Artistic Aspects of Embodiment of Postmodern Theater Practices in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, when integrated into the European art space, the countries of Eastern Europe take the path of creating a new model of cultural development in a post-pandemic society. Added to the world of theater innovations and, in particular, post-modern theater practices, it makes it necessary to search for new types of communication with the audience, creating such a balance between the actor and the audience that would meet new historical realities, shape its cultural landmarks, moral values, and provide meaning for current events. Consequently, the new historical realities require theatrical culture to change the artistic trajectories of development and at the same time determine the cultural reflection on its place and role. In culturological and art studies, the theater, as a rule, is considered as a system component of the cultural space. This corresponds to the generally accepted approach: the definition of culture as a set of spheres, each of which has its own specifics. These areas are combined by certain socially significant factors (worldview, way of being, set of values), according to which they must coordinate their way of existence. Now, in a post-pandemic society, there is not enough research that examines the latest formations at the place of origin and is perceived as the products of the local experience of the individual and the society to which he belongs.

Keywords: *artistic aspects, postmodern, theatre, covid-19, pandemic.*

How to cite: Bekh, Y., Romankova, L., Vashkevych, V., Yaroshenko, A., & Lipin, M. (2021). Artistic Aspects of Embodiment of Postmodern Theater Practices in the Context of COVID-19 Pandemic. *Postmodern Openings*, 12(1Sup1), 313-322. <https://doi.org/10.18662/po/12.1Sup1/287>

1. Introduction

In the countries of Eastern Europe, performance, happening and environmentalism acquire special features, since postmodernism in our country was formed in special historical conditions that are different from European and American. It can be described as “post-traumatic”, since the provisions of Russian culture in isolation in the Soviet Union, the dominance of ideology over all spheres of life are those “traumas” that continue to be interpreted in modern postmodern culture. This was reflected in the fact that the embodiment of performances, happenings and environmental studies of the 1990s. In many respects, the already experienced artistic experience of US art was repeated. (Ames, 2015).

Characteristic features were: interactivity, the possibility of co-creation of the audience; lack of dictatorship of the authoritarian position of the author; a work of art as a reason for communication; everyday life as a field of creativity and the main theme; repetitions, quoting art samples of the past - all these signs were manifested in performance, happening and environmentalism under the influence of postmodern culture. The indicated cultural formations determine at the micro-level of social and artistic interaction the post-modern reception in the domestic theater culture on the basis of two pairs of positivity's: “the action of suffering” and “word-around-the-clock”.

2. Theoretical research

2.1. Features of postmodern theater practices in Eastern Europe in the 20th century

One of the first postmodern theater practices in Ukraine during the USSR was the performance of V. Bazhay, whose idea often appears in his works today. So, in 1975, after graduating from the Lviv Institute of Applied and Decorative Arts, where no one remembered performance and other latest trends, V. Bazhay began working at the Theater named after M. Gorky. The performing staff there turned out to be interesting, the directors caught and embodied new artistic ideas (Adrian, 1974).

All this was forbidden and interesting. In 1976, the artist and the director decided not to do the “next” performance, but something radically new. They used the budget provided for the new production and created a performance - a one-time performance with the “Performer actors” took place. (Mackey, 2016)

The scene, filled with mirrors, embodied the idea: how a person can overcome his doubles, not get lost in hundreds of himself (since each actor, appeared on the stage, immediately appeared in dozens of his reflections), depending on the excess of information, attacks from all sides, changes, get rid "I", likened to someone and find your true "I." Thus one of the first public performances took place in Lviv and active work began on something unusual – performances and actions.

In the cultural context of the Ukrainian theater scene for post-modern art practices: performance, happening, environmental

- characteristic as the collectivity of the action, and the action itself, the phenomenon of complicity, playful character, provocativeness and shocking, which activates the deep transformations of the psycho-emotional state of the subject of the action, the duality of space and time. (Sugiera, 2017).

These processes actualize the possibilities not only for the development of theatrical performance in the space of Ukrainian culture, but also its distribution in other cultural spaces. So, in Lviv, the festival "Days of Art of Performance in Lviv" is annually held. During the week of contemporary art, a large number of art projects take place, among which the performances of Ukrainian performers occupy a prominent place (Fisher-Lichte, 2017).

