

Individual Re-Enactment of Stereotypical Social Roles on Subculture Scene

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Paper “Individual Re-Enactment of Stereotypical Social Roles on Subculture Scene” analyses the relationship between individual identity of a person and established social roles on Lithuanian subculture scene. The identity of a person is analysed as daily re-enactment of certain social and cultural roles, which follows given cultural schemes and changes these schemes by adding new features to it with every new repetition. Both the re-enactment of social roles established in certain subcultural groups and the attempts to change or reject these roles become externalized and emphasized in the context of various subcultures. Here the fusion of different signs of identity takes place on the surface of the body and reveals itself in numerous variations of social roles.

The theoretical basis of this article is the concept of identity as of a performative phenomenon. The investigation of the subject is based on the writings of sociologist Erving Goffman who uses terms of theatre as metaphors describing social roles in everyday life as well as on the concept of performative sexual identity formulated by feminism theorist Judith Butler. In this theoretical framework various aspects of personal identity are treated as certain roles, as external enactment of the identity which has no permanent internal core.

The paper applies such theoretical approach to the analysis of material from a particular interdisciplinary project on subcultures, which was realized by the author of the paper and his colleague Ph.D. Rasa Pranskevičiūtė. The project resulted in a book, which includes photographs of representatives of different subcultures taken in a photo studio and written interviews of the persons photographed. The book provides authentic material for the case studies presented in the paper and gives an opportunity to combine perspectives of artistic and scientific research. Thus the paper does not just repeat well-known statements of gender studies or of the performative identity concept, but applies them in particular and relevant context of subcultures, where they offer insights into important areas of the subject.

The paper concludes by stating the possibility of certain limited freedom to change and modify established social roles (including those of subculture scene) by re-enacting them in particular external contexts and “customizing” them according to individual world-views and personal ideological perspectives of the representatives of different subcultures.

The paper will include the presentation of the extensive visual material, which exceeds the limits of the printed book.