

Przemysław Rotengruber

Znanięcki's Reflection on Culture in the Light of Performance Studies

Summary. Znanięcki's pragmatic conception of culture is an invaluable offer for cultural studies seeking its own subject research and methodology and for performance studies being in a similar position today. It is not possible to assess the scale and significance of the changes caused by the performative turn in culture, without the support of cultural studies. Hence the benefits of the alliance between cultural studies and performance studies. On the one hand, this alliance does not require abandoning any of the assumptions underlying performance studies. Doubts about whether the institutional order was changed after World War II in the Western world, or only its facade, do not concern the thesis on the emergence of new richer forms of expressing ideas that are important for contemporary man. On the other hand, the attempt to find an answer to the question about new ways of reproducing cultural schemes has far-reaching consequences. It allows us to determine how the phenomena described by performance studies researchers affected the system of schemes and the practical dogma (the dominant scheme) used in the practice of Western communities.

Keywords: pragmatic conception of culture, performative turn, performance studies

Przemysław Rotengruber, Adam Mickiewicz University Poznań, Institute of Cultural Studies, Szamarzewskiego 89A, 60-568 Poznań, Poland, e-mail: proten@amu.edu.pl.

There is no doubt that the contemporary world is dominated by science and technology. We use mobile phones, travel in cars and planes, we shop in similar shopping centers. However, these similarities do not relate to what constitutes the identity

of each of us. While being similar consumers or citizens, we are also different people. What is more, our need to maintain our autonomy in relation to others is getting stronger. If we were previously divided by nationality, religion or belonging to a specific social group, these distinctions today are no longer sufficient. We want to individualize our own existence, give (unique) meaning to what happens to us. At the same time, we expect the social environment to take into account our differences – to respect our right to live in our own way. What brought about this change?

Modern changes in culture are not reducible to technological progress. Along with the changes caused by technical knowledge, the humanities and social sciences also change. The result of the standardization process of political and economic practices is that philosophers, ethnologists or cultural researchers no longer treat the rules of participation in collective life as a homogeneous, unchanging system.¹ The pioneering role in this process was played by Friedrich Nietzsche. In his opinion, the prerequisite for our participation in culture is the acceptance of heterogeneous patterns of behavior. Nietzsche's distinction between the Apollonian and Dionysian models originating in ancient Greek culture serves to reveal a fundamental lack in Western culture (at the end of the 19th century).² The progressive homogenization of the principles of thinking and acting meant that the representatives of this culture achieved a productive and organizational efficiency unprecedented in human history. Along with this, however, they deprived themselves of access to *joyful wisdom* (*la gaya scienza*), which is decisive for the quality of their lives.

Nietzsche has many followers. They confirm – in various ways – the validity of his diagnosis concerning the destructive effects of giving up divergent criteria for the assessment of human behavior. The subject of autonomous study is the world of human life (*Lebenswelt*) colonized by science and, above all, the administrative and economic system. Martin Heidegger describes the process of closing the lumen of human consciousness (*Lichtung*), the representatives of the Frankfurt School believe that man fell victim to false consciousness. These authors are at the start of a long list of radical critics of Western culture. Meanwhile, it would be a mistake to narrow down

¹ It is worth mentioning the authors who long before Nietzsche questioned the claims of science for the categorical validity of its judgments. For example, David Hume presents the self as a bundle of impressions. In his opinion, this bundle is formed by the habitual associations difficult to distinguish from causal relations (justifying the claim to the truth). Moral duty is not much better. Man is struggling with the problem of divergent criteria of justice. They include his responsibility for himself and caring for other people. All this taken together means that he must keep a skeptical distance to the verdicts of science and – through trial and error – build relationships with social partners. D. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, London 1993, pp. 44–55; idem, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, London 1983, pp. 45–54.

² F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, Cambridge 2001, p. 128.

the description of changes in contemporary culture to their criticism. Less radical researchers focus on the means by which a person shapes his/her attitude towards other people and communicates with them.

In the first case, the initiative is taken by the advocates of the approach to the truth as a category permanently entangled in practice of interpreting the world (on the basis of available data). This is illustrated by the concept of the hermeneutic circle introduced – most probably – by Friedrich Schleiermacher and popularized by Hans-Georg Gadamer. It is a metaphor of the act of reconstructing patterns of culture based on rudimentary information about them. Fragments of the overall picture do not say much about it. The researcher must therefore create a hypothesis by which he will give meaning to detailed information. This information is then used by him to confirm his hypothesis. If there is room for a question about the truth, it refers to arrangements – made in dialogue – with the authors of competing hypotheses.

