THEATRICALITY IN MODERN PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

In recent years, the idea of theatricality has taken centre stage in studies of theatre and performance. It is necessary to distinguish theatre from a number of other creative forms, such as multimedia, performance, and dance, in order to define the term. We must contrast the character of theatre with other forms of art. Over the course of the 20th century, the theatre's fundamentals underwent a dramatic upheaval. In light of the development of new media, academics reevaluate theatrical aesthetics that were established at the end of the 19th century. Additionally, modern theatrical practice gave the text a new location and started to separate it from the theatrical activity.

The word "contemporary performance" in this context refers to an aesthetic history that begins in the 1880s with early Dada experiments and Alfred Jarry and continues through the American avant-garde movement. Currently, the phrase is used to refer to hybrid performances and artists who move freely between the genres of experimental theatre, video art, multimedia, and performance art without conforming to the practices of any one particular field. As contemporary performance continues to take on new shapes and subgenres, it necessitates a language that is

more and more varied. According to Artaud, the limitations imposed by the linguistic model are what make it difficult to theoretically explain the physical language of the theatre.
This essay looks into how modern theatricality should be defined, the impact it has on audience' perceptions across genres, thec ontemporary performance concepts, as well as the connections between' live performance; concert, music videos and its mediation.

Keywords: Theatricality, Performance studies, Audience perception

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Introduction

The term "theatricality" defies summation and definition, yet it has become a central concept in performance studies in Germany and the USA, with a large and expanding body of literature. The German Research Council's multidisciplinary project "Theatricality as a Model for Cultural Studies," which has resulted in numerous conferences and publications since 2000 has a particularly deep focus on theatricality. The concept's complex and variable meanings are continuously emphasized by academics, who also acknowledge the concept's ability to shed light on a variety of cultural phenomena and communicative processes. Postlewait and Tracy criticize prior attempts to develop a generic theory of theatricality in their 2003 essay collection Theatricality, arguing that the term should instead be used to analyze cultural performances in particular eras and locations. Other eminent theatre scholars have also pushed for this emphasis on cultural

and contextual distinctiveness. The idea of theatricality has drawn interest from a variety of professions because it allows for the exploration of links between things that are historically and geographically disparate.

The theatricality idea appears to be directly related to performance or performativity, but it elicits far more ambiguity and is used in less consistent ways. Some theories of theatricality focus on the norms and conventions of theatrical communication as well as how the audience perceives them in a self-conscious way. Such iterative patterns allow the "theatrical" to manifest itself in settings outside of the traditional theatre. According to this interpretation, theatricality is in contradiction to the idea of performance because each particular occurrence is concrete and hence transcends iteration, possibly radicalizing the meanings that may eventually emerge. The term "performance" is frequently used to refer to a concept that encompasses cultural practices and behaviors in addition to theatricality.

While traditionally theatre theorists have most frequently looked to the work of literary or philosophers for inspiration, concepts, and analytic strategies, today they are much more likely to look to such cultural analysts as anthropologists, ethnographers, psychologists, and sociologists, according to Marvin Carlson, who surveyed the history of "theatricality" in scholarship in 2002. This fusion of theatre studies and social sciences, linked with Richard Schechner and his circle, gave rise to a method of seeing theater that avoided ideas of aesthetic autonomy and emphasized how theater is a part of social and cultural processes. By

bringing together individuals from many academic fields and highlighting connections between aesthetics and culture, "Theatricality and Performance" will advance the growth of the study of culture. How is the creation, reception, and cultural significance of operas and plays influenced by the way festivals are framed? What new sites of dramatic inscription are being created by modern media, such as music videos and virtual worlds, and how are these media changing the parameters of theatricality? How are our ideas of the nature of theatricality impacted by our contact with the globalization of theater with non-European theatre? How does theatricality influence the conversation surrounding concerts and music videos, either positively or negatively? The ambivalence toward theatricality is likely to be most fully explored by this latter question. Some people view theatricality as a liberating or subversive force that undermines the appearance of transparent or unmediated representation, so exposing the theatrical nature of all forms of representation. However, it may also be seen as a coercive power tool that normalizes authority and thrives on the spectator's submission to its ability to create mimetic illusion. Recent conflicts about "theatricalized" acts of forgiveness, retribution, and reconciliation have brought to light the problematic relationship between theatricality and power in the public realm.

