around this time.⁵⁹ Already symbolizing liberty and national unity at the outset of the Arab Spring, both were seized as symbols of revolt and solidarity.⁶⁰ In the summer of 2013, however, the military leadership – which was only ever nominally ousted – reabsorbed these symbols of defiance to fuel dissent against the elected Islamist government, dropping flags from helicopters into protestors in Tahrir, for example.⁶¹ After the 2013 military coup, the same leadership placed the austere, massive pedestal with an Egyptian flag in the center of Tahrir Square. In gestural language, the message was jarring. It was equivalent to a middle-finger, and said “Retreat from Tahrir and its ideology, or pay.” More subtly, the flag also said: “The revolution is over, and we won.” “We” stands for the military, and weakly for the people. This is because the military has branded itself as serving the people.

In addition to communicating in gestural language, architecture can also cultivate comportment styles among users. Such is the case with the Administration Building on the new campus at the American University in Cairo (AUC), which is modeled after a fortress. It has only a single entryway from the main plaza, and getting there entails crossing an imitation drawbridge with a moat below, albeit without water. Entering the building, one goes through what resembles a castle gatehouse, complete with the arched opening that would customarily hold a spiked portcullis. Upper levels have windows that look like arrow slits, and the roof has protrusions resembling battlements. The building’s imperious atmosphere echoes the autocratic values of Egypt’s ruling class, and reflects an ethos common to universities, which are medieval in origin and governed

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- 58 Lloyd Gardner, *The Road to Tahrir Square: Egypt and the United States from the Rise of Nasser to the Fall of Mubarak* (New York, Saqi, 2011), Ch. 1.
- 59 Elie Podeh, *The Politics of National Celebrations in the Arab Middle East* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), Ch. 2–3.
- 60 Crippen, “Contours of Cairo Revolt.”
- 61 Matthew Crippen, “Asleep at the Press: Thoreau, Egyptian Revolt and Nuances of Democracy,” *Arab Media and Society*, no. 20 (2015). https://www.arabmediasociety.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/20150302085925_Crippen_AsleepAtThePress.pdf.



FIGURE 6.5 *AUC Administration Building*

AUC's administration building has attributes associated with feudal architecture, including what looks like a drawbridge, moat and portcullis, plus features resembling arrow slits and battlements, all this in line with the hierarchal organization of universities in general, along with Egypt's authoritarian government.

accordingly. AUC carries this to unusual heights, for example, secretly inviting preselected individuals for an event with Mike Pompeo,⁶² thereby precluding tough questions to a man who promotes military aggression, secret prisons, and torture. Encountered in these contexts, the Administration Building expresses clear messages about who wields power and who is in the role of supplicant, inviting a corresponding demeanor in the latter (See Figure 6.5.).

Somaestheticians have in fact observed that architecture engenders compartment styles and moods,⁶³ which are mutually implying. The founder of somaesthetics, Richard Shusterman, adds that such ideas have long circulated,

62 Pascale Ghazaleh, "Letter to the BoT [Board of Trustees] and President Ricciardone" (internal AUC communication, Jan. 14, 2019); also see Declan Walsh, "Revolt at American University Where Pompeo Addressed Middle East."

63 Crippen, "Body Politics," 89–110; Richard Shusterman, *Thinking Through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics* (New York: Cambridge University Press), Ch. 10.

noting that some early 20th century architects “argued that one could help free people by freeing rooms of their closed heavy atmosphere through the use of glass and its light.”⁶⁴ By extension, design also cultivates psychogeography,⁶⁵ which Debord – to repeat – characterizes as explicit or implicit effects that surroundings have on emotions and behaviors.⁶⁶ Though customarily emphasizing playful responsiveness and free movement such as that seen in the flâneur,⁶⁷ psychogeographical space can also be exclusionary and oppressive. In line with psychogeographical observations, existential scholars note that settings have moods; that we find ourselves in moods rather than finding them in us;⁶⁸ and that finding ourselves in a mood entails a comportment style and vice versa, that is, a certain deployment of habits and manner of inhabiting and valuing the world.⁶⁹

Such occurs when depressed and lacking energy to go forward, with aspects of the world accordingly becoming less accessible and appearing that way, taking on oppressive tones. By affecting our comportment, say, by imposing a humble demeanor, design can similarly modulate mood, which to a significant extent is just the demeanor we adopt. Something like this arguably goes on in the imperious AUC Administration Building. The effect gets close to the notion of social and political affordances, which, like the more customary variety originally posited by Gibson, are neither in the agent or environment alone. Instead, they emerge out of avenues that the environment, agent and broader cultural practices together open up or close.