The festival of contemporary art "Gogolfest" is the great importance in the formation and development of postmodern theater practices in Ukrainian spectacular culture.

The fifth festival became special, as the location was a former brick factory on Vydubychi in Kiev. "The development of industrial zones by artists is a long-known and familiar thing in the world, but the spontaneous development of a factory in Vydubychi is a phenomenon worthy of a feat for the foreign public and for us. From performances on the stage and expositions of paintings to sweeping the territory and garbage removal, everything was done by the hands of actors, artists, musicians and a bunch of people who made this festival real, Yaremchuk notes. The founder and curator of the festival, Vlad Troitsky, is a critic of the modern system of Ukrainian theater. In each interview, he rightly indignant notes that the leaders of state theater groups have turned into pharaohs, forever occupied their seats and do not let young directors into their ranks (Brook, 1996). "These invectives are not paying attention. Nobody is going to release chairs. And conducting theater reforms in the near future is unlikely. The theater, perhaps, is doomed to remain on the periphery of public attention for a long time. Partly he himself is to blame. By and large, having lost faith

in the meaning of his appointment, agreeing to bow incessantly to everyone who agrees to pay for his miserable attractions, demonstrating the poverty of ideas and the atrophy of civic conscience, he carelessly locked himself in his farm, satisfied with a miserable, but stability ” (Geertz, 2000).

That is why the introduction of such initiatives, such as "Gogolfest", "Days of Performance in Lviv", etc., is fertile ground for the coalescence of artists of a new generation, freed from a "blurred" look at theatrical art. Formative principles of performance, happening and environmentalism are often traced in the actions of various experimental groups presented at the festival.

Ukrainian theater performance in the form of individual performances also becomes the object of attention of art critics. The play "Coma" directed by Andrei May became in 2012. One of the most interesting theatrical experiments in Ukrainian cultural space at the beginning of the 21st century (Burke, 1969).

The Zaporizhzhya Municipal Theater-Laboratory "Vie" performed the monoplay "Everything, Finally," by the Austrian writer Peter Turine. The male role in it was played by Sergey Detyuk. The simplicity of the plot is expressed by the performance - the character promises the audience to shoot himself after he counted to a thousand, and in between counts he talks about his life drama, which is quite complicated in terms of performing skills. The actor must keep the viewer's attention for an hour. Sergey Detyuk copes with the task well, doing it very professionally: he "catches" the audience with an joke, a direct appeal, mainly with his acting charisma and convincing game (Goffman, 1956).

2.2. Features of the Development of PostModern Theater Practice in the Modern Art Space in The Conditions of PostPandemic

Modern spectacular culture synthesizes centuries-old searches in the field of the artistic life of the human spirit, gives it its own interpretation and absorbs what now most fully meets sociocultural needs. Achievements of the latest technologies are introduced in various spheres of human activity; affect the individual's worldview, manifest in significant changes in the cultural and artistic paradigm and in the search for a new "language" of artistic expression. "The current state of culture in the literature on philosophy and aesthetics is often called post-culture. This concept applies to culture as a whole, and to its most important component - artistic and aesthetic culture. Postculture, in turn, in aesthetic and cultural literature is identified with postmodernism"(Goldberg, 2005)

Postmodernism is gradually changing the representation of sociocultural meanings in the context of the formation of a consumer society and the transformation of a homogeneous mass culture into a heterogeneous, subcultural one. A representative “accompaniment” of social interaction becomes a “props” in the global staging of a “performance society”. Representation is often replaced by a simulation that “exposes” the initial destructive potential of postmodern sociocultural / artistic practices. (Huong et al., 2014)

The canons of self-presentation of an individual, produced by classical culture, first differentiate, and then completely switch to the process of constructing an individual style of self-presentation in a post-classical culture. This leads to a certain leveling / “reformatting” of the status of public art institutions (the status of the theater, for example, in the modern day is replaced by the status of group stage activity), and then in postmodernism the whole system of theater culture experiences differentiation, dispersion and even deconstructing (Hassan, 1994).

Postmodernism denies the modernist demand for “permanent originality”, despite the fact that at the end of the twentieth century. to create something fundamentally new is impossible.

