

Body as Resource of Narrative Communication: An Intersection of Corporeal Narratology with Rhetorical Narratology

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Abstract

As a result of the ‘somatic turn’, studies of the body have gradually permeated many branches of contemporary narratology, among which corporeal narratology was born. This article surveys on the newly emerged discipline of postclassical narratology. It traces the history and key issues of corporeal narratology based on classical narratology, whose current outlook includes character, time/plot, space and differential embodiment. For a modification and expansion of its theoretical frame, corporeal narratological methodology is combined with the narrative communication model in James Phelan’s rhetorical narrative theories. This hybrid model reverses Daniel Punday’s framework based on categorizations in classical narratology. My article also offers a comprehensive interpretative pattern, adopting Punday’s theories while supplementing them. Defined as a special case of Phelan’s Author-Resources-Audience general model, my corporeal narrative communication model aims to provide a panorama for readers to systematically understand the corporeal-related meanings within the two-way narrative communications.

Keywords: *corporeal narratology, Daniel Punday, rhetorical narratology, James Phelan, narrative communication*

Introduction: Before Corporeal Narratology

In 2003, soon after Daniel Punday published his monograph *Narrative Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Narratology*, this newly emerging narrative theory became an important tool for literary criticism. Gerald Prince evoked it as one of the ‘tasks that narratologists are pursuing or should undertake’ in ‘identifying, examining, or reexamining various aspects of narrative’.¹ Another leading figure in narratology, Ansgar Nünning, also lists it as one of the ‘contextualist, thematic, and ideological approaches in literary studies’ among his selection of developments and approaches in narrative studies.² Fifteen years after, the innovative terms in this book like ‘kinetic space’ and ‘general body’ are still popular terms in narrative studies. It is no wonder that both body and narratology are imperative issues

¹ Gerald Prince, ‘Surveying Narratology’, in *What is Narratology?: Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of a Theory*, vol. 1, ed. Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 10.

² Ansgar Nünning, ‘Narratology or Narratologies? Taking Stock of Recent Developments, Critique and Modest Proposals for Future Usages of the Term’, in *What is Narratology: Questions and Answers Regarding the Status of a Theory*, vol. 1, ed. Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2003), 249.

for today's literary criticism, although their convergence does not have a long history.

Before tackling corporeal narratology, it is necessary to review how the modern body enters the field of narratology. During the deconstructionist vogue in the last quarter of the 20th century, the body as a symbol of 'otherness' increasingly began to attract attention. According to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception, which defines the body as both subject and object of perception, the body is granted multiple meanings. In its wake, fast-developing technology and medical science unlocked yet more secrets of the physical body and our conception of the body further departed from its older apprehension as it also became more varied. With the increased interest in the corporeal, the 'somatic society' was born.³ An obvious proof of that is that body as well as the word 'embodiment' began to permeate numerous disciplines. Narrative research on the body first took place with the emergence of the 'narrative turn' in disciplines other than narratology (of which Hélène Cixous's *écriture féminine* is a representative), and it has remained to this day a theory opening onto interdisciplinary study of notions like gender, identity, race, behaviour, cognition, etc.

In 1990s, terms like 'body narrative' were coined and tentatively explored in several works. One such successful study is *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (1993), in which Peter Brooks traces the history of the body in many narrative forms, meanwhile showing us how the body is given multiple layers of narrative meaning within specific historical and social contexts. Some points raised by Brooks served as inspiration for the emergence of corporeal narratology. The first point is the relation between physical body and character's identity. Brooks contends that the body has always been the 'sign of recognition'.⁴ The symbolization of character will end up in the manifestation of some characteristics of the body. In this way, literature cannot be represented without the help of the body agent, and the body also becomes the basic agent for understanding the literary text. Brooks's focus on desire is the second central point, which was already put forward in his earlier book: 'narratives both tell of desire – typically present some story of desire – and arouse and make use of desire as dynamic of signification'.⁵ *Body Work* further illustrates and develops this idea: on the one hand, the desire of the character's body 'appears to hold within itself – as itself – the key to satisfaction, power, and meaning' (*BW*, 8); on the other hand, readers also hold their 'desire for knowledge of that body and its secrets' (*BW*, 8). The 'vector of desire' keeps connecting readers to the narrative text as a case of narrative dynamics. Furthermore, the body is related to the rise of capitalist economy, when it is no longer a simple object of readers' curiosity and desire. The political issue can be detected from a physical body and the body responds to social events as well. In this way, the narrative body is introduced to illustrate non-somatic senses for the first time. Seen nowadays, although Brooks's perspectives contributed significantly as a catalyst to corporeal narratology, they are restricted by the limitation of resources and the selection of theoretical foundations (his statements depending heavily on Freudian theory).

³ Brian S. Turner, *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1984).

⁴ Peter Brooks, *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 4. Hereafter cited as *BW*, with page numbers in the text.

⁵ Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 37.