The term "theatricality" has become a key idea in contemporary performance studies, with an ever-growing collection of literature. "Theatricality" defies categorization and explanation. Discussion on the concept of theatricality and its historical background

will be discussed. Depending on your point of view, theatricality can have a broad variety of meanings. It can be anything from an act to an attitude, a style to a semiotic system, or even a medium to a message. It could merely be seen as a self-referential gesture. It can also be accepted as a distinguishing aspect of human communication. Though realism is frequently regarded as a subset of theatricality, modernism is typically seen as the antithesis of realism. The idea of theatricality is connected to some of the most important issues of our day, such as: The idea and character of performance, The development of aesthetic trends, Representational tools and techniques and The ability of art to communicate operating procedures in public life.

Theatricality challenges the distinction between fact and fiction. It is a critical thought that uses the idealistic and illusory aspects of theatre to establish how it relates to reality and can even replace it. Theatricality fills the void that both modalities of expression occupy between theory and practice. The transformation from the literary to the dramatic is accomplished by the spatial realization of the text, and space is essential to theatricality. The audience only notices the stage's remarkable quality within the context of space. The idea evokes much more ambivalence even if it is strongly tied to performance and performativity.

Evolution or History of Theatricality

There are connections between the histories of theatre and theatricality. The terminology, ideas, and practices that have a long history in many cultures are related to the term's potential meanings and connotations. For

instance, the Latin term "Theatrum Mundy" (The theatre of the world) and the Greek concept of "mimesis" have both been used to describe theatricality.

The term was first used in 1837, but prior to that, theatricality was known by a number of other names; in other words, a number of ways and methodologies worked to define a term that eluded them. The avant-garde movements' manifestos and publications at the turn of the 20th century are where the idea of theatricality originally emerged. The first person to advocate for a re-theatricalization of theatre was Georg Fuchs in his book The revolution of the theatre (1909). His intention was to establish precise standards that would set theatre apart from other kinds of art. Additionally, he defines theatricality as the whole of the props and sign systems utilized in a theatrical production in addition to the dramatic text. Thus, the elements of a theatrical performance are motion, colour, voice, sound, music, and light.

However, in his article Apologija teatral'nost (1908; Apologia of Theatricality), the Russian director Nikolai Evreinov used the term teatral'nos (theatricality) for the first time and considered a comprehensive definition of theatre. In contrast to theatre as an art form or even theatre as a social institution, he defines theatricality outside of its parameters. Evreinov looked at a number of academic fields, including sociology, ethnology, political and cultural history, and psychology, in order to create a precise and comprehensive definition. He set out to understand the mechanisms and fundamental purposes of theatricality in each of those contexts. In this regard,

he may be considered a forerunner of modern cultural studies experts.

However, the topic of theatricality was not brought up again until the 1970s. Elisabeth Burns starts off with the premise that the idea of theatre is historically and culturally enduring in her seminal study, Theatricality (1972). She contends that because theatricality is independent of "degrees of demonstrativeness," it cannot be characterized as a particular way of conduct or expression. Burns contends that it is "determined by a particular viewpoint" and refers to it as "a mode of perception" instead. In her description of theatricality as a mode of perception, Burns offered a convincing argument for its role as the focal point at which theatre and culture overlap and converge, or as the common denominator of both.

Modern Performance

The execution of artistic endeavor in front of an audience is typically referred to as a "performance." During the late 1960s and early 1970s, it developed from Happenings and Conceptual art to become a significant avant-garde art form. The popular text-based theatre was rejected by avant-garde theatre techniques. The intention was to be impromptu, presentational rather than representational, and to involve the audience in the performance rather than just have them watch it.

