

Literature, Performance, and Somaesthetics

Literature, Performance, and Somaesthetics:

*Studies in Agency
and Embodiment*

Edited by

Anna Budziak, Katarzyna Lisowska
and Jarosław Woźniak

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Edited by Anna Budziak, Katarzyna Lisowska and Jarosław Woźniak

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INTRODUCTION

ANNA BUDZIAK

This book views textual and extra-textual worlds as intimately connected, as forming a continuum, in fact. The collected essays—on literature, philosophy and art—which it contains derive their theoretical inspirations from two realms where embodiment and agency are particularly stressed: philosophical somaesthetics, a discipline proposed by Richard Shusterman in 1999, and performance studies, remarkable for its current expansion. The studies of performativity and performance, which originate in the philosophy of language and theater studies, began in the mid-1960s to permeate a host of other disciplines. Morphing into performance studies in the 1970s, they also drew inspiration from cognate domains, such as anthropology, cultural studies, sociology, ethnography, psychology, cognitive science, and neurolinguistics. This interdisciplinary development—described as the performative turn—is now in full swing, spreading not only within humanities, but also far beyond. However, performance studies has also a tradition reaching back to the nineteenth century. Its key term, “performance,” comes from John Austin’s theory of performatives; and it has now been used for more than fifty years in a number of contexts ranging from theater studies to anthropology. But the meaning of the term “performance” is constantly changing and expanding in various directions. Today, primary subjects of performance studies are aspects of performativity, agency and acting, both on stage and in everyday life. At the same time, the research done in this broad field combines diverse methods and methodologies without forcing them into a single perspective.

Jon McKenzie, one of the most celebrated advocates of the performative turn, predicts that, in terms of the organization of knowledge in the twenty-first century, the idea of performance will replace the idea of discipline, which is a legacy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (2001, 176). McKenzie’s hypothesis—locating the studies of various types of performances and performativity at the center of disciplines that have an ambition to explain the human condition in post-modern reality—is certainly a daring prediction. But contemporary performance studies began modestly. In his *Drama: Between Poetry and Performance* W. B. Worthen

(2010) associates their rise with the resistance to the New-Critical—that is, purely literary, or textual—approach to the drama as exercised by theoreticians and practitioners of theater. To Worthen, thus, the field of performance studies was formed as a result of the conflict between, on the one hand, literary studies emphasizing the drama's textual dimension and, on the other hand, the theoretical approaches that focused on performance that was unrelated to any previously scripted form.

Born of this discord, performance studies found their place among the intellectual tendencies that challenged the long-lasting supremacy of textuality in the humanities and social sciences. Theoreticians and practitioners worked to find alternative models of cognition to instate in the place of frameworks which had been predominantly linguistic. The linguistic paradigm—established at the beginning of the 1960s with recourse to Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy and to Ferdinand de Saussure's work in the field of linguistics, and under the dominance of structuralism, poststructuralism and deconstructionism—reasserted its authority within sociology, anthropology, and history. From the radically textualist perspective, reality was considered as mediated exclusively by language, unstable, indeterminate, flickering, a matter only of the games played within various discourses. The world came to be seen as a text: human experience was reduced to a story, the logic of history became replaced by the appeal of rhetorical figures—such are the four master tropes of Hayden White's historiography—and the self, after Richard Rorty, assumed the shapes of varying sets of vocabularies, descriptions and re-descriptions.

However, this tendency was also counterpointed by the recognition—appearing in various fields—that neither the world nor selfhood were texts and contexts all the way down. Resistance against body-mind dualism within neuroscience, inaugurated by Antonio Damasio's works (beginning with his *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* published in 1994), has been long rising also within humanities. The counterturn in the humanities stressed the significance of corporeality and proposed to break out of the prison-house of ideality into the physical world. Both in linguistics and in philosophy, the textualist, narrative pattern was eventually deemed insufficient. In linguistics, the view of language as a site of ideality has been challenged by cognitivists who argue that we do not explain the surrounding reality by relying solely on a narrative paradigm. The cognitivists have queried whether and how language—and, even more importantly, thought—can be a product of corporeality and of our embodied existence in the physical world. Mark Johnson and George Lakoff, the major luminaries of this approach, have

sought to answer this question by exploring metaphors underlying the ways of sense-making; and they have shown that meaning arises as something visceral, that is starts with the way we orient ourselves in the surrounding physical environment.