Corporeal Narratology: Concepts, Issues, Problems

In the 21st century, the body plays multiple roles in a whole range of critical approaches. Widely applied in sociology, psychology, education and medicine, it is finally making its mark in narratology. Bearing in mind classical narratology's 'disengagement with the human body',⁶ Daniel Punday tries to bring the concreteness into the abstractness of classical narratology. Unlike classical narratology, which pursues a universal law that suits all narratives, Punday's corporeal narratology is a more contextualist, 'moderately historical concept' (*NB*, 185). Many of Punday's arguments are based on body/narrative studies that emerged in particular historical periods and are generalized into a trans-historical discourse for the modern narrative. The balance between historical cases and semiotic rules sets a point of departure for corporeal narratology and this interdisciplinary study keeps oscillating between the two. In other words, corporeal narratology has its rules generalized from particular literary or philosophical bodies, then forms transhistorical rules, functions as an interpretative tool for other historical cases, and eventually generates more trans-historical rules.

Corporeal narratology is defined by Punday as an interpretive method which focuses on the *textual features* of human or human-like bodies in narratives in order to discover the relationship between body and narrative elements like the narrative world, character, plot, narrative space, etc., and, therefore, in order to find out the cultural and historical values hidden behind bodies. Corporeal narrative theories are typologies of the body and general rules derived from the its relationships with narrative elements, serving as interpretive toolkits. The concept of corporeality and the discipline of narratology have developed mostly from novels and short stories in modern times. Therefore, the corporeal narrative interpretative methods may not be applicable to older narrative bodies.

However, the typologies or rules are unable to cover all kinds of bodies because of the relatively historical feature of corporeal narratology; scholars could thus only see a relative map of narrative bodies. In Punday's conceptual system, there are four central issues at stake in corporeal narratology: character, plot and time, space, embodiment and narrative authority. The rest of this section will elucidate each of these four issues.

Character is the first important issue on which Punday elaborates. One preliminary stage is to distinguish between body and nonbody. Punday's demarcation of what a 'significant body' is lies in responsiveness and consciousness, which can be defined as 'a human or human-like object who can act on and respond to the environment and be the seat of consciousness, endowed with cultural and familial significance' (*NB*, 58-9). The most challenging area is the 'gray area' between body and nonbody – ghost, angels, robots – and this has aroused critics' interest increasingly ever since the advent of postmodernism (*NB*, 59). These 'incomplete' bodies often straddle categories, between human life and some other area, and carry properties from both. Punday also proposes several common criteria to distinguish types of bodies, including racism, health, personality and gender. Inborn or acquired qualities like humour offer a good reflection of the social or cultural environment, while 'fundamental' properties like gender and race are more connected with politics.

Punday stresses a point that he shares with William Harvey's and Seymour Chatman's opposite views on character, namely that 'literary characters function primarily by contrast with each other' (*NB*, 55). Accordingly, the typology of bodies

⁶ Daniel Punday, *Narrative Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Narratology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 4. Hereafter cited as *NB*, with page numbers in the text.

serves to help critics to find out bodily contrast between characters. Juxtaposition of characters on ‘thematic, psychological, metaphysical, ethical, or social ground’ could generate many narrative interpretations (*NB*, 55).

In general, the issue of character has much to do with identification, interaction and contrast of characters’ bodies. It delves into how the body makes characters significant. Punday’s typology of bodies confirms our recognition of the relation between corporeal body and identity, establishing a useful framework to interpret the highly individualized bodies. However, it seems that Punday’s corporeal narratology of character has dealt with most of the features and relations *outside* the character, but neglected the status of internal features or ‘traits’ discussed by Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan or Seymour Benjamin Chatman. We admit that ‘various traits combine to form the character’,⁷ while a single trait ‘may either unfold, that is, emerge earlier or later in the course of the story, or that it may disappear and be replaced by another’.⁸ The alternative or emergence/disappearance of a body’s trait would cause the same kinds of effects as the contrast between different traits. In other words, the interaction among the body’s internal traits deserves equal attention as the external traits of a character’s body.

The second key issue in Punday’s conceptual system is plot and time. Punday agrees with Hayden White on the body’s resistance to emplotment because ‘everyday experience naturally comes to us as disunified and in need of mental if not strictly discursive representation’ (*NB*, 91). Likewise, in narratives, ‘the eventual shape of overarching plot is already prefigured in the individual body’, while emplotment is ‘the transformation of incoherent natural and human events into a plot organized around a social center and a shared sense of community significance’ (*NB*, 91-3). In this way, the body and the overarching plot can be taken as two poles of emplotment and the narrative finally proves to be a confrontation between an ‘unruly body’ underneath and the overarching plot on the surface. Punday concludes that ‘before we can have stories that move through a narrative trajectory within some overarching pattern, we must be able to think about bodies in a way that allows them to resist that pattern’ (*NB*, 94). Time is the leading force of the plot’s trajectory, which deviates from the trajectory of body experience; hence the intertwining relation between plot and body is, to some extent, the confrontation between time and body. Inspired by Paul Ricoeur’s ‘tension between temporal wholeness and unruliness’ and Michel Foucault’s contrast of social performance and individual (*NB*, 103), Punday specifically claims an oppositional relationship between the body’s experienced time and the exterior time in the fictional world. He also borrows the concept of ‘implied reader’ from reader response criticism to add a third dimension to corporeal narrative time: the ‘reader’s particular sense of time’ (*NB*, 114), and expands it into reader’s body-limited position in narrative. The reader’s process of reading is different from the atemporal perspective of critics because the reading and knowing processes are limited to the reader’s ‘horizon’ which relies on their experience of physical location to suggest the limitations of reading; thus, the reader’s body creates another distention⁹ as

⁷ Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 40.