As a result, there is a rethinking of the basic aesthetic categories: the beautiful becomes the “alloy” of the sensual and conceptual, the ugly is aesthetized, the sublime is replaced by a strange, the tragic by paradoxical. The central place is occupied by the comic in its ironic hypostasis (Kaprow, 2020).

The postulates of freedom of creativity, openness and processuality of an artwork, the lack of division into genres and styles became ideal conditions for the further development of performance, happening and environmentalism in the plane of world and Ukrainian spectacular culture. At the same time, these cultural morphological formations originated under modernism, in postmodernism they began to borrow a modernist aesthetic strategy, which, according to postmodern principles,

“Canceled” modernist thinking associated with an array of empirical material. This paradox was “supported” in post-modern spectacular culture, including through the use of artistic borrowings, remakes, reinterpretations, “additions from oneself” of classical works and the like. In this way, the postmodern artist demonstrates his, albeit renewed, tradition, contrasting himself with the unconventional avant-garde (Geertz, 1992).

Another typological feature of artistic postmodernism is irony. Postmodernism does not recognize pathos at all and is ironic over the surrounding world or over itself, thus avoiding vulgarity and banality.

“The avant-garde attitude towards novelty is opposed here by the desire to incorporate into the contemporary art all the experience of world art culture by its ironic quotation” (Goldberg, 1998). The ability to freely manipulate in an ironic manner any ready-made forms and artistic styles focus on their anomalous state in the modern world. It is irony that becomes the sensorial principle of mosaic postmodern art. Parody is close to irony and also characteristic of the mentioned direction.

Eclecticism is becoming an important feature of postmodern art, because it provides for the merging of various qualities, properties, techniques, forms, genres, styles. Postmodernism rehabilitates in a new quality the artistic traditions of classics, academism, and realism, actively suppressed throughout the twentieth century. A contemporary artist seeks to combine the truths and principles (often opposite) of many people, nations, cultures, religions, philosophies. By synthesizing a variety of art forms, postmodernism confirms its readiness for dialogue with any culture.

Within the framework of the general post-modern paradigm, society becomes a society of total play, imposes certain forms of cultural activity and self-spectacular spectacular self-presentation upon social actors. The postmodern artist, who’s “game” becomes a definite result of marketing and cultural activity, and has a flexible and agile, playful character, is no exception.

The modernist understanding of chaos as a “complex order” in postmodernism is transformed into “the experience of playing on this chaos in a game, turning it into the living environment of a person of culture” (Goldberg, 1998). One of the main symbols of this environment (as well as postmodernism as a whole) can be considered a maze - as an embodiment of the number of paths, multivariance, inputs and outputs, and the like. Conceptualism became one of the leading art movements in the 60-70s. XX century at the same time in Europe and the USA (Goldberg, 1998).

Conceptualists believed that the main task of the artist is to create a concept, a certain idea, because the main thing is to come up with, and the embodiment can happen thanks to whom. Personal implementation of the generated idea can be embodied in words, texts, audio materials, videos, installations, drawings, drawings, photographs, objects, performances and the like; the work can be exhibited or created in a gallery, hall, outdoors. A conceptual work is an instant fixation of the artist’s thoughts, and the viewer is invited to this intellectual process. Certain discomfort may arise in the perception of such works, because they, denying traditional aesthetic assessments, operate more on the mental understanding of the concept, rather than on emotional empathy.

Non-sonic stage design gives rise to a new plastic language, expands the scope of the performance on the viewer, and also avoids the difficulties associated with the translation of texts for a foreign public. If “before the theater acted, rather, as an illustrator of the play; accordingly, the specific gravity of the interpretational moment (it mainly depended on the personality of the actor) was at stake minimal until the beginning of the twentieth century” (Geertz, 1983), now a look at the literary source is only an occasion for one’s own statement.

The visual image begins to dominate in modern culture. The text of the performance is perceived as a “total text” and includes music, plastic, video projections and other expressive means of modern theater, which operate along with the actor’s existence. All these expressive means are in “free composition” (Fisher-Lichte, 2008).