In philosophy, for that matter, Rorty's stance has been challenged by Richard Shusterman's emphasis on the embodied self. Shusterman questions the assumption that the human subject connects with the external world only through stories and acquires self-understanding exclusively in the course of interpretation. Understanding, to Shusterman, is a category broader than that of interpretation; and the self becomes significant if restored to its somatic dimension, rather than only re-storied. It is performance studies and Shusterman's somaesthetics—a discipline which, as Christopher J. Voparil and John Giordano (2015) state,¹ is a momentous inspiration behind the somatic turn—that the authors of the essays presented in this book engage with. Shusterman defined somaesthetics as a disciplinary proposal in 1999. But substantial philosophical explorations of the embodied (aesthetic) experience can be found in his *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (1992), culminating, as of today, in *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (2008) and *Thinking Through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics* (2010). Over nearly twenty years, somaesthetics has exceeded disciplinary boundaries by growing into a broad discourse and attracting scholars from the realms of both humanities and sciences. At present, it provides a framework for combining philosophical, literary-critical and theoretical concerns with the findings of neurophysiology, feminist studies, studies of affectivity, and theories of reception and performance.

In the most general terms, the point of convergence for somaesthetics and performativity is their stressing the agency of the embodied and sentient human self. Admittedly, in their preoccupation with the embodied *esse*, the explorations presented in this book reflect Michel Foucault's concern with disciplining discourses, even his apprehension of their punishing and limiting impact on the body. But, on the other hand, they share Judith Butler's conviction that the body can become a site of rebellion against such discursive and textual regimes; and they also engage with Shusterman's hope that the recognition of the implications of the body and corporeal dimension within the humanities will have ameliorative effects, liberating the self from discursive paradigms and empowering the embodied human self to alter them. This latter assumption—of the human subject's agency—has, among its corollaries, the supposition that as the texts influence the reader on a somatic level, so

the sentient reader can affect the meaning of the text. The relationship is one of reciprocity.

The authors of the essays brought together in this book explore the question of agency through its various manifestations. They examine the construction of literary characters, with the emphasis on the representation of their corporeality and affectivity. They look into the problem of the formation of the literary canon as enacted rather than established, and into literary history as retold rather than re-written. And they focus on the problems of literary reception, considering it on the visceral, physical level. In these explorations the reading subjects are considered to be capable of shedding their passive attitudes, viewed as actors and performers involved in literary communication. The reader, then, is recognized neither as a function of the text nor, as Derek Attridge has it, the archive of idioculture (or the individual version of the culture as a whole), but as a sentient psychosomatic subject: an embodied active self. In *Literature, Performance, and Somaesthetics*, the agency of this embodied sentient self is regarded as it is outlined in philosophy—in somaesthetics and in the ethics of emotions—and as it manifests itself in these arts which follow Dewey's call to abandon the shelter of the museum glass case. It should be noted that art, as approached in this collection of studies, is energy and, as in Richard Shusterman's (post-Deweyan) philosophical reflection, a distinctly emotive and somatic experience. It is also a locus where the self can be liberated from its discursive confinement and the sphere where the audience's taboos and prejudices can be exposed and challenged.

Thus, by stressing agency and the embodiment of the human subject—in philosophy, the arts, and literature—the essays in this volume engage with the performative and somatic turns to counterpoint the textual tradition. But providing a counterpoint to textualism does not mean opposing it blindly. The essays collected in *Literature, Performance, and Somaesthetics: Studies in Agency and Embodiment* acknowledge the inspiration of performance studies and follow the somaesthetic proposal to attend more closely to the world stretching beyond the text; nevertheless, they also rely on the interpretative strategies developed under the aegis of structuralism and poststructuralism. Such inclusiveness seems to be suggested by Richard Schechner. Whilst Schechner warns that literature and performance are fundamentally different phenomena and that, as such, they require different research methods, he also asserts that the fundamental feature of performance studies is their openness to other fields. The essays presented in this book—discussing the problems of narrativity and performativity, and textuality and corporeality as closely

connected—demonstrate this openness. They stress the embodied and agent status of the human subject in philosophy, underline the corporeal and affective appeal of art, and highlight the performative and somaesthetic aspects of literary texts and readings.