⁸ Seymour Benjamin Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978), 126.

⁹ Distention or *distentio* is a key concept in Paul Ricoeur’s statements about narrative time in his *Time and*

‘an unruly delaying agent’ (*NB*, 114) which might be taken into consideration by corporeal narrative critics in analysing the narrative text.

To put it more generally, the relationship between body and plot is a binary opposition. The resisting body comes ‘naturally’ and is ruled by the overarching plot. Interaction or tension between the two can generate political, historical and cultural interpretations. The difficulty of studying time in corporeal narratology, in addition to the theoretical foundations, also lies in the fact that the individual body’s relationship with time is not as close as its relation with character. Further studies reveal that the relation between body and time can assist the textual analysis of corporeal narrative. To name a few, the typologies of the body’s experience of time, typologies of body’s tension (or other kinds of relations) with time, the way one feature of the body react to the narrative time passing (may be enhanced, reduced, or transformed), etc.

Compared with time, the third issue of ‘space’ has not received much attention. It is no less important to the body than time, and it also controls the realization of plot. Monika Fludernik claims that ‘key points in the plot are reached when characters travel from one location to another, or converge in one place; in so doing they bring the separate plot strands together’.¹⁰ For this reason, Punday tries to draw a general map for the narratological investigation of body and space. His first concern is the degree of access, which could be explained as different types of boundary drawn particularly for the body within the story space. The boundary line could be drawn by all kinds of factors like, for instance, cultural assumption or technological limitations, which would ultimately be due to limitations and possibilities of the human body (*NB*, 129). The second aspect of Punday’s map refers to ‘means of access’, including physical, perceptual and imaginative access. Physical access is the traditional means of access, in which the physical body can arrive in a particular place; perceptual access, as dominated by sight, is achieved by using human perception; imaginative access, as its name implies, shows the way of accessing space through imagination. Besides, a shifting or contrasting of different types of access might also produce tension and carry some social or cultural indication. The third aspect is the condition of access, in which Punday suggests three major kinds of limitation of the body’s access: physical condition, cultural convention (with its implied social imaginary), and metaphysical condition (*NB*, 135-8). All the three aspects not only indicate the specific meaning for the text, but also serve as a dynamic for forward movement of the plot, namely ‘the struggle to investigate our access to other places, the tension between many types of space and the ways that we can travel to them’ (*NB*, 140).

In addition to his categorization of bodily access, Punday attempts to discover more perspectives in treating the body-space relation. One of them is the narrative circulation based on the body’s movement between narrative settings. Critics consider the body as a figure of circulation (in social space). It helps us grasp something which otherwise would not be able to be statically represented (*NB*, 145). Punday introduces an aesthetic perspective as well; he states that art forms convey ‘biological feeling’ by being linked to human feelings – ‘either through everyday use and human life-rhythms, or by the physical interaction of object and viewer’ (*NB*, 147). Taking this kinetic perspective into account, it is easier for readers to ‘anticipate types of possible movement’ or ‘use different sorts of perceptual information’ to activate the narrative space (*NB*, 148).

Narrative. The past/present/future all exist in mind with the form of memory, expectation, etc., which means that the mind does not submit to the passing of time.

¹⁰ Monika Fludernik, *An Introduction to Narratology* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 44.

To briefly summarize the study of body-space interaction, current foci are basically the method and the status of the body's access to narrative space. However, in a practical interpretation of the narrative text, we should be aware that the degree, means or condition of access may vary from body to body. Each one of the three aspects of access may contain situations of more than one body. In practice, it might be helpful to compare the different bodies' degree/means condition of access or compare one body's degree/means condition of access under different situations to further investigate the body's individuality.

The last key points of Punday's corporeal narratology are the categories of embodiment as well as the narrative authority that it conceals. Punday claims that 'narrative authority is about corporeal positioning, and this position is always a matter of the transformation of the 'weightiness' of reader, author, and text' (*NB*, 150). The physical body represents a possibility of the visible object that could be manipulated by the author and be imagined and received by the reader, creating an unblocked channel between author and reader. Following the views of Lynch and Gallagher, Punday pays attention to the technique of differential embodiment (*NB*, 156), since managing the embodiment is an important technique of novelists to establish their authority within the narrative text. According to De Lauretis, gender and race, among other things, can be elements used to produce our sense that certain characters are embodied (*NB*, 157). The embodiment contrast often happens between character and the disembodied hero, or between character and disembodied narrator. The contrast's effect is determined mainly by the culture's recognition of the body. In other words, the disembodiment roles are the proper position that an author creates for his/her readers as a suggested perspective to view other bodies in the narrative – readers consciously or unconsciously enter this perspective, and thus narrative authority is established.

