

Coping with Reality through Storytelling as a Performative Act

In *Somebody Telling Somebody Else: A Rhetorical Poetics of Narrative* (2017), James Phelan suggests a transformative approach to narrative theory, shifting the focus from seeing narrative as a mere structural entity to understanding it as a rhetorical act. In this act, the narrator strategically utilizes storytelling tools to achieve specific goals for specific audiences.

We argue with Phelan that narratives are eventful rhetorical constructs in which the storyteller's choices of content, structure, and style are designed to achieve specific effects and responses from the audience. These narrative choices are particularly poignant in the context of coming to terms with reality – be it personal trauma, societal challenges, or global crises – both from a text-immanent perspective and of the reception by the public.

We also encourage submissions that explore how storytelling, in its eventful rhetorical essence, serves not only as a reflective mirror but also as an active agent in interpreting, coping with and potentially transforming realities - within the text and/or in dialogue with the audience. We are particularly interested in papers that explore, both as case studies and theoretical approaches, the relationship between narrative structure and audience engagement, and the impact of Aristotelian *diegesis-mimesis* opposition or structuralist show-and-tell and the discourse/story problematics within these narratives on social norms and identity narratives. How do stories function as tools for understanding complex experiences? What is the role of the audience in this rhetorical exchange? How do narratives help to cope with personal and collective crises?

Inspired by Phelan's exploration of narrative as a rhetorical process, **the 2024 issue of *Confluente. Texts and Contexts Reloaded*** invites submissions on the theme “Coping with Reality through Storytelling as a Performative Act”. We invite an interdisciplinary dialogue at the intersection of narrative theory, identity narratives in literature and cultural studies, performative teaching techniques, and/or challenges of storytelling by cultural performance.

Contributions may focus on, but are not limited to:

- the role of rhetorical and narrative strategies in storytelling as a coping mechanism.
- Aristotelian *diegesis-mimesis*-opposition or/and the structuralist showing and telling problems.
- audience engagement and response in the face of transformative narratives.
- the impact of narrative structure on perception and understanding of reality.
- comparative studies of narrative techniques in different cultural contexts as a means of coping.
- the influence of digital media and technology on the rhetorical aspects of storytelling.

The articles may be written in **English, French, and German**. Instructions for authors can be found on the journal's webpage:

<http://www.confluente.univoradea.ro/en/notes-to-contributors>

All submissions will undergo a double-blind peer-review process. Authors will receive evaluation reports detailing the outcome.

Please submit your submission proposals, ranging from 200 to 300 words, in both the language of the article and in English, along with 5 to 6 keywords, by **March 15th**. A confirmation of admission will be sent to you by **March 30th**.

The deadline for submitting full articles, which should be between 5,000 and 7,000 words, is **June 1st, 2024**.

The submission proposals and full articles should be emailed to

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Suggested Bibliography:

- Phelan, James. *Somebody Telling Somebody Else: A Rhetorical Poetics of Narrative*. The Ohio State University Press, 2017
- Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. Routledge, 2008.
- Heinen, Sandra and Roy Sommer, eds. *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research*. W. de Gruyter, Berlin, 2009.
- Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. Routledge, 2020.