64 Shusterman, *Thinking Through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics*, 220.

65 Evy Varsamopoulou, “‘*Terrae Incognitae*’: The Somaesthetics of Thomas Quincey’s Psychogeography,” In *Bodies in the Streets: Somaesthetics of City Life*, ed. Richard Shusterman (Boston: Brill, 2019), 249–270.

66 Debord, “Critique of Urban Geography,” 23.

67 Debord, “Critique of Urban Geography,” 23–27; Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography* (London: Pocket Essentials, 2006); also see Farida Youssef, “The Dreams of Shanghai: On the Mental Life of the City in Mu Shiyong’s Short Stories,” in *Urban Walking: The Flâneur as an Icon of Metropolitan Culture in Literature and Film*, ed. Oliver Bock and Isabel Vila-Cabanes (Wilmington: Vernon Press, 2020), 173–193.

68 Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 171.

69 See Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 1927, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), §29.

5 Somaesthetic Criticisms

Architectural settings have value and express messages as clearly as written words, albeit often in pre-reflective ways engendered through somatic engagement.⁷⁰ Shusterman writes:

A crucial dimension of architecture is what its articulated spaces mean and contribute to the lived experience of those who dwell in those spaces and pass through them. A significant part of that lived experience of meaning and value is what architectural theorists now generally denote as atmosphere. This notion, which deserves extended analysis, seems to encompass the vast array of perceptual qualities, dominant feelings or moods, and ambient effects that emerge not only from the complexity of forms, relations, and materials of the articulated space but also from the complexity of practices, environmental factors, and experienced qualities that pervade the lived space of a building or other architectural structure.⁷¹

A mundane demonstration of Shusterman's position is a grassy portion of the DeVos Center's courtyard. Here, ornamental poles suspend decorative chains on two sides of the area, with the remaining two hemmed by benches and trees. The chain is so low that it can be stepped over, and casual polling suggests it is invisible to many students. The message it expresses, however, is not. It unequivocally says, "Stay off the grass," and students pre-reflectively obey, despite the lack of fencing on two sides and the absence of posted prohibitions against entry. This pointless overregulation of bodily activity creates a restrictive atmosphere and deprives students of the simple pleasure of sitting on the grass. It also removes an aesthetic feature: people. The psychogeographical configuration in fact contravened the preferences of the architects; it was enacted at the behest of former university President Arend Lubbers, who envisioned a pristine space in the vein of some grassy yards at Cambridge and Oxford, where access is explicitly forbidden.⁷²

70 See Crippen, "Contours of Cairo Revolt"; Crippen, "Intuitive Cities," 125–145; Noemi Marin, "Bodies in the Streets of Eastern Europe: Rhetorical Space and the Somaesthetics of Revolution," in *Bodies in the Streets: Somaesthetics of City Life*, ed. Richard Shusterman (Boston: Brill, 2019), 111–129.

71 Shusterman, *Thinking through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics*, 232; also see Bálint Veres, "Rethinking Aesthetics through Architecture," in *Aesthetic Experience and Somaesthetics*, ed. Richard Shusterman (Boston: Brill, 2018), 87–100.