In contrast to the drama theater, the main feature of which is the actor creating a psychologically reliable image of the role and representing the character’s experience (experiencing the story told in the play), in the post-dramatic theater the actor presents the audience his existence, noted by Chambers (2002) “performative”, “instantly absolute presence”. “The body of the actor does not demonstrate (and does not mean) anything other than himself, and appeal to the plasticity of a free gesture (dance, rhythm, grace, strength, kinetic wealth) gives it maximum significance. The body becomes the only theme,” H.-t. Lehman (Burke, 1969).

Analyzing the directorial experience of post-dramatic theater, we can conclude that the main actor’s task is to actualize the role;

“Liberation” of the actor’s body from the essence of the role. He does not transform into a character, but demonstrates his own physical hypostasis, his physicality.

The next principle of theatrical postmodernism is the openness of the structure, which excludes an unambiguous reading, opens the text of a plurality of interpretations, and changes the emphasis in the relations of actors and spectators. Postmodern directing turns interpretation into a peculiar art of stripping layers from a literary text. Layers can be social, psychoanalytic, philosophical, and the like. Therefore, the education of importance in post-modern theater should be compared with commentary on endless notes, with the help of which layering of meanings takes place. (Sedgman, 2019)

3. Conclusions

The identification of the transformations characteristic of the modern state of theatrical art, and the analysis of their functioning and features indicate that culture continues to generate new standards, a new artistic language. It can be stated that the era of postmodernism in a post-pandemic society still affects the transformation in theatrical art. The indicated changes in theatrical art in the context of postmodern culture as a whole and each innovation separately, of course, require further scientific reflection.

Thus, an analysis of the artistic aspects of the embodiment of postmodern theater practices in the context of spectacular culture in the post-pandemic society of Eastern Europe proves that the domestic experience of crystallization of cultural forms, which is only partially based on the world, arises on a slightly different level of "armor" of theatrical performance. Domestic theatrical practices hybridize much faster than Western ones (often there is a combination of environmental performance with performance, performance with a post-dramatic performance, etc.); according to their ontology, they are not only based on stage performance, but also on certain electronic technologies (interactive in nature), because the postmodernist receptions in the domestic theater culture were formed in a certain antiphase to the world conditions for the development of the postmodern artistic situation. A quite interesting and autonomous domestic practice is the theater festival, which radically changes the potential of role-playing options of participants / spectators, but also transforms the work of the director as a director of several theatrical practices at the same time.

The action turns into a lot variations symbolic field, in the space of which the space can move endlessly. B. "Openness" of a kind of "transcendental pattern" of structuring the art form in postmodernism. The postmodern image is not designed for unambiguous decoding, since it contains a whole "bunch" of meanings, which makes subjective perception possible. Offering the viewer to complete the work in his mind, the artist as if transfers part of the responsibility to him, providing a special status and noting: only a person currently has true meaning. We agree with the opinion that it is precisely the impossibility of reading something that unambiguously allows one to put forward versions, options, replay and rethink situations. Therefore, the concept of composition as a systemic, logical correlation of parts of a work disappears, being replaced by the principle of decomposition - the conscious creation of chaos at all levels of narration.

The so-called discursive text (compositional chaos) is a new perspective on vision, a key that provides access to that side of phenomena that is incomprehensible in another, ordered system of connections. At the

same time, the essence of theatrical action in a post-dramatic theater is the creation of a cultural fabric that combines action and suffering, expression and reception.

Postmodern theatrical practices appeal mainly to a youth audience, and not to a “conservative” society. Many researchers believe that as a result of such innovations on theatrical grounds, the humanistic realistic basis of the theater is supplanted and destroyed and replaced by technogenic, alien theatrical canons, because theatrical progress is increasingly being replaced by artificial technological development.

We see no negativity in the birth of new post-modern theater practices and are inclined to believe that these experiments appeal to the renewal of theatrical language in various aspects. Most of the directors of innovators came to the theater to change the aesthetic reality, and this should not look for a threat to the existence of the classical model of the theater. New techniques and styles of creativity sometimes arise without destroying the traditional genre characteristics of art - along with new concepts and terms, the concepts of a traditional theater school, which continues to develop and improve the language of artistic expression, do not lose relevance.

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