COGNITIVE APPROACHES to EARLY MODERN SPANISH LITERATURE

Edited by ISABEL JAÉN & JULIEN JACQUES SIMON
Cognition and Poetics

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CHAPTER 6

A Mindful Audience: Embodied Spectatorship in Early Modern Madrid

ELIZABETH M. CRUZ PETERSEN

Madrid’s first permanent public theaters or corrales, Corral de la Cruz (1579) and Corral del Príncipe (1583), presented a unique architecture and organization that very much influenced how spectators from diverse social backgrounds experienced drama. Unlike the playhouses of Paris, the Théâtre de l’Hôtel de Bourgogne and the Théâtre du Marais, which were built in a converted indoor tennis court, and the English playhouses that were either custom-built or used converted buildings, like churches or inns with yards, the corral’s stage, adapted from a courtyard framed by blocks of houses, intimately connected the representation to the owners of the surrounding buildings, some of whom were also residents. These owners opened windows in chambers to accommodate paying viewers from their houses, as in the case of a don Rodrigo de Herrera y Ribera, who requested authorization to break a bedroom wall for a window to the Corral del Príncipe (Shergold, Los corrales 16). At times, these windows served as a gateway to the rooftop for unauthorized viewing of the comedias by servants or young people. Owners also added rejás [grilled windows] and aposentos [boxes], which were elaborately decorated rooms located in their homes. Similarly, they converted the attic space on the fourth floor of the buildings to theater boxes called desvanes for additional observation space. Eventually, more benches and entrances were also incorporated to the corral to further accommodate audiences.

The structure of the corral made it possible for all classes to share in the theatrical experience, although from different vantage points. The
ground floor or pit housed spectators from high and low economic classes—young noblemen and mosqueteros (similar to England’s groundlings). The platform, which resembled the orchestra of the French and Italian theaters, did not obstruct the view of the spectator standing in the pit or patio, or the view of those sitting on the gradas (stands attached to the lateral walls of the corral) (Shergold, History 411–12; Allen, Reconstruction 20). Literary critics, and at times playwrights, sat on taburetes [stools or seats] for a better view of the comedia.¹ The clergy who frequented the corrales sat at the west end of the third floor in a separate section called the tertulia, signaling their distance from the rest. Melveena McKendrick points out: “Friars and lesser clerics crowded in the tertulia although attendance for them was in theory forbidden by a succession of unheeded edicts” (Theatre 193–4). The cazuelas, balconies or partially grilled boxes located on the second floor facing the stage, were designated for women of lower social and economic classes since they were required to sit separately from the men. The design and mutable structure of the corrales described earlier—coupled with the unstable economic, social, and political circumstances—contributed to the natural evolution of the Spanish playhouse. This dynamic context led to an increasingly complex experience for the spectators, who responded in a variety of ways to the theater by embodying the performances in the physical space of the corral.

Within cognitive literary studies, we find multiple approaches to theater and performance centered on “embodied spectatorship.”² Here, I will focus on the embodied experience of the audience that attended the corrales in Madrid by framing my discussion within Richard Shusterman’s somaesthetics, a discipline of theory and practice³ that offers an inclusive

1. See McKendrick, Theatre 197.
2. See McConachie and Hart’s Performance and Cognition (2006) and McConachie’s Engaging Audiences (2008), as well as, more recently, Shaughnessy’s Affective Performance (2013) and Johnson, Sutton, and Tribble’s Embodied Cognition and Shakespeare’s Theatre (2014). In the context of early modern Spanish performance, see the work of Connor-Swietlicki, “Bridging the Performance Gap” and “Embodying Rape & Violence.”
3. Somaesthetics was founded by Shusterman in the late 1990s, as a new philosophical discipline concerned not only with the body’s external representation, but also with its lived experience (“Somaesthetics” 302). Shusterman’s somaesthetics is rooted in ancient philosophy on bodily care. It is the first systematic framework structured for somatic care or enhancement of it, useful in examining art and performance. Somaesthetics includes feelings and insight, creative thinking, ethical action, and communicative expressions or physical signs. It offers pragmatic practices as a means to improve embodied experiences and somatic awareness: how you perceive your body and how you perceive others.