The book is divided into three parts concerned with philosophy and art (I), literary reception (II), and literary interpretations (III). Part One opens with Urszula Lisowska's study of performance and perception considered in the light of Martha Nussbaum's ethical philosophy. Her essay stresses art's role in cultivating human emotions. By bringing together Nussbaum's multifarious philosophical concerns—including the theme of political liberalism, the dilemma of plurality and collectiveness, Nussbaum's insistence on the attitudes to the body, her philosophy of emotions, and her position on the function of art—effectively, Lisowska arrives in her discussion of Nussbaum at the point where Shusterman's and Nussbaum's philosophies converge. Martha Nussbaum—like Richard Shusterman, who for that matter revives the Deweyan tradition in philosophy—emphasizes that art should be moved from the stultifying space of a museum into social space and insists on art's capacity to arouse in its recipients a sense of wonder and delight. While considering Nussbaum's moral and aesthetic philosophy in a broader philosophical context, Lisowska finds in it a solution to the dilemma of plurality and collectiveness, which John Rawls, she says, failed to provide. She indicates that Nussbaum offers this solution by applying her variety of the capability approach, insisting, at the same time, on the embodied nature of human experience and on the significance of affectivity. Following Nussbaum, Lisowska juxtaposes the negative feelings of an individual with a sense of gladness which art can evoke: specifically, she contrasts the socially disruptive emotions of shame and disgust, which come from denying the animality of human bodies (anthropodenial), with the emotions of compassion and wonder seen as conducive to a respectful recognition of other humans, of their autonomy and dignity. These positive emotions, she argues, are induced through aesthetic experience; thus art—especially the art performed in the public space—performs a socially meliorative role. Accordingly, in her essay, Lisowska puts an emphasis on the arts involving social participation, such as theater performance and design of public spaces; and she interprets particular projects—including the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Constitution Gardens in Washington and Anish Kapoor's Cloud Gate in Millennium Park in Chicago—by

paying attention to the corporeal and intersubjective aspects of space design.

Alex Ciorogar in his essay “From Somaesthetics to the Stylistics of Existence” is also concerned with the ameliorative function of art. In his paper, Ciorogar brings together two disciplines: on the one hand, he outlines the characteristics and aims of Shusterman’s philosophy, on the other hand, he looks at a branch of studies that has recently arisen within the field opened and outlined with Shusterman’s explorations—Marielle Macé’s *Anthropology of Practices*, or a *Stylistics of Existence*. Their affinity is noted in their approach to the notion of style as embodied and in their engagement with literature. Shusterman uses literary examples when describing various styles of living, which, Ciorogar claims, function as “worksheets” for self-improvement. Literature, on this view, can help us to develop “a sense of harmony” and improve the quality of our interpersonal relations; thus, art inspires life. Macé, in turn, views the act of reading as artistic: she elaborates the theory of the reading practice as an aesthetic process, as a part of the stylistics of existence. Ciorogar compares the two approaches, showing that they come together in their concepts of the non-essentialist, relational self and through their involvement with literature, though they differ in their emphases on the social and individualist aspects of the self, respectively. However, most importantly, Ciorogar seems to suggest, both Shusterman’s somaesthetics and Macé’s stylistics of existence are concerned with the ethical project of shaping the relational self through various stylistic practices, and they both are concerned with finding a correlation between the styles of living, reading and writing, or between soma and text.

While Lisowska’s essay stresses affectivity and corporeality in performative art, and whilst Ciorogar expands on the somatic aspect of style, Konrad Wojnowski engages with a broader problem of returning to physicality. In his “Thermo-performatics: Energy and Performance Studies,” Wojnowski focuses on the idea of energy as the material aspect of communication; and he reinterprets the issue of energy in the sphere of performance studies. By viewing communication, on the one hand, and performance, on the other hand, in terms of energy flow, he proposes to change the understanding of both. His approach is interdisciplinary, also in that it goes beyond the traditional realm of humanities in the direction of hard science. Significantly, Wojnowski offers an overview of the changing emphasis in the realm of hard science: from the affirmation of the physical mode to the assertion of the mathematical abstract model which, he says, leads to the new Platonism. However, he recommends the re-conceptualizing of humanities in terms of physical science dealing with

tangible objects, rather than along the lines proposed in information studies and in computation. The inspiration for his theoretical model of performance and communication comes from the physical, rather than mathematical sphere. Consequently, he claims, there should occur a metaphorical shift in the understanding of performance: a change from the mechanic to the organic metaphor. Wojnowski proposes to explore speech acts in terms of energy flow and with reference to thermodynamics. Specifically, he considers the problem of energy in relation to three other notions—context, system, and energy distribution—and, while analyzing various types of energy-distribution systems, he argues that a particular emphasis should be placed on the examination of the ways of freeing and channelling energy during communication. Thus, Wojnowski underlines the materiality of communication, and proposes that the analysis of the energy flow which takes place in the course of performing and communicating can be useful in performance studies. He proposes to name this type of analysis with the neologism introduced in the title of his essay, “thermo-performatics,” a term encouraging the cooperation of the humanities and sciences, performance studies and physics.

