The Performative Practices in Politics: The Ukrainian Maidan and its Carnivalization

Dmytro Shevchuk, Maksym Karpovets

Abstract: Performance theory is one of the methods that can explain dynamic and unpredictable social phenomena. The basics of our research are to be found in the artistic practices that destroyed previous classical patterns in art, while overcoming its boundaries. Accordingly, performance as a practical phenomenon has become the basis for a theoretical explanation of different political processes with carnival nature that influence and change social reality. This article proves that the Maidan in Kiev had a performative nature as well, which developped spontaneously due to its active involvement of the human body and the release of unconscious elements. It is claimed that the use of performative practices inside the Maidan allowed to overcome the totalitarian vertical logic of power, realizing democratic ideals and overcoming nihilism. Therefore, we suggest that performative theory can be applied to similar carnival political, social, and cultural phenomena, revealing their procedural and creative substance.

Keywords: performative theory, performance, politics, the Maidan, carnivalization, power.

Introduction

At the end of the 20th century, humanities were experiencing a 'performative turn,' the beginning of which is associated with John Austin's theory of speech acts, which was presented in his course *How to Do Things with Words*. The connection of language and action was also noted by Hanna Arendt in *The Human Condition*, where she stated that human activity needed language as action (Arendt 1998). The linkage of language and action leads to the manifestation of a person in the world where specific performative identification is created. According to Arendt's theory, it is possible to distinguish two fundamental identifications in the social world. The first one is happening through language and action. It demonstrates *who* a human being is. The second one is identification by reference to physical parameters of corporeality (body and voice), expressing *what* a human being is.

The formation of performative theory is associated with the critique of Austin's speech acts within post-structuralism: Jacques Derrida's deconstruction, Michel Foucault's theory of disciplinary power, and Judith Butler's (self)criticism of feminism and gender theory. This stage of performative turn is characterized by the fact that the concept of performative is not limited by its linguistic meaning but further expands into social, cultural, and political contexts. In

addition, the transformation of interpretation into the basic methodological procedure in the humanities replaced the institutional critique of hermeneutics, which was manifested in Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's work *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Gumbrecht 2004). Thus, the performance theory became a powerful tool for understanding atypical social phenomena that the previous classical models could not explain.

As a result, a methodological approach called "performative studies" appeared within the human sciences. The basic concepts for the further understanding of political reality and the Maidan are performatives, performances, and performativity. Performatives are a type of speech acts that do not merely describe the world but also express certain actions that have both social and political meaning. Performance refers to social practices that involve presentations of sensuality and corporality within a social, political or cultural space. Performativity is a term that refers to the basic characteristics of social, political, and cultural phenomena, which are interpreted within the framework of performative studies. The correlations between performatives, performance, and performativity are stated by German anthropologist Christoph Wulf. In particular, he states that performances can describe an artistic and social activity, performative action is useful for the analysis of speech, and performativity is a derivative concept that actualizes the connections between the previous models (Wulf 2005).

The specifics of performative studies are that they can be implemented both as a theoretical model and as an empirical approach, absorbing different social practices within their conceptual limits. Hence, this approach is also popular not only among philosophers, sociologists, and cultural anthropologists but theatre directors, actors, dancers, and artists, who also use this model for the future realization of their ideas. It means that the performative turn orients the social and human sciences not only towards the understanding of society but also on its current often invisible transformations. In this regard, the performative and hermeneutic approaches complement each other as procedures for explaining social reality.

The interpretative analysis of a perfomative action is based on modern hermeneutics, which also has political consequences. Accordingly, Stanley Rosen explains: "Every hermeneutical program is at the same time itself a political manifesto or the corollary of a political manifesto" (Rosen 1987, 141). Moreover, performances with a specific political meaning require implementation of hermeneutical interpretation in order to identify hidden political messages. Within this context, social performances can be defined as situations for pre-understanding of the political world with the help of special art practices and manifests, achieved in the process of its interpretation. Therefore, the politics of performativity connects with the politics of interpretation.

