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Performative Practices
Theoretical Foundations of Interpretation in the Social Sciences and Humanities

Перформативні практики
Теоретичні засади інтерпретації в соціогуманітарних науках

Abstract. The paper analyzes the works related to the understanding of performative practices as a phenomenon of modern culture and art; it highlights the principal trends of the studies of this phenomenon. The reasons for the growing interest in the study of performative practices were clarified, the complexity and ambiguity of this phenomenon as a special socio-cultural communicative action, having the appearance of an "artistic event," a theatrical action, a dynamic symbolic action affecting all channels of human perception, was emphasized. The work is aimed at the analytical study of the essence of specificity of performative practices within the framework of various study optics from the standpoint of social and cultural anthropology and art history, in direct connection with social and cultural life, human emotions, cultural patterns, etc.

The aim of the paper is to identify the theoretical definition of the "performative practices" concept in the contemporary humanities, which will allow solving the scientific problem of determining the essential specificity of performative practices as a modern cultural phenomenon.

General scientific approaches, principles, and methods employed made it possible to consider the phenomenon of performative practices from different angles: theoretical interpretations of the basic forms of performative practices were compared using the comparative method; the use of the structural-functional method helped to determine the components creating an idea of the meaning of certain performance elements as the forms of manifestation of performative practices in modern culture.

Keywords: performative practices, performance, communication, art, society, performativity.

Introduction

The large-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine affected all spheres of Ukrainian society: the infrastructure and economy are being destroyed, Ukrainian people are dying, Ukrainian territories are occupied, such usual things as peace and security are lost, etc. In the new wartime reality, the "usual" and "natural" infrastructure of Ukrainian culture and art has been deconstructed, and the value-based orientations in society underwent changes. The study of the issues raised in this article occurs in a wartime period when performative practices are at the stage of their development and in the midst of another transformation, however, performative initiatives are used in various fields for war prevention.

At the same time, despite the extraordinary spread of performative practices in modern culture, there remains a large number of open questions. In particular, in the humanities, there is a certain terminological uncertainty about the "performative practices" concept. In general, the phenomenon of performative practices as a form of social and artistic action appears to be a problematic field and the topic of performative practices remains a lacuna of sorts in cultural and art studies requiring the search for new theoretical angles of analysis. This article is an attempt to understand what performative practices represent and what makes them special. An attempt to explain the essence of performative practices as a sociocultural communicative phenomenon is quite difficult, especially within the limited publication space. The relevance of the paper is in the fact that the study of the manifestations of performative practices, human nature, and various forms of creativity contributes to the research of the development of culture, with its regularities, historical process, and specificity. At present, it is rather difficult to find a field of social and humanitarian knowledge that would completely avoid the performative turn. Performative optics is essential to the development of the humanities

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since it allows us to realize that the research facilities of these sciences not only describe cultural processes and self-production but also are directly involved in them as, for example, historical sciences affect the development of modern events and "doing history."

Literature Review

Numerous concepts of performativity are represented in the modern humanities, developed by both foreign and domestic authors working within the framework of philosophy, art history, cultural studies, linguistics, social studies, political studies, religious studies, etc.

R. Schechner's approach that justified performative studies as a discipline close to social sciences became important in the context of the present paper. In his opinion, studies of performativity begin where most disciplines, limited by their field, end, the behavior, interactions, and correlation become the objects of study, and not objects or facts, and performance is interpreted as a special type of behavior (Schechner, 2006). The scholar proposes a broad-spectrum concept in which various performative practices (both artistic and social) are represented. This concept is based on the fact that performance is a "restored behavior pattern" in art, rituals, or in everyday life (Schechner, 2006). Schechner sought to create a discipline that would be open, and within this discipline, each researcher would independently highlight the necessary key points, since "the basis of performative studies lies in the fact that there is no fixed set of works, ideas, practices or anything else that defines or limits a field. … Performance studies are fundamentally relational, dynamic, and processual. … There is nothing that inherently 'really belongs' or doesn't really belong' to performative studies" (Schechner, 2006, p. x.). Schechner's approach to performative studies is quite progressive, however, not entirely unambiguous. On the one hand, there is an opportunity to consider performance and performative practices from different scientific positions, perspectives, and in different contexts, which allows forming the most accurate picture of the essence and functioning of this phenomenon. On the other hand, this methodology is heterogeneous, it contains borrowings from various social sciences and humanities theory and history of culture, psychoanalysis, feminist and gender studies, etc.

