

Performativity and Agonistic Pluralism in a Mediatized Age: Towards a Synthetic Approach An Interdisciplinary Conference

Charles University, Prague, 23-25 May 2025

Call for Papers

Since J. L. Austin's 1955 William James Lectures, performativity has become a seminal concern in linguistics, philosophy, literature, theatre, gender and media studies. Although Michel Foucault's influential discourse theory defines itself against the notion of speech act, performativity as a concept has undoubtedly become paradigmatic, fundamentally inflecting understandings of discursive constructions of individual as well as social identities. In philosophy, aesthetics or political science, normative-deliberative theories of discourse (Jürgen Habermas) have been critically reflected (J.-F. Lyotard) and often abandoned in favour of agonistic pluralism (Chantal Mouffe, Ernesto Laclau, William E. Connolly).

Notably, with the arrival of new media, performativity acquires new forms, including "discourse networks" no longer driven by meaning and sense but by pattern and code. These "networks of technologies" enable the selection, storage, and processing of data (Friedrich Kittler) characterized by algorithms, interaction and "flexible accumulation" (Manuel Castells) and increasingly implemented by artificial intelligence. In computer processing of natural language, "discourse parsing" has been applied, for instance in sentiment classification or question answering.

The conference invites investigation of the common features of these approaches in order to offer a theoretical reflection of mutually overlapping aspects of performativity and explore the possibility of formulating a synthetic theory of performativity which could contribute to the understanding of the dynamic of identity conflicts as reflected in modern and contemporary arts, sciences and spirituality.

Keynote Speakers

- **Laura Cull Ó Maoillearca** (Professor of Performance Philosophy, University of Amsterdam / Lector, Academy of Theatre and Dance, Amsterdam University of the Arts) and **Rajni Shah** (artist and researcher, Amsterdam University of the Arts)
- **Pavel Drábek** (Professor of Drama and Theatre Practice, University of Hull)

The issues this conference will address include

- What are the performative aspects of
 - discursive constructions of subjective, gender, social and cultural identities,
 - data processing in discourse networks, and
 - computer processing of natural languages?
- What is the nature of performative aspects of modern and contemporary art, especially literature, theatre and film, and how does performativity function particularly in relation to conflict?
- What performative dimensions characterize contemporary trends in spirituality? Are they compatible with the above aspects of discursive constructions and networks?
- What roles have different forms of performativity in accelerating or moderating social conflicts?

The organizers welcome proposals of

- (a) individual contributions (maximum 20 minutes, abstracts of 300 words), and
- (b) round tables (4-6 speakers), including a general description (300 words) and brief bio-notes of individual speakers (100 words).

The proposals should be addressed to Professor Martin Procházka, Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures, Charles University Prague, martin.prochazka@ff.cuni.cz.

The submission deadline of the proposals is **30 November 2024**.

The registration will open on **1 February 2025**.

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