In the second case, the intention to negotiate the rules of effective communication with other people is related to the Nietzschean question about *the truth and lies of words*. The traditional concepts of language as a bridge connecting things and mind (*rei et intellectus*) give way to considerations regarding the differences between language codes (post-analytic philosophy), the intention of a sender of a message (Ludwig Wittgenstein, John Austin, John Searle) or its non-verbal aspects that can be taken into account only after applying a thick description of a communication event (Gilbert Ryle, Clifford Geertz). In these proposals, attention is paid to the multitude of criteria determining, on the one hand, the content of the message, and on the other hand, the manner in which it is articulated. Yes, its sender must take into consideration the perceptual possibilities of the recipients. This does not mean, however, depriving him of an initiative regarding what he wants to say and how he intends to do so. On the contrary, the new humanities offer him a whole range of such possibilities.

An important role in these searches is played by representatives of performance studies. Their uniqueness lies in the fact that they analyze the above-mentioned issues in a more general formula of giving (individual) meaning to communication activities in their various forms. These researchers do not neglect the social organization's influence on its members. They are aware of the importance of political and economic performances in their lives. Nevertheless, performance theorists believe that between these determinants – or in opposition to them – there is a place for autonomous forms of expression, identical with the practice of realizing one's freedom. Richard Schechner explains this in the following way:

Discussing whether or not Ophelia's suicide bars her from heaven, the more theoretical of the two Gravediggers asserts 'An act hath three branches – it is to do, to act, to perform'

(Hamlet, 5, 1: 11). The Gravedigger divides an action into the physical attributes ('do'), its social aspects ('act'), and its theatrical qualities ('perform'). But why does he use the word 'act' twice – first as an overall category and then as a subset of itself? Any action consciously performed refers to itself, is part of itself. Its 'origin' is its repetition. Every consciously performed action is an instance of restored behavior. Restored behavior enacted not on a stage but in 'real life' is what poststructuralists call a 'performance,' [...] Shakespeare did not have Austin, Derrida, or Butler in mind when he wrote *Hamlet*. But the Gravedigger's brief disquisition shows that the notion of performativity has been around a long time.³

The quoted excerpt from this book devoted to performance studies reveals the essence of the problem. It is contained in two questions. First, how to describe Schechner's distinction in the use of tools offered by cultural theory? Does it refer to permanent and unchanging features of (each) culture or is it associated with "the performative turn" in the contemporary world? An effective study of these issues is not possible without using a model of culture which explains the co-existence of fixed elements (that act as normative stabilizers of the communication process); and variable elements (those whose correction or elimination does not endanger the continuity of social practice). This is related to the second question. Where is the border separating the fields of performance from the areas under (normative) control of a social organization – the state, economic system, or customs? A social norm is not always a matter of point of view. Schechner reminds us that:

More serious violations can get a person excommunicated, ostracized, jailed, or killed. Role-specific and situation-specific conventions govern all social interactions. In all circumstances, there are conventions, rules, and laws: social behavior is never free and unbound. [...] Should we, as Henry David Thoreau (1817–62) advised, listen to our own internal drumbeat, or ought we tune ourselves to the demands of social life? There is not correct answer. There are only varying degrees of response.⁴

It is true that culture evolves. However, the dynamics of these changes refer to particular fields of culture to different degrees. A political dispute or consultation regarding a new legal regulation is not the same as interference with the beliefs by which the community shapes its own cultural identity. After all, these beliefs lead the community to (restrictive) protection of such values as "freedom," "rationality" or "justice." This process has its history leading to the emergence of cultural patterns – values and symbols that enable their users to orientate themselves in the world around them. Users must employ them to confirm the correctness of their own findings or

³ R. Schechner, *Performance Studies. An Introduction*, London – New York 2002, p. 141.

⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 176, 182.

to assess the usefulness of these patterns. The critical distance to patterns of culture is nothing more than the result of using them. But, it is not everything. Patterns of modern culture – especially those functionally justified – make up a coherent belief system. Therefore, their rejection requires a holistic approach. If this project is to succeed, it must initiate paradigmatic changes in the sense that Thomas Kuhn gave to this idea. However, this is easier said than done...