72 Personal communication from Brian Barkwell, one of the architects on the team designing the DeVos Center.

A central aim of somaesthetics, of course, is to cultivate life-improving bodily practices,⁷³ and some psychogeographies are more somaesthetically counterproductive than the DeVos Center's grassy courtyard. One such case was mentioned at the outset: pink lighting that selectively pushes youth away by showing up facial acne.⁷⁴ Aural techniques are used to similar effect. This includes easy listening music disliked by teens,⁷⁵ and a more aggressive device known as the Mosquito that emits ultrasonic sound typically only audible to people under 25 years.⁷⁶ Headaches and feeling as if one's brain is swelling are side effects.⁷⁷ Disequilibrium, nausea, and perhaps hearing damage may occur too.⁷⁸ Inasmuch as results are achieved by causing pain, the Mosquito resembles military uses of loud music to break enemies or prisoners.⁷⁹ The selective effects of the Mosquito and pink light on young people also parallel political affordances established in Tahrir Square that are more hostile to Egyptians than tourists. This is because Egyptians are politically tired, with exhaustion diminishing capacity to act, making things appear less accessible. Humiliation, irritation, and hence fatigue inflicted on youth by the Mosquito and pink light may likewise heighten the severity of implicit boundaries typically delineating commercial areas where these devices are deployed.

Although design and its psychogeography need not be exclusionary,⁸⁰ the just discussed measures are, and they violate aspirations of somaesthetics, which proposes three interrelated ways of bettering bodily life. One of these

73 For example, Shusterman, "A Disciplinary Proposal," 299–313.

74 Klement, "Moral and Political Implications of Urbanism," Ch. 6.

75 Suzanne Cusick, "Music as Torture/Music as Weapon," *Transcultural Music Review* 10 (2006). <http://www.sibetrans.com/trans/articulo/152/music-as-torture-music-as-weapon>; Lily Hirsch, "Weaponizing Classical Music: Crime Prevention and Symbolic Power in the Age of Repetition." *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 19, no. 4 (June 2007): 342–358; Jonathan Sterne, "Urban Media and the Politics of Sound Space," in "Sound in Art and Culture," a special issue of *Open: Cahier on Art and the Public Domain*, no. 9 (2005): 6–15.

76 Mitchell Akiyama, "Silent Alarm: The Mosquito Youth Deterrent and the Politics of Frequency," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 35 no. 3 (2010): 455–471; Klement, "Moral and Political Implications of Urbanism," Ch. 6.

77 Akiyama, "Silent Alarm," 463; Klement, "Moral and Political Implications of Urbanism," Ch. 6.

78 German Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. "Einsatz von Ultraschall-Störgeräusch-Sendern nicht ganz unbedenklich," December 4, 2007; Mark Fletcher et al., "Effects of Very High-Frequency Sound and Ultrasound on Humans. Part 1: Adverse Symptoms after Exposure to Audible Very-High Frequency Sound," *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 144, no. 4 (2018): 2511–2520.

79 Cusick, "Music as Torture/Music as Weapon."

80 An example of non-exclusionary design is Pusan National University's main campus in Busan, South Korea. It blends seamlessly into the city, with commercial establishments and little identifying signage straddling portions of its perimeter, so it is not clear where

is called representational somaesthetics. This category includes everything from surface adjustments achieved through bodybuilding, makeup and hair-styling to external exhibitions of power and skill.⁸¹ Pink light obviously inflicts negative body representations. The Mosquito does likewise insofar as pain associates with negative body image.⁸² The redesign of Tahrir Square, by hindering political protest, has similarly discouraged representational displays that occurred during the Arab Spring. Among other practices, this included creatively converting injuries into celebratory badges of dissent, and painting Egyptian flags on faces as symbols of unified resistance and strength.⁸³