We argue in this paper that some social/political phenomena have a deliberate performative nature that can be realized by political actors and artists as two opposite

types of representation. These phenomena cannot be analyzed through the use of hermeneutic interpretation since it cannot explain their variable and incomplete nature, mostly focusing on stable and completed contexts. In addition, we assume that many phenomena do not have a performative nature, but this does not eliminate the fact that they can be analyzed within the performative theory, which reveals their procedural (gaming) essence. Following that, the Ukrainian Maidan (the civic protests of 2004 and 2013-2014) is an example of a social phenomenon with a performative nature. Performative studies can reveal their cultural/aesthetic and social/political significance in the perspective of carnivalization and overcoming cultural, political or philosophical limitations.

Art, Performance, and Politics

The history of performance begun with an attempt of certain artists to separate themselves from the previous tradition, namely avant-garde and modernism. First, they rejected the long and habitual border between an artist and an audience, when the former always performed the leading role. In this regard, such division of roles and functions for the art of performance was inadmissible since it had nothing to do with life. Artists believed that everyone can be an artist and everything can be conceptualized as well as performed, thus "performance art has opened hitherto unnoticed spaces" (MacDonald 1993, 175). Secondly, performance integrated various types of art including theater, music, and dance, and thus developed into an interdisciplinary field of one's expression. However, the main difference from these arts is that performance was aimed to develop narrative in a non-linear way due to the active participation of the audience. Lastly, performance was particularly sensitive to real life although it often separated itself from it because of its apolitical position. According to Taylor, performances "function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity reiterated behavior" (Taylor 2003, 2). Following this, performance art conveyed the main social problems of the past century, including feminism, racism, the Vietnam War, the Holocaust, and capitalism.

In fact, it is difficult to identify the first stage of performance since many artists, directors, and musicians used performative elements in their texts. Within this framework, even the first resonance exhibition of impressionists can be an example of a performative action where artists, spectators, and critics were involved as full participants into the same discourse. RoseLee Goldberg tracks the history of performance from futurism although she claims that the early futuristic performance was a kind of demonstration rather than an aesthetical practice (Goldberg 2011, 11). She adds that futurist practices had more propaganda than art (Goldberg 2011, 11) although they are often inseparable. Considering the goal of the current research, it is significant that performance within the avant-garde movement expressed its interest in political issues, trying to change the surrounding reality due to its aesthetical (and often non-aesthetical) techniques. The origin of performance shows that this kind of

art expanded traditional forms of expression as well as the perception of social reality, which was interpreted as a product of artist's consciousness but not as an objective and inaccessible part of existence.

Performance in its essence has always been a political action because it tried to undermine the established constructs of power and any available hierarchies in the society. Performance art developed in the 1960s and became a form of rebellion against the capitalist values, American politics, and masculine discourse. Therefore, it is not surprising that female artists were the most prominent representatives of performance, who tried to rewrite the so-called 'masculine' history of art and, what is even more important, to rehabilitate their social status. For example, although a well-known performance *Cut Piece* (1964) of Yoko Ono was not designed to criticize specific historical episodes, but it is still referred to the issue of social injustice. The artist reflected the problem of war through her body, which was a performative canvas for the audience, representing the human body as a form of passive struggle against the human aggression of that time. Moreover, Ono proved that the female body could exist as a way of social opposition according to the tradition of peaceful protests.

All things considered, performance has always used the human body as a method of rebellion against a certain political regime, which was associated with the Dadaist and modernist actions. Artists believed that the human body could express the deepest unconscious instincts and insults, so the involvement of a large number of people was an indispensable element in performance. This fact allows to apply the performative theory in the future analysis of public spaces, social protests, and even metropolitan areas. On the one hand, the body is a powerful performer for creating new social messages that can substantially change a prevailing order. On the other hand, performance art uses the body as a text for its own aesthetic practices, transforming the previous means of artistic expression. In this regard, social protests, demonstrations, and revolutions are those specific embodied practices that reveal the collective unconscious as well as the invisible mechanisms of social life.

