

which seem to be, consciously or unconsciously, now scrupulously estranged from the things of import that happen around us.

In other words, at the onset of the twenty-first century, the idea of performance and the young tradition of performance studies are critical to any understanding of our present situation. We can use and develop the tools of performance studies to explain to ourselves and to others what is going on around us. The analytic frameworks of "theater," "drama," and "art" analysis clearly don't allow us this opportunity, as Stockhausen's experience shows. But performance studies does.

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## READER CROSS-REFERENCES

- Schechner – the shift from "drama" to performance studies  
 Goffman, Gabler – everyday events as performance  
 Santino – public shrines as a response to September 11, 2001  
 Kaprow – the blurred boundary between life and art

## Part II

## WHAT IS PERFORMANCE?

The term "performance" most commonly refers to a tangible, bounded event that involves the presentation of rehearsed artistic actions. We may, for example, attend a performance of a play, a dance, or a symphony. We can extend this idea of a performance to other events that involve a performer (someone doing something) and a spectator (someone observing something): a clergy member's performance of a religious service, an athlete's performance on the court, a politician's performance in a debate. Performance may also be understood more generally as any activity that involves the presentation of rehearsed or pre-established sequences of words or actions. Schechner calls this "restored behavior" or "twice-behaved behavior."

But performance is also a concept, a way of understanding all types of phenomenon. Shakespeare's idea that "all the world's a stage" is not new; it was probably not new to Shakespeare. But the idea of the world as performance has become increasingly relevant throughout the last century, displacing an earlier idea of the world as a book. While the language we use to describe this worldview often borrows from the stage (actors, roles) it is important to remember that understanding the world as performance can mean both more and less than understanding the world as "theater."

In his 1959 book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, anthropologist Erving Goffman explored how much of our everyday social interactions consist of pre-established patterns or routines. In the section excerpted here, "Belief in the part one is playing," Goffman draws on theatrical language (*show, audience, setting*) to describe the various expressive tools which individuals employ to indicate social status, noting that these everyday life performances may be "cynical" (intended to deceive) or "sincere" (intended to reflect "reality"). Goffman was one of the first (among many) social scientists to turn to the theater for a framework with which to interpret non-theatrical behavior. Conversely, many of Goffman's contemporaries in the humanities were turning to social theories to help analyze theatrical and literary events. Writing in 1983, Clifford Geertz ("Blurred genres: the refiguration of social thought") casts a critical eye on these interdisciplinary borrowings and what they may suggest for the subsequent study of performance.

One of the most thorough recent attempts to define performance in the field of performance studies is Marvin Carlson's 1996 book *Performance: A Critical Introduction*. In his

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introduction, "What is performance?," excerpted here, Carlson dissects several different uses of the term, while recognizing its "essential contestedness" (see p. 70). Carlson's consideration of performance art as a genre reminds us that the term "performance" does not always connote fiction or artifice. Used in contrast to "theater" or "drama," "performance" makes a claim to authenticity.

Neal Gabler, in an excerpt from *Life the movie* (1988), brings us back to the question of performance in everyday life. Like Goffman, Gabler suggests that social roles are performed, but Gabler takes it a step further, declaring "after decades of public-relations contrivances and media hype, [. . .] life has become art, so that the two are now indistinguishable" (see p. 76). This proposition is put to the test in a more oppositional way by performance artists such as Marina Abramović who enact everyday behaviors for audiences in art galleries and elsewhere. Peggy Phelan's 2004 essay considers Abramović's work with an eye toward issues of consciousness, liveness, and the artist's body. How and why are these issues essential to performance?

As the chapters in this section demonstrate, the limits of what is performance and what can be considered as performance are not fixed. The boundaries between performance and not performance are constantly being tested, challenged, and remapped by artists and theorists alike. This dynamic and flexible characterization of our object of study is one of the hallmarks of performance studies.

When an individual impression that is see actually possess have the consequence what they appear to his performance and to begin a consideration of the individual's own among whom he fits

At one extreme, be sincerely convinced. When his audience to be the typical disgruntled will have

At the other extreme routine. This position to see the performer may be ends, having no ulterior. When the individual of his audience, we believe in the impression the cynic, with all his masquerade, expect toy at will with some

It is not assumed, audiences for purpose may delude his audience community, etc. For