Concerns with physicality, corporeality and performance are creatively employed in the fourth essay in this book, in Sabina Macioszek’s interpretation of Thomas Bernhard’s play *The Ignoramus and the Madman* and of its adaptation as an opera under the same title, composed by Paweł Mykietyn and directed by Krzysztof Warlikowski. Whilst Wojnowski’s essay is preoccupied with the energy-invested materiality of performance, Macioszek’s article—discussing complexities of the literary text, theatrical play, and operas (she also refers to Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, an intertext for *The Ignoramus*)—likewise, explores the ambivalence of the simultaneous ephemerality of voice and its materiality. The essay’s focus is on the character of the diva, “the coloratura machinery,” but it also shows a very dense network of relationships between the characters, themes and genres. Macioszek discusses the problem of patriarchal power wielded over the female artist, the aesthetization of the self and its reduction to an artistic asset (the voice), the consequent disembodiment of the female artist (metaphorically reinforced by the passage in which a male character discusses autopsy, the dissembling of the body) and, finally, the female artist’s rebellion against being limited to her gender role and reified as an object d’art. The two-sided nature of the voice—both a physical fact and immaterial phenomenon—is paralleled in Macioszek’s interpretation by another ambivalence, that of power relations: the female artist is controlled as a diva, but at the same time she controls men through her voice. Macioszek’s interpretation also shows a working paradox: while the opera

as a genre exposes its vulnerability to a critique—for its decline and its exhaustion—simultaneously, it demonstrates its potential and creativity by using its exhaustion imaginatively. In her interpretation of those ambivalences, Macioszek uses notions which capture instabilities: of presence, being and duration, activity and action, disappearance and fading (borrowed from Catherine Clément and Mladen Dollar) and of negative performativity (taken from Joanna Jopek, Bojana Kunst and Judith Halberstam). Having discussed these troubling variabilities in the text, the opera, and the play, Macioszek indicates an interesting parallel between the contemporary plight of the opera and the position of the female artist. Whilst the opera, by exposing its limiting conventions, rebels against the limitation of the genre, the female artist, by employing her disembodiment *ad absurdum* (and against those who require it of her)—by literally disappearing on the stage—rebels against the limitations of her gender role. Thus, in the course of performance and through playing with embodiment and disembodiment, the limitations of both gender and genre are transgressed.

The issues of corporeality and performance are also discussed in “How to Work with the Body—Theory and Practice: Karol Radziszewski’s Works Regarded in the Context of Merleau-Ponty’s Philosophy.” Paulina Tchurzevska regards them as interwoven with the problem of sexual taboo and its appearance in the public space, and as creatively explored in the exhibition *The Prince and the Queens: The Body as an Archive* by Karol Radziszewski, a Polish painter, photographer, video-artist, writer and performer. Tchurzevska’s major focus is on art as performance and on film as documentary. Considering the modes of representing the body in Polish contemporary art, Tchurzevska specifically presents the ways in which Radziszewski’s art enters a dialogue with some of the most significant Polish performers (including Jerzy Grotowski, Ryszard Cieślak, Natalia LL and Ryszard Kisiel). She explores the meaning of art located at the intersection of the artistic, erotic, sexual and social, and outlines the creative ways of experimenting with the altering of perception. Tchurzevska highlights the fact that the exhibition to which she refers, in fact, discloses the ways in which the audience perceives art located in the social space: it *exposes* the dependence of the audience’s response on their prejudices and desires and on social taboos. Thus, like other authors in this book, she stresses the social function of art. As noted in the title, the theoretical background of this essay is constituted by Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy of the body. But Tchurzevska not only views Radziszewski’s art in the light of Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy, she also views this art as both animating and testing the concepts of Merleau-

Ponty's phenomenology of perception and of anti-dualism in the understanding of the self.

The essay closing Part One of *Literature, Performance, and Somaesthetics*, Gloria Luque Moya's "The Mysterious Force of *Duende*: A Dialogue between Federico García Lorca and Richard Shusterman," engages with the idea of heightened emotion, a passion which is moving, stirring, abysmal, tinged with a sense of the daemonic and permeated with an awareness of death. It is the all-encompassing emotion of flamenco. The concept of *duende*, Luque Moya notes, entered the realm of aesthetics in 1933 through a lecture which Federico García Lorca delivered in Buenos Aires. This notion, which Lorca took from the Spanish folklore and transformed into a category of aesthetics, is discussed by Luque Moya in the context of the essay with which Shusterman officially inaugurated his somaesthetics: "Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal" from 1999. The *duende*, in Luque Moya's essay, is probed as an aesthetic category, as a creative force, and as a deeply felt somatic emotion. She explores the idea of *duende* by referring to traditional Spanish songs and Lorca's poems and plays, and with a particular emphasis on the expression of grief and the artistic command of mourning. But she also regards the notion of *duende* within the framework which Shusterman introduced when presenting his project of somaesthetics—through its analytic, pragmatic and practical dimensions.