Nevertheless, the human body is only a medium between one's idea and the audience, where the transmission of an aesthetic message is often open and unfinished. Hence, everyone can participate in the performance without knowing its main purpose, which makes the process itself more important than its ultimate goal. Therefore, the performance can last indefinitely in time and space as well as it can be contributed to countless times. For example, the performance *4.33* (1952) of John Cage conditionally sets the frames of action, but within these limits the audience can do anything. Similarly, the performance *Rhythm 0* (1974) of Marina Abramovic assumed complete freedom of action for the audience that could perform various actions with the artist's body with the help of 72 objects that lay on the table. It proves that the interaction of the artist's body with the audience allows not only to rethink social stereotypes or ideologies but also to create a parallel social reality that can influence the development of various

processes and phenomena. In this regard, Diana Taylor notes that the task of performance was to rebuild the structure of cultural memory by changing the basic codes of history and identity (Taylor 2003, xviii). This formula is also relevant for German performances and actions (the struggle against the Nazi past), Yugoslav (the protest against the Soviet regime), and modern Russian actions (rethinking the communist and totalitarian ideologies). All of them were on the verge of aesthetical and political areas while changing the content of both cultural memory and the artist's role in the creation of social reality.

On the other hand, conceptual performances are not always related to politics, trying to distance themselves from any ideological connotations. The artists work purely with abstract categories that have nothing in common with politics. For example, the Moscow group of conceptualists *Collective Actions Group* organized *The Balloon* in 1977, which tried to go beyond the ideological limits of its society. They mounted a large ball of four meters in diameter and stuffed it with smaller balloons and a ringing alarm clock inside, letting the whole haystack-shaped thing to drift down the river Klyazma (Moscow Conceptualism 2017). It is important to mention that there were no spectators, but the whole performance was realized in a specific place and time. The problem is that apolitical performances are often associated with conceptualism, which is not always aimed at collaborating with the audience. Nevertheless, performance often refers to different aspects of politics, considering it as an emancipatory and destructive practice towards people.

Such division is close to Jacques Ranciere's theory of political art, where he proposes to use *the distribution of the sensible* in order to explain the interplay of art and politics, in particular in their distribution of sensory data. Ranciere states that the aesthetic distribution reflects an appropriate social division and, as a result, cannot be politically intertwined (Ranciere 2004). In other words, aesthetic sensations are not a product of human consciousness or spirit but depend on politics and its logics: "It is a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience" (Ranciere 2004, 13). Accordingly, art exists as a form of aesthetic representation and articulation of political phenomena, namely the mechanisms of emancipation, political erosion, indifference, and populism. However, Ranciere insists that this concept should not be confused with Walter Benjamin's discussion of the 'aestheticization of politics' (Ranciere 2004, 13). At the same time, Ranciere's vision of art and politics is still relevant to the Marxist aesthetics that interprets art in the context of socio-economic relations. Thus, it has nothing to do with the sphere of transcendence either. Moreover, this concept deals with the conceptual foundations of performance, which tries to go beyond the limits of ideological discourses but still manifests it in its specific way.

The most important thing to mention is that Ranciere opposes autonomous and heteronomous art. The former refers to a closed sphere