These doubts do not mean giving up on performance studies. The results of research on the multiplicity and diversity of attitudes characterizing the participants of contemporary culture are undoubtedly the achievement of this branch of knowledge. These results, however, will remain ambiguous until they are complemented by parallel research into the mechanism of converting these attitudes into new (or corrected) cultural patterns. I will look for sources that enable this task to be carried out in the work of Florian Znaniecki. In a special way, I intend to refer to his pragmatic theory of culture. I would like to express my hope that the planned combination will serve both disciplines – culture studies, to deepen knowledge about the diversity of (patterns of) Western culture, and performance studies, to systematize the results of this research.

Diversity of culture or the performative turn?

The 20th century was a time of great accomplishments. The new era put into question the (cognitive) value of the findings of the humanities. The subject of research conducted by representatives of various theoretical orientations is the multiplicity of norms, symbols and principles governing human life. Their attitude to theory also changes. The place of descriptions that aspire to objective validity is replaced with considerations on the axiological diversity of the world of culture. Performance studies plays a distinctive role in this process.

This branch of knowledge aims to reconcile our expectations regarding the practical use of inconsistencies discovered in everyday rituals, political programs or verdicts of science, with our awareness of the difficulties accompanying the implementation of this intention. What are the difficulties? Performance studies must use a comprehensive model of culture in order to explain the significance of phenomena that are the subject of its study. Only this procedure allows us to determine the effect of performative practices on the course of cultural processes. This raises the question of how to implement this research directive in accordance with the initial assumptions of performance studies? The aim of the search is to arrive at theory of culture sufficiently capacious (and flexible) to contain in one description the effects of “the

performative turn” with cultural determinants of the old type. The combination of both components is of great importance. It determines the reliability of the diagnosis regarding the state of contemporary culture. Is it a place of unprecedented change, which neither scale nor results we can predict, or are we dealing with the (eternal) return to the axiological diversity that has been present in Western culture since its ancient birth?

The history of reflection on human values – its order and relevance – begins in the golden age of Athens. The writers of ancient tragedies tell stories of people embroiled in a conflict of values. Oedipus, Antigone and Electra are only ostensibly in control of their destinies. The choices they make in no way protects them from the insidious influence of *fatum*. Experiencing uncertainty rises – in those tales – to the level of ontological diagnosis. You could say that the participants of ancient performance identify unreservedly with the characters of the drama. This is most probably why, in his *Poetics*, Aristotle defines *katharsis* as the capacity to experience genuine feelings under the influence of the artistic message. The sophists stand up to the dramatists of those ancient times. Protagoras believe that thanks to reason, man, “as the measure of all things,” has an influence on what he encounters. Sadly, those who subscribe to this view either question the existence of objective rules of proper conduct, or give up hope of understanding them cognitively. The choice that the subject is faced with is whether he himself will set the rules governing his life, or whether others will impose them on him. The boundary separating *doxa* from *episteme* (common belief from knowledge) is not crossed in either case. The sophists believe that the world of values is heteronomic. However, reporting on the world and the rules governing it must, in order for it to be understandable (if only for its author), be coherent. Hence the incommensurateness occurring between the homogeneity of thinking and the diversity of what is described and managed.

Socrates enters the dispute with the Sophists. Although he does not question the thesis of the heteronomic nature of reality, he denies the subject initiative in regard to creating order without constraint. Socrates sets *arete* (virtue) against external (cognitively mediated) goals. The axiological limiters on the part of the subject force him to be restrained in his judgments; namely, this subject acknowledges the thought that the only valid knowledge (*episteme*) is that regarding his ignorance. The position that Socrates takes is a logical consequence of the assumptions adopted by the sophists and by Socrates himself. At the same time, it is the end of the humanities practiced according to the diachronic model. The subscriber to Socrates’ views would, by modelling reality using his own perceptions of his desired state, be behaving in spite of himself. Yet he has nothing else at hand. This is probably why Socrates’ successors

choose research methods close to the notion of homogeneous rationality (or the law of non-contradiction). Plato positions the world of ideas above the material world, one full of paradoxes; from the principle of *phronesis* (practical wisdom), Aristotle creates a recipe for the auspiciousness of one's own community of fate, and ultimately the auspiciousness of he who decides to tend to his own political context.

The models of homogeneous rationality, putting it briefly, remain valid to our day. Of particular importance in the history of science is the birth of modern natural history. The 'mathematisation of nature' carried out by Galileo at the turn of the 17th century reaffirms habitual doubters in their conviction of the cognitive "adequacy of things and the mind." In the meantime, the technological success of Western man translates with difficulty into his safety, self-fulfilment or feeling of happiness. Despite the improvement in his fortunes augured so many times, he remains a prisoner of models of thinking that do not so much render him receptive to defined areas of experience as conceal from him all the rest (due to the incommensurateness of its content). Discussions regarding the nature of man, the political model of the state, or the sources of social anomies are the best example of this.