Furthermore, Punday discusses the body politic. In a social context where all kinds of sources circulate through different forms of conduit (*NB*, 144), the body politic can better represent the modern definitions of nation and authority because of the body's dynamic status. In a narrative text, to speak of the body politic is to claim a certain authority for a whole image of the social state (*NB*, 158-9). For Punday, the body politic serves as a perspective rather than a representative; it can solve the problem of seeing the whole society. A society is dynamic, it circulates and it is comprised and defined precisely by the multiplicity of the 'body'. The body politic provides an imaginary position from which the whole of the nation can be narrated (*NB*, 160).

Punday also lists some basic models of differential embodiment that can be actualized in particular narrative styles and cultures. The first one is differential embodiment in contrasting characters. Starting from Deidre Lynch's review of 18th century novels whose embodied characters are often the object of scorn, Punday argues that as time changes, scorn can be mild and even turn to sympathy today. On the other hand, the disembodied character represents moral superiority by virtue of self-control (*NB*, 164). The second model is the differential embodiment in 'sentimental identification' (*NB*, 165). Quoting from analyses of sentimental novels concerning issues of race and gender, Punday concludes that the difference between the embodied central figures and the disembodied environment could help achieving 'sentimental goal' by creating productive tensions (*NB*, 169). More contrasts are to be found between embodied surface and disembodied universal racial or gender identity, which also provides a new way of understanding the sentimental goal. The third model, the embodiment of the narrative voice, pays more attention to the categories of author and reader. Hugh Kenner notices that 'the language used to describe character actions reflects the way that the characters

think and speak'¹¹ (*NB*, 171), which could reflect the author's thematic or aesthetic aim. Even though the modernist narrative seeks to radically disembodiment the author and reader, the fascinating mixed voices are still 'one of the central aesthetic principles of modern narrative and one of the assumptions of contemporary narratology' (*NB*, 171-2). There are two supplementary implications for Punday's argument that narratives position readers by carefully manipulating embodiment. Firstly, authority and reader positioning need not occur exclusively through the narrator's manipulation. Secondly, within a focus on the relationship between narrator and author, we must consider the way in which embodiment is deployed (*NB*, 175).

In other words, the relationship between narrative authority and embodiment is a more complex issue than the previous three. It has much to do with the author's manipulation as well as the reader's decoding of the author's embodiment techniques. Compared with the above three issues that concentrate on the narrative body itself, the concept of narrative authority in corporeal narratology encompasses the whole process of manipulation, representation and communication. It tries to remove those historical features that limit its wide application and change the rules into more general ones, which enclose culture, politics and social criticism, making the theoretical framework stable enough.

From this sketchy account of Brooks's and Punday's works, it can be inferred that corporeal narratology contains many applicable theories and offers more research tools of investigating a narrative. They not only blaze a creative interdisciplinary trail for body studies, but they also enrich postclassical narrative studies. Nowadays, corporeal narratology is receiving attention from many critical directions, which requires more theoretical developments and improvements.

The Corporeal Narrative Communication Model

The joint theory of rhetoric and narratology originates from Neo-Aristotelian criticism in the 1930s advocated by R. S. Crane of the Chicago School. The second generation of the Chicago School, represented by Wayne C. Booth, made it popular with notions like 'implied author' and 'unreliable narrative'.¹² Later, James Phelan, of the third-generation Chicago School, published *Narrative as Rhetoric: Technique, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology* (1996), marking the establishment of rhetorical narratology, in which Phelan attempts a rhetorical definition of narrative: somebody is telling a particular story to a particular audience in a particular situation for, presumably, a particular purpose.¹³ The purpose of the teller and the process of telling are thus the central concerns of rhetorical narrative. Phelan intends to modify the multidimensional model in which 'rhetoric consists of an author, through the narrative text, extending a multidimensional (aesthetic, emotive, ideational, ethical, political) invitation to a reader who, in turn, seeks to do justice to the complexity of the invitation and then responds'.¹⁴ The boundaries between author, reader and text will no longer be as clear-cut as before; in the new model, rhetoric is seen as the

¹¹ Quoted by Punday from Hugh Kenner, *Joyce's Voices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

¹² Relevant theories can be found in Wayne C. Booth's work *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961).

¹³ James Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric: Technique, Audiences, Ethics, Ideology* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 1996), 4.