because it serves only its ideas. This idea refers to the romantic aesthetical doctrine of 'art for art's sake' which exhausted itself after modernism. In addition, this art is associated with the institute of a museum, which is opposed to the second type – street art. Ranciere tries to prove that such division is not relevant today, but it seems that hetero-dominated or non-institutional art replaced the autonomous one due to the process of politicization. As a result, this led not only to the expansion of themes and methods of art but also to its socio-cultural mission, where performance plays the role of approval and implementation of the most relevant social practices. Ranciere's theory does not only undermine traditional notions about the social function of art but also completely changes the role of politics in the creation of aesthetic content. According to this logic, an artist cannot create out of politics because, according to Ranciere's belief, he/she inevitably creates his/her time and space, thus falling into the sphere of sensual distribution: "It is thoroughly possible, therefore, to single out the form of politicization at work in a novel, a film, a painting, or an installation. If this politics coincides with an act of constructing political dissensus, this is something that the art in question does not control" (Ranciere 2004, 62). Hence, art is a direct element of social reality, which always transforms or formats it according to its goals. However, a philosopher does not explain where these goals come from or what the final goal of its aesthetical activity is. If it only realizes political goals, then what is the role of an artist in this process? It is also substantial for performance art when the roles between an artist, an audience, and social institutes are not always clearly demarcated but constantly invisible and changeable.

Progressing further, the artists refused to use traditional methods of expression, especially the mimetic ones, absorbing every possible gesture and object from everyday life, pretending to be an integral or even dominant part of reality by politicizing and conceptualizing it in such a way. It also refers to the idea of meta-politics that opposes the forms of politics to those elements that are formed by political actors: "It can be said that an artist is committed as a person, and possibly that he is committed by his writings, his paintings, his films, which contribute to a certain type of political struggle […]. It means that aesthetics has its own politics, or its own meta-politics" (Ranciere 2004, 60). Thus, Ranciere proposes a paradox in which art becomes art when it ceases to be itself. In this case, performance clearly illustrates the situation when artists abandoned the classical means of mimesis and crossed the line between art and non-art into the space of reality and politics.

Joseph Boyce, one of the leaders of performance, noted that art should truly change everyday life of human beings (Goldberg 2011, 184). This transformation of art into life and vice versa expressed the essence of not only Boyce's philosophy but of many other performers who used the concept of "social sculpture" for their actions as well: "His idea of 'social sculpture', consisting of lengthy discussions with large gatherings of people in various

contexts, was a means primarily to extend the definition of art beyond specialist activity. Carried out by artists, 'social sculpture' would mobilize every individual's latent creativity, ultimately moulding the society of the future" (Golberg 2011, 151). In spite of this, the desire to create art outside of politics, museums, and hierarchies turned out to the opposite situation when every performative gesture offered or denied a certain version of reality, and thus was inevitably transformed into ideological action.

Consequently, performance has always been sensitive to social problems, rethinking them in the form of subjective-subjective interaction, where the main purpose was to create an interactive field of collision between different social strata through the active involvement of their own corporeality. Therefore, it was difficult for many critics to distinguish the art of performance from theater, dance or even everyday life since their actions were close to the surrounding reality. On the other hand, the performative shift updated various fields of humanitarian knowledge by returning performance its status as a serious art: "With performance as a kind of critical wedge, the metaphor of theatricality has moved out of the arts into almost every aspect of modern attempts to understand our conditions and activities, into every branch of the human sciences – sociology, anthropology, ethnography, psychology, linguistics" (Carslon 2004, 72). Clearly then, performance allowed to reflect different complex social and political processes due to its procedural, decorative, and interactive nature.

The Politics of Performativity and Interpretation

Considering the correlations between hermeneutic interpretation and performative studies, it is important to underline how they differ from each other. At a first glance, the procedural nature of performative theory predetermines the involvement of hermeneutics. For instance, Gumbrecht claims that his *The Production of Presence* does not tend to be an anti-hermeneutic project: "Challenging the exclusive status of interpretation within the humanities, however, does not mean that this book is 'against interpretation.' It is interested in what it will suggest we think and, as far as possible, describe as 'presence' but it by no means aims at being antihermeneutic. In this spirit, the book will suggest, for example, that we conceive of aesthetic experience as an oscillation (and sometimes as an interference) between 'presence effects' and 'meaning effects'" (Gumbrecht 2004, 2). Therefore, according to the theorist, the focus on "materialities of communication" (its attention to the corporeality in the process of communicative interaction), "nonhermeneutic" (the critical approach to the institutionalization of hermeneutic), and "the production of presence" (the effects caused by materiality of communication), do not completely deny "the production of meaning" including the procedures of interpretation in social sciences and humanities (Gumbrecht 2004, 2).