[112] Embodied Cognition and Performance
and innovative understanding of the relationship between mind and body. The term “somaesthetics” is the combination of “soma,” a body that is something more than flesh and blood, something that lives and is lived by, and “aesthetics,” a sensorial perception that links the mind and the emotions to the sense of beauty (Shusterman, *Body* 1). There are three basic branches of somaesthetics. First, analytic somaesthetics examines the impact of epistemological, ontological, and sociopolitical issues relating to “bodily perceptions and practices and their function in our knowledge and construction of reality” (*Performing Live* 141); second, pragmatic somaesthetics not only presupposes the theoretical branch but prescribes various methods to enhance somatic awareness as a means of changing or remaking the body; and third, practical somaesthetics applies somatic awareness and experiential embodiment for “heightened somatic sensibility and mastery” (153), used in practices such as Zen meditation, yoga, and the Feldenkrais Method.4

Shusterman further divides pragmatic somaesthetics—the specific branch that constitutes the framework of my essay—into three dimensions: representational, experiential, and performative. Representational somaesthetics orients itself toward external appearance, dealing with the body’s surface forms. On the other hand, experiential somaesthetics emphasizes the aesthetic quality of the body’s inner experience. These two dimensions are not mutually exclusive; instead, they work interdependently. The third dimension, performative somaesthetics, concentrates primarily on improving inner and/or outer strength, well-being, or skill. Depending on the goal—whether for external appearances or inner senses of power and skill—the performative discipline may be linked to or assimilated into the representational or experiential dimensions. Furthermore, all three dimensions of pragmatic somaesthetics interconnect with both theory and practice, enhancing “not only our discursive knowledge of the body but also our lived somatic experience and performance” (*Performing Live* 21). On a sociopolitical level, somaesthetics brings the understanding of the encoded somatic habits imposed by hierarchies of power and enforced by laws and social norms; for example, how a woman should walk, speak, and so forth (*Performing Live* 140). In this sense, Shusterman contends with Foucault that the “repressive identities that are encoded and sustained in our bodies . . . can be challenged by alternative somatic practices” (Shusterman, “Somaesthetics and Care” 535).

4. The Feldenkrais Method focuses on the relationship between movement and thought, using movement to teach one how to improve and maximize one’s daily motor functions.
As I will demonstrate, a somaesthetics approach to Spanish comedia is particularly useful to discuss how human beings engage in the early modern theatrical experience, to account for the dynamic interactions that occur among those embodied minds in the physical and social environment of the corral. First, it allows us to go beyond discourse-based comedia studies, which tend to neglect or do not pay sufficient attention to the performative-experiential aspects of drama. Second, conducting this discussion in the context of Shusterman's pragmatic dimension of somaesthetics provides us with the methodological framework to both systematize and further understand the embodiment aspects of the theatrical experience, particularly those related to socio-normative aspects and how individuals of certain social groups push, as audience members, the limits of prescribed behavior. Although I have chosen to focus on this pragmatic dimension for the purpose of placing spectatorship at the core of this discussion, the essay will evidence the permeability among all the dimensions outlined by Shusterman. Theory, norm, representation, experience, and skill are inseparable elements of the early modern theatrical experience in the same manner that actorship, spectatorship, and environment are intrinsically linked and cannot be considered in isolation.

MINDFUL SOMATIC PRACTICES IN THE SPANISH CORRAL

In early modern Madrid, theatergoers practiced a form of somaesthetics, playing an active role in the live experience of the playhouse. Spectators exercised an embodied aesthetics by merging their own experiences with representational forms such as attire, mannerisms, and expressions of feeling they adopted from actors and fellow playgoers they observed in the corrales: “The spectators not only watch persons acting in front of them, but are also aware of the other members of the audience around them. Personal experience becomes embedded in a triangular relationship between oneself, the other spectators and the performers” (Sauter 174). Hence, the theater is not only about watching the performance; it is about being in the space (both physical and social), where playgoers become active participants, actively engaging in the events on and off-stage.