¹⁴ Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, xi.

synergy occurring between authorial agency, textual phenomena, and reader response.¹⁵ Phelan emphasizes some key terms of rhetorical narratology, such as narrative progression, tensions, narrative judgement, etc., and the essential idea here is his dynamic of narrative, which alters the static narrative into a narrative progression – the way in which the narrative initially establishes certain issues or relationships to be the centre of its implied audience’s interest and the way in which the narrative complicates and resolves (or fails to resolve) those interests.¹⁶ Narrative progression moves forward with the change of instabilities or tensions, the former meaning ‘unstable relationships between or within characters and their circumstances’, and the latter ‘some disparity of knowledge, value, judgment, opinion, or belief between narrators and readers or authors and readers’.¹⁷ Furthermore, Phelan adopts the narrative progression to interpret author/text/reader ethics and ideology. Since then, his rhetorical narrative theory has kept developing and improving: its definition was recently improved to ‘somebody using the resources of narrative in order to accomplish certain purposes in relation to certain audiences’,¹⁸ with a more complete summary of ten key principles for the rhetorical paradigm:

- (1) Rhetorical theory subsumes the traditional view of narrative as a structured sign system representing a linked sequence of events under the broader view that narrative is itself an event – more specifically, a multidimensional purposive communication from a teller to an audience.
- (2) The rhetorical definition of narrative, ‘somebody telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purpose(s) that something happened,’ describes a ‘default’ situation rather than prescribes what all narratives should do.
- (3) Rhetorical interpretation and theory are based on an *a posteriori* rather than an *a priori* method.
- (4) In interpreting a narrative, rhetorical narrative theory identifies a feedback loop among authorial agency, textual phenomena (including intertextual relations), and reader response.
- (5) The rhetorical approach theorizes ‘the somebody else’ in narrative communication by identifying three audiences in nonfictional narrative and four audiences in fictional narrative.
- (6) In addressing narrative ethics, rhetorical theory distinguishes between the ethics of the telling and the ethics of the told.
- (7) Rhetorical theory integrates history in multiple ways.
- (8) The underlying rhetorical situation varies in different kinds of narrative, and it typically varies within individual narratives.
- (9) The progression of a narrative – its synthesis of textual and readerly dynamics – is crucial to its effect and purposes.
- (10) Rhetorical readers develop interests and responses of three broad kinds, each related to a particular component of the narrative: mimetic, thematic, and synthetic. (*STSE*, 5-11)

To these Phelan later added two complementary principles:

- (a) Narrative is ultimately not a structure but an action, a teller using resources of narrative to achieve a purpose in relation to an audience.
- (b) The presence and the activity of the somebody else in the narrative action is integral to its shape.¹⁹

As rhetorical narrative theory kept being updated, it has developed into one of the

¹⁵ Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, xii.

¹⁶ Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 29-30.

¹⁷ Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 30.

¹⁸ James Phelan, *Somebody Telling Somebody Else: A Rhetorical Poetics of Narrative* (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2017), x. Hereafter cited as *STSE*, with page numbers in the text.

¹⁹ James Phelan, ‘Authors, Resources, Audiences: Toward a Rhetorical Poetics of Narrative.’ *Style* 52.1-2 (2018): 2.

strongest branches of postclassical narratology.

Among its principles, a high-frequency word is ‘communication’. It serves as a fundamental concept of Phelan’s rhetorical narratology from 1980s to his latest article in 2018, in which he highlights the communicational nature of rhetorical narrative, according to which ‘the rhetorical definition orients its user toward narrative communication and the prominence of tellers, audiences, and purposes’.²⁰ In particular, Phelan challenges one of the ‘dominant communication model’ (Real author → [Implied author → Narrator → Narratee → Implied readers →] Real reader)²¹ expounded by Seymour Chatman in 1978 with his ‘from inside out’ method.²² Based on his interpretation of one extract from George V. Higgins’s novel, he ponders over this widespread model in order to invalidate its universality: ‘[t]he standard model, with its omission of characters, distorts our perception of the narrative communication here and in countless other scenes of dialogue.’²³ Then, Phelan sets out from the narrative element ‘character’ to dissolve the opposition between story and discourse and maintain their continuity by showing two typical cases – the character narration and dialogue. He goes one step further to build up his own ‘IRA’ (Implied Author-Resources-Actual Audience) model after refuting the structuralist model,²⁴ which he improves into an ‘Author←→Resources←→Audience’ model in *Somebody Telling Somebody Else: A Rhetorical Theory of Narrative* (2017). Containing two constants and one variable, the table is a complete reversion of Chatman’s model in all aspects, showing the dynamics, openness and diversity of postclassical narratology.

Table 1. Constants and Variables in Narrative Communication (STSE, 26)

| TABLE 1.1 CHART OF CONSTANTS AND VARIABLES IN NARRATIVE COMMUNICATION | | | | |
|---|---------|-----------------------------|---------|---|
| AUTHOR | ←-----→ | RESOURCES | ←-----→ | AUDIENCE |
| ACTUAL/ IMPLIED | | | | AUTHORIAL AND ACTUAL (ESP. RHETORICAL) |
| | | Paratexts | | |
| | | Occasion | | |
| | | Narrator(s)/Narration | | |
| | | Characters/Dialogue | | |
| | | FID | | |
| | | Voice | | |
| | | Style | | |
| | | Space | | |
| | | Temporality | | |
| | | Arrangement/Gaps | | |
| | | Narratee/Narrative Audience | | |
| | | Genre/(Non)Fictionality | | |
| | | Intertextual References | | |
| | | Ambiguities | | |
| | | Etc. | | |

²⁰ Phelan, ‘Authors, Resources, Audiences’, 1.