Part Two of this book—with a particular focus on literary reception, canon, and history—starts with Jarosław Woźniak's essay on "Performance of Narrative Fiction," a comprehensive attempt to bring together the narrative and performative approaches to literature (as suggested in the title) and to combine three domains—performance studies, somaesthetics, and the theory of intersubjectivity—into a rich single interpretative perspective. Woźniak's article moves across the fields of philosophy and literary studies, but it engages most closely with the work of Polish theoreticians: Anna Krajewska's proposal to view writing, reading and interpreting as a dramatic, even theatrical, act, and Arkadiusz Żychliński's idea of fictional narration as *anthropoficton*, a label for stories which help us to understand better what it means to be a human being. For Woźniak, the reader is an embodied and active subject, no longer reduced to a construct, to an "implied" reader of a text, and no longer aloof—but rather viewed as capable of emotionally identifying herself with a literary character. The readers' somatic self-awareness helps them, Woźniak claims, to understand other humans, and hence, to better appreciate literary characters. This latter conviction has its theoretical inspiration in Shusterman's somaesthetics: namely, in his consideration of the idea of

anthropofiction, Woźniak prioritizes the notion of “understanding” over pan-textualist “interpretation,” engages with the anti-Cartesian view of the mind as embodied, and highlights the post-Foucauldian concern with the reader’s agency as opposing what, after Foucault and following Shusterman, he terms “discursive determinism.”

The reader’s experience also remains at the center of Lilla Farmasi’s study of a novel by Don DeLillo. In her “Kinetosis in Don DeLillo’s *The Body Artist*: Tracing the Somatic Experiences of the Reader,” Farmasi explores the material aspect of an aesthetic experience. The essay’s focus is on the physical experience of space, encoded in the literary text and decoded by the readers guided by their own sensorimotor experience. To conceptualize the reader’s bodily experience, in her paper Farmasi combines narratology and cognitive theory: she regards bodily physical experience of space—pre-conceptual and non-propositional—as reflected not only at the level of metaphor, but also, and indeed predominantly, at the level of plot. Deploying cognitive narratology in her approach to *The Body Artist*, she demonstrates how DeLillo’s narrative technique—relying for its effect on many-leveled narrative, fragmentary accounts, and the blurring of the border between the imaginary and the retrospective—reflects a confusion typical of the state of trauma. DeLillo’s main character, suffering from trauma after a loss, is confused in body and mind, which shows in the disruptions and fragmentation of the plot. But, then, Farmasi argues, if the plot reflects the confused mental and sensory state of the main character, it also affects the reader in a sensory way. It creates in the reader a mental state equivalent to the bodily feeling of *kinetosis*, a feeling of physical discomfort and unease evoked by conflicting sensory data. Thus, to Farmasi, reading is a process of interaction which happens at the pre-conceptual level, with the reader affected not only by metaphors but also by the structure of the plot. Interpretation, consequently, depends not only on the logical conclusions but also on the senso-motor inferences. In this way, the reader’s body participates viscerally in the sense-making.

In its concern with the somatic response to art, Zuzanna Kozłowska’s essay closely connects with Farmasi’s paper. However, while Farmasi’s focus is on the sensorimotor feeling which all humans share, Kozłowska’s point of reference is the more exclusive experience of synesthesia: that which is effected by the mingling of the senses, or by the crossing of the sensory pathways. In her article, Kozłowska provides examples of various instances of synesthetic appreciation of art (for instance, by considering the emotional appeal of alliteration). She also outlines the features of the somatic synesthetic experience. On her account, it involves hyper-

sensuality, heightened sensitivity to formal properties of artworks, and an accompanying feeling of approval or aversion. Engaging in her study with the sensual, proprioceptive, “syn-aesthetic” experience of art—and acknowledging inspiration from neuroaesthetics and somaesthetics—she claims that the visceral experience of art should not only receive more attention but also be systematically studied within the field she proposes to call a somato-poetics of reading. Kozłowska believes that a somato-poetics of reading would provide a way of enlivening, or “reinventing” the traditional reader-response criticism. It would also lead, she states, to the redefining of the concept of beauty. Possibly Kozłowska’s hypothesis about the general, or universal, mechanisms underlying any aesthetic judgment may lead to a heated and protracted debate between the essentialists and non-essentialists, but in its far-reaching proposals, her article also reflects the energy of the expanding field.