Among the foreign sociological works that allow to consider the phenomenon of performative practices from a different angle, it the work of E. Goffman *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman, 1959) should be noted. According to the International Sociological Association, it was recognized as one of the ten most important sociological books of the twentieth century. The author uses a "dramaturgical approach" and studies social interaction from the point of view of a theatrical performance but considers the theater itself as a metaphor. According to Goffman's approach, elements of human interaction depend on time, place, and human audience, and a person represents themselves to another person orienting towards cultural values, norms, and beliefs. Before interacting with another individual, a person prepares a role and strives to impress. Everything happens as if on stage, people in everyday life control the environment, their attire, words, and non-verbal actions to create the right impression.

E. Barba, R. Wilson, R. Goldberg, M. Carlson, E. Fischer-Lichte, R. Schechner, and others studied the performance and performative practices from the different methodological positions. In the academic and art space of Ukraine, the above-mentioned problematics was also reflected in the works of Ukrainian researchers: G. Vysheslavskyi, K. Stanislavska, and others.

The aim of the paper

The paper identifies the theoretical definition of the "performative practices" concept in the modern humanities, which will lead to a solution to the scientific problem of determining the essence of the specificity of performative practices as a phenomenon of modern culture.

Results and Discussion

In modern society, culture, and art, performative practices manifest themselves with particular obviousness. They are present in the media, in the virtual and personal space. Despite the popularity of the term "performative practices," an attempt of its conceptualization started only at the end of the twentieth century, which can be partially explained by the fact that this concept was used as a keyword in various contexts at the time. Modern performative practices have fallen under the influence of the processes of globalization and glocalization. Accordingly, they embody the glocality principles in terms of their aim, content, and spectacularity. However, techniques, means, and forms of performative practices are actively employed in various socio-cultural spheres.

This paper, the scope of which is not limited to art but encompasses a greater context of cultural research, clarifies two concepts in the core of this study: performance and performative practices. It is common knowledge that the delineation of basic concepts is essential since in modern science one has to address terminological experiments and liberties quite often, which significantly complicates the understanding of already difficult problems and hinders mutual understanding both at the level of everyday communication and in the academic environment.

Before defining the semantic spectrum of the "performative practices" concept, it is necessary to turn to the meaning of the "performance" concept and identify the main differences between these phenomena. The theoretical heritage regarding the problem of performance art and the etymology of the "performance" concept was considered in detail in the paper "Performance conceptualization in scientific discourse" (Bezuhla, 2020). It should be noted that during

the end of the 20th and early 21st century, the problem of performance was studied by scholars from various fields, which resulted in an increase in definitions of different aspects and significantly complicated creating a relatively universal term. The lack of unanimity in the scientific community, as well as among art historians, can also be noted in the fact that, in various definitions, performance is classified as a "kind," "genre," "form," "type," or "trend" of art. S. Banes, E. Bryzgel, E. Mazur, E. Howell, and others taking into account the key features and peculiarities of the historical development of performance, plausibly classify the latter as a genre of modern art. This allows drawing a certain analogy with the genres of other types of art that in the course of their historical development acquired and accumulated their features, underwent changes, and sometimes disappeared from the art process or returned after transformations.

Understanding performance as a genre of art enables the delineation of such phenomena as performance and performative practices and clarification of the main differences between them. Performance as a genre, formed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, became one of the popular and sought-after genres of modern art, to which the representatives of various schools, types, and trends of art (visual, musical, theatrical, fashion business) turned to. Five basic elements are essential to a performance: artist, time, space, audience, and context (or interaction between the artist and the audience). Performance works can include other forms of visual art, video, sound, and objects. However, spectacularity, staginess, and theatricality become universal features of modern performance as one of the means of influencing the audience and society. Despite the fact that performance is a process, a "live" action, various means of documentation (capturing) are used today to present performance works to a wider audience.