As the Tahrir example shows, representational practices are not inevitably shallow expressions of vanity, and can converge with what Shusterman calls experiential somaesthetics. This second category encompasses bodily activities such as athletics and yoga that make “us feel better in both senses of that ambiguous phrase: to make the quality of our somatic experience more satisfying and also to make it more acutely perceptive.”⁸⁴ Pink light and the Mosquito are contrary to this because they make places unappealing by making youths feel unattractive or ill, thereby degrading somatic-environmental experience. The redesign of Tahrir likewise runs counter to experiential somaesthetics by curtailing practices that buoyed the population and made it more keenly sensitive to injustices. In one artistic-bodily display during the 2011 uprising, for example, a woman perched statue-like on top of utility equipment, clutching a newspaper showing dead protesters.⁸⁵ Creative exhibitions such as this made people more acutely aware of injustices and the will to fight them, while contributing to collective cathartic release and shared optimism.⁸⁶

the university property begins. The campus nonetheless has definition insofar as it cuts up a mountainside where geography limits road access. After crossing the permeable lower border, one finds crisscrossing roads, winding walking paths and stairways, scenic parks, creeks, outdoor exercise areas and tennis courts in addition to customary university buildings. These features collectively pull the public across the permeable border, more so because the upper side of the campus meets a web of mountain trails leading to temples, outdoor gyms, pleasant riverside gathering sites and peaks with historic bulwarks and watchpoints not to mention other portions of the city. The campus is thus both a destination and transition point since many pass through on their way to or from the mountain trails.

81 See Shusterman, “A Disciplinary Proposal,” 299–313; Shusterman, “A Plea for Somaesthetics,” 1–21.

82 Oliver Sündermann et al, “‘When I Feel the Worst Pain, I Look like Shit’ – Body Image Concerns in Persistent Pain,” *Scandinavian Journal of Pain* 18, no. 3 (2018): 379–388.

83 Crippen, “Body Politics,” 102–107.

84 Shusterman, “A Plea for Somaesthetics,” 15.

85 Crippen, “Body Politics,” 103.

86 *Ibid.*, 104.

Representational and experiential somaesthetics overlap with a third category: performative somaesthetics, focused on improving functioning by building health, skill or strength.⁸⁷ The Mosquito and pink light are contrary to performative somaesthetics insofar as the pain and humiliation they inflict almost surely degrade functioning, not to mention aesthetic experience. The redesign of Tahrir similarly destroyed a venue for what was in practice protest performance art.⁸⁸ The woman with the newspaper is one example. Another is a man who incorporated his body into a cardboard tower, scrawled with Arabic cursing the government and a shoe attached near the bottom, which is viscerally insulting in the Middle East. The Tahrir demonstrations themselves were a highly intricate ballet involving face paint and props such as flags, loud speakers, and an effigy of Mubarak. More globally, this collective dance organized into what was basically a makeshift city, complete with places for food preparation, sleeping, medical treatment, prayers, trash disposal, and even checkpoints to keep security forces from entering.⁸⁹

An overarching commonality between the examples considered is that they all impose somatic burdens by *implicitly* generating exclusionary psychogeographies. In the case of the grassy yard in the DeVos Center, few notice themselves avoiding the space. Although Egyptians feel a threatening political atmosphere, they are typically unaware of architectural attributes repulsing them from places like Tahrir. The Mosquito lacks obvious referentiality and does not seem to come from the environment.⁹⁰ It is often so much in the background as to not be explicitly noticed, while nonetheless infusing space with an unpleasant aura. Likewise with lighting: one may know that one looks bad without linking it to lighting, instead experiencing an area as having an unappealing, almost sickening ambience. Elaborating on psychogeography, Debord talks about the “appealing or repelling character of certain places,” their “distinct psychic atmospheres,” and changes in “ambiance.”⁹¹ He further describes “the path of least resistance which is automatically followed in aimless strolls (and which has no relation to the physical contour of the ground),”⁹² this last statement characterizing latent boundaries, symbolic affordances, and selective permeability. Summing up, Debord laments that “all this seems to be neglected.”⁹³ If anything, however, psychogeography is not ignored, but

87 Shusterman, “A Plea for Somaesthetics,” 16.

88 Crippen, “Body Politics,” 102–107.

89 *Ibid.*, 103–104.

90 Akiyama, “Silent Alarm,” 461.

91 Debord, “Critique of Urban Geography,” 25.

92 *Ibid.*, 25.

93 *Ibid.*, 25.

managed too carefully these days. With space and bodily movements so regulated, our lives are too, and often with little benefit and sometimes significant harm.⁹⁴

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