

RICHARD SHUSTERMAN

Body Consciousness and Performance: Somaesthetics East and West

1

Embodiment is a universal feature of human life, and so is body consciousness. Body consciousness, as I understand it, is not merely the consciousness that a mind may have of the body as an object, but includes the embodied consciousness that a living, sentient body directs at the world and also experiences in itself (and through which it indeed can experience itself as both subject and object). Since the term ‘body’ is too often contrasted with mind and used to designate insentient, lifeless things, and since the term ‘flesh’ has such negative associations in Christian culture (and moreover focuses merely on the fleshly part of the body), I have chosen the term ‘soma’ to designate the living, sensing, dynamic, perceptive body that lies at the heart of the project of somaesthetics.¹

Part of that project concerns the reasons and methods for raising one’s somatic consciousness to promote better self-use and consequently greater achievement of philosophy’s traditional goals of knowledge, self-knowledge, virtue, happiness, and justice. Consciousness has different levels. At its most basic form of primitive body intentionality, we can even describe a level of what could be paradoxically called unconscious consciousness. This is the sort of limited, obscure awareness we exhibit in our sleep, when, for example, we intentionally (though unconsciously) move a pillow that is disturbing our breathing.²

Beyond this level is the stage when we are awake and clearly conscious of the object we perceive, say the cup of coffee we are holding and drinking from, but are not explicitly aware of it as a distinct object of consciousness, as when we

are drinking the coffee absentmindedly or simply noticing the coffee’s taste and not the cup. Yet, even without explicit awareness, we can handle the cup with efficiency and ease. This level of unreflective, unthematized perception is what Maurice Merleau-Ponty hails as “primary consciousness” and the fundamental, unappreciated key to the mystery of our successful perception and action.³ We reach a higher level of consciousness when we have explicit awareness of the cup, when we attend to it as a distinct object of consciousness; and we can distinguish a fourth, more reflective level, when we are not only explicitly conscious of the object but also conscious of how (and that) we are conscious of it. Here we consciously monitor our awareness of the object as an explicit datum of consciousness, noticing, for example, how our attention to the cup makes it look bigger or feel heavier.

These different levels of consciousness that we noted with respect to objects like pillows or cups can also be found in the sense we have of our embodied selves. When asleep, the soma feels its positionality and breathing well enough to move the pillow or to reposition itself when it feels it is getting too close to the edge of the bed. We often pay no attention to our feet nor have an explicit awareness of them when we are walking. But sometimes we do make our feet an explicit object of consciousness—when we are crossing difficult terrain, when we have problems of balance, or when our feet are hurting. Similarly, we sometimes move from inexplicit consciousness of breathing to situations where our breathing becomes an explicit object of our somatic consciousness, as when we notice that we are short of breath or have difficulty

breathing. Finally, there are cases of more reflective somatic consciousness, such as when we are not only explicitly aware that we are breathing but also clearly conscious of our conscious awareness of breathing and of how that reflexive consciousness affects our breathing and other dimensions of somatic experience. These explicit and reflective levels of consciousness, which can blend or overlap into each other, I describe respectively as somaesthetic perception and somaesthetic reflection.⁴

To what extent are somaesthetic perception and reflection really useful in improving our self-use and performance? If every action requires bodily means and control, should not heightened somatic awareness be helpful in some way for improving action, and should not somaesthetic reflection or introspection in turn be useful for improving somatic awareness? Many great philosophers, however (including some who greatly appreciate the body's role in cognition and action), have influentially argued against the value of heightened or reflexive body awareness, though some insist on this value. It is customary to contrast Western and Eastern perspectives on body consciousness, but on this question both Western and Eastern thought seem to share the same ambivalence between opposition and affirmation of somaesthetic perception and reflection as effective means for successful action. In addressing the different arguments on this issue, I will eventually pay special attention to the performance of action in dance and theatrical acting, building on the insights of the master of Japanese Nō drama, Zeami Motokiyo (1363–1443).

II

Since its ancient inscription on Apollo's Temple at Delphi and its Socratic advocacy, the quest for self-knowledge has been long and widely affirmed as a central quest in Western philosophy. Yet reflectively examining one's somatic self has found little favor among its most influential philosophers. Despite affirming the value of bodily training in other dialogues, Plato, in *Phaedo*, most influentially argued that the philosopher should not concern himself "with the body" but rather turn attention away from it "as much as possible," "because the body confuses the soul," distorts perception, and distracts from the pursuit of truth (64e–67a).⁵

Though Immanuel Kant famously took meticulous care in bodily matters such as diet and exercise, he sternly warned against paying attention to one's somatic state and feelings. When claiming that "the First Command of All Duties to Oneself" is to "know (scrutinize, fathom) yourself," he insists that this is "not in terms of your physical perfection (your fitness or unfitness for all sorts of . . . ends) but rather in terms of your moral perfection in relation to your duty."⁶ Kant instead repudiates the project of reflecting on bodily feelings, claiming that it leads to the madness of hypochondria and morbid despondence. Somatic introspection "takes the mind's activity away from considering other things and is harmful to the head." "The inner sensibility that one generates through [such] reflections is harmful . . . This inner view and self-feeling weakens the body and diverts it from animal functions." Hence: "Turning reflection away from the body leads to health." In short, introspective somatic self-study is harmful to both mind and body, and the best way to treat one's body is to ignore, as much as possible, the self-knowledge of how it feels, while using it actively in work and exercise.⁷

William James, one of the most body friendly of modern philosophers and one of the great masters of somatic introspection in psychology, similarly warned against its use in practical and moral life for fear of its encouraging an unhealthy self-absorption that promotes depressive hypochondria, which he knew from personal experience. And one might compound the warning by arguing that such self-absorption also promotes immoral selfishness.⁸ But James proposes a further line of critique against somatic self-awareness, one involving the major focus of this article: that "the inhibitive influence of reflection" on one's bodily action and its attendant somatic feelings actually interfere with that action. "Trust your spontaneity and fling away all further care" is James's contrasting maxim for successful sensorimotor performance.⁹ "We fail of accuracy and certainty in our attainment of the end whenever we are preoccupied with much ideal consciousness of the [bodily] means" and the internal (or "resident") feelings they involve, he argues in his masterpiece *The Principles of Psychology*. "We walk a beam the better the less we think of the position of our feet upon it. We pitch or catch, we shoot or chop the better the less tactile and muscular (the less resident), and the more exclusively optical (the more

remote), our consciousness is. Keep your eye on the place aimed at, and your hand will fetch it; think of your hand and you will very likely miss your aim."¹⁰