Performance can be assumed to be one of the genres impacting the emotional and psychological state the greatest, not only of the audience but also of the performer. According to Marina Abramović, arguably the best-known contemporary performance artist, the aim of the performer is to create such an image, such an energetic connection that will not leave a choice and will not allow being "not here and not now." It is also important to be one hundred percent involved in the performance with the body and the soul of both the artist and the audience. "Performance is the moment when the performer enters into mental and physical interaction with the audience at a certain time. This is not a theater. The theater will repeat. The performance is real. In the theater, the knife is not real, the blood is not real. In the performance, the blood, the knife, and the body of the performer are real. Performance is a kind of unique art form that is temporary, comes and goes. I like when the audience is present, because the performer's work is made for the audience. Without the audience, it doesn't matter at all" (Rudnev, 2021, February 24).

At present, performance becomes a form of art transformation and an attempt to actualize reality. Through mimesis, the adaptation to the new, to social changes related to the development of civilization occurs. Determination of various types and genres of art by laws and ordinances leads to the emergence of various forms of transformation that go beyond the scope of an art form. As the Ukrainian researcher G. Vysheslavskyi notes, "New forms of modern art emerged at certain stages of the socio-cultural development of communities in different countries, and later spread, under other circumstances, to completely different societies both in terms of traditions and worldview" (Vysheslavskyi, 2019). Presenting performance as a manifestation of actionism in art, and actionism as one of the manifestations of spectacular forms of culture, Vysheslavskyi considers it impossible to compare (and accordingly to use the term "performance" in regard to them) such phenomena as "actionism of politicians" or "social activists" to "actionism of modern experimental theater" due to their different orientation. The art expert recognizes the presence of the mutual influence of these differently "oriented actions at the level of instruments of artistic devices with resistance to modifications at the level of orientation" (Vysheslavskyi, 2019, p. 80).

In this context, Vysheslavskyi's opinion seems well-grounded, since the use of the same term to denote different phenomena is inappropriate, as it leads to a certain terminological confusion and forces scientists to constantly clarify what they meant by using this term. There are a number of art history terms that over time were introduced into the conceptual and categorical framework of other social sciences and humanities, including cultural studies, when the artistic content of the term disappeared, and the word remained in the general colloquial lexicon, or vice versa, when the general colloquial lexicon can present a certain problem absorbing the artistic meaning. There are also cases when both meanings of the word—direct and figurative—coexist and "popularize" each other, for example, as was the case of avant-garde, glamour, surrealism, and others. The unusualness and "mysteriousness" of such lexical borrowings often attract so-called mass culture, and the term is used to denote the outstanding events of modern life. A "metaphor of mass use" emerges, meaning engagement of a term in all possible and impossible senses and contexts.

The word "performance" underwent all of the abovementioned processes. If in the West, in particular in the United States, performance is mainly associated with its direct meaning of the genre of art, in Ukraine the average spectator knows and understands only a part of the genre but enthusiastically uses the term in a colloquial sense. Currently, completely different phenomena may be labeled performance, from parliamentary collisions between politicians to street tricks or a flash mob. There is also a tendency to use the term in various word combinations (political

performance, media performance, theatrical performance, social performance, etc.) or create "derivative" words and terms, i.e. performativity, performatives, performative practices, artistic performative practices, theatrical performative practices, performativity of judicial discourse, strategic performativity, textual performativity, factogenic performativity, etc. Such a broad and variable use of the term in different contexts leads to a clarity blurring regarding the understanding and definition of performance as a genre of art within the art community, and scientists begin to look for other concepts to denote those phenomena that today "hide" under the umbrella term "performance." One of these terms is the word combination "performative practices."

It is important to note that among modern researchers and artists, there is no unanimity both in the interpretation of the "performative practices" concept and in the definition of the essence of the phenomenon itself. Ukrainian researcher K. Stanislavska classifies this term as one that is included in the conceptual and categorical framework of art history, and believes that the content of the "performative practices" concept is close to the term "performance art." However, in her opinion, the concept of performative practices is somewhat broader than the concept of performance, since performative practices, in addition to performance, also include art actions, happenings, and flash mobs. The scholar believes that in order to avoid further blurring of the "performance" term, the word combination "performative practices" should be replaced by the "actionist practices" concept (from actionism or action art) (Vysheslavskyi, 2019).

