

Bernátek, Martin; Pavlišová, Jitka

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Editorial

Bodies in Archival Situations

For more than a decade, the relationship between the body and the archive has been one of the most important resources in Performance and Dance Studies for thinking about cultural techniques and their relationship with memory, politics, and public institutions. The arising questions and research challenges may, on the one hand, lead back to the seminal works of Rebecca Schneider (e.g., SCHNEIDER 2011) and her reconsideration of the theatrical event, whose ontology extends beyond a strictly non-reproducible presence. On the other hand, the transitory nature of performance emerges as a subject of inquiry, with tensions between presence and absence, the ‘choreopolitics’ and body as archive analysed by André Lepecki (2010). The concept of ephemera has also been widely discussed in the field of Performance Studies in recent decades regarding intensified mediatisation of culture in general and specifically in theatre and performance.

Both approaches similarly reconsider the traditional understanding of what the archive means, being part of a broad stream of cultural analysis that employs the concept of power as a means of the production of knowledge by Michel Foucault along with his notion of counter-memory. The relationship between corporeality and the experience of power and memory has also been widely discussed in Queer Studies, e.g., in the writings of José Esteban Muñoz (1999), in Trauma Studies and in Holocaust Studies, and conceptualised, e.g., in the philosophy of Giorgio Agamben (2002).

Those issues have also been discussed in Theatre and Dance Studies especially in relation to the thinking concerning staging and re-presentation of history in performance, and by reflecting the practice of reenactments. Apart from Freddie Rokem’s *Performing History* (2000) and Marvin Carlson’s *The Haunted Stage* (2003), several newer publications already demarcate the field of research (ROSELT and OTTO 2012; FRANKO 2017). Recently, the political dimension of corporeality and cultural performances in relation to memory and historical narratives has been examined, e.g., by Dorota

Sajewska (2020). Events, such as the conference *On Reenactment: Concepts, Methodologies, Tools* (2020), may be seen as examples of the constitution of the specific field of Reenactment Studies.

This issue of *Theatralia* foregrounds practices and concepts that entangle body, performance, and archive. Its aim, as well as ambitions of its topic-related contributions, is to reflect on the body as a hybrid medium in between presence and absence, between emancipation and normativity, between historical and individual traumas, that operates also beyond performance events in various audio-visual media.

Diverse aspects of speaking about (our) bodies, foregrounding the corporeality as a site of cultural memory and as an interface between past and present, included in the current issue, highlight that we hardly can think about the body as a singular, bounded unit. Bodies are to be thought rather through relations, that means in their multiplicity. Concurrently, the archive – as far as performances are concerned – is not a disembodied and value-neutral organisation of sources and documents, but rather a specific constellation with a performative agency that operates on a material and immaterial level. Our task as editors was to explore links between these two unstable, dynamic ‘objects’ and collect essays that locate their inquiry and selection of examples between corporeality and the archive, and into performative, cultural, and artistic practices of embodiment, mediation, reconstruction, and re-presentation of the past.

Two results may be brought out, without necessity to give them a stamp of a conclusion. Firstly, relations between performance, bodies, and archives are strongly reflexive. As the very notion of performativity (namely in the perspective of Jacques Derrida or Judith Butler) implies, self-referentiality and iterability as processes that happened in time and in specific relation to convention. Thus, relation between events carried out through bodies, and its pretext, or ‘support’ (see BUTLER 2017: 179–181) has a strong self-reflexive agency, which may also emphasise and make visible acts of translation and/or ruptures between certain socio-cultural regulations and the way of their performing. This may be the case of individual narration on body shaming in podcasts, exposure of suffering bodies in action art, or in historical and artistic reenactments. Repetitions, reenactments, and reconstructions, discussed in the actual issue, set up a constellation where questions related to production of normative patterns, processes of canonisation, interpretation, and commemoration of the past may be revealed. This aspect has also a strong political dimension, since it makes sensible the power constellation related to management of memory, access to archives, constitution of hegemonic historical narratives and canons. But such a self-reflective mode of performativity also opens the chance for contra-hegemonic action, dissent, protest, and (strong or weak) emancipation and detournement on an individual and collective level.

Secondly, speaking about the body as an archive, or even as a contra-archive, demands for specific sensibility for relations and interconnectedness between various aspects attributed to bodies and archives, no matter the shape and support they have. The concept of ‘body as archive’, discussed in the following essays, implies the transgression of common binaries used in the Humanities, such as present/absent, amateur/professional, archive/witness, ephemeral/reproduced, hegemonic/subal-

tern. The research of such a net of relations asks for a terminology that foregrounds ‘webs’, ‘entanglements’, ‘constellations’, and ‘dispositifs’. It also implies emphasis on processuality of cultural practices and, in this respect, stresses using terms such as canonisation instead of ‘canon’, memorisation instead of ‘memory’, archiving instead of ‘archive’. Therefore, thinking about bodies as archives and performance as a certain historical pretext means to reconstruct its specific ‘archival situations’ as an active force that regulates relations between all heterogeneous ensembles of discursive and non-discursive elements. Such a perspective is pursued by Susanne Foellmer (see the Guest section).

