

Introduction to
The Act and the Show:
Performing Arts, Cinema, Psychoanalysis

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This special dossier of *Studia Universitatis Babeș-Bolyai. Dramatica* gathers the **Proceedings of the second edition of the International Conference on Cinema, Theatre and Psychoanalysis** and also the papers of some international researchers interested in the Freudian and the Lacanian psychoanalysis. The conference took place in Cluj-Napoca on October 26-27, 2019, and was organized by Noemina Câmpean and Flaviu Câmpean (Forum of the Lacanian Field in Romania), in collaboration with professor Ioan Pop-Curșeu from the Faculty of Theatre and Film at Babeș-Bolyai University. The theme was *The Act and the Show*, with reference to cinema, theatre and psychoanalysis in the context of the recent cultural transformations. The keynote speaker was José Monseny Bonifasi (Member of EPFCL, AME, Psychoanalyst and Psychiatrist, director IPB, Institut per a la Clinica Psico Social Barcelona, Spain) and the invited speaker was Giovanni Rotiroti (Professor PhD at the L'Orientale University from Naples, Italy).

At a close glance, it is undeniable that *the act* constitutes one of the most solid grounds where performing arts, cinema and psychoanalysis can meet. The act(ing) always supposes an unveiling (even an unmasking) of the subject, but also a *mise-en-scène* of the unconscious. The act freezes hidden tensions and it also serves in the repression of unacceptable desires. Moreover, the act is always double and, consequently, fascinating: transparent and opaque, premeditated and impulsive, controlled and chaotic, submitted to social constraints and free of all pressure. The act concentrates profound psychological meanings and places the subject in a significant encounter with the Other – if not really palpable, at least virtual. The authors brought into discussion different topics concerning the dynamics between the act and the show by reexamining the aforementioned concepts or by approaching

other perspectives that could be of relevance: the theatrical act, the cinematographic act, the theatricalization of the cinematic image, the filmicity of the theatre, theories of the *mise-en-scène*, psychoanalytic theories of acting in theatre and/ or cinema, act and language, the (interior) scene of the actor, the spectator vs. the performance, psychoanalytic theories of the spectatorship.

On the **stage of the unconscious** – an unconscious which, according to Jacques Lacan, brings the theatre into presence – an endless play is played, never repeated in its repetition. We are obviously referring to the second scene as a place of creative imagination, of the miscellanea of signifiers and, perhaps most significantly, a place of dramatic show (Fr. *le spectacle de la représentation théâtrale ou cinématographique*) and catharsis towards which both the gaze and the eye are directed. Theatrical and cinematic practices, in relation to psychoanalysis and to the ritualized ensemble of the psychoanalytic session – very importantly, it puts the subject into act and develops a discovery of the truth similar to that of the Greek tragedy –, propose a raw reality of distant bodies paradoxically unfolding before our eyes. A raw reality covering a spiritual conflict; it is this immutable spiritual conflict which determines the drama – the *blood of our lives today*, as Eugene O'Neill wrote in 1924. At the same time, on the acting stage and on the screen desire, phantasm, anguish, dream, hallucination, censorship, to name just a few, are staged, revealed, interpreted and, why not, subjected to the psychoanalytic technique of transference. In the coincidence of life with both theatre and cinema, two ways of telling/ retelling the world and the self, the subject is exposed through the inquisitive gaze (see, for instance, Sigmund Freud's essay from 1922 *Medusa's Head/ Das Medusenhaupt*, or Michael Powell's film from 1960 *Peeping Tom*). Initially a passive spectator, the subject becomes a deeply involved actor: his personal and original acting constitutes his *jouissance* (Fr., in Lacanian psychoanalysis, the subject attempts to transgress the prohibitions imposed on his enjoyment, to go beyond the pleasure principle... or beyond the pain). Metaphorically, he is a kind of threshold figure, located between interiority and exteriority, where the invisible side of the theatre could be seen cinematically through the ubiquity of the video camera. There is an endless influence, interaction, rewriting and continuous passage between theatre and cinema that points to a hybrid and mysterious dialogue of theatricalization, dramatization, epic transformation, concentration... even distillation (for instance Ingmar Bergman's stage directions concerning the emotions of the actors) and so on. **On the real stage**, something is played, that *is* and *is not* real at the same time, that can be spectacular (*i.e.* picturesque, theatrical, even tremendous, etc.) or intentionally vapid, something related to the actor's dramatic power of *realization* – all this with the hidden cost of transforming the turmoil of psychic life into a drama or an allegory – due to a

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resolvable or an unresolvable conflict –, depending on the subject's own relationship with language. Theatricality, theatricalization, dramatization or filmicity, all these instances urge us to consider the performing arts and the cinema as **arts of act(ing)s**, not arts of forms. As the papers of this dossier will prove, our stake pertains to the original divided text but also to the image subjected to editing – as an eloquent example, take the face in front of the close-up procedure that inevitably refers to the specularity of the show, the specularity from the spectacle as such. Let us think over and over: where else can we find ourselves in a sidereal moment, at the fall of illusions and masks, if not on the empty stage of the unrepresentable, *i.e.* impossible, real?