



PERFORMANCE AND PERFORMATIVITY BEYOND THEATER ARTS AS A POWERFUL CREATIVE POTENTIAL OF THE CULTURAL FIELD

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Abstract. The research touches upon the ideas of performance and performativity more broadly than within the usual limits of theatrical art, based on an understanding of culture as a whole, since performatives and performances have a strong creative potential in the overall dimensions of the cultural field.

Keywords: performance and performance; theater arts; cultural understanding.

Issues of performativity are now commonly sought to leave the boundaries of the theatrical arts, extending them to a common understanding of culture, and in recent decades, interest in the problem has grown, making *Performance Studies* a separate field of study. Philip Uslander states: "The evolution of performative studios has driven them beyond theater (*Theater Studies*)" [1, p. 1], so they are suitable for understanding socio-cultural phenomena. The presented research touches on the ideas of performance and performativity more broadly than in the usual theatrical boundaries, since performers and performances have a strong creative potential in the cultural field.

The performative turn, reproduced through various social performances, sociocultural performances, overcoming the monotony of everyday culture as a practical activity of human being, was initially associated only with theatrical studios, having a rather narrow understanding and application. Historically, the performative turn began at the end of the nineteenth century, in the context of the so-called *fin-de-siècle* – simultaneously with the "transition from predominantly textual to predominantly performative

culture" [2, p. 29]. To date, the English word "performance" refers to a particular theatrical performance, acting or musical performance and focuses a person's attention on the specific aesthetic and emotional interaction between the artist and the audience.

In particular, phenomenologists use the metaphor of theater to explain the idea of frontality as a principle of completion in the consciousness of the invisible sides of an object and a certain way of coexistence with it. In fact, when comparing the perception of the visible (front) side of an object as a scene (frontstage) and the invisible (back) side as a backstage [3, p. 28], the phenomenological understanding of human perception and experience is very close to the performative theory of society as performance.

Peter Berger and Thomas Luckman go further, arguing that the phenomena of social reality have been systematized and presented in advance in an objective form "prior to my appearance on stage" [4, p. 35], and are also a tool for transmitting the necessary objective forms of everyday life as a result what makes life meaningful, therefore, becomes orderly.

This logic has led to the fact that performative practices in society can also be a



form of overcoming the dominant understanding. For example, at one time artistic performances were an attempt to go beyond the established understanding of art and the spaces of its presentation, so the artists abandoned the paintings, the sustainable content of the aesthetic message (especially given by the sole author) and the museums as classic places for display.

The development and dynamics of culture need to go beyond established norms, where non-linear and unpredictable social performances play an essential role, providing an experience of extraordinariness and advancing the "sustainable structures" of culture. However, the question is, what makes performances so unpredictable – the desire to overcome the established orderly rhythms of life or human nature itself, such as existentials such as play, imagination and creativity?

Performative theory is one of the most recent humanitarian projects designed to explain contemporary, often contradictory, social phenomena. The essence of such phenomena is that they occur performatively, that is, they are played as a kind of spectacle with obligatory involvement of the audience. This prompts not only theatrical art, but all broad contemporary socio-cultural contextuality to be regarded as a continuous performance, where its structural elements are interpreted as performatives. However, such a keen interest in performativity as a special feature of human existence is conditioned by the practical need for the performatives themselves, which embody, illustrate different experiences – from aesthetically artistic to socio-cultural.

The point is that, through performativity, various institutions seek to revive their ontology by giving their phenomena effective status. Andrew Pickering, Michelle Colon, and other researchers began to view education and science through the lens of performativity, supplementing Liotar's theory while substantially modifying it. Another

dimension of performative cultural theory is the use of the concept of performance to explain a number of social events. In particular, Peter Snow [5] proposes to consider society as a permanent performative act, carried out by actors appropriately [5]. This idea refers to the already classical sociological and cultural theories of Erwin Goffman [6], Guy Deborah, Victor Turner [7].

It should be added that performativity as a subject of humanitarian knowledge is not a discovery of only the performative theory of Austin, because it was considered much earlier in the context of cultural theories. Johann Hasing showed the possibilities of performative theory of culture, influencing later on cultural theorists in the field of aesthetics and theater. Hasing developed the game theory of culture, paying attention to the performativity of human action [8]. His idea of the closeness and completeness of the game is similar to a performative, which also coincides in expression and action. The game has tremendous efficiency and performance, and therefore enables the key phenomena of civilization. Heizinga drew attention to the particular performative situations of human being, which in their process embody individual and collective ontological forms, in particular in archaic societies: to the phase that the observer is currently experiencing ” [8, p. 6]. Play competitions are similar to performatives, because they also precede social experience and culture in general. In general, the game is performative because it bodily and sensually outlines the important things for the person through the constant reproduction of certain practices, each time setting new horizons for the development of the world of culture. At the same time, it is essential that the play of culture creates a special dramaturgy, very close to the performance, theatrical art. The need for play and performance supports the whole logic of culture.

Thus, one can start from the theory of performance, where conceptually important



is the understanding of culture in the context of scripts, games, transformations, symbolic messages. Therefore, performativity is an important part of cultural reality, as it not only actualizes it for a specific audience, but also preserves its temporal gravity. Taking into account Austin's belief that there are too many of these performatives, follows a logical conclusion: a significant part of cultural reality is performative. Not only does formativity imply an influence on the audience in appeal-action, but also in the gradual expansion in the field of activity of culture, opening the heuristic potential for understanding performatives as special intense situations of human interaction in different socio-cultural contexts. This indicates that, beyond the ordinary limits of theatrical art, any process in culture – from overcoming the dominant understanding to the conceptualisation of things – has a performative basis where production is its fundamental ontological characteristic.

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