Notion of Performance

Performance is a brand-new style of contemporary art that combines theatrical performance with visual art. It is typically interdisciplinary and presented to an

audience in a fine art setting. Its medium is the artist, whose live activities serve as the actual artwork. Theatrical in nature, performance art frequently pushes acting and movement to expressive and functional limits beyond of traditional theatre.

Performance art can be planned or spontaneous, impromptu or meticulously orchestrated, and it can involve or exclude audience participation. It can be performed practically everywhere, including on stages, in parks, art galleries, cafes, restaurants, and public spaces. It is difficult to correctly describe this particular style of postmodernist art, but it is crucial to note that the artist must perform and communicate his art in front of an audience. Performance artists are free to incorporate any discipline or medium into their performances, including more traditional genres like painting, drawing, and sculpture, as well as dance, music, theatrical design, recitation, juggling, mime, film, fashion, installation, body, and computer art.

Historical Background

Historical avant-garde movements such as the Dadaists (1916–24), the Surrealists (1924–40), the Futurists (1909–14), Body Art (1960–present), and Feminist Art (1970–present) all had actions and manifestos that were related to modern performance art. Following World War Two, performance art underwent a significant development in the USA. Its elements and intensity came from a variety of sources, such as the beat movement's aesthetic styles, jazz performances, John Cage's experimental music, and Merce Cunningham's non-sequential modern dance.

Performance art during the 1960s and 1970s was characterized by improvisation, spontaneity, audience involvement, and political activism. In order to expose racism, misogyny, and corruption, particularly in the art industry, it also became a preferred strategy for feminist artists. The formalist approaches of traditional art, which lay emphasis on the finished painting, sculpture, or other piece of art, were abandoned by these groups in favour of a focus on the message or method of the artwork.

Performance art has typically positioned itself in opposition to contemporary text-based theatre over the latter three decades of the 20th century. Instead of being a theatre of the dramaturge, performance art is typically a theatre of the performer/creator. Instead of a theatre of presence and illusion; performance art combines presence and simulacra, image and disguise.

Performance Traits of the Present Day

Performance art uses a wide variety of methods. It might be formalist, autobiographical, or political. It could be guerrilla theatre, street theatre, or even mainstream theatre. Performance art might be recognizable, strange, or enigmatic. It may be hostile, upbeat, or social. Or it could be none of the possibilities above.

Occasionally, the verbal and visual components of a performance are combined in novel and strange ways, as in the theatre of Richard Foreman and the Wooster Group. This is especially true of Robert Wilson's early productions. The fundamental elements of all performances are, among other things, the following:

* The manipulation of the performer's body - a principal and essential element of any performing act.
* The manipulation of space, which the performer empties out and then carves up and occupies in its slightest nooks and crannies; and
* The relation that performance establishes between the artist and the audience, between the audience and the work of art, and between the work of art and the artist.

The inclusion of new media technologies in performance and the dominance of ordinary performativity in addition to street or pop culture in a theatrical setting are two important developments of the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The way we create and perceive performance has significantly changed as a result of these two invaders. Other traits that are virtually always present in a modern performance include the following ones

Theatrical Reworking or Adaptation

A true performance-making tool of the 20th and 21st centuries is the theatrical adaptation. Frank Kermode had previously defined the term "classics" as works that "possess intrinsic qualities that endure, but possess also an openness to accommodation which keeps them alive under endlessly varying dispositions" (Kermode, 1975). The traditional text is regarded as composite and sufficiently ambiguous to provide us our essential pluralities. In the process of adaptation, the literary "work" becomes transparent "text," revealing itself as open to an abundance of interpretations and also vulnerable to them. The director uses the theatre set

(mise-en-scène) to illuminate meanings, minute variations, and allusions found only via experiential exploration when reinterpreting the original text. The transition from the page to the stage, from literature to performance, is inevitable. The text's completion and maturity are further factors that set the conflict between the writer and the director/adapter apart.

It is challenging for directors to focus their interpretation on a specific, distinct point-of-view because of postmodern freedom. Instead, practitioners are fervently looking for fresh visuals, found text and artifacts, remarkable noises, and any shot of roughly authentic information; in general, they are looking for any type of material that will offer that crucial spark of creativity that will cause an adaptation to succeed. According to Liz LeCompte, the director of The Wooster Group, adaptation is a means of "passing on a tradition by reinventing a play".