The idea of replacing the concepts of "performance" and "performative practices" with other terms, or even rejecting their use in art history, is also supported by the Ukrainian scientist G. Vysheslavskyi, since "performance—actually actionism (performative practices, hybrid forms of performance)—having lost genre specificity and having combined with theatre or video, crossed the specific boundaries of the arts" (Vysheslavskyi, 2019, p. 94). The art expert notes that he deliberately does not use the word combination "performative practices" as such, "which explains almost nothing, and most importantly, confuses the hierarchy of definitions … this word combination requires additional comments and a description of a significant number of exceptions, due to which its very use is devalued" (Vysheslavskyi, 2019, p. 80). Vysheslavskyi proposes to introduce the term "actionism of spectacularity" into scientific discourse and, using the "hierarchy of definitions," divides the spectacular forms of culture into three levels: the first level is political, religious, economic, and social spectacularity; the second is artistic spectacularity (artistic, literary, theatrical, musical actionism, etc.); the third is artistic actionism (performance, happening, flash mob, body art, stuffing, etc.). The researcher noted that a certain conceptual and categorical breakdown occurs since the "performative practices" concept is most often used

for the phenomena of the first and second levels without clarifying its exact meaning, while the term should be applied to the phenomena of the third level (Vysheslavskyi, 2019). Vysheslavskyi's suggestion seems to be realistic, as it would be most logical to use the term "performative practices" towards performances, happenings, flash mobs, body art, and stuffing, however, as the scientist aptly noted, this concept is most often used for various spectacular sociocultural forms.

In this regard, a branch of the general but not yet fully existing classification emerges: "art performance" (or art performance) and "social performance" (performative practices). In order to avoid confusion, art performance is understood to be the genre of modern art (as it was mentioned at the beginning of the article), and it may encompass all the other "types" of performance (social, political, media performance, etc.) into the performative practices, i.e., all those phenomena which, according to Vysheslavskyi's "hierarchy of definitions", are included into the spectacular forms of culture of the first level. In addition, performative practices should also include those social phenomena and forms of social and individual existence that have a performative nature.

There is a clear boundary between performance and performative practices: as a rule, art performance is induced from within, while performative practices are conditioned by the rules of the "acting" imposed from the outside. Art performance (hereinafter referred to as the "performance") involves personal interaction, while performative practices—the mediated one. According to E. Fischer-Lichte, performances differ from performative practices in the point that performative practices are limited in time and space, their important characteristic is the purposeful destabilization of binary oppositions existing both in discourse and in cultural/social practices. The academic notes that deconstructing oppositions, performances quite often model a liminal situation "and the transformation process associated with it, experienced by the participants of the performance" (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 296), and performative practices may not generate such effects.

Therefore, performative practices are a sociocultural phenomenon, which we understand as an interactive discursive practice using performance technology in the process of sociocultural and political discourse based on the creation of the cultural identity of "actors" and "spectators." It may be proposed to consider performative practices as a set of the following components: acting itself, performance, manner of "role" performance and image transformation, aim and objectives of the "performance," and the environment of the statements addressed to anyone. The persuasive potential of performative practices is not based on rational arguments but on an appeal to human feelings, cultural needs, and curiosity about everything unusual. Since corporeality, memory, affect, mobility, and, in general, constant interaction with others are essential

for an individuals, who are constantly creating their social reality, reinventing themselves every time due to corporeality and sensuality, "creating" themselves under the influence of internal and external factors, performative practices play an important role in the formation of social reality, which is also emphasized by Richard Schechner in his study: "Performativity means to be someone else and at the same time to be yourself: empathize, react, grow, and change" (Schechner, 2006, p. 9).

The presence of performative practices in various sociocultural spheres became one of the features of modern society. Guy Debord in his work *The Society of the Spectacle* ("La Société du spectacle"), analyzing the state of society, classifies the latter as the "society of the spectacle" and the "society of the dispersed spectacle." He notes that in societies that have reached the modern level of development, life manifests itself as a huge accumulation of performances, and "everything that was previously personally experienced is now transformed into a performance" (Debord, n. d.). Accordingly, a person has turned into a spectator able to observe the socio-political scene and, thus, losing the ability to distinguish the reality of what is happening from the illusiveness (Debord, n. d.). According to Goffman, the vast majority of social roles are performed on the basis of adaptive competence, sometimes unconsciously when a person performs their own role, adapting to the roles of other people, or their role is dictated by the roles of other people. Such a situation may lead to the fact that an individual can be involved in the performance of roles that harm them, as a result of the implementation of strategies of manipulation, deception, conspiracy, etc.