As Evelyn Tribble reminds us, “the design of a physical environment influences how agents behave within it. . . . In the case of the early modern theater, the most important element of the environment was the playhouse itself” (142). This is particularly relevant in the case of Madrid's

5. See also Burningham and Reed in this volume.
playhouses, which resembled a melting pot of heterogeneous elements, all of which conspired to intensify the aesthetic experience. The design of the corral was meant to separate the classes and the sexes, reflecting the seventeenth-century Spanish society. Ironically, however, the topography of the theater enabled the uninhibited vociferation from lower classes, which ultimately influenced the plays' direction and success. The heterogeneous nature of the comedia audience influenced changes in the theater space as well—for example, adding windows for more viewing of comedias, as mentioned earlier, or at times adding gradas, or side benches, in order to accommodate women spectators when the cazuelas were full. The manager of the corral optimized the space of the cazuela by doubling the seating, ergo making it amiable to larger groups. In fact, Jonathan Thacker notes that "there were times when women started queuing at dawn for the seats at the front of the cazuela for the afternoon's performance" (127), as perception from the first or last row would differ immensely. Interestingly, the number of women frequenting the corrales at times surpassed the 350 public spaces available to them for seating, especially if one considers playwright Juan de Zabaleta's observation of an attendant known as an apretador [pusher] packing as many female spectators as possible into the cazuela (119). These women, having full view of the actors on stage, exercised somatic control by voicing their disapproval and by banging their keys against the railings or throwing lemon peels at the performers, regardless of social norms that advocated the practice of passive behavior from women. As McKendrick points out, female spectators exerted "a degree of unsupervised freedom that released them from the traditional polarized categories of virtuous woman (silent, reticent, passive, house-bound) and whore" ("Breaking the Silence" 23). In other words, the parameters of the entire playhouse permitted a change in status or an ambiguous zone in terms of behavior and social decorum. Similar to the women in the cazuela, the mosqueteros had a better view of the comedias than most of those sitting in the aposentos or gradas. The close proximity

6. On the socioeconomic composition of the theatrical audience in early modern Madrid, see Albrecht; and Fischer-Lichte and Riley.
7. See Granja's study, "Sin los pies en la cazuela."
8. Franciscan friar Francisco Ortiz Lucio's devotional works preached: "There is nothing more gracious in the eyes of God and man than silent women, friends of enclosure, cloistering, and withdrawal" (Lugares fol. 5r; trans. Pink de Backe! 19).

Similarly, Fray Luis de León insisted that as a norm, women "must always practice silence" (71). According to Nancy LaGrecia, women were considered "inherently simple and impulsive creature[s] prone to laziness who [were] to be kept enclosed, busily tending to the economy of the household" (7), a stark contrast to the freedom women exercised in the theater.
to the stage permitted them to voice their likes and dislikes more directly with the actors, thus exerting control over the plays. In 1690, José Alcázar described the groundlings as “los sastres, los zapateros, los cocheros, los litereros y otros semejantes, que por el ruido que meten se llaman 'mosqueteros'” (237) ["tailors, shoemakers, coachmen, sedan chair carriers and the like, who, because of the noise they make, are called mosqueteros”].

Jodi Campbell remarks that a play’s success or failure oftentimes depended on audience reception, especially that of the mosqueteros, who verbally and physically attacked the actors on stage with “a torrent of insults, rotten fruit, and any other objects on hand” (Monarchy 40). The noble classes sitting in the aposentos that were located in the homes framing the sides of the stage did not enjoy the same level of direct engagement, as it was more difficult for them to follow a play (either visually or aurally). However, regardless of the audiences’ social status or seating arrangements, “everyone from illiterate poor to the cultured and wealthy” found ways to view the comedias (McKendrick, Theatre 196). As I argue here, the corral’s space served as an impetus for spectators to become active participants in the world of theater. In sharp contrast to passive observation, the corral’s playgoers responded to the theater through physical awareness, employing somaesthetic practices that empowered them.

**REPRESENTATIONAL SOMAESTHETICS**

The exercise of altering the body’s external form and cultivating habits of certain individuals or groups of people to comply with or diverge from social norms, a form of representational somaesthetics, played an important role in seventeenth-century Spain. During the early modern period, many treatises and devotional works regarding social decorum circulated in Spain. In addition to Juan Luis Vives’ *De institutione feminae christiana* [Of the Instruction of the Christian Woman] (1523) and Fray Luis de León’s *La perfecta casada* [The Perfect Wife] (1583), treatises such as Francisco de Osuna’s *Norte de los estados* [The North Star of Ranks] (1531) and

