

Theatre analogy in contemporary theories of tourism: scripts, stagings, performances

Synopsis of a PhD project

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My background:

- Theatre research
- Semiotics
- Ethnology/antropology

My framework and methodologies:

- Overall frame: interdisciplinary & metatheoretical
- Methods of data gathering and analysis: ethnographic research, semiotics, performance analysis

What do I study?

The overall research problem of my thesis is to analyse how theoretical concepts/models based on theatre analogy (*script, staging, performance*) are used in socio-cultural theories of tourism underlining:

- How these models became into use in theories of tourism?
- In which disciplinary contexts and how have these models been developed?
- To what kind of more general epistemological trends and changes in cultural research these developments indicate?

What else do I do?

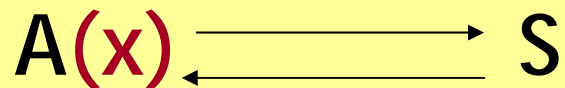
- I test the relevancy of aforementioned concepts/models in the particular case studies of tourism from the nowadays Estonian culture
 - How these models can be applied?
 - To which extent can they be applied?
 - What should be changed in the models during the analysis?

Why is it relevant?

- Need for **alternatives to text-based analogies** in cultural research.
- **“Performative turn”** in humanities and social sciences during the last decades (tourism theories included).
- **Systematic inter/transdisciplinary analysis** of disciplinary diverse but epistemologically similar developments is needed.
 - “travelling concepts”
 - mapping *theatricality*

In traditional theatre research:

- **drama** = dramatic text (play)
- **staging** = artistic concept, idea, theme etc; strategies used for creating the performance by the director
- **performance** = material/embodied realisation of theatrical art in certain time and space in front of the audience

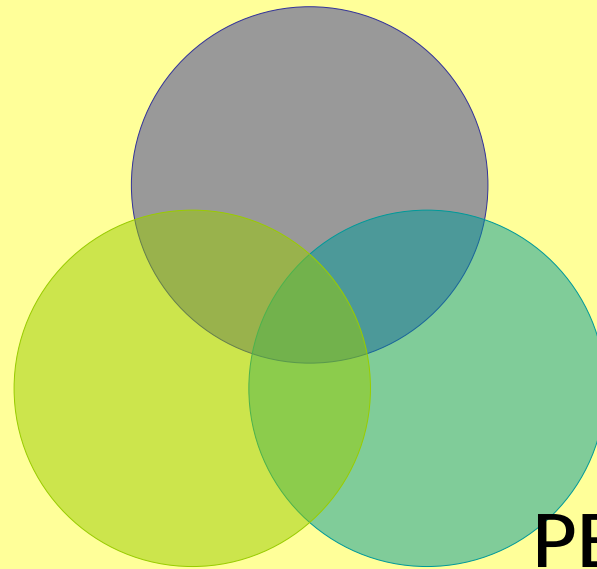


A = actor x = fictional character S = spectator

Conceptual fields related to theatre in contemporary cultural research:

Inszenierung; mise en scene; spectacle etc.