²¹ This model derives from Chapter 4 of Seymour Benjamin Chatman’s work *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1978).

²² James Phelan, ‘Rhetoric, Ethics, and Narrative Communication: or, from Story and Discourse to Authors, Resources, and Audiences.’ *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 94.1-2 (2011): 57.

²³ Phelan, ‘Rhetoric, Ethics, and Narrative Communication’, 64.

²⁴ Phelan, ‘Rhetoric, Ethics, and Narrative Communication’, 68.

The first column is an authorial agent, which is ‘far more important’ than the controversies on implied author. The implied author after the slash exists when some group of readers do not mind the deception by an actual author (*STSE*, 26). For the third column, Phelan breaks the symmetry, ignoring the ‘implied/actual’ audience. In his eyes, the authorial audience is a combination of an author’s hypothesis about actual audiences and his expectations for the actual audience; rhetorical readers are defined as those who want to become authorial readers. The authorial audience does not appear in the middle column because the authorial and actual audience should both join the larger communication with the author rather than the text-specific devices between narrative audience and narratee (*STSE*, 27). The variable column involves all the in-text resources that could be applied by author for his/her rhetorical purpose. Only some basic and popular elements have been listed by Phelan and his use of ‘etc’ allows for infinite possibilities. The relation between each constant and the variable is a two-way process of communication, within which author and reader work together in order to create meaning. However, this table is only a very general framework for narrative communication; the resources can only be decided when it is used as interpretative tool for a particular narrative text. As Phelan states in the illustration of this table, ‘the chart deliberately does not specify the exact relationship among the constants and variables in any specific narrative communication. Those relationships can vary greatly from narrative to narrative [...] even within the same narrative’ (*STSE*, 26).

Even though Phelan does not directly mention the corporeality or body as one narrative communication resource, it is possible for corporeal narratology to cooperate with rhetorical narratology. Thus, we can find both the precedents’ practice and theoretical necessity for intersecting corporeal narratology with postclassical narratologies. As early as the 1970s, Hélène Cixous’s feminist narrative, known as *écriture féminine*, has put much emphasis on women’s body.²⁵ In addition, Gerald Prince refers to ‘corporeal explorations’, anthropological views, feminist takes, queer speculations and other directions as dialogical and phenomenological mainstreams postcolonial narratology.²⁶ It is no wonder that the body can be a research object in almost all art forms. As Mary Douglas claims, the body provides the first and simplest analogy for thinking about the social relation of human beings, which serves as the prototype for the logical relations between things (*NB*, 57). Even though the above cases do not directly refer to the term ‘corporeal narrative’, they have de facto incorporated corporeal narratology when the body is taken into consideration. From a historical point of view, this intersection is a necessary step for any postclassical narratology in its second phase. According to Jan Alber and Fludernik, ‘[n]arratology, to continue our metaphor, in settling down, will now have to align with one another the numerous centrifugal models that arose in the first phase of postclassicism’.²⁷ Therefore, the cooperation of rhetorical narratology with corporeal narrative should be feasible and beneficial.

Punday praises Wayne C. Booth’s *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961) since it ‘set the

²⁵ See, in particular, Hélène Cixous, ‘The Laugh of the Medusa’, in *Feminisms Redux: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. Robyn Warhol-Down and Diane Price Herndl (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1975), 416-31.

²⁶ Gerald Prince, ‘On a Postcolonial Narratology’, in *A Companion to Narrative Theory*, ed. James Phelan and Peter J. Rabinowitz (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 372.

²⁷ Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik, ‘Introduction’, in *Postclassical Narratology: Approaches and Analyses*, ed. Jan Alber and Monika Fludernik (Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Press, 2010), 5. Similar statements can be found in Biwu Shang, ‘Plurality and Complementarity of Postclassical Narratologies’, *Journal of Cambridge Studies* 6.2-3 (2011): 142.

tone for narrative criticism for the next twenty years by demanding that critics consider the rhetorical effectiveness of any narrative style' instead of abstract standards (*NB*, 3). His 'general body' idea is inspired by Phelan's illustration of character's 'representative function',²⁸ seeing one particular body (belonging to one character) as a textual system that carries the symbolic or metaphorical meaning of the whole narrative. Then, the general body is activated as an exchanging hub for bodies. Besides, in the investigation of narrative authority and embodiment, Punday agrees with Booth that individual narrative is 'rhetorically manipulating readerly trust for some individual textual end' (*NB*, 149). Narrative authority in corporeal narratology is just one typical aspect that could be enriched by rhetorical narratology. Punday offers enough cases showing many ways of embodiment in constructing narrative authority, including the disembodied author, embodied narrator, differential embodiment of character and positioning of reader, covering the whole communication process of 'somebody telling somebody else' (*STSE*, 5). Taking a careful look at other chapters of *Narrative Bodies*, we could also find many clues confirming Punday's attention to rhetorical narrative communication, such as manipulating the reader's narrative desire, for instance. However, Punday does not give sufficient illustrations of the effects on the reader's side.