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9. All translations from Spanish in this essay are mine, unless indicated otherwise.
10. As opposed to the corrales, court theaters and street theater in the plazas had different agendas. McKendrick writes: “The crucial difference between court and public theatre, however, lay in the nature of the occasion. In the presence of the monarch, the audience observed rather than participated, and observed in an atmosphere of formality and silence quite foreign to the corrales” (Theatre 224). In court theaters, the royal family was “the prime object of attention.” For more information on the space of the street and court theater, see also Rull Fernández; and Greer.
Antonio de Guevara’s *Letra para recien casados* [Letter to Newlyweds] (1524) advised their readers on proper dress codes and habits. Moreover, sumptuary laws were put in place to control dress. At a time when treatises of behavior and dress code prescriptions were emphasized for common citizens’ social decorum, it was also a matter of importance on stage. For example, in 1615, a decree was issued prohibiting women actors from dressing provocatively, which included dressing as a man (Bravo Villasante 152).

A representational aspect of theater could also be found in the actors’ costumes, which captured the spectators’ attention. Seventeenth-century theater treatises emphasized the importance of the costume to match the proper social status and age of the characters. For José Pellicer de Tovar, “la gala y el adorno en los que la representan es elocuencia muda que escuchan los ojos” (226) [“the actors’ dress and adornment is mute eloquence heard by the eyes”]. Alonso López Pinciano established this rule early in his treatise on the process of acting: “En la persona, después de considerado el estado, se debe considerar la edad, porque claro está que otro ornato y atavío o vestido conviene al príncipe que al siervo, y otro, al mozo que al anciano” (500) [“After considering the social state of the character, you should consider the age, because clearly the movement and attire or dress of a prince is different than that of a servant, as well as that of a young person is different than that of an elder”]. In 1690, José Alcázar gave the following counsel to the actors: “En el traje se deben considerar la propiedad y la riqueza” (245) [“In the dress one should consider property and wealth”], encouraging extravagant spending habits in regards to costumes by actors. Consequently, sumptuary laws were put in place to curtail expenditures of luxury apparel for actors, such as the decrees in 1615 (mentioned earlier) and in 1644 that restricted the amount of costumes actors could wear during the course of a play, which, as Laura Bass observes, “offered further testimony that the stage was the fashion runway of seventeenth-century Spain” (46). At the same time,

11. For several examples of other conduct manuals that deliver similar messages, see Dopico Black 17.
12. Martínez Bermejo’s study, “Beyond Luxury,” shows that from 1563 to 1691 sixteen luxury laws were passed (97).
13. Detailed accounts of costumes and wardrobes purchased by actors can be found in Greer and Varey. For examples of actors’ extravagant spending habits in regards to costumes, see Ruano de la Haza and Allen 297.
14. Bass reminds us: “As early as 1563, Tomás de Trujillo’s treatise *Reprobación de trajes* [Condemnation of Clothing] had connected sartorial habits offstage with their equivalents onstage. For Trujillo, the person who wore a different outfit for every occasion was like the actor who, playing multiple roles in a single play, constantly changed his costume” (45).
emboldened by the performers’ attire, spectators attended the theater “lucidas” [well dressed] in the case of women, as Zabaleta observed (119), or as P. Juan Ferrer witnessed, wearing expensive outfits or accessories such as “zapato pintado y aun bordado” (qtd. in Cotarelo y Mori 254) [“painted and embroidered shoes”]. Thus, spectators empowered by these representational somaesthetic practices donned attire that permitted them a certain degree of confidence to defy dress codes that stressed social decorum.

The playgoers’ external appearance and cultivation of habit extended beyond the dress. For instance, an important component of the corral’s aesthetic experience was the food and drink. In another form of representational somaesthetics, spectators used aloja, fruits, and wine bought from the concession stands as props to represent a certain status. The aloja became so popular with playgoers that contracts and legislations were put into place in order to ensure its proper making and selling (Ball 71–73). The spices, such as pepper, cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg found in the aloja, were considered precious commodities during the Middle Ages and early modern period (Malanima 162), placing particular social importance on the beverage.