The essay by Joanna Maj offers yet another perspective on the somatic reception of literature. It engages with this specific response to literature which results in the outlining of literary history and establishment of the literary canon. But, significantly, in the literary history that Maj examines—Stanisław Bereś’s *Polish Literary History in Conversations: 20th-21st Centuries*—the view of literary history is presented as embodied. Bereś’s history of Polish contemporary literature includes transcriptions of interviews recorded for the Polish television; thus, in a sense, it is a transcript of oral literary history, if such a genre could be said to exist. This possibility Maj explores. She investigates the aspects of performative literary historiography by focusing on conversations with two authors, Czesław Miłosz and Kazimierz Brandys, and regards the performative significance of the pictures included in Bereś’s *History*, and of the written record of gaps, silences, and repetitions which occurred in the course of the dialogues. But she also indicates the elements of the originally videoed interviews, which could be noted by the viewers, but are lost to the readers of the text: gesture, pose, facial expression, prosodic qualities of words, their tone and tune (Miłosz sings). The history of literature in a dialogic form, Maj indicates, relies heavily on personal insight and on anecdotes recounted by the speakers; it also causes an affective engagement in the viewer. But, most of all, it reveals the intersubjective and performative character of literary tradition—literary history is created during a meeting of two embodied individuals, and it is invested not only with their ideas but also with their emotions.

The discussion of the embodied and dialogic nature of literary history is extended in this volume into the consideration of the literary canon viewed in the performative context. This problem is central to Aleksander

Trojanowski's consideration of Ricardo Piglia's novel *Artificial Respiration*. Trojanowski's approach to the question of the literary canon, as revealed in his reading of Piglia, also ties in with Jarosław Woźniak's insistence on the reader's agency and the intersubjective nature of the act of reading and writing (which appears in the essay opening Part Two of this book). A literary text, in Trojanowski's interpretation of Piglia's novel, is an integral element of the social world, and it can cause things to happen. Besides, it is a locus of experience: a place where the experience of the other can be unjustly confined, but then, it can be also recreated and restored. The reading of literature, in turn, is a shared performance rather than a silent perusal. Trojanowski, relating himself to Eric Hobsbawm's theory of tradition formation, and viewing the novel from the perspective of performance studies, shows how the narratives of literary history (the canons) are established and how they can be reformulated and undermined in the course of a subversive act of dialogical reading. Considering *Artificial Respiration*, Trojanowski demonstrates the mechanisms of exclusion, appropriation, and identity construction that were employed in the canon formation in Argentina under the military regime. Specifically, he explores the mechanisms represented in the novel: the exclusion of the "barbarians," the romanticizing of the gaucho, and the two contrasted projects of a new language formation in the works of Roberto Arlt and Leopold Lugones. His essay not only shows how Piglia reveals the ideologies underpinning canon construction but also how Piglia-the-author becomes a performer by staging for the reader the experience of living under the military regime, rather than by merely describing it. But Trojanowski also stresses the dialogic nature of literary history as suggested by the very form of Piglia's novel: he emphasizes that the novel comprises letters, diaries and conversations, and that, from these various forms, the readers of the novel, as well as its protagonist, must unravel the meaning of the literary canon. This meaning, Trojanowski's essay suggests, is not there, written down for the readers, but is performed in front of them.

Part Three of this volume—featuring literary interpretations which, in their concern with the soma, go beyond the problem of reception—opens with András Berze's study of staged violence. Embedded in philosophy, and drawing on the conclusions of cognitive theories and the studies of theatricality, Berze's essay turns to Thomas Harris's novel *The Red Dragon*, its film adaptation by Brett Ratner, and the television series *Hannibal*. Besides violence, its subject is empathy and the lack of it. Empathy in Berze's essay is not a psychological aptitude, but a theatrical faculty. It is an ability to imagine oneself (or "theatricalize" oneself) in the

