



# Transmission

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In a book published in English in 2015, the German media theorist and philosopher Sybille Krämer attempts to provide a model for transmission that preserves the possibility of community without succumbing to notions of communication as the imposition of sameness. As Krämer insists, it is essential to safeguard the difference that emerges during the process of transmission, defined as “an external, corporeal, and material process that can be conceived as a kind of embodiment” which is “also associated with a ‘disembodiment’ – namely, the way in which media ‘become invisible’ in their (interference-free) usage” (75). Transmission “lets appear”, or makes difference perceptible, and as such renders culture and community possible, in Nancean terms, as loci of both connection and separation. As Krämer and many others point out, transmission does not amount to neutral repetition of information, but implies “creativity,” distortion and noise, which means transformation is just as important as reiteration. Krämer’s model successfully reminds us that transmission, through the persistence of the medium – whose materiality, even if self-effacing, never ceases to intrude – makes the world “appear.” This may never have been so clear as at the time of the Covid pandemic, of social media, fake news and (perhaps crucially) climate crisis.

In the age of viral dissemination (digital, informational, biological), transmission can outstep the bounds of direct, unilinear flows between some fixed points of departure and destination. (Dis)articulated across complex, tangled and unstable nets, the multiscalar trajectories of transmission can drift across the micro- and the macroscopic, or the local and the planetary, as seen in the transference of plastic molecules into the human bloodstream or in the even vaster phenomenon of ocean plastification. Transmission, conveyed as both transference and transformation, is also a commonplace literary scenario in contemporary fictions that tap into what Marco Caracciolo calls the fragile yet dynamic “mesh” of interconnected human and nonhuman realities. With its attendant anxieties of loss and retrieval, transmission – which, etymologically speaking, is a process of sending forth *and* putting across – has always been a feature of literature’s intersections and enmeshments with the technosocial and the biopolitical. Not least, narrative transmission, especially in its literary instantiations, can also relay a possibility to better grasp the ethics of difference that should guide our way across the predicaments of today’s world.

Possible topics for the essays include:

- mediality, intermediality, liminality, exchange and the production of difference;
- communication, noise, entropy, interference, distortion: the dissemination of information, disinformation, knowledge;
- contagion, immunity, community, purity, security: the individual body and the body politic; literature and biopolitics;

- ecosystemic communication, environmental propagation, interspecies contiguity: transmission in the age of climate change;
- literature and medical discourses: discourses of infection, hygiene, contamination, origins; epidemics, pandemics and culture;
- circulation and recirculation of ideas: cultural transmission from manuscripts to social media;
- technologies of storage, archiving, recording; forms of cultural memory in the age of flow and virtualisation;
- authorship and dispersal: collaborative texts, joint authorship, participatory writing; from texts to co-texts, paratexts, metatexts;
- citations, borrowings, influences, interpretation, reception; precession and succession in literary history: copies, originals, (af)filations, genealogies
- transmission, dissemination & transformation; interlinguistic, intercultural traffic & contact zones; transnational literature;
- linguistic/cultural hybridization: hybrid texts, genre hybridity; from discourses of hybridity to worlding/planetarity;
- translation and adaptation.

#### **Indicative Bibliography:**

- BOLTER, Jay David and Richard Grusin. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2000.
- CARACCIOLO, Marco. *Narrating the Mesh. Form and Story in the Anthropocene*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2021.
- KITTLER, Friedrich. *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*. Translated by Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999.
- KRÄMER, Sybille. *Medium, Messenger, Transmission. An Approach to Media Philosophy*. Translated by Anthony Enns. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015.
- KROKER, Arthur, and Marilouise Kroker. *Technologies of the New Real: Viral Contagion and Death of the Social*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021.
- MANN, Annika. *Reading Contagion. The Hazards of Reading in the Age of Print*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2018.
- MITCHELL, Peta. *Contagious Metaphor*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012.

#### **Submission calendar:**

- 1 November 2023 – proposal submission deadline (200-word abstract, 7 keywords, 5 theoretical references, 150-word author's bio-note);
- 1 December 2023 – notification about acceptance;
- 1 March 2024 – submission of full papers (Instructions for authors regarding formatting rules and style sheets can be found on the journal's webpage: [http://studia.ubbcluj.ro/serii/philologia/pdf/Instructions\\_En.pdf](http://studia.ubbcluj.ro/serii/philologia/pdf/Instructions_En.pdf));
- 30 September 2024 – publication of the special-themed issue.

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