In the context of correlations between interpretation and performativity, there are two kinds of politics. The first one is the politics of performativity, which can be applied in the perspective of the performative field. At the same time, the politics of meaning as the second type can be realized in the hermeneutic field, including its different possibilities for understanding. The similarity between these kinds of politics is evident in the fact that both of them use opportunities of language as communicative means in the public space. This kind of politics is connected with the creation of the modern public space, including such processes as public disturbances and protests. For example, Gumbrecht describes the genesis of the hermeneutic field from the New Age, which is associated with the development of new ideas about public space: "The public space was imagined as the sphere of deliberation where all participants would bracket their personal and group-specific interests in order to reach consensus. Such were the premises for the early institutions of political representation, above all, for the parliament as a place where the competition of different opinions and of different visions of the future was supposed to be transformed into consensus and into a joint punctual vision of the future" (Gumbrecht 2004, 35). The politics of performativity also suggests the necessity of political dialogue and consensus, trying to "revitalize" the modern political discourse in such way. In particular, this intention has been realized in the project of "performative democracy."

First of all, this "revitalization" is aimed at developing a new type of engagement that involves a wider involvement of members into the political discourse, thereby allowing to overcome the particular interests of a certain group. However, the problem of performative politics is how to institutionalize it within different social groups, considering their carnival nature. Elżbieta Matynia explains the connection between performance and carnival: "Performative democracy, like the carnival studied by Mikhail Bakhtin, is a transitory phenomenon and, accordingly, cannot be institutionalized... In its best moments, it is an example of a joyous and subversive experience that is played in the carnival public space..." (Matynia 2009, 16-17). This thesis explains the use of performative democracy as an instrument against totalitarian practices. Relying on the spontaneity of carnival experience, the politics of performativity uses non-institutional mechanisms of interpretation in order to understand such social and political events that cannot be controlled by the authorities. The interpretation of social and political phenomena within the framework of performative studies is ensured through the reference to mimetic gestures, which involves applying the experience of corporal practices and speech. At the same time, the procedure of understanding does not include a principle of reflection but involves the performative elements of regularity and repetitions.

The performative approach involves the performing of meaning, thus it is possible to assume that political action has a gaming nature. However, the game of performance is full of spectacularity within predetermined scenarios.

Hermeneutics, on the contrary, understands the process of gaming in a different way: it indicates how the phenomenon of the political exists but does not reveal its performative elements. Moreover, the hermeneutic understanding of the game implies more freedom of its realization because one cannot impose meaning in the process of gaming as well as in communication. In this regard, the manifestation of political meaning requires more freedom for its realization, referring it to democratic institutions. Within this context, the Maidan revealed democratic political, social, and cultural meanings only because of its performative essence.

The Performative Nature of the Maidan

The Maidan is a social and political phenomenon of protest that affected the political order and, even more importantly, changed the social landscape. The word "Maidan" became a universal political concept, defining different protest actions in the beginning of the 21th century. Therefore, the phenomenon of the Maidan has various interpretations that depend on political positions and systems of social values. This title is also associated with a kind of sacred topos, especially after the killing of protesters in February 2014. In other words, the Maidan became a special dimension of publicity within the system of the social imaginary that intensively shapes and distributes political meanings. Clearly then, it is important to implement a kind of theoretical mapping in order to understand the real essence of the Maidan, namely in its performative manifestation.