body of the other. The imaginary protagonist of Harris's novel, and of its adaptations, in whom such empathy is absent, is described as a "theatrical serial killer." The concept of theatricality is central to Berze's considerations. After Samuel Weber, Berze reasserts that, paradoxically, while the popular appeal of the theater seems to be declining, the idea of theatricality—as a way to describe reality—is on the rise. Thus, for the purpose of his analysis, Berze uses reformulated concepts of the audience and stage. He deploys Benjamin's idea of a "grouping," stressing the non-institutionalized, accidental nature of spectatorship; and he conceptualizes the notion of the stage as any environment in which an intervention has taken place. Whilst the idea of empathy in Berze's essay is understood as an ability to "theatricalize" oneself in the body of the other, it is also explained within the frameworks of phenomenology and cognition theory. The Heideggerian Being-with, Berze says, is insufficient—a quality of detached spectatorship; only Being-in-the-world can provide the ground for empathy. Empathy, then, depends on human beings' shared corporeality. Heidegger's terms are used by Berze in discriminating between different types of experience. The killer's existence is described as "Being-with," whereas the "Being-in-the-world," or an empathic sharing with others of his experience of the body as the source of agency, remains beyond his sensibility. Body and corporeality, Berze insists, following Mark Johnson's theory of cognition, also structure our cognitive patterns. Mind is embodied—and only as such does it participate in the world. In his analysis of Harris's protagonist and his motivation, Berze argues that the killings can be viewed as resulting from the Cartesian mistake. His essay, then, remains firmly embedded in the tradition of critiquing the Cartesian split between the body and mind. Berze sees this split as enacted in Harris's imaginary killer's decision to murder his victims and to re-animate their bodies as a puppeteer would. According to the killer's criminal logic, whose workings Berze persuasively explains, the victims are only inanimate corpses to be arranged as the audience watching the spectacle of the killer's (Dolarhyde's) transformation. Their living "souls"—or their will and agency—Berze explains, are seen as separable from their bodies, to be removed and then replaced by the tricks of Dolarhyde's aesthetic inventiveness. Berze not only studies the protagonist's motivation but also outlines the stages in which violence is enacted. He ends his essay by placing his conclusions in meta-perspective: the readers of the novel and the audience watching the film, he claims, are violated, too. Violence initiated by displaced empathy (the killer's sociopathy) spreads through the channels of extra-sensitive empathy (the detective's) and normal empathy (the audience's and the readers'). But

Harris's novel and the films, he notes, also critique the mass-media reliance on violence for commercial success.

The concept of theatricality is also employed by Matthew Biberman in an exploration of the combined notions of affectivity and the self in his "Archeologies of Affect: Shakespeare's Phantasm of Love in *Romeo and Juliet*." Engaging with Frederic Jameson's idea of affect, Biberman explains that, to Jameson, the "spiritualized" body of the pre-modern epoch is replaced by the "affective body" of the modern era. To Jameson, as stressed by Biberman, the rise of affectivity depends on the "waning," or "repression," of the spiritual; affect, then, occupies the empty space from which the spiritual has been removed, in fact, relegated to the realm of the purely theological or metaphysical. Hence, Biberman stresses, affect is synonymous with a lack of the spiritual, or with melancholia. Biberman suggests that the postmodern self, following the Jamesonian modern affective self, can be seen as resulting from the return of the repressed: the melancholic taking the place of the spiritual. The emphasis in his article, however, falls on this stage which emerges between the Jamesonian epochs of the spiritual and affective selves. Biberman posits that there exists an intermediary phase between these two periods: between the epoch which proffered the spiritualized body and that which produced the affective self, comes the one which features a form of embodiment he proposes to call theatricalized or performative body. Biberman expounds his hypothesis of the theatrical body and self by analyzing passages from Shakespeare and referring to Marsilio Ficino. He posits that within the sphere of the theater—with the individual that is exposed, staged, isolated ("monadic"), and towering above the community of spectators—the "waning of the spiritual" was delayed. In Shakespeare, for that reason, Biberman notes, the sensibility is still pre-modern. The Shakespearean self represents an intermediary hybrid, its spiritual aspects being rendered in a strikingly physical way. This midway stage is illustrated by Biberman in his examination of the concept of love in Shakespeare, when he shows that this apparently spiritual state is understood with recourse to concepts and paradigms that render love as a quasi-material, semi-physiological phenomenon and that nowadays might occur in the discourses of optics and neuroscience.

The idea of performance in Katarzyna Lisowska's "The Re-evaluation of Female and Queer Bodies in Selected Works of Contemporary Polish Literature" is explored with reference to gender identity. The literary-analytical focus in her essay is on contemporary Polish authors, whilst the theoretical background for her considerations is derived from the work of Judith Butler and Richard Shusterman. She engages with Butler's concept

of gender performativity, convinced that by highlighting the performative aspect of gender identity, literature participates in the process of liberating individuals from normative and confining social and ideological paradigms. She also invokes Shusterman's somaesthetics with its emphasis on the cultivation of body consciousness, which leads to the deepening of self-understanding and advances self-improvement. In her paper, she reads works representing various genres, but connected through their preoccupation with the uncovering and disputing of the ostracized and downgraded position of those whose corporeality does not represent an ideological mainstream. In particular, she discusses selected works of Polish contemporary literature—including a short story by Szczepan Twardoch, Ewa Schilling's novels, and Izabela Filipiak's drama—to expose the ways in which they undermine and reinterpret the dominating narratives of the body and the images these narrative impose, thus re-evaluating the marginalized corporeality. Lisowska concludes her interpretive-theoretical essay by stressing literature's socially transformative role: she notes that, by naming marginalized phenomena and by materializing them in discourse, literature participates in the transformation of images and beliefs that dominate in a given culture and society.

