

ATS1287: THEATRE PERFORMANCE IN CONTEXT 1

Week 6 and 7- watch pre-recorded lectures before class and workshops during class

Themes throughout the unit-

- Performance as ritual
- Performance of gendered identity
- Places of performance
- Audiences of performance
- Performance as profession

Performance-

- Performance is an ephemeral (that is in existence, power, favour, popularity; for a short period of time)
- Peggy Phelan- “performance’s only life is the present”
- What is there left over for us to study? - Texts, historical period, traditions of theatre, manuscripts, programs etc (studying the residue of performance)
- Manipulation into another concept or reality
- Live
- Audience must be a part of performance
- “embodied ways”
- “Scholars apply the term not only to the staging of plays but to religious rituals, state ceremonies, carnival festivals, political demonstrations, athletic contests, or the repetition of customs around a family dinner table”

Richard Schechner-

- “twice behaved behaviours”
- “the habits, rituals, and routines of life are restored behaviour”

Similarities between play, games, sports, theatre and ritual:

1. special ordering of time
2. special value attached to objects
3. non-productivity in terms of goods
4. rules

Erving Goffman-

- We are constantly in a state of performance
- “Life itself is a dramatically enacted thing”
- “We act better than we know”
- The presentation of self in *Everyday Life* (1959)

Judith Butler-

- A central concept of the theory is that your gender is constructed through your own repetitive performance of gender

Theatre-

- The culmination of many different people, skills, talents and ideas
- A place to allow people to perform
- Collaborative live performance
- A performance of a play/Act
- Greek ‘theatron’ (seeing place)
- A tradition within such a performance takes place
- “Theatre is not one ‘thing’, but rather a complex set of human communicative activities involving... fundamental human desires to imitate, play, imagine, and structure our experience” (theatre histories, pg31)
- For a performance to be theatre it requires two sets of participants- audience and actors- and an organised spatial relationship
- Theatre of war- place in which important military events occur or are progressing. War now happens outside the theatre of war, change in the way we view war- what happens when performances are performed outside of the theatre and strictly places designed for performance?

Drama-

- Use your body
- Acting
- When something (positive or negative) happens that captivates others
- Greek ‘dran’ (to do/to act)
- The “action”
- The form that the action takes. Western Tradition privileging narrative tends to mean the play, the story, the text
- We get ‘dramatic action’, ‘dramatic form’, ‘dramatic structure’

- Dramaturgy; the study of how meaning is generated in drama and performance

Richard Schechner 'Play, Games, Sport, Theater, and Ritual'

- Similarities between play, games, sports, theatre and ritual:
 1. special ordering of time
 2. special value attached to objects
 3. non-productivity in terms of goods
 4. rules
- Three types of performance times:
 1. Event time- steps of sequence must be completed no matter the length of time taken (scripted theatre performance)
 2. Set time- an event begins and ends at certain moments (games structured on “how much/many”)
 3. Symbolic time- span of activity represents another clock time (theatre, play and make-believe in general)
- In performance objects are valued much higher within the context of the performance than they actually are in real life
- Often props and costumes are designed to look more expensive than they actually are
- Objects in performance are often of extreme importance and the focus of the activity
- Theatre, play, games, sport and rituals all do not produce goods
- Forms of theatre remain constant- money cannot corrupt it
- Rules defend the activity against the encroachment from the outside
- Rules are to games like traditions are to ritual and conventions are to theatre, dance and music
- If someone finds a “better” way to perform, it must coincide with the rules
- Performance is special because it exists outside of the “everyday life” and creates a “special world”
- Within it people can make the rules, rearrange time, assign value to things and work for pleasure
- Spaces in which performance is given are often large and in prime real estate but lie dormant for large periods of time
- Play is a “free activity” where one makes the rules
- Ritual expresses the individual’s submission to forces “larger” or “other” than oneself
- Games, sports and theatre mediate between these extremes
- An actor must work within the confines of directorial instructions, the drama itself, the conventions of the drama and the space given to perform

Module	Themes	Connections to other modules
Performance definition	<p>Performance as ritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schecner’s article connects the ideas of ritual, theatre, games and sports • Similarities are- special ordering of time, special value attached to objects, non-productivity in terms of goods and rules • Types of performance times- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event time- steps of sequence must be completed no matter the length of time taken • Symbolic time- span of activity represents another clock time (theatre, play and make believe in general) • In performance objects are valued much higher within the context of the performance than they actually are in real life • Objects in performance are often of extreme importance and the focus of the activity • Ritual expresses the individual’s submissions to forces “larger” or “other” than oneself- similar to performance in a way because performance is often surrendering of oneself to the role they intend to play, for the greater good of the performance • “embodied ways”- Scholars apply the term not only to the staging of the plays but to religious rituals, state ceremonies, carnival festivals, political 	<p>The idea that ritual is a type of performance was particularly relevant in the medieval theatre period because there was a major intersection between performance and the ritual of the church.</p>