Deliberations over the heteronomic nature of the social world are reviving in our times. This is being initiated by the question of how the law of non-contradiction contributed to the displacement of what is different from the philosophical description of reality. The significance of this issue for contemporary social theory is beyond discussion. The hermeneutic multitude of interpretations, the Marxist combination of economic and awareness-related factors, the Nietzschean will to power as the distinctive feature of the Overman (*Übermensch*), opposition of Apollonian and Dionysian attitudes, the Freudian Eros and Thanatos, and sociological ambivalence as a source of anomy; these are but the first examples of a loosening of the demand for coherence placed on social theory. At the same time an epochal awakening does not mean that those awakened give up the dispute over what divides them. Some focus on the subject's cognitive capacity, others on the specifics of the world outside. Indeed, these obstacles are not trivial. But when discussion on the multitude of regulators of community life is carried over into the area of culture, then the difference is as conspicuous as the object of protection given by those who – following the example of the ancient philosophers – want to take matters into their own hands.

The conviction that the paradoxical nature of cultural processes compels man to look for his (own) "measure of all things" is shared by Richard Schechner. In studies on the role of performance in shaping the identity of the inhabitants of the contemporary world, Schechner emphasizes the presence of two factors determining the success of this undertaking. Schechner reminds us of their antique origins: In his opinion:

A basic theme of ancient Greek tragedy is a struggle between the unconstrained power of “free play” and the “rule of law,” or behavior governed by rules. [...] The dialectical tension between power and law is strong throughout Western philosophy and history, up to the present. About a century after the high point of ancient Greek tragic theatre, the reigning philosophers of the Western tradition, Plato and Aristotle established rationality as a dominant system of thought. Plato wanted a city, and Aristotle a science, governed by known, universal, and generally accepted rules or laws. These laws had to be obeyed by people, gods, and nature itself. Free play was replaced by rule-governed games. Free play, *paidia*, was subsumed under, or governed by, rule-bound behavior, *ludus*. [...] Just because Plato threw the poets out of his Republic did not mean that *paidia* was forever banished. In the nineteenth century, themes from pre-Socratic Greek philosophy were taken up by Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900). And further developed in the twentieth century as a scientific theory by Werner Heisenberg in the ‘uncertainty principle’ and as a cultural theory by Jacques Derrida in the notion of deconstruction. “Free play” in many guises – from dada to performance art, from unconscious to indeterminacy – has regained much of its power, if not its divine status.⁵

The advantage of the presented approach to research conducted at the crossroads of cultural studies and performance studies is that the reflections on the state of contemporary culture are (implicitly) preceded by the history of Western culture including its forgotten elements. From considerations of this kind, it is only a step to the question about the definition of culture (in general). If we assume that this question is answered by ancient philosophers and playwrights, then we will get a picture of a culture permanently entangled in axiological contradictions. A participant of culture must choose between directives that require him to take care of himself or to be responsible for others, to show them hostility or kindness, to cooperate actively with them or refuse to cooperate. Greek myths are full of illustrations relating to each of these cases. Is there a participant in contemporary culture in a different situation? A side issue is the circumstances encouraging or dissuading him from implementing the directive of Protagoras. In any case, the multiplicity of patterns of behavior offered by culture forces the participant to choose (and creatively transform) those of them which – here and now – seem to be the closest to him. To the title of the book written by Jon McKenzie: “Perform or Else...” one should add: perform as much as you can...

The reference to McKenzie is not accidental. In contrast to Schechner’s position, he is closer to the progressive model of culture. He makes a creative compilation of the views of Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and other poststructuralists. McKenzie asserts that Western culture has its stages of development. They include the stage

⁵ Ibidem, pp. 95, 96.

of power over the body, the bio-power symbolized by the (internalized) panopticon, and finally the period which McKenzie calls "the performance stratum." His position in the dispute about the significance of changes justifying the performative attitude to the world of modern man, McKenzie, explains as follows:

While some theorists have applied Foucault's reading of discipline directly to contemporary society, other have dismissed it as inadequate to today's power arrangements. Rather than quickly embrace or dismiss Foucault's model of discipline, let us take a cue from Deleuze, who stresses that "what Foucault recognized as well was the transience of this model." In "Postscript on the Societies of Control," Deleuze writes that "the disciplines underwent a crisis to the benefit of new forces that were gradually instituted and which accelerated after World War II; a disciplinary society was what we already no longer were, what we have ceased to be." [...] let us deviate a bit from Deleuze and call things another way: we're living, dying, on the tip of a massive formation that I call the performance stratum.⁶

The diagnosis of McKenzie covers two issues. The starting point for his historical analysis is "the discipline model" whose collective users were the societies of control. This model, according to McKenzie, has worn out. Control societies have been in a state of crisis. The regularities characteristic of recent forms of collective life encountered an obstacle in the form of centrifugal forces, exemplified by post-war social movements or the achievements (experiments) of a new generation of artists. In this respect, the findings of McKenzie are undisputed. Both critics of Western democracy and its apologists provide arguments confirming this thesis. However, something else is entailed by the presumption that it is possible to replace the discipline model with the sum of bottom-up (spontaneous) activities. McKenzie opposes the performances of ordinary people with well-developed and professionally prepared political and business performances. Institutions representing these fields of culture recognized the presence of the aforementioned centrifugal forces and learned to use them for their own benefit. If we take into account the persuasive efficiency of these institutions, the presumption regarding the performative fields of freedom from their social environment is doubtful.

It should be emphasized that this is not just about resisting the violence of stronger social partners. Obedience to political and economic power justifies a number of functional arguments. We love our prosperous life, we consider ourselves citizens, we appreciate the guarantees of safety resulting from our membership in the organization of a Western state. Even when we oppose the state, we have every reason to treat conflicts of this kind as a boon of liberal democracy. Along with this state-

⁶ J. McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, London 2001, pp. 175–176.

ment, culture returns. What happened in the Western world after the emergence of “the performance stratum”? Whether, as a result of changes initiated by the new left wing, consumer movements or ecological organizations have disappeared or lost the meaning of the former borders separating the dominant and (symbolically) dominated participants of the public sphere? Yes and no. We all became performers (some of us – institutional performers). In another way, we express what is important to us, we formulate expectations with regard to others, we enforce obligations resulting from participation in games conducted according to definite rules. These rules, however, change more slowly than it might seem to an impatient “advocate of progress.” The durability of these rules results from the fact that without them we would become unpredictable, not only for others, but also for ourselves.

The fact that the rules of cultural games allow participants to control each other does not mean that the participants have no influence on what they play. That’s why both Schechner and McKenzie are right in the dispute over the origin of performative cultural resources. Schechner rightly attributes contradictory features to Western culture. It is this heterogeneity that makes the critical observer of collective life able to distance himself from what he is experiencing. Undoubtedly, however, this diagnosis requires a supplement that McKenzie makes. The importance of events (of various types) in which we have been participating for several decades justifies the thesis on qualitative changes in Western culture. The problem is that McKenzie overestimates their importance. The fact that contemporary culture is full of bottom-up movements (using its emancipatory potential) does not mean that it is no longer a disciplinary formation. This alternative must be considered false. The rules of the state and economic system will not disappear because people want to be free. History proves that such simplifications result in anarchy and – as a consequence – the loss of freedom of short-sighted reformers. It is worth noting that spontaneous actions aimed at remodeling our lifestyle remain in an ambivalent relation to interference in the institutional (constituted) order. Sometimes one is related to the other. Once again, the institutional frame of our activities has little effect on our motives or effectiveness.

According to the findings, research on the cultural functions of performance should be carried out in a different way. The preferred cultural model helps in determining the subject of the research and at the same time (imaginatively) distorts it. After all, there is no point in examining something that has been accepted in the form of a preliminary assumption. That’s why one has to reverse the order. The beginning of performative (and cultural studies) research is the question about the state of culture. The researcher needs diagnostic tools to answer it. Of course, ontological reflection is helpful in his research. It is helpful, however, as long as it protects the researcher from arbitrarily narrowing the field of study to selected cultural fea-

tures. This is forbidden to him. For the research to be carried out reliably, the theory that opens the researcher to the multiplicity and diversity of information from the world of culture is necessary. This justifies the view of the predominance of the heteronomous model over the logocentric approach to the postulated research. If the collected data undergoes unification, the consequence of too extensive research is a return to a homogeneous description of culture. But what if it turns out that these data refer to different forms of participation in a collective life? Then the credibility of the description depends on whether the researcher did not exclude such a possibility (by choosing homogenous initial assumptions).