Undoubtedly, Punday's theoretical framework covers most of the basic issues that could be discussed in relation to the body, but my contention is that there are some elements missing. The structure of *Narrative Bodies* looks more like Gérard Genette's classical narratological classifications, dividing the contents of a narrative into concepts such as time, space, character, etc. This kind of division emphasizes different aspects that the body can influence, while weakening the multi-layered communication among author, text and reader into a fragmented, inferior topic. Therefore, considering Punday's dynamic and circulation view of corporeal narratology, I will endeavour to re-categorize elements of corporeal narratology into Phelan's ARA (Author-Resources-Audience) rhetorical narrative communication model in order to bring out the authorial or readerly communication within the corporeal agency. This proposed model can be taken as a specific case of Phelan's model, aiming to cast into a clearer perspective the body narrative's rhetorical and communicational function. It contains a supplement for Punday's corporeal narratology as well as a summary of how readers can affect and be affected by the resources of the narrative text. In such a model, I also recommend replacing 'an order' with a 'sequence' in using the corporeal resources below, to suggest a comprehensive process of corporeal narrative interpretation.

Table 2. Corporeal narrative communication model

| Author | ↔ | Corporeal Resources | | ↔ | Audience |
|----------------|---|-----------------------|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Actual/Implied | | 1. Embodiment | Narrator | Reader Positioning; Narrative Judgement; Narrative Desire, etc. | Authorial and Actual Reader |
| | | | Character | | |
| | | | Narrative Audience | | |
| | | 2. Bodily Comparison | Single body | | |
| | | | Bodies | | |
| | | 3. Bodily Interaction | Time/plot | | |
| Space | | | | | |

²⁸ James Phelan, *Reading People, Reading Plots: Character, Progression, and the Interpretation of Narrative* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 43.

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|---|--|--|
| | | 4. Body with Special Functions | General Body Body Metaphor (Body Politic, Body-like Text, etc) | | |
| | | Other Corporeal Resources | | | |

The first line and the author/reader column in my model are mostly copied from Phelan’s model, for similar reasons: the (implied) author controversy is put aside, the model just needs an authorial agency to take this position; the third column of the ‘authorial and actual reader’ is set mainly for interpreting a larger scale or the outer level of communication. The mutual influences of each pair are represented by two-way arrows. Phelan defines his resources as including human agents as well as occasion and arrangement that authors deploy for significant communicative effects (*STSE*, 28). To be more specific, I would like to name the middle column ‘corporeal resources’, labelling it as one kind of resources in Phelan’s open-ended list of communicative techniques. My proposed corporeal narrative communication model remains equally open. In other words, the above table includes only major types of corporeal resources for the current situation. It does not intend to, and surely will not cover, all types of corporeal resources.

What requires further explanation is the resources’ division in the middle column, as well as the reader’s different relations with corporeal resources (under the second two-way arrow, which means the listed factors under the arrow can work in both directions). I would illustrate each division with its relation to reader (in the column between ‘Audience’ and ‘Corporeal Resources’). The corporeal resources listed can be divided into four parts. The first part, embodiment, refers mainly to three kinds of textual agents. I do not completely exclude the embodiment of author and reader from this table. Generally, both author and reader are taken as disembodied by default. When they get involved in the embodiment, it is usually a matter of double agents – the embodied author being the narrator, the embodied reader the narratee. Therefore, in such cases the author or reader can be categorized as textual agents. Other very special cases, considering their lack of generality, will not be discussed here. To look at textual agents, we need first to judge if the particular agent belongs to the body, or to check the possibility of its embodiment. The ‘grey area’ between body and nonbody would arouse much interest as well (*NB*, 59). Critics might compare nonbodies (e.g. robot, ghost) with human bodies to have a better understanding of human life, society and culture. Human narrator/character/narratee will meet a key problem of being embodied or disembodied. The tension between the disembodied and embodied, or between bodies of different degrees of embodiment, would indicate the author’s manipulation of the reader’s positioning and narrative judgement. For example, the disembodied narrator or hero are often contrasted with embodied characters in order to show the relevant culture’s recognition of bodies (*NB*, 157).

The second part concerning bodily comparison comes from Punday’s argument of body and characterization. Here we might as well let the corporeal perspective exceed the character division, to see a story world consisting of bodies, not characters. As I have mentioned in my summary of Punday’s characterization, the body should be a carrier of many changing traits. The comparison within a single body is designed to make up for this aspect that is missed by Punday. The comparison between conflicted traits of a body, between different states of a body, or between a body with the trait and the same body

without the trait, should be a useful source for critics to investigate one single body, which represents one single character. The comparison between different bodies' traits has been illustrated in Punday's theories, especially the comparison between those who get in 'touch' (in its general sense) with each other, meaning how individual bodies engage in an ongoing exchange with others, thus making the comparison significant (*NB*, 76). This comparison creates tensions, conflicts, or even consistency. The comparison between two and more bodies can be extended to an observation of bodily 'exchange' – exchanging location, identity, information, etc, which could probably affect the reader's narrative judgement.