Maurice Merleau-Ponty is another philosophical champion of the body who nonetheless rejects the value of somaesthetic reflection. Like James, he contends that spontaneity and unreflective perceptual awareness will always serve us best in everyday life, whereas somatic reflection and representational images are (for normal people) unnecessary and even get in the way of smooth functioning. The body marvelously "guides us among things only on condition that we stop analyzing it, . . . only on the condition that [we] do not reflect expressly on it."¹¹ Not only in bodily locomotion but also in the variety of our actions (including the expressive, creative actions of speech and art), Merleau-Ponty repeatedly insists that successful performance depends on the efficacy of spontaneous bodily intentionality beneath the level of thematized awareness rather than any conscious representations or reflective awareness that tends instead to hinder efficient action: "like the functioning of the body, that of words or paintings remains obscure to me. The words, lines, and colors which express me . . . are torn from me by what I want to say as my gestures are by what I want to do . . . [with] a spontaneity which will not tolerate any commands, not even those which I would like to give to myself" (S, p. 75).

Merleau-Ponty even suggests we cannot really observe the body in a proper way. It "defies exploration and is always presented to me from the same angle. . . . To say that it is always near me, always there for me, is to say that it is never really in front of me, that I cannot array it before my eyes, that it remains marginal to all my perceptions, that it is *with* me." I cannot change my perspective with respect to my body as I can with external objects. "I observe external objects with my body, I handle them, examine them, walk around them, but my body itself is a thing that I do not observe; in order to be able to do so, I should need the use of a second body."¹² "I am always on the same side of my body; it presents itself to me in one invariable perspective."¹³

In my book *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*, I challenge these claims by refuting their specific arguments and enlisting the insights of various theorists who recognize the value of somaesthetic reflection for

improving the quality and efficacy of our self-use, among them John Dewey, F. M. Alexander, and Moshe Feldenkrais. Though I too have long advocated the positive and necessary role of unreflective somatic understanding and spontaneous performance, I now think we need a double-barreled approach that also highlights the uses of somaesthetic reflection and explains how unreflective and reflective body consciousness can best be integrated.¹⁴ The pervasive value of unreflective habits in our perception and action do not entail that these habits are fully adequate and do not need correction through a process involving critically reflective awareness of what those habits are.

Unnoticed bad habits exercise a horrible power over action, thought, and will. What we call spontaneous action is the product of habit, not of a pure, free will; and habit typically incorporates aspects of the conditions of its acquisition. Because these conditions are often far from optimal (just consider the imperfect home, school, and work environments in which we learn), we unreflectively can acquire bad habits just as easily as good ones.¹⁵ Initial nervousness about working on a computer, for example, tends to generate postures of self-use that have too much muscular contraction and strain but that get habituated as the normal spontaneous way of sitting, despite the discomfort they involve, which typically is not noticed because our somatic awareness is deficient. Improved, reflective body consciousness is therefore necessary for correcting such bad habits and achieving better control of the use of ourselves. To correct our bad habits we cannot simply rely on spontaneity, which, as the product of habit, is precisely part of the problem.¹⁶ This is why various disciplines of body training typically invoke representations and self-conscious somatic focusing in order to correct our faulty self-perception and self-use.

These disciplines do not aim to erase the crucial level of unreflective behavior by the (impossible) effort of making us explicitly conscious of all our perception and action. They simply seek to improve unreflective behavior that hinders our experience and performance. But in order to effect this improvement, the unreflective action or habit must be brought into conscious critical reflection (though only for a limited time) so that it can be grasped and worked on more precisely. We have to know what we are doing with our bodies in order to know how to correct what we are

doing so that we can more effectively do what we wish to do with them. Thus, as Dewey paradoxically concludes (from his experience as a student of the Alexander Technique), “True spontaneity is henceforth not a birth-right but the last term, the consummated conquest, of an art—the art of conscious control” through an enhanced, reflective awareness of our bodies.¹⁷

Because *Body Consciousness* concentrated on contemporary Western philosophy, I now would like to turn my focus in this article to the Far East. Though it is common to contrast Western and Asian philosophies of embodiment, in both traditions we find a similar divergence between views that advocate reflective analysis and conscious control of self and body and those that instead advocate spontaneity. In the Confucian tradition, the founding *Analects* affirm a daily self-examination of behavior (where the term for self or person is the same as that for body, 身 *shen*).¹⁸ Later, Mencius advocates cultivating the “flood-like qi [ch’i]” that “fills the body” by giving it the controlling attention of will and mind, while Xunzi argues that the exemplary person should master “the method of controlling the vital breath” and be “absorbed in the examination of his inner self” and “scorn mere external things.”¹⁹

In contrast, though the Daoist tradition very strongly emphasizes somatic attentiveness in terms of caring for the body, it is also famous for championing unreflective spontaneity of action and the release from willful self-consciousness.²⁰ In the *Zhuangzi* (the most influential Daoist classic after the *Daodejing*), one is urged to be “a forgetter of self,” since “the man who has forgotten self may be said to have entered heaven.”²¹ “When a man does not dwell in self, then things will of themselves reveal their forms to him” (Z, p. 372). The message is apparently more than a mere rejection of selfishness but rather a repudiation of examining the self at all, and with it a critical, reflective examination of the outside world. Blind spontaneity seems to be the secret to successful living and action. Hence, “[w]hen the eye does not see, the ear does not hear, and the mind does not know, then your spirit will protect the body, and the body will enjoy long life. Be cautious of what is within you; block off what is outside you, for much knowledge will do you harm” (Z, pp. 119–120). In one striking passage of the *Zhuangzi*, this rejection of reflection is associated with mere sitting—a remarkable foreshadowing of

Zen’s practice of sitting meditation (*zazen*), which the Japanese Zen master Dōgen later describes as “sitting fixedly, think of no thinking.”²² As the *Zhuangzi* more dramatically puts it: “I smash up my limbs and body, drive out perception and intellect, cast off form, do away with understanding, and make myself identical with the Great Thoroughfare. This is what I mean by sitting down and forgetting everything” (Z, p. 90).