The Maidan can be defined according to the classification of movements proposed by Richard Rorty who distinguishes political movements and campaigns. Accordingly, the philosopher explains his classification: "By a campaign, I mean something finite, something that can be recognized to have succeeded or to have, so far, failed. Movements, by contrast, neither succeed nor fail. They are too big and too amorphous to do anything that simple. They share in what Kierkegaard called 'the passion of the infinite'" (Rorty 1995, 56). Movements have a more universal and global political scale than campaigns, thus they are also incorporated into culture because they have been always inspired by philosophy, literature, art, and history. Therefore, they represent a political potential that is claimed to be the ideal of politics. This situation also refers to Alain Touraine's theory of social movements, where he insists that every movement is a social conflict and cultural project at the same time (Touraine, Macey 1995, 240). Moreover, the movement contains ethical antagonism, when the creation of moral values often requires the creation of political opponents as well as enemies.

Accordingly, the Maidan was one of those social phenomena that had been developed as a performative action although it was not reproduced according to a certain scenario. In fact, the whole movement was a spontaneous and unexpected act, thus the authorities and the general public were not ready for its

practices. During its social and artistic practices, it created such an intense performative field that it managed to gradually organize the entire population around the idea of European integration and democratic values. Moreover, due to its specific and often extreme performances, the Maidan managed to 'blow up' politics, offering a unique experience of the extraordinary. The idea is that the Maidan was an experience on the edge of human capabilities, which is especially relevant for performance and Actionism. People stood in the central square of the city 24/7 at low temperatures, did not sleep for several days, and ate sandwiches with tea. However, this extreme state of the human body awakened the unconscious forms of mankind as well as its archaic collective instincts. Within this context, the Maidan used the creative power of unconscious instincts for creating its alternative version of reality where people lived/performed to the final escalation.

An essential feature of the Maidan was that it had a carnival nature as it was turning the existing system on the opposite one, and, what is more important, changing the unnatural practices through performative actions, in particular breaking the usual rhythm of life in Kyiv. According to Padraic Kenney's theory, any revolution performs as a carnival with its actors, stage, and decorations (Kenney 1989, 21), which fully reflects the situation of the Maidan. The entire central square has become a carnival place of constant protests and demands in a way that physical movement through the center of the city was impossible. Accordingly, the majority of everyday and holiday practices could be organized only in the context of the Maidan's value system. For example, the celebration of the New Year was held near a metal tree that was created as a collage of politicians. The congratulation of the President was also a conditional element, which the majority ignored because of the critical situation in the country and their dissatisfaction with the regime. In this regard, Snow states that performances have always had a creative intention, producing artificial realities due to the imagination of their participants (Snow 2010). Thus, this fact indicates that the participants on the central square in Kyiv proposed their version of reality against the central politics by performing every social and cultural element in its symbolical state of existence.

On the other hand, some structures on the Independence Square continued to work, namely cafes and restaurants, which became a support for the protesters in the winter. Nevertheless, such carnival decorations as the scorched tires, houses, frozen shields, and large artificial barricades can be related to the performative language of the Maidan. These artificial objects formed a line that clearly separated the performative life from the stable, the chaotic reality from the disciplined, and finally separated the world of daily protests from the routine one, which did not lose its rhythm in the city and the country. Therefore, the performative context of the Maidan automatically transformed the routine into something exceptional and artistic, thus creating a

special situation for people in order to realize their political goals within this specific situation.

Apart from the fact that the Maidan itself developed as a performative action on the scene, which functioned even during the attacks on the protesters, it also contained several artistic performances. The main goal of these performances was not only to eradicate social anxiety and fear but serve as an impact on power and its structure. One of such examples is the well-known performance on the piano by Markiyan Matsekh who played near the armed riot police. The idea was to convey the social messages of the Maidan through creativity by breaking the aggressive pole of military discourse. The pianist played Chopin's Waltz in C-sharp minor in the coldest winter season, so his fingers could barely move. However, such bodily transgressive gesture was an important element of the performance since it diagnosed a special state of consciousness of the protesters who stood on the square despite physical discomfort. Thus, the pianist's action overcame human physical capabilities, going beyond the physical and mental limits into a symbolic space of the political body. On the other hand, the riot police were also direct participants during the whole performance as well as the Maidan as they were performing the roles of actors and audience at the same time although they did not take any action. It was a powerful and important visual image that transported the Maidan's situation, namely the ongoing confrontation between the civilian population and the armed government, which did not want to change its style of domination in the country.