The drinks, as well as the fruit and snacks sold at the alojero, served as a visual cue of one’s place in the social order. In her recent study on food and performance in early modern Spain, Campbell underscores the important role food plays in social settings, arguing that “food works as a display of power” and “as performance of elite identity” (“Foods” 2). In fact, nobles went to great lengths to defend the elite status of specific foods, having the courts add certain city regulations to sort food by social categories (4–5). In hopes of making an impression, young men would often send sweet snacks, such as “ciruelas de Génova” (Zabaleta 120), to women sitting in the cazuela. Doing so, spectators expressed their sense of empowerment through representational somaesthetics that included rituals or habits related to aspects such as dress and refreshments. This form of

15. In his 1613 treatise, P. Juan Ferrer saw theaters as “escuelas donde se enseña todo género de torpeza con ingenio, agudeza y disimulación” (qtd. in Cotarelo y Mori 252) [“schools where every kind of stupidity is taught with wit, sharpness and dissimulation”]. The Catalan Jesuit warned that spectators who imitated actors and their manner of dress posed a moral danger to society.

16. Aloja was a mixture of honey, spices, and water sold at the refreshment booths called alojería or alojero.

17. Nutmeg, for example, was a luxury product until the end of the Dutch monopoly in 1770. It seemed to become a symbol of elite status for the wealthy who, according to Ken Albala, “often took their own portable container and grater with them wherever they went” (46).
embodiment enhanced their sense of aesthetic agency, enabling them to both comply with and challenge social codes.

EXPERIENTIAL SOMAESTHETICS

In early modern Spain, a number of theatrical treatises emphasized the importance of the actors' inner experience in bringing their characters to life and making the audience feel with them. In his *Nueva idea de la tragedia antigua* [New Idea of Ancient Tragedy] (1633), Jusepe Antonio González de Salas stresses the actor's role in facilitating spectators' inner emotional experience by embodying the character—imagined by the poet—who is the mediator between the emotions of the playwright and those of the audience or the "arcaduz i conducto, por donde comunicará el Poeta al Auditorio sus passiones i afectos" (86) ["means and conduit through which the poet will communicate his passions and affections to the audience"]. Lope de Vega—one of the most prolific playwrights of early modern Europe and the author of *Arte nuevo de hacer comedias* [The New Art of Writing Plays] (1609), in which he gathers his innovative ideas for the new *comedia*—directs the playwright to depict characters with emotions that transform the actor, since it is through the actor's embodiment that the audience will be moved (vv. 272–6). He puts this advice into practice, for instance, in his *comedia Lo fingido verdadero* [The Feigned Truth]. The protagonist, Ginés, speaks of an actor portraying the pains of love, saying that only when he feels love's passion can he convincingly perform a man in love, because "no los sabrá hacer si no los siente" (232) ["if he doesn't feel them, he won't know how to play them" (69; Trans. by McGaha)]. These words echo the advice of Quintilian, the celebrated Roman orator and rhetorician from Hispania (c.35–c.100), who states that, if one wishes to arouse emotions in others, one first needs to "feel those emotions oneself" (6.2.26). Following this line of thought, seventeenth-century rhetoricians acknowledged the intrinsic connection between mental and bodily states and believed that "the actor's inward state of mind" easily influenced the outward shape of the body (Roach 49). Consequently, proper exercise was key for the actor in preparing for her role. Corporeal exercises, such as breathing to strengthen the voice and lungs, helped the actor to control visceral movements connected to her emotional state. Through these physical exercises, the actor strived to increase her awareness of bodily states and

18. All citations from Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* refer to book, chapter, and section.
feelings to facilitate greater insight of sentiments. Such awareness of somatic functions allowed the actor to make adjustments and portray her character in a natural and realistic manner, as demanded by Lope's new precepts. López Pinciano lays out some physical movements actors should consider in preparation for their specific roles, insisting that they follow the natural movement of the person they will represent, whose gestures vary depending on the individual’s mood. He recommends to focus on body parts such as the hand to communicate the character’s emotion: “si está desapasionado puede mover la mano con blandura, agora alzándola, agora declinándola, moviéndola al uno y al otro lado; y si está indignado la moverá más desordenadamente, apartando el dedo vecino al pulgar, llamado índice, de los demás como quien amenaza” (505) [“if he is dispassionate, he can move the hand with gentleness, raising it now, dropping it now, moving it now from side to side; and if the mood is outraged, moving it more wildly, pressing the thumb to the forefinger, called the index finger, in a threatening manner”].