A similar sort of unreflective spontaneity is affirmed in skillful action. “Artisan Chui [Ch’ui] could draw as true as a compass or a T square because his fingers changed along with things and he didn’t let his mind get in the way” (Z, p. 206). The *Liezi*, the third most influential Daoist classic, seems to express the same advocacy of unreflective, spontaneous action, which its translator, the distinguished scholar A. C. Graham, formulates as “thinking does [one] harm instead of good” and that “it is especially dangerous to be conscious of oneself.”²³ Arguing that a drunken man, by being largely unconscious, is likely to be less injured in falling from a cart than a conscious man who stiffens and tries to brace his fall, *Liezi* likewise notes that the good swimmer says, “I do it without knowing how I do it” (L, p. 44). The book also remarks how a Daoist disciple of Laozi claims to be so unified in himself and with nature that he confesses that though aware of whatever affects him, “I do not know whether I perceived it with the seven holes in my head and my four limbs, or knew it through my heart and belly and internal organs. It is simply self-knowledge” (L, p. 77). Likewise, “I did not notice what my body leaned against and my feet trod, I drifted with the wind East or West like a leaf . . . and never knew whether it was the wind that rode me or I that rode the wind” (L, p. 37).

But alongside this advocacy of unreflective spontaneity, one also finds a deep respect for self-examination in these classic Daoist texts. Thus, the *Zhuangzi* insists: “When I speak of good hearing, I do not mean listening to others. I mean simply listening to your self. When I speak of good eyesight, I do not mean looking at others; I mean simply looking at yourself. He who does not look at himself but looks at others, who does not get hold of himself but gets hold of others, is getting what other men have got and failing to get what he himself has got. He finds joy in what brings joy to other men, but finds no joy in what would bring joy to himself” (Z, pp. 102–103). “So I examine what

is within me and I am never blocked off from the Way” (Z, p. 319). The sage “returns to himself and finds the inexhaustible” (Z, p. 273); “he who practices the cultivation of what is within him will not be ashamed because he holds no position in society” (Z, p. 317); “he who concentrates upon the internal does deeds that bring no fame . . . [but] is forever the possessor of light” (Z, p. 255). At one point, even bodily action or movement is said to be improved by looking inward to establish a stable sense of self from which action can more effectively emerge. “If you do not perceive the sincerity within yourself and yet try to move forth, each movement will miss the mark. If outside concerns enter and are not expelled, each movement will only add failure to failure” (Z, p. 255).

The *Liezi* likewise affirms value in self-examination: “You busy yourself with outward travel and do not know how to busy yourself with inward contemplation. By outward travel we seek what we lack in things outside us, while by inward contemplation we find sufficiency in ourselves. The latter is the perfect, the former an imperfect kind of traveling” (L, p. 82). And with respect to skilled action, the *Liezi* similarly suggests that underlying masterful performance is a mastery of self, achieved through attention to oneself, because underlying the self is the unfathomable, empowering Way that guides us best. Thus, the musician insists on first finding the harmony in himself before venturing to play: “What I have in mind is not in the strings, what I am aiming at is not in the notes. Unless I grasp it inwardly in my heart, it will not answer from the instrument outside me” (L, p. 107).

We should likewise note that Daoism’s founding *Daodejing* clearly affirms the importance of self-knowledge (“He who knows himself has discernment”; “the sage knows himself”),²⁴ while also suggesting that critical self-monitoring is important for attaining its cherished goals of stillness, suppleness, and mental clarity.²⁵ This idea of self-monitoring is extensively developed in another classic text associated with Daoism, the “Neiye” chapter of the *Guanzi*. This text, which seems to date from the middle of the 4th century, focuses on the use of “inner cultivation” as a method to grasp the Dao and thereby achieve the most effective perception and most successful manner of action that is so effortless as to be described as nonaction (*wuwei*).²⁶ Such inner cultivation requires a careful attention to regulating body and mind toward

tranquility so that the Way can be found within the individual’s own mind. I quote briefly from two sections of the “Neiye,” and other sections reinforce these points.

V

The Way has no fixed position;
It abides within the excellent mind.
When the mind is tranquil and the vital breath is regular,
The Way can thereby be halted.
That Way is not distant from us;
When people attain it they are sustained.
That Way is not separated from us;
When people accord with it they are harmonious.
Therefore . . .
Cultivate your mind, make your thoughts tranquil,
And the Way can thereby be attained.

XIX

By concentrating your vital breath as if numinous,
The myriad things will all be contained within you.
Can you concentrate? Can you unite with them?
. . .
When the four limbs are aligned
And the blood and vital breath are tranquil,
Unify your awareness, concentrate your mind,
Then your eyes and ears will not be overstimulated.
And even the far-off will seem close at hand.

I should note that the term ‘mind’ here is a translation of the Chinese term *xin* (心) whose primary meaning is ‘heart’ and is often translated as such or translated as ‘heart-and-mind’ to emphasize that in Chinese thought one’s mental life is essentially also somatic. Thus, attending to the mind (*xin*) by cultivating it and making it tranquil would automatically imply attention to one’s somatic self.

III

How, then, can we reconcile these conflicting views between attending to self and unreflective forgetting of self in spontaneous action as keys to effective self-use, not only within Daoism and Chinese philosophy but also within the Western philosophical tradition and even within the narrower scope of pragmatist philosophy (as exemplified in the contrasting views of James and Dewey)? One strategy that I outlined in past writings is that of interchanging phases or stages. Though spontaneous unreflective action is

generally the most effective way to perform, even its proponents tend to acknowledge that, in the early stages of learning a sensorimotor skill (playing an instrument, batting a ball, riding a bicycle, learning a dance step), we very often need to pay careful, critical attention to what we are doing with the body parts engaged in that action. I would add that we should also pay attention to our breathing and the proprioceptive feel of what we are doing. But the radical advocates of spontaneity insist that, once this learning stage is over, so is the need for explicit attention to what our bodies are doing.