**On the difference of human attitudes,
social order and the logic of values.
Florian Znaniiecki's pragmatic theory of culture**

Performance studies researchers are right that it is impossible to understand contemporary culture without taking into account the changes caused by the performative turn. The variety of behaviors, opinions and forms of expression is the most distinctive symbol of our time. But what are these times? The reconstruction of the cultural world's order – along with its diversity of patterns of behavior – is of key importance in this proceeding. Referring this intuition to the research problem, the performer changes what he has found, hoping that he is properly understood by his social partners. It is impossible to explain what he does without considering the cultural context of his actions. The circle is complete. Performance studies provides invaluable descriptions to researchers of culture, while they determine its place in the system of normative beliefs shaping the (collective) identity of the participants of Western culture.

Cultural values are not the same as the rules of social life. They are distinguished from each other not by the content of specific norms but by the way of combining them into a larger whole. Culture – in contrast to social life – is the place to discover paradoxes. The paradoxical nature of the actions taken by its participants comes from the fact that they are torn between (different) patterns of behavior. Inspirations from Greek mythology and the Bible, and the verdicts of science or business experience, are the first examples of this tear. In this symbolic position, the individual has no choice but to choose between "seeking the measure of all things" or subordinating himself/herself to the measure imposed on him/her by others. The assumption initiating cultural studies – thus understood – is close to the intuitions of performance studies researchers. The resignation from the possibility of performing – in the pro-

posed approach – means inevitable self-denial. Unfortunately, this is not enough. The usefulness of the cultural model depends on the ability to reconcile divergent norms (patterns) with the practice of a definite cultural community and at the same time to question them. So where to look for a solution that takes into account these research directives?⁷

Florian Znaniecki – in the philosophical period of his activity – concentrates on the question of the origin of collective order possible to maintain, despite the multitude of stimuli shaping human attitudes. In order to explain this issue, Znaniecki distinguishes three areas of human activity: the psychological world, the social world and the world of culture. In the psychological world, man shapes his own autonomy towards the natural environment. He undertakes the effort to organize of all things and symbols that he identifies with. As a creative self, he protects his autonomy by choosing definite life rules. At the second, social level of activity, an individual interacts with other people, and modifies, rejects, and adopts solutions regarding collective life. The findings from the first level are correlated by an individual to complex and changing social needs. Finally, in the world of culture (“ideal world”), some of the results of social cooperation are transforming into forms of community thinking and acting. This is a qualitative change. Znaniecki claims that the “logic of values” belonging to the world of culture is different from the “logic of things” in use in the social world.⁸

The condition for understanding the dependence linking these areas is to respect the axiological differences defining the way they function. It is true that culture takes a central place when this division is conceived of statically. However, in its dynamic approach, the man who produces values and the community that confirms or denies his choices turns out to be more important.⁹ At the same time, the communication model, which is an integral part of the social world, finds its support in the logic of the values constituting the world of culture. This composition makes it possible to defend the assumption of the continuity (axiological stability) of social life despite the corrections and changes that are its inherent feature.

An individual engaged in social life discovers cultural values when he/she decides to choose any form of non-routine action. The order of the social world – founded on the criterion of the functionality and coherence of its constituting norms (the “logic of things”) – makes the invisible “logic of values” that allows their use also when it

⁷ K. Hastrup, *A Passage to Anthropology*, London 1995, pp. 82–90; C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York 1984, pp. 376–390.

⁸ F. Znaniecki, *Pisma filozoficzne*, vol. I, Warszawa 1987, pp. 151, 172–183.

⁹ Cf. K. Pomian, *Wprowadzenie do Znanieckiego*, “Więź” vol. 1, no. 189, 1974.

causes their collision. An individual has no insight into this order. Despite this, he/she recognizes certain cultural values and gives them the status of "universal rules." By means of these rules, he/she shapes his/her attitude to the community – his/her memory, goals and customs. Meanwhile, these activities should not be confused with the shaping of the rules of public life. An individual through "moral creation," even when it affects the whole community, usually does not cause significant changes in the sphere of culture. These changes are usually the result of long-term overlap of socially significant content. The dependence, being the key to understanding human affairs, may be distorted. The imperative of continuity is perceived by some researchers as a social ontology, shaped at the expense of knowledge about changes that do not fit in the preferred explanatory formula. Others view this imperative as a source of errors and theoretical abuse. These, in turn, expose themselves to the allegation of lability of social image. The constant replacement of the old by the new, as a final diagnosis, exposes social interlocutors to the loss of a common language in giving meaning to what happens to them.