Affective embodiment in the corral was also mediated in great part by the eyes. For Quintilian, they are a critical element of expression, “since they, more than anything else, reveal the temper of the mind, and without actual movement will twinkle with merriment or be clouded with grief” (11.3.75). Therefore, makeup that exaggerated the actor’s eyes or the expressive movement of her eyes was a necessary component of acting, especially in large spaces such as the corrales or the palace stages.29 The eyes were also a key symbol in Baroque art and literature as windows to the soul and, thus, possessed not only a representational value but also an experiential one, as they were both portrayers of emotion and vehicles of emotional transformation. In connecting the eyes to the soul, López Pinciano lists the array of emotions this “small organ” exhibits: “ira, odio, venganza, amor, miedo, tristeza, alegría, aspereza y blandura” (505) [“anger, hatred, revenge, love, fear, and sadness, tough and tender joy”]. Moreover, Juan de Guzmán argues in the Primera parte de la Rhetorica [First Part of the Rhetoric] (1589) that with one’s eyes one can easily communicate “cualquier afecto o pasión” (148) [“any affect or passion”]. Playwrights placed great importance on the eyes, rendering them the culprit for inciting emotions in others. For example, in Lo fingido verdadero, Marcela’s eyes cause Gines to feel aroused: “[¡Por Dios, que por sus ojos me abraso!” (264) [“My God, her eyes drive me crazy!”]. In La serrana de la Vera [The Mountain Woman of La Vera], Luis Vélez de Guevara goes further by

19. Evidence of woman actors wearing stage makeup can be found quoted in Cotarelo y Mori’s Bibliografía de las controversias, pp. 216, 264, 349, and 401.
emphasizing the protagonist's "ojos hermosos rasgados" (vv. 213) ["beautiful, almond-shaped eyes"] throughout the play, specifying both their movements and effect on others, which equally seduce and instill fear. On the power of the eyes to move the audience, Quintilian explains:

By far the greatest influence is exercised by the glance. For it is by this that we express supplication, threats, flattery, sorrow, joy, pride or submission. It is on this that our audience hangs, on this that they rivet their attention and their gaze, even before we begin to speak. It is this that inspires the hearer with affection or dislike, this that conveys a world of meaning and is often more eloquent than all our words. (11.3.72)

In this sense, the eyes connect the inner experience of the actors to that of the audience, illustrating the interconnectedness of representational and experiential somaesthetics: they not only allow actors to depict emotion but are also the open "windows of the soul" that allow the audience to connect to the actors' inner emotional states, thus enabling the spectators' emotional experience. Along with the voice, gestures, movements, hands, and all the other elements that form the actor's body, the eyes are the vehicle through which both actors and spectators actively experience drama, participating in the third dimension of pragmatic somaesthetics: performative somaesthetics.

PERFORMATIVE SOMAESTHETICS

To increase their chances of succeeding in their profession, early modern Spanish actors became themselves spectators of life. Female actors, for example, observed the behavior of real-life models of respectable women, who at times ventured outside their homes to attend to religious functions or to visit family. McKendrick remarks that "respectable women of the nobility and often of the wealthy bourgeoisie in Madrid (and to some extent other large cities like Barcelona and Seville) had a reputation for liveliness and wit" (Woman and Society 27), a behavior foreign travelers often commented on, as in the case of Tomé Pinheiro da Veiga. McKendrick informs us that in 1605 the Portuguese traveler reacted with shock at the public behavior displayed by decent women. Especially incredible to him was how the women were "treated as people and as Christians" by the Spanish men (26).

His disapproval of women's social freedom resonated

with those who subscribed to the manuals on proper behavior mentioned earlier. Interestingly, Theresa Ann Smith points out that “texts promoting women’s enclosure and praising male rule—two antidotes to women’s capricious nature—more likely constituted reactions to, rather than shapers of, women’s behavior. [Queen] Isabel and countless other Spanish women lived more public and more active lives than promoters of patriarchy desired” (19).