My position, however (which I share with body theorists like Alexander and Feldenkrais and philosophers like Dewey), is that there is also need for critical self-attention after the learning process is considered finished. This is because the learning process is never entirely complete. As Xunzi long ago put it, “Learning must never be concluded” (X, p. 135). Learning is never over because not only there is room for further refinements and extensions of the acquired skill, but also because we so often lapse into bad habits of performance or face new conditions of the self (through injury, fatigue, growth, aging, and so on) and new environments in which we need to correct, relearn, and adjust our habits of spontaneous performance. Not that all our actions must always be given explicit attention—that would be both impossible and undesirable. We need to focus attention on what needs it the most—usually the world in which we act (though we should never forget that careful explicit attention to one’s body in action always involves some awareness of its environment).²⁷

However, on many occasions, in order to deal more effectively with things in the world of action, we need either to acquire new habits or refine or reconstruct our habitual modes of action (as well as our attitudes, feelings, and knowledge that guide our action), and this process requires redirecting explicit attention to our somatic behavior. Once the new or reconstructed habits are acquired, we can forgo special attention to one’s body in action and instead move into the more uncritical, unreflective spontaneous mode with our attention focused on the targets or ends of action, not the somatic means for attaining them.

In the *Liezi*, we find the same advocacy of careful attending to self to establish the harmony needed for successful spontaneous action. The great archer succeeds with even a poor bow not

simply “because his attention was concentrated” on the target but because he had already trained his body so that “the movement of his hand equalized the give and pull” of the bow (L, p. 105).²⁸ For archery, moreover, “you must learn not to blink” and “how to look” (L, p. 112), which also requires critically examining our somatic behavior in looking and blinking. Similar points are made with the skills of fishing and charioteering, where spontaneity and focused response to our targets rely on having acquired somatic control of the bodily means to attend and respond with calm and perceptive hands. And the only sure way to establish the necessary calmness in oneself is by looking attentively within to know one’s nature and develop its virtues: “He will cling to his degree and not exceed it; . . . he will unify his nature, tend his energies, maintain the virtues inside him, until he penetrates to the place where things are created. If you can be like this, the Heaven inside you will keep its integrity, the spirit inside you will have no flaws” (L, pp. 37–38). And this is immediately asserted as superior to the drunken man whose fearlessness of falling comes only through the unknowingness provoked by the foreign substance of wine, rather than from knowing the heaven within the self.

Moreover, the *Liezi* shows how our already acquired skills of spontaneous performance require reconstruction when they face new conditions. The accomplished archer totally loses his skill of unthinking habit and his masterful posture of stillness “like a statue” when he is asked to perform on a mountain cliff, where he trembles and falls on his face in fear, because he had not learned to master himself so that “his spirit and breathing do not change” in new conditions that provoke anxiety (L, pp. 38–39). One’s skill in other actions is likewise overwhelmed when one thinks of failure or reward: “You give weight to something outside you; and whoever does that is inwardly clumsy” (L, p. 44).

Similarly, in the *Zhuangzi*, the great carver Qing, who creates marvelous works with apparently effortless spontaneity, explains that his skill depends on the somatic self-preparation of fasting. “I always fast in order to still my mind. When I have fasted for three days, I no longer have any thought of congratulations or rewards, of titles or stipends. When I have fasted for five days, I no longer have any thought of praise or blame, of skill or clumsiness. And when I have

fasted for seven days, I am so still that I forget I have four limbs and a form and body. By that time the ruler and his court no longer exist for me. My skill is concentrated and all outside distractions fade away” (Z, p. 206). In order to forget body and mind, the carver first cultivates their stillness and focus through the somatic means of fasting. Thus he can focus on the work with no distracting ideas of bodily rewards and punishments or mental blame and praise.

These colorful fables suggest a critical point. Many of the cases that James and other advocates of spontaneity allude to, where reflection on our somatic means of performance seems to make us stumble, stutter, and fail, could well be cases in which it is not really the somatic focus (on our feet or tongue) that makes us stumble and stutter. Rather it is the anxiety of falling or failing in some way that causes such lapses and that intimately accompanies our attention to our body parts in our concern to help them do the job we fear they will not properly accomplish. In other words, such instances where attention to bodily movements in action seems to interfere in successful performance are really cases where one’s actual attention to the bodily parts is obscured by emotions and thoughts of failure, success, or one’s image in the eyes of others. For example, am I really focusing carefully on my finger and hand movements in my problematic lifting of a slippery pea with my chopsticks, or is my mental focus, when looking at my hand, equally suffused or even dominated by the thoughts and attendant emotions of whether I will manage to do it successfully and how I am regarded (or judged) by others who see my efforts? Is my consciousness calmly observant or anxiously flustered? There is also the question of whether I have skill and accuracy in somaesthetic self-observation or is my somaesthetic sense of self not very clear so that I am not even aware that I have become anxious and that the quality or precision of my attention to my fingers has been thereby distracted, even if my eyes remain fixed on them.

Some people have better skills of perception and performance than others, and training is one way they have acquired them. Though Merleau-Ponty’s essentialist phenomenological approach presumes that all normal people enjoy the same primordial level of spontaneous perception and action (which functions with marvelous efficiency and only proves dysfunctional in clearly abnormal

individuals with pathological cases of brain lesions or other forms of trauma), I think the situation is more complex. Many (if not most) of us manage to get by with habits of sensorimotor spontaneity that have various minor defects that do not disqualify us from being normal in the sense of having more or less average functioning but that do result in unneeded pain, discomfort, inefficiency, more rapid fatigue, and a tendency to certain kinds of errors or accidents. These more subtle pathologies prevent one’s action from being normal in the sense of defining the norm for exemplary, healthy functioning.

Keen to insist on the efficacy of a universal and unchanging primordial body consciousness, Merleau-Ponty describes our spontaneous performance as being marvelously effective.²⁹ While I share Merleau-Ponty’s appreciation of our inexplicit, unreflective somatic perception, I think we should also recognize that it is often painfully inaccurate and dysfunctional. I may think I am keeping my head down when swinging a golf club, though an observer will easily see I do not. Disciplines of somatic education deploy exercises of representational awareness to treat such problems of misperception and misuse of our bodies in the spontaneous and habitual behavior that Merleau-Ponty identifies as primal and celebrates as miraculously flawless in normal performance. So if Merleau-Ponty aims to recapture a primordial unreflective perception that is universal and “unchanging” and that is needed as the essential ground for explaining all other perception and performance, my pragmatist approach is more sensitive to differences in somatic subjectivity and instead aims to explore and enhance our behavior by rendering more (though not most or all) of it more explicitly conscious and reflective so that our perception and performance can be improved. Bringing unreflective habits into more explicit consciousness is useful not only for correcting bad habits but also for providing opportunities for unlearning problematic patterns of behavior and for stimulating new thinking that more generally increases the mind’s flexibility and creativity, even in terms of enhancing the plasticity and efficiency of the brain’s neural networks.³⁰

The value of explicit, critical, and even reflective somatic awareness seems undeniable both for the stages of learning skills and for continuing efforts of extending and refining them and of reforming inadequate habits.³¹ Even the famous

Chinese advocates of spontaneity recognize this continuing importance of self-monitoring, affirming its use even in the efforts to transcend the self to concentrate on harmonizing one's actions with the world or the Way. These convincing points of learning, unlearning, and relearning would seem sufficient for establishing the importance of explicit somaesthetic awareness and reflection. But perhaps we can go further. Can explicit or even reflective somaesthetic attention be usefully directed to action beyond these diverse stages of learning to phases of full mastery where focus is on successful performance rather than learning?