STAGING



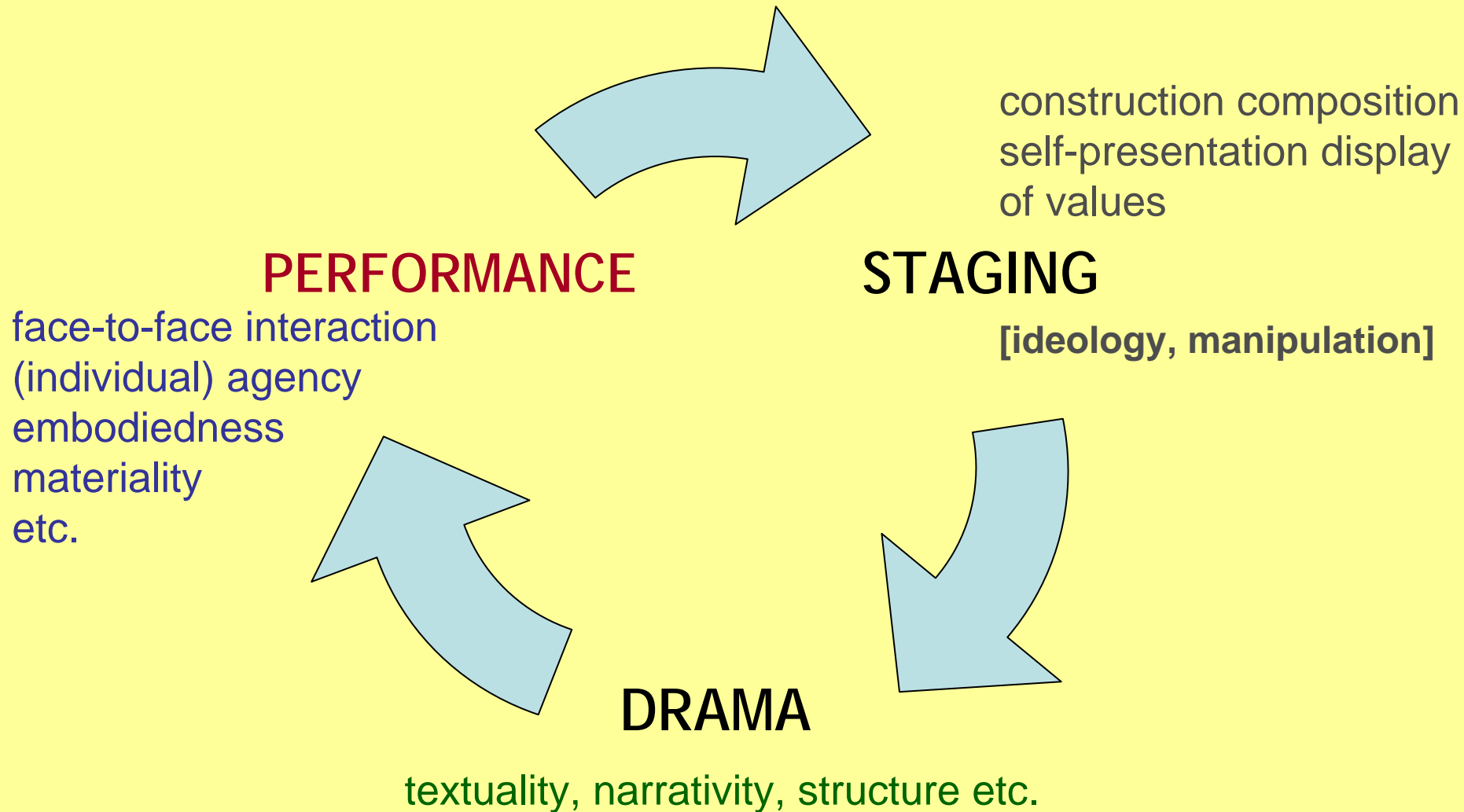
DRAMA

social drama; script;
cultural scene, etc.

PERFORMANCE

cultural/social performance;
performativity, etc.

General epistemological developments:



Theatre analogy in socio-cultural theories of tourism

- **Scripts** (stories of the place, plans for action, texts)
- **Stagings**
 - staging tourist attractions, “staged authenticity”
 - spatial organisation of experience (tourist settings, scenography)
- **Performances**
 - performances of key workers (directors and stage managers)
 - tourists as performers (various types of performances; interaction with others and environments)
 - *spectacles* as one type of touristic performances

Empirical research: 3 case studies

- *Spectacle* and *performance* as two mode(l)s of relating with environment
- Mimicry on the menu: A strategy for staging modern Estonian *haute cuisine* (Restaurant *Kaerajaan* in Tallinn)
- Theming farm tourism in Southern Estonia: Scripts and performances

Spectacle and performance as two mode(I)s of relating with environment



Spectacle: Leigo Lake Music (South-Eastern Estonia)

Performance: ecotourist trips in Soomaa (South-Western Estonia)



Mimicry on the menu: A strategy for staging modern Estonian *haute cuisine*



Restaurant *Kaerajaan* in Tallinn old city center



Theming farm tourism in Southern Estonia: Scripts and Performances



Blacksmith's farm in Rõuge (South-Eastern Estonia)

Vaskna tourist farm in Haanja (South-Eastern Estonia)



Conclusion: theory in the light of empirical studies

- Every concept/model enlightens certain aspects of a phenomenon analysed and discards others.
- All 3 models should be applied systematically and holistically, although sometimes one may be more relevant/explicit than the others.
- All 3 models need to be slightly redefined considering the particular phenomena that is being studied (empirics should feed theory!).

Thank you for watching this!