So where to look for the communication basis of social activities? How to ensure that theory does not become detached from practice? Znanięcki responds that the basis of a social norm is its cultural form. This form is not given once and for all. It evolves like the social world. However, this process is much slower. The world of culture is constantly changing under the influence of factors coming from the social world. These relationships are difficult to define because they are complemented by the spontaneous activities of creative individuals. Therefore, the world of culture should be described (and studied) from a pragmatic perspective.¹⁰ If the social norm does not meet the conditions of continuity and change, it either becomes a kind of expression incomprehensible to the environment, or takes the form of metaphysics. It is not about one thing or the other. The principle of freedom and the unpredictability of cultural changes plays a key role in Znanięcki's concept. Marek Ziółkowski, explains this as follows:

Newton, with his problems, did not have to become the successor of Galileo, Kepler and Huyghens. After the concept of Newton, there appeared – in addition to the concept of Einstein – many other concepts, beginning whole sequences, which are a logical reference to the Newtonian concept. In this way, Znanięcki combines the freedom of human creative activities with the fact that every such activity must refer to the actual achievements.¹¹

¹⁰ W. Morawski, *Zmiana instytucjonalna. Społeczeństwo, gospodarka, polityka*, Warszawa 2000, pp. 13–17.

¹¹ M. Ziółkowski, *Wiedza, jednostka, społeczeństwo*, Warszawa 1989, p. 173.

Apart from that, the skills of society orientating itself in its own matters deserve to be considered. Interference with the social reality, especially those stretched over time, requires choosing a rule defining the right (desirable) way of organizing the empirical material. This is the rule (pattern grounded in collective thinking) that Znaniecki calls practical dogma. In the first phase of its formation, through the coordination of qualitatively different elements – cognitively accessible fragments of a specific field of culture – the scheme of its functioning is reconstructed. Znaniecki says that:

No regularity exists originally in the sphere of experience; all regularity must be actively produced and maintained, and this means active control over the future as well as the organization of the present and the unification of the past. The bigger in this respect are our claims with regard to the future, the greater the regularity we expect, the less we can rely on the existing order of reality in fulfilling these claims. Our expectations should be based on the constant aspirations of our activity rather than the permanent features of its subject.¹²

The scheme of “expected regularities” is then subject to two types of transformation. In the first case, it can become a system of schemes that meets “the requirement for an organization of empirical reality.” It has a hypothetical character and its goal is to obtain the theoretical compatibility of arrangements of various types. The second case is “practical dogma.” This arises as a result of the combination of schemes made with the use of a chosen interpretative key. Practical dogma, unlike philosophical doctrine or religious credo, is: “Any implicitly or explicitly accepted principle that unconditionally defines future activities due to the maintenance of a certain complex practical organization of reality [...]”¹³

In opposition to a system of schemes, the practical dogma presupposes the dominance of one scheme over others – this scheme that “defines ideal conditions in which dogma requires updating other schemes, while other schemes create real conditions in which dogma requires updating the dominant scheme.”¹⁴ Practical dogma is applicable not only in the social sciences, but also in the sphere of politics. Being a construct that organizes empirical data, it retains its categorical importance. As a (hierarchical) system of schemes with different theoretical complexity, it can be

¹² F. Znaniecki, *Rzeczywistość kulturowa*, in: *Pisma filozoficzne*, vol. II, Warszawa 1987, pp. 744–745.

¹³ F. Znaniecki, *Nauki o kulturze*, Warszawa 1992, pp. 285–290; idem, *Wstęp do socjologii*, Warszawa 1988, pp. 121–127; see also: A. Giddens, *Nowe zasady metody socjologicznej. Pozytywna krytyka socjologii interpretacyjnych*, transl. G. Woroniecka, Kraków 2001, pp. 194–195 ff.

¹⁴ F. Znaniecki, *Rzeczywistość kulturowa*, p. 752.

either rejected or replaced with another dogma. When it was established, however, it is impossible to ignore it in the process of rational organization of reality.¹⁵

A practical dogma is placed between the social world, understood as the never-ending dispute over dominant values, and the world of culture, which provides the conflicted interlocutors with the criteria of agreement. As long as practical dogma is perceived by them as a useful tool in the process of managing common affairs, it maintains the status of an "unwavering principle." For this reason, the practical dogma is easily confused with culture itself. After all, it consists of (dominating) beliefs about how to maintain public space in the expected order. Do we need additional mechanisms to select criteria for understanding our own culture? Yes, of course. The distinctive feature of the world of culture is the state of axiological excess. Therefore, a creative individual should maintain a distance to the knowledge about the current changes in culture. In order for practical dogma to be properly applied, it is necessary to supplement it by adapting (preferred) theory to (evolving) practice. Hence the postulate of freedom for those who would make these corrections, or even more so, take responsibility for their results.