There is certainly a presumption, apparently founded on real-life experience and some experimental studies, that explicit attention to the bodily means of movement will somehow distract us from the ends of action and thus diminish performance. But perhaps this is because our powers of attention and coordination are insufficiently trained to simultaneously encompass multiple targets or inputs, such as would be involved in monitoring both our bodily movements and the targets of our action. Yet we seem able to listen attentively to the narration of news while also watching attentively the visual news images on the television screen, just as we can carefully listen to the news while we are also attending to traffic, as when we listen while driving. Perhaps those persons more experienced and skilled in attending to bodily behavior can combine such explicit or reflective attention with smooth effective performance that equally attends to the targets of action. Perhaps many of us can already do so with familiar tasks. In tying my shoelaces, for example, I do not find that noticing my finger movements and grasp of the laces interferes in my monitoring the laces that are to be tied but rather improves my performance of tying.

IV

The great master of Nō theater Zeami Motokiyo provides some encouragement for thinking that attention can be trained to encompass simultaneously very different and even opposing directions. In one of his most important texts, *Kakyō* ("A Mirror Held to the Flower"), while explaining the training of performance skills in Nō, Zeami delineates "the Five Skills of Dancing." The first is "the Skill of Self-Conscious Movement," which involves an explicitly conscious attention to the body

in technique, "placing the various elements of the body into motion, moving the hands in appropriate gestures, controlling the performance so that it will fall into the proper structure of *jo*, *ha*, and *kyū*" (rhythms of movement).³² The second skill is described as "the Skill of Movement Beyond Consciousness," which is not a matter of the particular movements the actor makes but rather "the creation of an atmosphere" that goes beyond explicit matters of technique (Ze, pp. 79–80). This second skill is not meant to supersede the former in the way that spontaneous skilled action is thought to supersede explicit or reflective attention to bodily position or movement in the learning of a skill.

The continued need for self-monitoring in action is made clear by Zeami's emphasis that such self-reflection "is a crucial element in the creation of . . . the Movement Beyond Consciousness," wherein "the eyes look ahead and the spirit looks behind" (Ze, p. 81). Here, while not concentrating especially on where he is placing his hands and feet, "the actor looks in front of him with his physical eyes" so that he can see the other actors and the audience and thereby harmonize his performance with the full theatrical environment; "but his inner concentration must be directed to the appearance of his movements from behind" (*ibid.*). In other words, the actor is performing with an explicit, reflective image of himself, not only his internal image of his somatic bearing (his proprioceptive sense of balance, position, muscle tension, expressiveness, grace, and so forth) but also the image of how he senses he appears to the audience.

Zeami explains this complicated consciousness as follows: "The appearance of the actor, seen from the spectator in the seating area, produces a different image than the actor can have of himself. What the spectator sees is the outer image of the actor. What an actor himself sees, on the other hand, forms his own internal image of himself." The actor therefore "must make still another effort in order to grasp his own internalized outer image, a step possible only through assiduous training. Once he obtains this, the actor and the spectator can share the same image. Only then can it actually be said that an actor has truly grasped the nature of his appearance. For an actor to grasp his true appearance implies that he has under his control the space to the left and to the right of him, and to the front and to the rear of him." Though most actors only succeed in looking

to the front and side, “if the actor cannot somehow come to a sense of how he looks from behind, he will not be able to become conscious of any possible vulgarities in his performance. Therefore, an actor must look at himself using his internalized outer image, come to share the same view as the audience, examine his appearance with his spiritual eyes and so maintain a graceful appearance with his entire body” (Ze, p. 81).³³

From such descriptions we see that even when Zeami is not talking about the “self-conscious movement” of the body’s limbs but instead about the so-called movement beyond consciousness, he still insists that acting excellence requires the focus of sustained self-consciousness, whose acquisition is not a native or easily learned skill but instead requires “assiduous training.” Indeed, even when the actor is not moving at all, Zeami claims it is the actor’s focus on his own expressive “inner tension” or “inner state of control” in performance that gives life to the performance (Ze, p. 97). The actor’s ability to “keep his consciousness of that inner tension” even when he is not saying or doing anything is what makes such moments “when nothing happens” nonetheless full of theatrical power and meaning.³⁴ Indeed, self-consciousness for Zeami is more generally essential to fine performance, since artistic mastery is primarily a mastery of self through self-understanding: “If an actor really wants to become a master, he cannot simply depend on his skill in dance and gesture. Rather, mastery seems to depend on the actor’s own state of self-understanding and the sense of style with which he has been blessed” (Ze, p. 90).