Today, performative practices fit as best as possible into the sociocultural matrix of modern times. Performative practices are extensively used in advertising technologies, political PR technologies, campaigning, etc., and their main goal is not the communicative act itself but the attraction of the target audience's attention and influence over its emotional state. Performative practices are able to radicalize people, provoke and intensify affect, and "push" the audience for "necessary" decisions, under the influence of an emotional impression, and not after a weighted analysis. In modern culture, performative practices are perceived as a "show" for the public created by the public itself, by politicians, TV heroes, and political technologists. For example, today performative practices are abundantly used by politicians in order to create a beautiful picture for the media, bright, memorable information, popularize a leader or a party, etc. Performative practices fill in the field of meanings and senses and partly form both political technologies and spontaneous actions. Thus, according to J. Alexander, performative practices act as a variety of actions, ruptures, and texts that can inspire the public, separate the public from knowledge, and are placed in the space between government and culture (Alexander, 2006). They are manifested in the desire to influence the mindset of a person, involving instincts and unconscious manifestations based on archetypes, dreams, and myths.

It should be noted that today, especially during of war with the Russian Federation, performative practices are used as a form of manipulation, since they are concrete tools of political and advertising technologies. In this regard, there is an increasing need not only to understand the principles and laws of the functioning and use of performative practices but also to fix the modality of the performative notification, in order to understand the extent of the influence of performative practices and the manipulative component in them to predict the consequences of the use of these technologies. Interpretation of the public behavior of specific individuals on the basis of the performance approach induces to the formation of a new analytical network based on the recording of public manifestations of performative practices followed by their interpretation.

The crucial task for modern humanitarian science is the integration of various theoretical and methodological approaches, in particular the use of the principle of transdisciplinarity for the achievement of the common goal of an unbiased and comprehensive study of the role of performative practices in modern sociocultural situations. In order to fulfill the designated objectives, it is necessary to disengage from the influence of specific empirical cases (regardless of their resonance and creative approach) and form a powerful theoretical base.

Conclusions

The outline of scientific literature demonstrates the importance of the "performative practices" concept for modern humanities, and the analyzed scientific concepts and positions have both intersection points and significant differences. The insufficient development of this concept and the need for further study of the phenomenon of performative practices are obvious. It may be asserted that terminological inconsistency negatively affects the subject studies of performative practices, and the lack of an accepted interpretation of the "performative practices" concept, its broad understanding, and the use in different contexts and discourses prompts researchers to sometimes even refuse to use this concept in favor of more "neutral" terms.

It has been proven that although the "performative practices" concept circulates in various studies, there is still no comprehensive justification for its content, and only a nominal definition may be used. The growing role of performative practices in modern culture and art causes their thematization in various discourses.

It is emphasized that spectacularity, dynamism, mobility, unpredictability, and provocativeness of performative practices are actively used not only in the sphere of art but also in the cultural and social fields, including in the realm of mass culture and everyday practices. For that reason, the subject of performative practices needs further in-depth study.

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Безугла Р.

Перформативні практики: теоретичні засади інтерпретації в соціогуманітарних науках

Анотація. Проаналізовано роботи щодо осмислення перформативних практик як явища сучасної культури та мистецтва, виокремлено основні напрями дослідження цього феномену. З'ясовано причини зростання інтересу до дослідження перформативних практик, наголошено на їхній складності та неоднозначності як особливої соціокультурної комунікативної дії, що має вигляд «художньої події», театралізованого дійства, динамічної символічної дії і впливає на всі канали людського сприйняття. Робота має на меті аналітичне дослідження сутнісної специфіки перформативних практик у руслі різних дослідницьких оптик з позицій соціальної й культурної антропології та мистецтвознавства, в безпосередньому зв'язку із соціальним та культурним життям, людськими емоціями, культурними патернами тощо.

Метою статті є теоретична ідентифікація поняття «перформативні практики» в сучасних гуманітарних науках, що забезпечить розв'язання наукової проблеми визначення сутнісної специфіки перформативних практик як феномену сучасної культури. Застосовано загальнонаукові підходи, принципи й методи, що дали змогу розглянути явище перформативних практик з різновекторних позицій. За допомогою порівняльного методу зіставлено теоретичні інтерпретації базових форм втілення перформативних практик; використання структурно-функціонального методу допомогло визначити компоненти, які створюють уявлення про значення окремих елементів перформансу як форм прояву перформативних практик у сучасній культурі.

Ключові слова: перформативні практики, перформанс, комунікація, мистецтво, соціум, перформативність.