The three essays in the main Yorick section in the volume discuss bodies not only in three various historical and ‘archival constellations’ but also in different media: performance art, theatrical production, and podcast.

In the opening essay ‘Günter Brus: A Walk Through Totality’, the work of Günter Brus is examined through concepts from Trauma Studies. **Tomáš Kubart** analyses the actions of this member of Viennese Actionism with a concept of ‘recurring trauma’ theorised by Patrick Duggan and with the notion of biopolitics as developed by Giorgio Agamben. He also uses the theory of the Fascist Man by Klaus Thelewit to explain and interpret provocative actions of Brus, namely his *Wiener Spaziergang* [Vienna Walk] as a response to Austrian war traumas. Kubart sees Brus as a bearer of individual trauma, social trauma of the Austrian post-war ‘fatherless generation’, and also of a ‘double wound’ of recurring trauma.

Dorota Sosnowska in her essay ‘*Blasted* 1999. Sarah Kane’s Body Against the Archive’ also accentuates the body as a medium of performing historical trauma on various levels. On the case of Polish staging of Sarah Kane’s *Blasted* in 1999 by Paweł Wodziński and Towarzystwo Teatralne [Theatrical Society], Sosnowska looks at, according to her, one of the most important ‘dead bodies’ in the archive of Polish contemporary theatre – Sarah Kane’s body. She combines concepts of body-archive and necroperformance, developed by Dorota Sajewska with the notion of destructive plasticity by Catherine Malabou to discuss this staging in relation to the ideological supremacy of liberal democratic capitalism established in the 1990s in Poland. She also pays attention to a presentation and representation of the ‘dead corpse’ in *Blasted*, specifically in relation to its author Sarah Kane and her suicide, and the performance of the role of Cate by actress Beata Bandurska and her small but emancipatory gesture of cutting her hair for the performance.

In her text ‘Tendons, Meat, Fat. The Invisible Body in the Liminal Space of Podcasting’ **Andrea Hanáčková** presents how questions of corporeality and body shaming are manifested, discussed, and framed in the contemporary podcast scene. By comparing English-Italian podcast *The Meat* and Czech podcasts *Sádlo* [The Lard] and *Hrana* [The Edge], she analyses the specifics of this auditory medium in relation to intimate forms of testimony, self-reflexivity, and also examination of mechanisms of power in relation to the body. For this approach she uses the concept of a podcast as a liminal space by Dario Llnares and combines it with the understanding of the discipline and political

technology of the body, studied by Michel Foucault. Podcast, the medium ‘without images and precise contours’, thus allows experiments with sound, narrative structures, and with performing closeness between the author and the listener.

We, editors, contribute to the volume with two ‘reflexive’ texts. In the dialogue titled ‘Tracing Dance: Expanding Archives, Contemporary Witnesses, and other Modes of Re-Producing Embodied Knowledge’, with the German dance and theatre scholar **Susanne Foellmer**, **Jitka Pavlišová** discusses current focuses, new points of view, and modifications of the concepts ‘body as archive’ and ‘dance as archive’ in contemporary dance and performance. These concepts have been extensively thematised and analysed in the field of Dance Studies since the so-called archival turn in dance. Perception of dance as a specific type of knowledge and cognition mediated by the body as a specific type of memory (amongst its other aspects) is still a great challenge for the Humanities in terms of research strategies and perspectives. And this is the topic that becomes one of the main emphasises of the interview, along with the importance of contemporary witnesses for investigating the dance history and its self-reflection. Further on, Foellmer reflects upon expanding the ‘archive’ within Humanities and thinks critically about what exactly the term ‘archive’ generates and implies in the field of dance. Last but not least, the interview touches on the virulent topic of dance canon and possibilities of its rethinking and reconstitution.

At the same time, we are very pleased to present you the reprint of **Susanne Foellmer’s** study on the thematic focus of this *Theatralia* issue, ‘The Archival Turn in Dance/Studies. Reflections on (Corporeal) Archives and Documents’. Being the expert *par excellence* in this field, she focuses on transfers of the originally philosophical concepts discussing ‘archive’ into the dance science discourse. Through several specific analyses, she subsequently points to various examples of these concepts usage in the field of dance/Dance Studies, and debates some disputable aspects connected with this prism of viewing.

Martin Bernátek reviewed *The Routledge Handbook of Reenactment Studies*, edited by Vanessa Agnew, Jonathan Lamb, and Juliane Tomann. By this reflection, the newly constituted field of Reenactment Studies is presented from the perspective of Theatre and Performance Studies. Here historians, theatre and dance scholars, religionists, and other professions as well as artists meet to research various ways of dealing with historical events, commemoration, and its various political, ethical, and aesthetic aspects. Reenactment thus can be understood as an object as well as a method of inquiry that also opens up the transmedial perspective in studying performance in relation to archival situations, e.g., in TV series, VR simulations, or digital games.