The performative nature of the Maidan identifies it not only as a life-threatening practice but opens the political perspective of overcoming nihilism in terms of political art. The Maidan in its democratic intentions tried to overcome a vertical order and propose a horizontal perspective of human coexistence where all were equal with each other. In this case, it is important to incorporate the discussion between Ernst Ünger and Martin Heidegger about nihilism which was embodied in the totalitarian regime of Germany. At the same time, Ünger adds that nihilism is sufficiently organized and structured: "Nihilism seems on the contrary to accord itself very well with order which in fact becomes all the more encompassing and machine-like the further the obstacle of traditional values is swept away. Hence why the vast apparatuses of production and destruction assembled in the modern world seem equally capable of serving under different, even explicitly antagonistic, banner" (Bousquet 2016, 32). However, such a type of nihilism makes it dangerous for democracy since it forms a single and unchanging model of being. Accordingly, for the protesters, the Maidan was a form of dismantling the totalitarian regime in Ukraine due to the radical performative practices that were necessary to influence on the dominant political regime. In other words, the performative spontaneous nature of the Maidan was the antithesis of the unchanging order that led to the feelings of hopelessness and despair in Ukraine. It means that the unexpected and

unpredictable practices of the Maidan went beyond the expectations of both the authorities and the international community, resulting in victory albeit with the victims among the civilians.

Consequently, the Maidan has become an incomplete political and social project due to its performative nature. In fact, the Maidan became a structure that can be permanently updated for producing and broadcasting political meanings. Accordingly, each city or region can implement its own Maidan relying on the previous experience. The essence of any performance is that it can be reproduced in all conditions, going beyond the limits of permanent conventions, thus it is a creative and dynamic social process. Within this definition, the Maidan became an open project only due to its performative essence, which allowed it to be constantly collected and reassembled at the structural level, involving various actors for collective actions. Moreover, the Maidan was an event that produced new cultural values and practices by updating the old order of things to the new one. Therefore, the Maidan overcame the artistic conditionality of performance by offering an alternative version of social reality through the attraction of creativity and collective imagination.

Conclusions

Having analyzed the performative theory in politics, namely its implementation within the practices of the Maidan, it can be concluded that the specificity of performance deals with the fact that it is not only a practical or empirical reality but also a theoretical approach with its specific methodological frameworks and concepts. In particular, the performative theory explores the social reality in its gaming and carnival nature, where the stable order can be reorganized randomly and subjectively, thus rooting into the unconscious and even archaic elements of the collective. However, the difference between the performative theory and hermeneutics is that it allows to explain the procedural and unpredictable phenomena. Such procedure has been explicated from art and its possibility to express one's creative vision without limitations by attracting the potential of one's own body, time, space, and audience. Accordingly, art can create the political landscape where the latter determines the nature of social performance.

The performative analysis of the Maidan demonstrated that its performative nature was realized due to the political manifestos, installations, collages, and art performances on the Square in Kyiv. The protesters created a dynamic and open reality according to democratic ideas and the deconstruction of the totalitarian foundations of power. Moreover, the Maidan's opponents performed the role of the audience, allowing to go beyond the limits of established conventions where the main driving element was the human body. On the other hand, the human body was the last border between the carnival reality of the Maidan and the everyday life beyond it. Hence, the Maidan became a virtually unfinished project both for Ukraine and the world, allowing it to be implemented anywhere due to its performative abilities.

Finally, the performative studies of the Maidan may be a methodological prerequisite for understanding similar social and cultural phenomena in the future research, including civil protests (the Occupy movement), sports events, and public celebration. Moreover, there are several social and political phenomena that can only be explained through performative theory because of their procedural and unpredictable nature. Thus, we highlight the ability of these phenomena to initiate a particular aesthetic perception of reality by the participants, thus transforming the very social reality into a qualitatively new form of the human being.

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