

Foreword of the Issue

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Scholarly approaches to narration in performing arts and visual arts have focused on identifying an array of narrative structures driven by plot or characters. However, Mieke Bal's seminal *Narratology* (1985) separates the study of "elements" (events, actors, places of the story) from "aspects" (presentation of those elements by means of the text). In Gerald Prince's (1982) words this opposition arises in questions of "how" against questions of "what", with an emphasis on the fact that the latter has garnered significantly more attention than the first. More recently, Daniel Punday (2003) proposed "corporeal narratology" as an interpretive method focusing on textual features of the human body in relation to the other narrative elements. In line with the Posthuman Paradigm, Punday's "corporeal hermeneutics" contradicts the soul-body dualism approaching the body not as a mere prop, as an inanimate object but as a vital agent.

At the same time, inspired by the way philosophers such as Merleau-Ponty, Gilles Deleuze or Jean-Luc Nancy take into consideration "a bodily knowledge", contemporary dance scholars and choreographers such as Martin Nachbar, Susanne Traub, Mathilde Monnier, Deuffert & Plischke, William Forsythe, promote abstract dance techniques centred on the body itself, with minor interest in the classical rules of storytelling and representing

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characters. The digital age of virtual reality/body/identity redefines the issue of disembodiment, the promise to lift us beyond our individual bodies. Steven Shapiro, the English translator of Deleuze, reveals some hidden perils of this tempting promise, analysing the fluid, mutable and constructed nature of the virtual body, which nevertheless has become both an essential part of our digital persona and a key figure of our recent narratives. Lev Manovich, the father of new media art and former student of Mieke Bal, describes the structure of these digital narratives as non-linear and relates them with the replacement of the modern linear narrative with the database, the postmodern archive of photographs, documents, descriptions.

To conclude, the advent of the virtual body is related with the birth of the hyper-narrative, the non-linear story that enable *the space navigation* of the computer games' player and make possible the encounter of the user with digital interfaces and *databases*. Thus, we invited scholars and practitioners to explore and contribute to the study of the human/human-like body as prevalent in relation to the narrative world/space/plot in performing and visual arts.

The first section of the journal covers an extended range of research fields, from painting, theatre, photography, cinema and television to new media. Ioan Pop-Curşeu, together with Rareş Stoica, examine the corporeal duality of the witch in a rich selection of works of art belonging to the fields of painting, literature and cinema. Daria Ioan's article explores the aesthetics of supernatural subjects as represented in photography and film. My own contribution restrains to film, presenting an overview of articles printed in the interwar Romanian newspapers regarding the status of the actor in the emerging sound cinema. Alina-Gabriela Mihalache revisits the first stagings of Eugène Ionesco's play *Rhinoceros* within the post-theatre paradigm. Dana Monah demonstrates the way in which concepts belonging to the historical avant-gardes shape two performances based on Shakespeare's *Richard III*, in order to place the main character above the events and to bring forward the image of his body. Dana Rufolo completes the articles dedicated to theatre with an insight on street theatre, more precisely staging street theatre on the topic of human rights, in multicultural urban environments.

Further in this first section, Flavius Floare confronts the film theory of body horror with the construction of the altered body in the television adaptation of the video game *The Last of Us*. Adelina Bulibaşa extends the topics of the issue to transmedia, detailing the process behind the *In-Between Worlds: Myths, Creatures, Traditions* exhibiton, as experienced from the standpoint of project coordinator. Last but not least, Alexandru Sterian discusses modern digital media in an attempt to address key issues regarding the reconfiguration of the sign and the message.

The second section consists in an essay and an interview. Practitioner Oana Pocan approaches the vocal training of the actor, more precisely the use of language disorders in creating a comic Commedia dell'Arte character. In addition, an interview of theatre and film actress Maia Morgenstern, taken by Sorin-Dan Boldea, provides an intimate exploration of the craft of acting, and a second interview with Çağlar Yiğitoğulları, taken by Ramona Tripa, brings into our attention the active, productive minds and bodies during the process of creation, focusing on a performative shamanic *Quest* at the National Theatre in Cluj.

The third and final section is dedicated to reviews. Ştefana Pop-Curşeu sheds light on the Japanese theatre as found in the Romanian contemporary theatrical landscape, both in artistic experiences and teaching practices, as demonstrated at the 2022 edition of the Sibiu International Theatre Festival. Cristina Pop-Tiron ends this issue of the journal by presenting the *Human Presence in a Digital World* showcase, consisting in the *Anxiety* and the *Jungle Machine* digital interactive performances.