	<p>demonstrations, athletic contests, or the repetition of customs around a family dinner table</p> <p>Performance of gendered identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Judith Butler- your gender is constructed through your own repetitive performance of gender• Erving Goffman- “life itself is a dramatically enacted thing”- idea that we are constantly in a state of performance <p>Places of performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For a performance to be theatre it requires two sets of participants- audience and actors- and an organised spatial relationship• Schechner- “An actor must work within the confines of directorial instructions, the drama itself, the conventions of the drama and the space given to perform” <p>Audiences of performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “fundamental human desires to imitate, play, imagine, and structure our experience” (theatre histories, 31)• <p>Performance as profession</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•	
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Text	Notes on unit themes	Quotes
<p>The Bacchae</p> <p>Themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sanity/insanity - Appearances vs reality - Piety to the Gods - Women/Men- societal roles - Hubris/excessive pride and arrogance - Civilisation vs nature - Extent of punishment/revenge <p>Plot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dionysus comes to Thebes to clear his mother's name and punish the insolent city - Dionysus is disguised as a stranger with Bacchantes to the family for their treatment of his mother and their refusal to offer him sacrifices - Pentheus decided to ban worship of Dionysus in Thebes - Dionysus tells the audience that when he arrived Thebes he drove Semele's sisters mad, and they fled Mt Cithaeron to worship him and perform his rites on the mountainside - Pentheus orders the guard to arrest the Lydian stranger and his maenads 	<p>Performance as ritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The play itself centres around the idea of cult worship and religiousness - Dionysus is seen as the driver of ritual throughout the play, as he controls the women of Thebes and forces Cadmus, Pentheus and Teiresias to join the Bacchantes - Possibly making a commentary on the threat of cult worship to Athens valuing of war and the polis over all else - The chorus also seems almost ritualistic because it is specific to Greek tragedies and draws on the idea of shared experience, which is similar to religious rituals - Furthering this idea, is the fact that the chorus in the Bacchae are actually Bacchantes themselves <p>Gender identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There would have been men playing women's roles on the stage, so character's like Agave would be male actors - Because the theatre and society were dominated by only the male voice, representations of women in the 	<p>Performance as ritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'deals with the god of dramatic festivals' (Rutherford, 121) - 'I have made the city of Thebes resound to women's cries, dressing them in fawnskins and putting thyrsus in their hands, my ivy-bound spear' (Davie, 128) - '[chanting as they enter]' (Davie, 130) - 'the god has made no distinction between young and old, in calling them to the dance' (Davie, 132) - 'Chorus: 'Many are the forms taken by the plans of the gods and may the things they accomplish beyond men's hopes. What men expect does not happen; for the unexpected heaven finds a way. And so it has turned out here today' (Davie, 165) <p>Gender identity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'It is not for Dionysus to force women to show chastity in the affairs of love; this lies in their own nature' (Davie, 135) - 'Am I to give up being a man and rank as a woman?' (Davie, 149)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When Pentheus tries to tie Dionysus he ties only a bull, when Pentheus plunges a knife into Dionysus the blade passes only through shadow. Suddenly an earthquake shakes the palace, a fire starts, and Pentheus is left weak and puzzled. - Cowheard explains how he saw the women peacefully in the forest but when they spotted him they went into a mad frenzy - Pentheus agrees to Dionysus' plan to dress like a woman because he wants to spy on the women and see the forbidden - Pentheus can't see the women so Dionysus bends a branch down and raises Pentheus up in the tree - Then Dionysus orders the Bacchants to attack Pentheus and they rip him apart limb-from-limb - Agaue returns with Pentheus' head as a trophy - Agaue then realises what she has done and begins to weep - Dionysus banishes Agaue from Thebes and ordains that Cadmus and his wife will turn into snakes, destined to invade Greek lands with a horde of barbarians 	<p>Bacchae were not friendly, they were presented as erratic, easily manipulated and crazy</p> <p>Places of performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Bacchae was performed at the festival of Dionysia in an amphitheatre that was built to seat the entire population of citizens in the Golden Age of Athens - The actors would have been wearing masks in order for their faces to be seen, however, some of the nuanced emotion might have been lost due to the scale of the performance - Possibly would have been even more powerful in its message because it was performed at a festival honouring the God Dionysus <p>Audiences of performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The audience were all male, free citizens, and as such would have seen the actions of the Bacchants as highly despicable and crazy - Also would have sympathised with Pentheus more because they would have had a similar view on women ignoring their duties to frolic in 	<p>Places of performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - '[the scene is outside the royal palace on the citadel of Thebes]' (Davie, 128) - 'I am Dionysus, son of Zeus... I have changed my appearance from a god's to a man's' (Davie, 128) - '[speaking from above the stage-building]' (Davie, 163) <p>Audiences of performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'departure of the Theban women for the hills is seen by Pentheus as a threat to the political order of the male-dominated polis' (Rutherford, 122) - 'Dionysus: every one of the foreigners is dancing these rites. Pentheus: that's because they have much less sense than Greeks' (Davie, 139) <p>Performance as a profession</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - '[in the costume of a Bacchant]' (Davie, 131) <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'bringer of joy and celebration, but also the cause of violence and madness' 'the gift of wine is two-edged, inspiration and intoxication' (Rutherford, 122)
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	<p>nature, thus making the tragedy highly tailored to their views</p> <p>Performance as a profession</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Performance as a profession was only just beginning and was only achievable for male citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'this city must learn its lesson' (Davie, 129) - 'soon put an end to this pernicious revelling' (Davie, 133) - 'you possess a fluent tongue, as if you were a man of sense, but your words lack all judgement' (Davie, 134) - 'Pentheus is dead' (Davie,155)- Messenger tells and describes deaths rather than showing audience - 'how he has destroyed us, the king who is the Roaring One- justly but excessively, though he is our own kin!' (Davie, 160)
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