

Joanna Maria Szumańska

Theater in Łazienki. Intercorporeality of Stanisław August and the performative aspect of the court

Summary

This dissertation examines the intercorporeality of the last king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Stanisław August, and the performativity of the royal court. Łazienki is analyzed as a place where human and non-human actors meet. The introduction outlines the topic of the dissertation and explains its structure. The first chapter describes in detail the research methods: phenomenology, hermeneutics, aesthetics of performativity, cultural poetics and elements of new materialism. The author explains here why she decided to use Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept of intercorporeality (phenomenology) and some themes of Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutics (body/subject, identity and otherness). She also shows that phenomenological and hermeneutic analysis is exceptionally powerful and inspiring when it enters into alliances with performance studies, cultural poetics and elements of new materialism. In the second chapter, titled *Parallel Images: Theater and the Library*, theatrical imagery is juxtaposed with the library and encyclopedia as two faces of the same idea, according to the observations of William N. West. Following his lead, the catalog of the reference library of Stanisław August in Łazienki is analyzed in terms of aesthetics and theatrics, in order to show in the following parts of the dissertation that it was the library of the Palace on the Isle, the architecture of Łazienki theaters and their decorations, and broadly understood court theatrical items that reflected the king's thought horizon, and not the staged performances from the period of his reign. The third chapter discusses the construction of Poniatowski's identity through his aesthetic and theatrical education and his youthful Grand Tour. The letters of the king and the famous Parisian salonnière, Marie-Thérèse Geoffrin, were subjected to a detailed analysis. By looking for crucial moments in this correspondence, it was shown how the monarch, his friend and mentor, and encyclopedists built their images through this medium. The work in this part is based on sources published in the second half of the 19th century, which are known to researchers, but have not been previously analyzed in terms of intercorporeality. In the next chapter, entitled *The other Eden, demi-paradise*, court scenes are

presented in the garden seat of the king. It is also shown how Stanisław August built his image through the selection of plays and figures of playwrights, and how he imposed his literary canon on his contemporaries. The last, fifth, chapter proposes the concept of Łazienki as a Foucauldian heterotopia and proves that it was mainly the figure of the king and court theaters that made the summer residence near Warsaw a heterotopia. Finally, it shows how the figure of an intertwined knot of influences, meanings and signs is realized in them.