

## Digital Performativity

### Themes:

- Digital media makes us all performers
- Online spaces reward self presentation with audience reactions, we perform for one and other
- We turn every day life into a constant performance, refined and adjusted by audience reaction, often monetized, life is turned into entertainment for others

### Sources:

#### Source 1:

De Kosnik, Abigail. "Is Twitter a Stage?: Theories of Social Media Platforms as Performance Spaces." In *#identity: Hashtagging Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Nation*, edited by Abigail De Kosnik and Keith P. Feldman, 20–36. University of Michigan Press, 2019.

- Context
  - Berkley Professor of theater and performance
  - Wide range of interests: digital culture, culture and memory, social networks, identity, etc
  - Wrote this chapter for an edited collection titled *#identity* published in 2019
  - addressing contemporary media scholars and students trying to understand how social media reconfigures identity and public discourse.
- Content
  - Erving Goffman
    - Performance of social interactions
    - We are performers every day
    - We want to control the impression we make on others
    - De Kosnik's connection to social media
      - "Techniques" of performance preparation we use in everyday life also applies to social media: We play a "part," Crafting of posts in advance, strategize release and impact of content, online persona through a certain "aesthetic" or consistent content, # and categorization of content
  - McLuhan
    - Global theater - Theory of telecommunications → A flexible, diverse world that consists of only actors
    - Builds on the theory of performativity
    - De Kosnik's connection to social media
      - Social media as a modern technology of the global theater

- Hashtags as a new form of journalism where everybody is a publisher, everyone voices opinions for reactions
- Makes public events more intimate, intimate events more public, everything turns into a social drama
- Emphasis on emotional expression rather than just a single report
- Significance to digital performativity
  - This is the central theory of digital performativity
  - Constant visibility, curation of self, emotion audience reaction, sense of performativity existed before (news) but social media has turned performance into an individually accessible constant part of all of our lives
  - Personal (glass bedroom), public (politics)

Source 2:

Marwick, Alice E. "The Fabulous Lives of Micro-Celebrities." In *Status Update: Celebrity, Publicity, and Branding in the Social Media Age*, 112–62. Yale University Press, 2013.

- Context
  - Alice E. Marwick UNC professor of media & technology Studies
  - Wrote this piece in 2013 during the rise of twitter, youtube, etc
- Content
  - Persona creation → strategic content creation, consistency, interaction with fans, curated with the intention of building an audience, through subcultures
  - Intimacy and relationships with fans, the private becomes public
  - "Authenticity" → wanting to see real life, micro-celebrities must then create a feeling of authenticity (which is so often completely inauthentic) but it emphasizes the want to private life to be performed for audience entertainment
  - Lifestyle of a celebrity → VIP, special access, networking
  - Huge emphasis on monetization, many have the goal of making money and are successful in doing so
  - Page 126 - Adam Jackson, tweets are SO uninteresting in content, just about his life but people are interested in hearing anything
- Significance
  - The possibility of the everyday user to become a performer
  - While reading we need to think in terms of how much this has been transformed in the last decade in this area (honestly in the last couple of years) with the whole new era of micro-celebrities having taken over the internet and the new fad of monetizing off of tiktok especially, every person having the opportunity to monetize
  - Universe of mini celebrity status, not out of reach, but has access to the out of reach world
  - Authenticity and emphasis on intimacy of access to the everyday life of those mini celebrities → performing the normal

Source 3: The TikTok "Day in my life" POV and all other posts

- Literally open any social media platform and look at the first post, that is a performance - Photo (aesthetic), curated photos (whether a spam or public), caption (dialogue), music (score), entire page consistent and not always based in the reality of their life, comments (audience reaction), likes (almost like applause)
- This specific POV - day in the life is mundane, but it is turned into a curated performance for the viewer