



RICERCA E PROGETTAZIONE PER LE ARTI PERFORMATIVE

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A. Fondamenti di Performance Studies

Dramma, script, teatro e performance

Drama, Script, Theater and Performance (1973)

The phenomena called either/all “drama,” “theater,” “performance” occur among all the world’s peoples and date back as far as historians, archeologists, and anthropologists can go. Evidence indicates that dancing, singing, wearing masks and/or costumes, impersonating other humans, animals, or supernaturals, acting out stories, presenting time 1 at time 2, isolating and preparing special places and/or times for these presentations [...] are coexistent with the human condition.

[Schechner, *Drama, Script, Theater and Performance*, 2003: 66]



Script

We know nothing of the scripts used by the dancer-shamans of the Paleolithic temple-theaters. I don't say "texts", by which I mean written documents. I say "scripts", by which I mean something that pre-exists any given enactment, which persists from enactment to enactment. Extrapolating from the prehistorical and historical evidence, as well as modern experience, I assume that the dancing took a persistent (or "traditional") shape which was kept from one event to another; that this shape was known by the dancers and by spectators (if there were any), and that the shape was taught by one group of dancers to another.

[Schechner, *Drama, Script, Theater and Performance*, 1973: 70]



Script

Furthermore, the script was important: maintaining it intact contributed to the efficacy of the rite, abandoning it endangered that efficacy. Even more: the efficacy was not “a result of” dancing the script but “contained in” dancing the script. To conceive of these very ancient performances – some as far back as 25.000 years ago – one has to imagine absolutely non-literate cultures: “aliterate” is probably a better word. Drawings and sculpting, which in the modern word are associated with “signs” and “symbols” (word-likeness), are in Paleolithic times associated with doing.

[Schechner, *Drama, Script, Theater and Performance*, 1973: 70]



Script

Thus, the “scripts” I am talking about are patterns of doing, not modes of thinking. Talking does not appear first as configuration (words-as-written) but as sounds (breath-noise). Ultimately, long after writing is invented, drama arose as a specialized form of scripting. Potential manifestations previously encoded in pattern of doing were later encoded in pattern of written words. The dramas of Greek, as Aristotle pointed out, continued to be codes for the transmission of action; but action no longer meant a specific, concrete way of moving/singing – it was understood “abstractly”, a movement in the lives of people. At that point, in the West, drama detached itself from doing.

[Schechner, *Drama, Script, Theater and Performance*, 1973: 70]



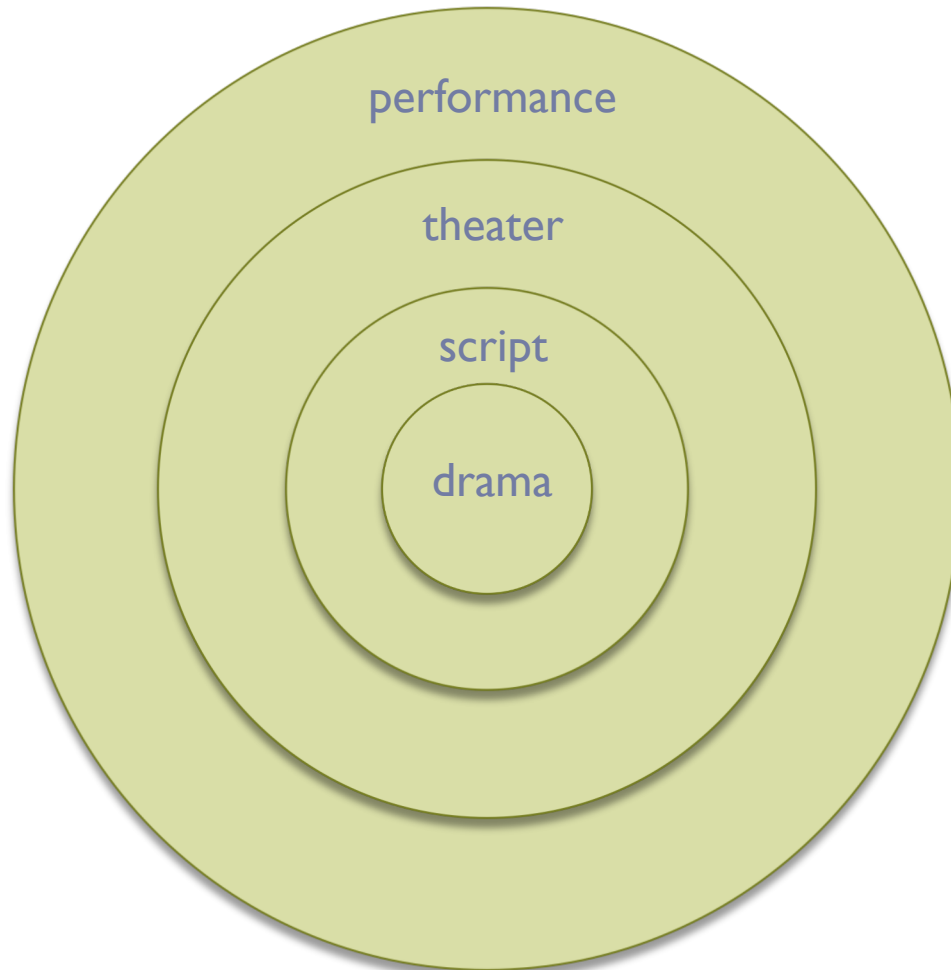
Drama, Script, Theater and Performance (1973)

[...] we in the west are accustomed to concentrating our attention on a specialized kind of **script** called **drama**. But the avant-garde in the west, and traditional theaters elsewhere, refocused attention on the doing aspects of scripts, and beyond script altogether to **theater** and **performance**

[Schechner, *Drama, Script, Theater and Performance*, 2003: 71]



Drama, Script, Theater and Performance



Drama: the smallest, most intense (heated up) circle. A written text, score, scenario, instruction, plan, or map. The drama can be taken from place to place or time to time independent of the person or people who carry it. These people may be just “messengers”, even unable to read the drama, no less to comprehend or enact it.

Script: all that can be transmitted from time to time and place to place; the basic code of the events. The script is transmitted person to person, the transmitter is not a mere messenger. The transmitter of the script must know the script and be able to teach it to others. This teaching may be conscious or through empathetic, emphatic means.

Theater: the event enacted by a specific group of performers; what the performers actually do during production. The theater is concrete and immediate. Usually, the theater is the manifestation or representation of the drama and/or script.

Performance: the broadest, most ill-defined disc. The whole constellation of events, most of them passing unnoticed, that take place in/among both performers and audience from the time the first spectator enters the field of the performance – the precinct where the theater takes place – to the time the last spectator leaves.



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- ▶ **drama** is the domain of the author, the composer, scenarist, shaman
 - ▶ **script** is the domain of the teacher, guru, master
 - ▶ **theater** is the domain of the performers
 - ▶ **performance** is the domain of the audience