Classic texts are combined with modern texts in contemporary performances. They undergo review and revision. To create new or alternative meanings, they are dissected and rearranged. Making old ideas and forms more powerful and relevant to modern audiences is the goal of theatrical adaptation. Director Robert Wilson, for instance, created impressively inventive theatre productions in which he reimagined classic texts like Hamlet, Faust, Macbeth, and Odyssey.

Integration of Live and Mediated Performance

Through the use of modern technology and multimedia, this has varying degrees of sophistication. Successful

integration of media texts occurs when they are used in performances as metaphors rather than just as a backdrop.

The various media used, such as photos, moving pictures, video screens, and television are present like many microscopes to magnify the infinitely small and draw attention to the audience's attention to the constrained physical spaces that the performer's aspiration quickly carves out and transforms into imaginary spaces, modeling a zone through which his emotional flows and illusions pass. The performer's hand, pieces of skin, an eye, and other body parts can be amplified to infinity in the physical space of the performance, but it can also be confined, fixed spaces.

Non-linear and Post-linear Narrative

The non-Aristotelian narrative form has become increasingly prevalent in modern theatre performances. There is no longer a 3-act structure requirement for plays. (Beginning, middle, end) as new story formats emerge, like:

1. Surrealist structure: image or incident not open to logical explanation or explication.

2. Fractured structure: comprises beginning, middle, and end, but not necessarily in that same order.

3. Shifting structure involves the use of flashbacks, playing with notions of time and space.

The postmodernist theory that an infinite number of parallel universes exist instead of one world where time only proceeds in a linear fashion is supported by these categories of narrative structure (non-linear/multiple narratives). Such performances enlighten; they expand awareness in a way that is fundamentally different from how we interact with the world as a whole. By personalizing the work in this way, we enable the audience to offer a wide range of explanations for their experiences. The content of the piece is determined by how the viewer interprets it.

There is a tendency to think geometrically in order to comprehend this type of performance. Live performance triggers lines, triangles, matrices, or particle clusters to help create the meaning.

Integration of visual or text-free elements

This category comprises visuals on screens and movement based performances known as "physical theatre" that support, develop, accentuate, and disintegrate the narrative. His theatre work has always been deeply rooted in the performing and fine arts. Wilson's skills as a painter, sculptor, and architect informs his directorial style. The conventional divisions between the performing arts; theatre, opera, film, and the visual arts were dissolved by Wilson. He uses methods from several fields, such as dance, theatre, video, installation, music, painting, and sculpture, to create an intricate synthesis of various artistic components.

Conclusion

The constraints imposed by the linguistic model are what make it problematic to theorize the physical language of theatre, according to Artaud. Therefore, defining the aesthetic and distinguishing features of modern performance such as music videos, concerts is debatable. The fundamental tenets of this framework are deterritorialization, performativity, and openness of form.

Performativity is related to the situational aspect of how the audience perceives the performance as well as the fact that this perception occurs right now. According to Richard Schechner, "Performativity is everywhere" it encompasses everyday actions, interactions between people in the workplace, on the internet, and in other media as well as in communication and languages. Theatre professionals are now incorporating "new media" into their creative endeavors since performance art is typically technologically focused. The encoding and decoding of all digital media converges the encoding and decoding of visual, linguistic, acoustic, and gestural information. The capacity to manipulate data in real-time is one advantage of this feature. The possibilities of modern performing practices are substantially expanded by this.

The category's overlap, particularly when it comes to the ideas of inter-textuality and joint authorship, is the cause of the form's openness. This idea casts doubt on the notion of defining the "begins" and "ends" of text.

In modern performances, the notion of collective authorship has replaced the idea of the single playwright as the final authority, as in conventional and realistic theatre forms. The new theatre supports a one-process method, in which the group develops the work from inceptive conception to final production. This is in contrast to the traditional model, in which a playwright writes a play in isolation and other artists present it.

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