Consequently, when seen through a somaesthetics lens, early modern Spanish actresses emerge, as McKendrick asserts, “as forceful spokeswomen.” She writes:

Their behavior on stage might belong to the world of imagination and popular entertainment, but from within that protected fictional space the words they spoke revealed what it was like to be a woman, and specifically what it was like to be a woman in a man’s world. . . . as a result of their profession and their peripatetic lives they knew more about the world than most of their sex and were amply equipped to act as forceful spokeswomen for a wide range of female causes. (“Representing their Sex” 73)

The words and actions of these spokeswomen and their male counterparts would have resonated with the spectators, who learned to articulate similar meanings in their daily contact with others. Ros King proposes that “the unique, unseen, and unknown play in the head of each spectator . . . may not be just concerned with what is being performed but may include reflection on that individual spectator’s current concerns, or previous and immediate life experiences, combined with conscious awareness of the performance as distinct from the story” (32). The actors’ artistic energies engaged the viewers, who by the end of the play actually believed them to be the characters they played and not the actors, even though they comprehended the difference. Thus, not only were the actors agents whose embodied emotions mediated the spectators’ theatrical experience, but they also became models of behavior through which spectators challenged the social rigidity of early modern Spain. Consider William Egginton’s description of audience members’ behavior in relation to embodied aesthetics:

[Mosqueteros] put on airs as well as noble clothing to come to the theater, a place where they could exercise an importance and power which they desired and identified with, but to which they had no access in everyday life. In this way, the gestural, verbal, and sartorial codes that the audience learned so well in order to project an alternate reality on the screen of the stage became equally an integral part of everyday personal interaction. (409)
This example highlights how the theater influenced the spectator's somatic awareness, especially considering, as Laurie Johnson reasons, that in early modern plays “the language that maps gestures to words becomes wholly internalised, fitting play texts more perfectly to the environment in which bodies and voices will be used to convey the text” (“Cogito Ergo Theatrum” 228). By incorporating the gestures in their daily relationships with others, spectators practiced experiential/performative somaesthetics. They interpreted their role in society, not by mirroring the reflection presented to them in literature or books of manners, or by Church or government authorities, but instead in relation to their own experience, effectively moving from object to subject to establish their subjectivity.

Women sitting in the cazuela or the mosqueteros in the pit observed other individuals’ movements and “empathetically” connected with them. Spectators responded to performances by synchronizing their physical and vocal expressions with audience members among them. However, they did not merely imitate other audience members, but instead interpreted every movement with their own personal experience. They physically and emotionally connected to the events surrounding the performances, often feeling seduced and overwhelmed, as witnessed by an anonymous playgoer in 1620, who describes his experience in the corral as a continual battery to all his senses: “Los ojos ven tanto aderezo y adorno, los oidos oyen tantas agudezas, el olfato tanto olor y perfumes, el tacto tanta blancura y regalo, el gusto tantas colaciones y meriendas, que es milagro poder uno resistir a tan larga bateria y tan porfiada a una siempre y por tantas puertas” (qtd. in Cotarelo y Mori 214) ["The eyes see so much dressing and adornment; the ears hear so much witticism; the nose so many odors and perfumes; the touch so much whiteness and pleasure; the palate so many sweets and snacks; it takes a miracle to resist such a persistent and long battery of one’s senses, which attack one from all sides"]). Through this performative (physical and emotional) engagement with all the different aspects that form part of the theatrical space, spectators undergo a transformation that is possible due to the fact that they “are not disembodied minds but rather embodied beings whose experience is conditioned by the body” (Mullis 106). As David Hillman and Carla Mazzio suggest, when studying early modern spectatorship one should think of the term “body-mind” as a “porous and inclusive entity that is constantly interacting with everything around it” (253). This active interaction contributes to the audience members’ embodiment of the performances and theatrical experience, enhancing their sense of aesthetic agency.
CONCLUSIONS

Pragmatic somaesthetics offers a systematic framework helpful in furthering the discussion and understanding of embodiment in the field of early modern comedia studies, as well as that of cognitive studies. In early modern Spain, playgoers created a sense of self-stylization that not only permitted them to control the body, but to strengthen its expressive authority. They cultivated somatic habits through attire (i.e., clothing that denoted social prominences), gestures (actions and articulations that expressed personal character), and food (i.e., refreshments that served as props for defining aesthetic agency). Furthermore, they reacted to their environment by “empathetically” responding to others (be it prompted by actors, fellow playgoers, and/or the corral’s architectural design), displaying behavior and adopting habits that permeated their lives outside the theatrical realm, in a form of experiential/performative somaesthetics. Far from a passive mirror of society, theater established an active relationship between actors and audiences. The mirror through which the actors and spectators saw themselves was a composite of collective and individual experiences that resulted in a somaesthetic experience for all parties involved.

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