If the actor thus needs enhanced critical self-consciousness and self-monitoring to achieve true excellence, how does he achieve it? How does one acquire the extraordinary skill to be attentively conscious of the bodily action one performs, one’s inner feeling or image as one performs it, the reaction of the audience, and also the image one’s audience has of one performing that includes the appearance of how one looks from the back and other dimensions of one’s appearance that one cannot logically see (say, the expression of one’s own eyes)? Zeami answers, of course, that this requires assiduous training. But what precisely constitutes the nature, basis, or direction of such training? Zeami does not reveal the secret; he was an esoteric thinker, whose texts were not even meant to be circulated beyond his acting troop.³⁵ Traditional meditative traditions

have developed a number of techniques for developing skill in self-monitoring and heightened, perspicacious self-consciousness, some of which should have been known to Zeami from his close relationship to Zen Buddhism. Yet none of those seem designed to address the most mysterious feat of self-consciousness that Zeami demands of the actor, that of seeing one’s appearance from behind as one’s audience sees it. Let us conclude this article by briefly considering three possible ways to help explain this mysterious secret, relying not on special textual or other evidence from Zeami’s time or from the inner circle of continuing Nō tradition, but instead on our own philosophical imaginations together with some recent discoveries in neuroscience.

v

At least three different strategies might explain how the actor can share his audience’s vision of himself and grasp his visual appearance from behind though he cannot really see it with his physical eyes.³⁶ The first might involve a program of training with mirrors. By looking through a properly configured set of mirrors, an actor could see how his back looks in various postures. Then by noting the proprioceptive sensations he has in the different postures, he could consequently associate or correlate the different visual looks with different proprioceptive feelings.³⁷ Through a rigorous program of such associative training, the actor then should be able to infer from his proprioceptive feelings what his posture from the back would look like in actual performance (without using any mirrors), even though he does not strictly see himself from the back. This transmodal training through vision and proprioception would be significantly aided by the presence of underlying neurological links between these sense modalities. Proprioception and vision are linked, for example, through the vestibular system, which, in governing balance, integrates information about head position and oculomotor information about eye movements and proprioceptive information about the rest of the body.³⁸ Proprioception and vision are also linked through the visuo-motor mirror-neuron system. The visuo-motor mirror neurons discharge both when an individual performs a particular action of motor movement and when the individual simply sees such actions done by others. Such neurons can help explain our natural abilities

to imitate and understand others and to communicate with them. But they also provide a way to explain our basic powers of integrating visual and motor-proprioceptive perceptions.³⁹

A second strategy would be more “other-oriented” or transpersonal. It would require someone else assuming the actor’s postures and movements while the actor (taking the audience’s role) would observe them from behind, and would empathetically appreciate them and simulate them in his mind. Notions of empathetic perception and simulation are no longer merely appeals to vague romantic notions of imagination but are solidly grounded in experimental studies and neurological research. Mental rehearsal or representation of a movement has been shown to activate not only areas of the brain similar to those involved in the movement itself but also to activate muscular and other physiological responses related to such a movement or action.⁴⁰ Moreover, just as recent research in the mirror-neuron system has shown that one’s watching an action leads to activation of brain areas involved in actually performing that movement, so experimental studies in learning have demonstrated that simply observing others repeatedly performing a task of movement can significantly improve the learning observer’s subsequent performance of the task.⁴¹ This means that looking at another actor’s assuming of a posture could stimulate in the observing actor a proprioceptive feel of that action, a felt understanding that the actor could confirm perhaps by then imitating the posture and seeing whether his taking this postural attitude indeed produces that kind of proprioceptive feelings. Through extensive training in associative linking of his visual and proprioceptive images of graceful posture in others and of his proprioceptive feelings in imitating such posture, a skilled actor might be able to intuitively or immediately infer from the proprioceptive feel of his own body what it would look like to spectators observing him, even when they are observing him from the rear.

These two strategies could not be implemented simultaneously by the same actor but could be combined in a sequenced program of training, and both rely on associative training that grounds an inference about one’s postural appearance. Can we speak of such an inference—no matter how immediate and unreflective—as really seeing? Zeami may be speaking metaphorically about one’s mentally seeing what one’s physical eyes cannot see.

But the idea of mirror neurons suggests a third possible strategy, which, though highly speculative and improbable, is worth noting because it would involve a more direct way for realizing Zeami’s idea of the actor’s mind seeing his body even where his eyes cannot see it. If proprioceptive feelings of posture could generate through mirror-neuron systems a corresponding visual input of that posture, then, in principle, someone very skilled in vivid proprioceptive awareness might be able to generate a visual image in his mind of how his posture would look not from a physical mirror or the empathetic mirror of looking at others but from his own proprioceptive self-observation of his posture or movement. So rigorous training in acute proprioceptive self-awareness might, ideally, enable Zeami’s actor to immediately grasp and represent to consciousness the visual effect of his body, even from behind.

This strategy may seem particularly far-fetched because mirror-neuron research connecting the brain’s visual and motor areas has focused on how visual inputs stimulate corresponding motor area brain activation, rather than the other direction. There seem to be no experimental studies of how blind movements with their attendant proprioceptive sensations stimulate visual brain areas, as Vittorio Gallese, a leader in mirror-neuron research, has confirmed. One recent study he coauthored, however, shows “activation of motion-sensitive visual areas during tactile stimulation of participants, who nevertheless kept their eyes closed,” and he thinks that in principle “one should be able to see activation in visual areas after a proprioceptive stimulus, like tendon vibration,” because “multimodal integration is . . . a pervasive functional feature of our brain.”⁴² Of course, such visual activation does not imply the generation of clear, accurate, and aesthetically discerning visual perceptions of what external spectators in the theater would see. So this strategy, like the others, remains a mere hypothesis, and Zeami’s secret remains safely kept. But his teaching nonetheless strengthens the case for the value of paying explicitly conscious attention to the body in action.⁴³

RICHARD SHUSTERMAN

College of Arts and Letters
Florida Atlantic University
Boca Raton, Florida 33431

INTERNET: shuster1@fau.edu

1. For initial formulations of this project, see Richard Shusterman, *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life* (New York: Routledge, 1997); "Somaesthetics: A Disciplinary Proposal," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 57 (1999): 299–313; *Performing Live* (Cornell University Press, 2000). For elaborations and critical discussions of somaesthetics, see, for example, Martin Jay, "Somaesthetics and Democracy: Dewey and Contemporary Body Art," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 36 (2002): 55–69; Eric Mullis, "Performative Somaesthetics," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 40 (2006): 104–117; Shannon Sullivan, "Transactional Somaesthetics," in her *Living Across and Through Skins* (Indiana University Press, 2001); Cressida Heyes, "Somaesthetics for the Normalized Body," in her *Self-Transformations* (Oxford University Press, 2007); and Wojciech Malecki, "Von nicht diskursiver Erfahrung zur Somästhetik," *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 56 (2008): 677–690.