Two films by Berlin-based Serbian director Marta Popivoda (*Yugoslavia, How Ideology Moved Our Collective Body*; *Landscape of Resistance*) reviewed by **Dáša Čiripová** in the article ‘Political Body in Relation to Memory and History’ may serve as an example of such an entanglement between individual and collective identity, witness, the cultural archive. As well as the article by Dorota Sosnowska, this contribution emphasises archival constellations related to the trauma of post-socialist countries from the former Eastern Bloc.

Lukáš Kubina in his review of Marcela A. Fuentes' book *Performance Constellations: Networks of Protest and Activism in Latin America* also discusses the concept 'embodied memory' in relation to Diana Taylor's concept of the repertoire, and 'online activism' in relation to performance and performativity. Fuentes based her concept of 'performance constellation' on writings of Taylor and uses it to understand specific temporality of the protest happening on social media and to grasp the ability to mobilise protesters on different temporal levels.

Finally, the Archive, which is already an established section of the *Theatralia* journal, significantly contributes to the topic. Both texts offer different perspectives on the aspects of corporeality, testimony, and (personal as well as collective) histories. Theatre director, actor trainer, and historian **Jane Woollard** uses the concepts of repertoire and performance as embodied archives in her personal reflection on her mother's practice as a singer. In her text 'My Mother's Voice: "A view from ground level, in the thick of things"' a specific vocal technique, related to German Lieder and opera is understood as embodied archive, and explores complicated relation to personal, family, and cultural histories related to her mother's love of singing. A strong female personality, issues of education and knowledge sharing, and a reconstruction of histories via embodied archives of the performer are the subject of the article by **Hanna Veselovska** and **Viktor Ruban**. Under the title 'Reconstructing the Glorious Past: Bronislava Nijinska's School of Movement' they describe the school operated by this great persona of ballet in Kyiv from 1919 to 1921, as well as the reconstruction of Nijinska's pedagogical and creative methods by Kyiv-based group of performers and researchers led by Ruban in 2021. The article discusses materials used for the reconstruction that took the form of a lecture-performance and pays attention to the visuality of Nijinska's performances and her collaborators like Alexandra Exter and Vadym Meller.

Besides its main scope, the volume comprises other contributions to contemporary theatre scholarship. **Vojtěch Poláček** in his essay (in Czech) analyses examples of so-called Rondocubism in Czech interwar stage design and presents findings of his search for this special mix of modernist and traditional stylistic elements in the work of Vlastislav Hofmann, Ladislav Machoň, Václav Špála, or František Kysela. The text is accompanied by rich illustrations. Scenography is also a topic of a contribution by **Jitka Ciampi Matulová** in the Review section. She presents (in Czech) a new collective monograph on the architect, stage and graphic designer, and writer Emil Pirchan. The book, published in German, comprises texts on the main areas of his interest.

Several contributions in the Review section – among mentioned articles – focus on actual publications related to drama. **Ondřej Sládek** reviewed (in Czech) the first Czech monograph on Czech so-called 'problem drama' of the 1960s written by David Kroča. Sládek appreciates mainly the strong connection between theoretical and analytical parts of the book and interpretations made on this ground. **Aleš Kolařík** presents (in English) another novel contribution to the understanding of Czech drama, which is the anthology (in Czech) *Neoficiální drama z komunistické totality* [Unofficial Drama of Communist Totalitarianism] by Lenka Jungmannová, published in the Drama edition of the Institute of Czech Literature of the Czech Academy of Sciences. The anthology also

offers a classification of the dramatic forms of those unofficial dramas and Jungmanová in her contextual chapter describes the stylistic and formal aspects of those specific and mainly not well-known texts. **Šárka Havlíčková Kysová** comments (in Czech) on the new translation of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* by Filip Krajník, a representative of the youngest generation of translators. She emphasises the fact that Krajník accompanied the translation with an essay that discusses possibilities as well as stereotypes in staging *Hamlet*. The Events section of the volume includes a report by **Hana Pavlišová** (in Czech), from the launch of Krajník's book. With this book and event also the new edition of the Větrné mlýny Brno publishing house, called William, started. In another report, **Tereza Turzíková** looks back at the fifth EASTAP conference held in May 2022 in Milan under the title *Theatrical Mind: Authorship, Staging and Beyond*. Besides the main programme she pays attention to the Emerging Scholars Forum and also to a series of panels dedicated to digital technologies in theatre or to problems related to the digital archiving of theatre performance.

The work on this volume started in time with unclear perspective on the end of COVID-19 and the editorial work was carried through the months after Russia invaded Ukraine, which strongly affected our Ukrainian colleagues Hanna Veselovska and Viktor Ruban. We express deep respect and recognition for their willingness to work professionally under such terrifying conditions and we also express gratitude and support to all Ukrainian people in fighting the Russian aggressor. We wish that all of those who suffer from the war and were forced to leave their homes, families, friends, and colleagues will be met with the open hand of support. We are also very thankful to the *Theatralia* editorial team Eliška Raiterová, Svitlana Shurma, and Šárka Havlíčková Kysová for great help and assistance throughout the editorial process.

Martin Bernátek and Jitka Pavlišová

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