Preface

During the intervening years significant changes have taken place in both the microcosm of performance art and the macrocosm of social and cultural performance in general.

Performance discourse and its close theoretical partner,”performativity”, today dominate critical discourse not only in all manner of cultural studies, but also in business, economics, and technology.

The fact that performance is associated not just with doing but also with re-doing is important-its embodiment of tension between a given form or content from the past and the inevitable adjustments of an ever-changing present make it an operation of particular interest at a time of widespread interest in cultural negotiations-how human patterns of activity are reinforced or changed within a culture and how they are adjusted when various different cultures interact. Performance implies not just doing or even redoing, but a self-consciousness about doing and redoing on the part of both performers and spectators, an implication of great interest to our highly self-conscious society.

Introduction

What is performance?
The body of analysis, a complex web of specialized critical vocabulary

Mary Strine, Beverly Long and Mary Hopkins (1990): Performance is “an essentially contested concept.” This phrase is taken from W.B. Gallie’s Philosophy and the Historical Understanding (1964).

Erik MacDonald suggests that “Performance art has opened hitherto unnoticed spaces” within theatre’s representational networks. It”problematises its own categorization,” and thus inevitably inserts theoretical speculation into the theatrical dynamic.

Strine, Long, and Hopkins argue that Performance has become just a concept, developed in an atmosphere of “sophisticated disagreement’ by participants who “do
not expect to defeat or silence opposing positions, but rather through continuing
dialogue to attain a sharper articulation of all position and therefore a fuller
understanding of the conceptual richness of Performance.

Erik MacDonald
Performance art has opened hitherto “unnoticed space” within theatre’s
representational networks. It “problematizes its own categorization”, and thus
inevitably inserts theoretical speculation into theatrical dynamic.”

**Few definitions to judge Performance:**
1. the display of skills
2. patterned behavior
3. keeping up the standard
4. theatre and performance art

The chapters in this book
Part1: anthropological and ethnographic (culture)
    Sociological and psychological (society)
    Linguist (language)
Part2: Performance
Part3: contemporary theory