2. I should note that there are apparently also different levels of consciousness during sleep. In non-REM sleep, "especially early in the night when EEG slow waves are prevalent," there seems to be a much lower level of consciousness or sense of experience than during "REM sleep late in the night, when dreams become long and vivid and consciousness returns to levels close to those of wakefulness"; see Giulio Tononi and Christof Koch, "The Neural Correlates of Consciousness: An Update," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1124 (2008): 239–261, citations from p. 243. The range of levels of consciousness is further complicated by the fact that different levels of consciousness can be produced through different degrees of induced anesthesia. These different levels include milder anesthetic states that are more conscious than normal states of sleep but also extend to deeply anesthetic states of extreme unresponsiveness, even to painful stimuli (see pp. 243–244). Different degrees of consciousness could also be distinguished in the levels of wakeful (and nonanesthetized) levels of consciousness I describe here, so my classification of levels here is not meant to be entirely exhaustive but rather to suggest the complexity that tends to get flattened in discussions of consciousness.

3. See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 1962), pp. xv–xvi, who affirms phenomenology's essential aim as recapturing that unreflective vision. It is "a philosophy for which the world is always 'already there' before reflection begin—as an inalienable presence; and all its efforts are concentrated upon re-achieving a direct and primitive contact with the world, and endowing that contact with a philosophical status" (pp. vii).

4. For more details on these levels and more generally on somaesthetics, see Richard Shusterman, *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

5. I quote from *The Complete Works of Plato*, ed. John Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), pp. 56–57. Plato offers a much more balanced account in *Timaeus* and the *Laws*, where certain forms of somatic cultivation are recommended.

6. Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 191.

7. See Immanuel Kant, in Benno Erdmann, eds., *Reflexionen Kants zur Kritischen Philosophie* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1992), pp. 68–69 (my translation);

and *The Conflict of the Faculties*, trans. Mary Gregor (University of Nebraska Press, 1992), pp. 177–189. In *The Conflict of the Faculties*, Kant describes hypochondria as a "sort of melancholia" (*Grillenkrankheit*) defined by "the weakness of abandoning oneself despondently to general morbid feelings" that do not point to a definite bodily malfunction but are usually associated with or produced by anxious attention to bodily sensations of unease or unhealthy discomfort. Noting constipation and flatulence as such somatic conditions of discomfort, he confesses his own "natural disposition to hypochondria because of [his] flat and narrow chest, which leaves little room for the movement of the heart and lungs," thus engendering an oppressive feeling in the chest. But insisting on the power of the mind "to master its morbid feelings merely by a firm resolution" of the will, Kant claims he was able to cure this morbidity by simply refusing to pay attention to the discomforting somatic feeling that promoted it, "by diverting [his] attention from this feeling" (pp. 187, 189).

8. I address these and other charges against enhanced somatic awareness in *Body Consciousness*.

9. William James, "The Gospel of Relaxation," in *Talks to Teachers on Psychology and to Students on Some of Life's Ideals* (New York: Dover, 1962), pp. 99, 109.

10. William James, *The Principles of Psychology* ([1894] Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 1128.

11. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Northwestern University Press, 1964), pp. 78, 89; hereafter S.

12. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, pp. 90–91.

13. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Northwestern University Press, 1968), p. 148.

14. See especially "Beneath Interpretation," in *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992) and "Somatic Experience," in *Practicing Philosophy*.

15. Moreover, as Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu have argued, diverse regimes and institutions of power seek to preserve and extend their power over us by instilling in us bodily habits of docility and compliance that can be bad for us in a different sense than that we ordinarily ascribe to bad habits. Such habits of compliance (which tend to be socially endorsed as good habits) are bad because they weaken our powers of resistance and thus reinforce our uncritical subservience to powers that effectively dominate us in unfortunate ways.

16. Nor can we rely on mere trial and error to form new habits, since the sedimentation process would likely be too slow and most likely be inclined to repeat the bad habit unless that habit was critically thematized in explicit consciousness for correction.

17. John Dewey, *The Middle Works*, vol. 11 (Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), p. 352.

18. Roger Ames and Henry Rosemont Jr., trans., *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine, 1998), Book 1:4.

19. D. C. Lau, trans., *Mencius* (London: Penguin, 1970), pp. 154, 155. J. Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*, 3 volumes (Stanford University Press, 1988–1994), Vol. 1, pp. 152, 154; hereafter X.

20. Its legendary founder Laozi claims, for instance: "He who loves his body more than dominion over the empire

can be given the custody of the empire"; *Lao Tzu*, trans. D. C. Lau (London: Penguin, 1963), p. 17. I use the more contemporary *pinyin* transliteration for Chinese names and terms (such as Laozi), except when citing translated works that use the older Wade-Giles transliteration system (such as Lao-Tzu). In quotations from such works in the body of the text I convert Chinese terms and names to pinyin, while placing the Wade-Giles transliteration in brackets. Daoist somatic cultivation included special breathing exercises, dietetics, gymnastics, and sexual disciplines. For more details on this subject, see Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 2 (Cambridge University Press, 1956), and R. H. van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

21. Zhuangzi apparently lived in the latter half of the 4th century B.C., and the book bearing his name is usually thought to be at least partly written by him and to date from around that time, though some date it slightly later. The founding text of Daoism, the *Laozi* or (as it later became more commonly known) the *Daodejing*, is attributed to Laozi of the 6th century B.C., allegedly an older contemporary of Confucius but now thought by most experts to be an entirely legendary figure. There is considerable controversy about the dating of *Daodejing*, some putting it in the 6th century, most in the 4th century. For Zhuangzi, I use the translation of Burton Watson, *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu* (Columbia University Press, 1968), p. 133; hereafter this work is designated Z.

22. *Dōgen's Manuals of Zen Meditation*, trans. Carl Bielefeldt (University of California Press, 1988), p. 181.

23. *The Book of Lieh-tzu*, trans. A. C. Graham (Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 32; hereafter L. As Graham notes (L, p. 1), the book bears the name of a famous Daoist sage mentioned by Zhuangzi but whose "historicity is doubtful" and whose alleged dates of existence are also very unclear, "some indications pointing to 600, others to 400 B.C." Graham (L, p. xiii) dates the book "not much earlier than its commentary by Chang Chan (c. A.D. 370)."

24. Lau, trans. *Lao Tzu*, chaps. 33, 72, pp. 38, 79.

25. See, for example, the self-monitoring implied in the following questions of chapter 10: "In carrying about your more spiritual and more physical aspects and embracing their oneness./ Are you able to keep them from separating?/ In concentrating your *qi* and making it pliant./ Are you able to become the newborn babe?/ In scrubbing and cleansing your profound mirror [i.e., the mind]/ Are you able to rid it of all imperfections?" I here use the translation of Roger Ames and David Hall, *Daodejing: "Making This Life Significant": A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), p. 90.