The third part, 'bodily interaction', includes the body's interaction with time and space, two traditional dimensions in the narrative world. The body's relation with time is often manifested in the tension between bodily experienced time and the storyworld's time. To put it differently, this relation is about the manipulating plot and the manipulated body against the plot. The narrative text follows the experience of the body, while the plot always hides behind and manipulates everything. The body contrasting with the manipulation time/plot will, as the narrative moves forward, arouses the reader's narrative desire and affects narrative judgement as well. Even though the contrasting relationship is just a general description, we may find more varied body-time relations and make detailed interpretations for concrete narrative cases. Similarly, bodies moving within space could also manipulate the reader's desire, especially bodies with limited access to narrative space. Meanwhile, bodies access to particular space can also affect the reader's narrative judgements, which often happens with bodies within a given social space. Since space shows higher diversity than time, studying the relation between the narrative body and space is more complex; here the major methods are, as Punday suggests, the degree, means and condition of access. Both time and space represent a kind of dynamicity in the story, showing a state of change. Therefore, we should endeavour to establish both horizontal (e.g. comparing two bodies' relation with time/space) and vertical (e.g. studying one body's changes with the change of time/space) comparisons and investigations.

The fourth part, 'specially functioned bodies', is selected from Punday's work as a comprehensive research target. They may overlap with more than one key issues in Punday's theory, and here I only list two representative kinds. The concept of general body is like an 'exchanging hub' or 'mediating figure' both between characters and between reader and the text (*NB*, 76). Such a body functions not only as a character within time and space, but also a prompt for the 'touch' and for the happening exchange. Considering others bodies around the general body, readers are able to observe clearly how bodies move, change and communicate, which is helpful for narrative judgements. The body metaphor is actually a bridge between the signifying and signified body. As a corporeal resource, we might pay attention to its function as signifier, while interpreting it has to be combined with the signification or indication of that particular body. One typical case of body metaphor brought up by Punday is the concept of body politic, and other cases include the bodily representation of the textual structure. Context has to be involved in the interpretation of body metaphors, such as the social cultural context for the body politic, the text organizing for body-like text structure, etc. 'Body with special functions' carry strong influence on the reader's narrative judgement and they require readers to take care of both body and something outside the body at the same time.

The four parts of corporeal resources I listed are ordered by the degree of depth and complexity of corporeal narrative interpretation. Embodiment plays a fundamental role,

thanks to which one could enter the corporeal narrative perspective to see the narrative as consisting of embodied agents. After that, bodily comparison helps to establish criticism of character relationships based on the bodies. Bodily interaction forces the bodies into their outside world to observe their interaction with narrative time and space. Lastly, some representative bodies would disclose a metaphorical perspective on society and culture. Interpretations going through the four steps would lead readers to a corporeal understanding of the narrative world – from recognizing the bodies, comparing the body traits, to the time and space the body occupies and experiences, and finally, to the metaphorical meanings lying deeper than the body’s textual presentations.

In 2006, Paul John Eakin raised the question of extending narrative studies’ territory:

Should narrative stick to narrative narrowly conceived as a literary form or forms, or should it entertain a more adventurous approach to narrative as something to do with society, with identity, with the body?²⁹

Today, the potential of corporeal narratology has provided a ready answer. The corporeal narrative communication model I proposed is a tentative development of this promising discipline, by intersecting Punday’s corporeal narratology with Phelan’s rhetorical narratology, thus, reframing corporeal narratology but also specifying one aspect of rhetorical narratology. It extends Phelan’s ARA model to criticism of practical narrative text in the direction of corporeal narratology and offers a pragmatic model for the practice of corporeal narratology as well – the separated aspects of theories are integrated into a systematic feedback loop fragmented theoretical statements are merged into a systematic feedback loop. With the aim of providing one viable approach of its illustration, this article just moves one step further ahead than Punday, hoping to encourage future developments for corporeal narratology.

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Corporalitatea ca resursă a comunicării narative. Intersecția dintre naratologia corporalității și naratologia retorică

Rezumat

Rezultatul „virajului somaticului” a fost că studiile despre corporalitate au pătruns în multe subdiviziuni ale naratologiei contemporane, din care s-a dezvoltat și naratologia corporalității. Acest articol trece în revistă recent apăruta subdiviziune a naratologiei postclasice și urmărește istoria și elementele cheie ale naratologiei corporale din punctul de vedere al naratologiei clasice, care se concentrează asupra noțiunilor de personaj, timp/subiect, spațiu și întruchipări diferențiate. Pentru modificarea și extinderea acestui cadru teoretic, metodologia naratologiei corporale este combinată cu modelul de comunicare narativă propus de teoriile retorice ale lui James Phelan. Acest model hibrid inversează cadrul teoretic al lui Daniel Punday care se bazează pe categorizări în naratologia clasică. Articolul oferă, de asemenea, un model de interpretare comprehensiv, adoptând teoriile lui Punday, dar și suplimentându-le. Definit ca un caz special al modelului general al lui Phelan Autor-Resurse- Spectator, modelul prezentat în articol le oferă cititorilor o perspectivă de interpretare sistematică a semnificațiilor legate de corporalitate, în cadrul comunicării narative duble din textul narativ.