Why do we need an alliance between cultural studies and performance studies? Final remarks

Znaniiecki's pragmatic conception of culture seems to be a theoretical proposition belonging to the deep past. However, nothing could be more wrong. Thanks to the unique solutions that enable (1) the separation of culture as an autonomous sphere of human activity, (2) the characterization of axiological excess as a distinctive feature of culture, and finally (3) the description of changes making culture a dynamic reality, Znaniiecki's concept is an invaluable offer for cultural studies seeking its own subject research and methodology. The findings made at the beginning of this essay show that performance studies is in a similar position today. It is not able to assess the scale and significance of the changes caused by the performative turn in culture, without the support of cultural studies (understood as a comprehensive cultural theory). Hence the benefits of the alliance between cultural studies and performance studies. On the one hand, this alliance does not require abandoning any of the assumptions underlying performance studies. Doubts about whether the institutional order was changed after World War II in the Western world, or only its facade, do not concern the thesis on the emergence of new richer forms of expressing ideas that are

¹⁵ See: A. Zybortowicz, *Przemoc i poznanie. Studium z nie-klasycznej socjologii wiedzy*, Toruń 1995, pp. 132, 133.

important for contemporary man. On the other hand, the attempt to find an answer to the question about new ways of reproducing cultural schemes has far-reaching consequences. It allows us to determine how the phenomena described by performance studies researchers affected the system of schemes and the practical dogma (the dominant scheme) used in the practice of Western communities.

To put it briefly, cultural studies receives from performance studies a gift in the form of data on cultural diversity. Without these data, the description of the cultural world would be incomplete. At the same time, this aim of research is not indifferent to performance studies. Without a comprehensive description of the cultural world made in the use of cultural studies (and its tools), performance studies remain at an impasse. The characteristics of new forms of expression or creative manifestations do not explain much in isolation from the question about the conditions of the stability (and efficiency) of the communication process. Therefore, the attention of cultural and performance studies should be focused on the problem of how to reconcile one with the other. Thanks to this, cultural studies researchers can determine how the axiological framework of culture evolves with the multiplicity of performances (causing these shifts), and representatives of performance studies are able to confirm their assumptions about the role of performance in contemporary cultural practice. It is unreasonable, in this context, to call into question the originality of the communication basis in the form of cultural norms. They must exist before they are corrected or questioned. These norms shape the identity of a given community, making it capable of revising its normative beliefs. This order matters. It allows changes to be distinguished concerning dominant cultural patterns (and social institutions that guard them) from the ways of using these patterns (usually referring to social behavior). Representatives of the Poznań methodological school believe that this aim can be achieved (among others) by returning to Znaniecki.

Literature

- Geertz C., *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York 1984.
- Giddens A., *Nowe zasady metody socjologicznej. Pozytywna krytyka socjologii interpretacyjnych*, transl. G. Woroniecka, Kraków 2001.
- Hastrup K., *A Passage to Anthropology*, London 1995.
- Hume D., *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, London 1993 .
- Hume D., *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, London 1983.
- Nietzsche F., *Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, Cambridge 2001.
- McKenzie J., *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, London 2001.
- Morawski W., *Zmiana instytucjonalna. Społeczeństwo, gospodarka, polityka*, Warszawa 2000.

- Pomian K., *Wprowadzenie do Znanięckiego*, "Więź" vol. 1, no. 189, 1974.
- Schechner R., *Performance Studies. An Introduction*, London – New York 2002.
- Ziółkowski M., *Wiedza, jednostka, społeczeństwo*, Warszawa 1989.
- Znanięcki F., *Nauki o kulturze*, Warszawa 1992.
- Znanięcki F., *Pisma filozoficzne*, vol. I, Warszawa 1987.
- Znanięcki F., *Rzeczywistość kulturowa*, in: *Pisma filozoficzne*, vol. II, Warszawa 1987.
- Znanięcki F., *Wstęp do socjologii*, Warszawa 1988.
- Zybertowicz A., *Przemoc i poznanie. Studium z nie-klasycznej socjologii wiedzy*, Toruń 1995.