26. The concept of *wuwei* does not imply mere passive quiescence or inaction, but rather a mode of action that is not forced, willful, or burdened with effortful striving. I use the translation of the "Neiye" by Harold Roth, in his *Original Tao: Inward Training (Nei-yeh) and the Foundations of Taoist Mysticism* (Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 7. The translated passages I cite are from pp. 54 and 82.

27. More generally, a pure feeling of one's body alone is an abstraction. One always feels something of the external world, though one may not notice it explicitly until one attends to it. Even if I lie down and close my eyes and focus on feeling my body only in itself, I will feel the surface on which I am lying; even if I try focusing on my internal organs, I cannot escape feeling the force of gravity on them

(or, for example, the air that I take into my lungs). For more on these points, see *Body Consciousness*.

28. In the same way, the catcher of cicadas must not only have his attention solely on them, but he also must already have learned how to "hold [his] body . . . and hold [his] hand as steady as a branch on a withered tree" (L, p. 45).

29. See Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, pp. 65–66, and my more detailed account of his view in *Body Consciousness*, chap. 2.

30. On such matters of learning-based brain plasticity, which is now widely recognized to occur in the fully adult brain (rather than only in earlier stages of development), see B. Draganski and A. May, "Training-Induced Structural Changes in the Adult Human Brain," *Behavioural Brain Research* 192 (2008): 137–142; and Norman Doidge, *The Brain That Changes Itself* (New York: Viking, 2007).

31. Numerous studies have demonstrated that mental practice through explicitly imagining, visualizing, or mentally rehearsing the activity or steps of performing an action has a significant positive effect on performance and improves the learning process. See, for example, Stefan Vogt, "On Relations between Perceiving, Imagining, and Performing in the Learning of Cyclical Movement Sequences," *British Journal of Psychology* 86 (1995): 191–216; A. Pascual-Leone et al., "Modulation of Motor Responses Evoked by Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation During the Acquisition of Fine Motor Skills," *Journal of Neurophysiology* 74 (1995): 1037–1045; and J. Driskell et al., "Does Mental Practice Enhance Performance?" *Journal of Applied Psychology* 79 (1974): 481–489. Explicit mental representation of motor activity can even lead to an increase in muscle strength for performing the action. See G. Yue and K. J. Cole, "Strength Increases from the Motor Program: Comparison of Training With Maximal Voluntary and Imagined Muscle Contractions," *Journal of Neurophysiology* 67 (1992): 1114–1123.

32. Zeami, "A Mirror Held to the Flower (*Kakyō*)," in *On the Art of the Nō Drama: The Major Treatises of Zeami*, trans. J. T. Rimer and Y. Masakazu (Princeton University Press, 1983), p. 79; hereafter Ze.

33. "To repeat again, an actor must come to have an ability to see himself as the spectators do, grasp the logic of the fact that the eyes cannot see themselves, and find the skill to grasp the whole—left and right, ahead and behind. If an actor can achieve this, his peerless appearance will be as elegant as that of a flower or a jewel and will serve as a living proof of his understanding" (Ze, p. 81).

34. Though Zeami affirms that the actor must also direct his concentration to what in the artwork precedes and follows the actor's inner tension of doing nothing in a way "that transcends his own consciousness," this concentration still involves the artist's mental mastery of consciousness, described as "connecting all the arts through one intensity of mind" (Ze, p. 97).

35. Zeami and his son-in-law Kamparu Zenchiku (1405–1468), to whom he entrusted his Nō writings, describe them as "a secret" that "must not be shown carelessly to others" and particularly "should not be shown to actors from other troupes" (Ze, p. 110).

36. I continue to use the male gender in this discussion because in the Nō tradition of Zeami's time the actors were exclusively male, though they often played women's roles. Of course, the general strategies I discuss could be similarly applied with women actors.

37. For insightful discussion of the aesthetic and affective dimensions of proprioception, see Barbara Montero, "Proprioception as an Aesthetic Sense," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 64 (2006): 230–242; and Jonathan Cole and Barbara Montero, "Affective Proprioception," *Janus Head* 9 (2007): 299–317.

38. Moreover, as vision is affected by vestibular stimulation (for example, through rotation or shaking of the head), so vestibular neurons respond to proprioceptive and optokinetic stimuli. People with problems of the vestibular organs of the inner ear can use visual information to help maintain their balance, while, conversely, in conditions where normal visual information and vestibular information are denied, other proprioceptive or tactile input can help determine one's sense of posture. For more on the intermodal linkage of the visual and proprioceptive system, see J. R. Lackner and P. Zio, "Aspects of Body Self-Calibration," *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 4 (2000): 279–282; "Vestibular, Proprioceptive, and Haptic Contributions to Spatial Organization," *Annual Review of Psychology* 56 (2005): 115–147; and Shaun Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (Oxford University Press, 2005).

39. See, for example, G. Rizzolatti and L. Craighero, "The Mirror Neuron System," *Annual Review of Neuroscience* 27 (2004): 169–192; and V. Gallese et al., "Action Recognition in the Premotor Cortex," *Brain* 119 (1996): 593–609.

40. See Alain Berthoz, *The Brain's Sense of Movement* (Harvard University Press, 2000); see also G. Yue and K. J. Cole, "Strength Increases from the Motor Program: Comparison of Training with Maximal Voluntary and Imagined Muscle Contractions."

41. See Vogt, "On Relations between Perceiving, Imagining, and Performing in the Learning of Cyclical Movement Cycles," pp. 209–213.

42. E-mail message from V. Gallese, May 29, 2008. The article is S. J. H. Ebisch et al., "The Sense of Touch: Embodied Simulation in a Visuotactile Mirroring Mechanism for Observed Animate or Inanimate Touch," *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 20 (2008): 1–13.

43. I thank my friend Professor Aoki Takao of Hiroshima University (where I was Visiting Professor in 2002–2003) for first introducing me to Nō theater and for improving my understanding of Zeami's writings and terminology.

Copyright of *Journal of Aesthetics & Art Criticism* is the property of Blackwell Publishing Limited and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.