In the essay presented by Iulia Maria Rădac the idea of performativity is, once again, probed within the perspective of somaesthetics. Rădac investigates the complex relationship between soma and text or, more specifically, the way in which Mircea Cărtărescu's prose reduces "the distance between the body and the letter." Rădac's essay has an important informative role in introducing the work of contemporary Romanian theoreticians and artists into the realm of somaesthetic discourse. But this essay also offers an analysis of Mircea Cărtărescu's *Travesti (Disguise)*, with particular attention paid to the representations of the body, of somatic experience, and of the correlation between the somatic experience described in *Disguise* and the structure of the text. In her reading of Cărtărescu's work, Rădac stresses an interesting paradox: she observes that even if Cărtărescu focuses on his character's mental states, then, by deploying visceral metaphors, he draws the reader's attention to the character's corporeal status. Rădac studies the narrative tactics in this novel and shows that, effectively, its narrator functions as a performer who uses various strategies to seduce the reader. She characterizes these narrative tactics and strategies by referring to the work of contemporary Romanian author and theoretician Gheorghe Crăciun; and after Crăciun, she calls them somatographic.

The essay closing this book, Ágnes Bató's "Unimmortal Men and the Body of Death: The Somatic Experience of Death in Milton's *Paradise*

Lost”—in demonstrating the sense of corporeality as heightened by the awareness of death—echoes the theme of Gloria Luque Moya’s “The Mysterious Force of *Duende*” (from Part One). However, while Luque Moya speaks of corporeality and the awareness of death as the aspects of the vital force of *duende*, Bató, considering Christian theology in Milton, highlights embodiment as necessary for the overcoming of death. In her essay, Bató discusses the four kinds of death in Milton’s writings (in *Paradise Lost* and the prose work *A Treatise on Christian Doctrine*): the death of innocence (or guiltiness), the spiritual death of Satan, the corporeal decline and death of Adam and Eve, and death as eternal damnation after the Judgment Day. The third kind, then, is bodily. But Bató notes the great complexity in Milton’s rendering of corporeality and death, which cannot be exhausted through this fourfold paradigm. For instance, she observes that sin and death in Milton’s work are not only abstract entities but also, as epic characters, corporeal beings; they are not only allegorical personification of univocal concepts, but characters—such as a personal vice and the death overcoming an individual—partaking in the embodied human experience. In this respect, Milton’s epic cosmology is also compounded by the fact that, in Christian theology, corporeality and death are signs of both sin and redemption. Indeed, corporeality is inalienable from the Economy of Christian Redemption: Christian theology and the Bible speak of the God who assumed a human body, died in the body and was risen in the body, thus overcoming mortality. If death comes to humans in the form of the dying body, so Redemption is delivered through the corporeal death of the sinless Redeemer. Significantly, in Milton, as Bató notes, the only figure that remains beyond the Economy of salvation is Satan. A purely intellectual, spiritual being, Milton’s Satan is incorporeal.

The aim of this book, if it may be restated, is to return literature to the physical world of corporeal beings and to stress, beside the activity of an artist, the agency of the reader and of the art recipient. Then the question of agency appears as equal in importance to the problems of corporeality and embodiment. The contributors to this book read and “performed” their essays during the International Conference at the Faculty of Letters of the University of Wrocław in December, 2014. While showing a keen interest in performance studies and somaesthetics, the authors of these essays bring in, at the same time, the expertise gained in their primary fields of research. They draw ideas from philosophy, musicology, literary theory and cultural studies; they venture into psychology and hard science; and they concern themselves with various literary genres and forms, including epic literature, lyrical poetry, tragedy, the experimental novel, thrillers,

literary history, theological treatises, documentary, flamenco and opera. They also represent various national backgrounds: Hungary, Poland, Romania, Spain, and the United States. But, as they came to Wrocław, in 2014, they discussed their shared concerns with embodiment, agency and affectivity, seeking ways to correlate soma, text and performance and to explore the physical aspect of art perception. And while they talked, they tried to adjust their vocabularies and to outline the field in the humanities where the three disciplines can meet and where literary studies can benefit from the approaches offered by performance studies and philosophical somaesthetics.

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Notes

¹ Voparil and Giordano's article is an omnibus review of Richard Shusterman's *Thinking Through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); *Shusterman's Pragmatism: Between Literature and Somaesthetics*. Ed. by Dorota Koczanowicz and Wojciech Małecki (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2012); and Wojciech Małecki's *Embodying Pragmatism: Richard Shusterman's Philosophy and Literary Theory* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010).

PART I

ENACTING PHILOSOPHY, PERFORMING ART

