

THE PERFORMANCE
STUDIES READER

Second Edition

Edited by Henry Bial

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Dwight Conquergood, "Performance studies: interventions and radical research," *TDR* 46: 2 (T174, Summer 2002), pp. 145–156. © 2002 by New York University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Reprinted by permission of MIT Press.

Diana Taylor, "Translating Performance," *Profession* 2002 (2002), pp. 44–50. © 2002 by the Modern Language Association of America. Reprinted by permission of the Modern Language Association of America and the author. This essay also appears in similar form on pp. 1–15 of Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Duke University Press, 2003).

INTRODUCTION

Henry Bial

There are people who already know, or think they know, what performance studies is. This book is not for them. This book is for the people who like *not knowing*, who find the uncertainty of unmapped terrain exhilarating. This is also true of the field itself. What makes performance studies unique is that it shares the characteristics of its object: performance. Just as performance is contingent, contested, hard to pin down, so too is its study. For the most part, those of us who consider ourselves "performance studies people" like it that way. As Diana Taylor writes in this volume, "I find its [performance's] very undefinability and complexity reassuring" (see page 385). The positive promise of performance studies – its potential to illuminate, instruct, and inspire – is enhanced, not diminished, by this ever-present uncertainty.

Therefore, I will not attempt in this introduction to define the field of performance studies. As Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett writes, "Performance Studies starts with a set of concerns and objects and ranges widely for what it needs by way of theory and method" (see page 43). Hence, the only definition that is universally applicable to the field is a tautology: performance studies is what performance studies people do. The purpose of this book is to collect in one volume numerous examples of what performance studies people do, allowing readers to find their own place at this movable feast of ideas.

Of course, one of the things performance studies people do is attempt to define our field of study; but as you will see from the essays in the first section of this book, all such definitions are themselves *performative*. That is, they are not descriptions of an already-existing body of knowledge, but attempts to create a knowledge-formation by defining, explaining, and discussing it. As Shannon Jackson notes in this volume, disciplinary labels such as theater, speech, and performance studies should be viewed "less as stably referential terms than as discursive sites on which a number of agendas, alliances, and anxieties collect" (see page 40). Assembling an anthology with the title *The Performance Studies Reader* carries with it many of the same concerns. There will be many readers who will question why certain texts have been included, why others have been left out. This is true of all anthologies, but it is especially true in this case. This book is intended as an inclusive, rather than exclusive, introduction to performance studies. The absence of certain texts or authors from these pages should not be construed as a banishment of those ideas from the performance studies realm.

The term *Performance Studies Reader* refers not only to this book, but to you, the reader, and to me, the editor. I have been reading performance studies, as a student and as a teacher, for about a dozen years: not very long by some people's standards, too long by others'. As a graduate student in New York University's Department of Performance Studies in the mid-1990s, I frequently thought: 1) this field is really exciting, and 2) this field is really confusing. It is exciting to read and write within an intellectual community that includes theatrical practitioners and critics, anthropologists, folklorists, sociologists, and cultural theorists. It is exhilarating to watch new worlds of inquiry open in the spaces between these more established disciplines. It is a special kind of rush to set out in pursuit of an object-of-study that is as elusive, temporal, and contingent as performance. To be a performance studies reader is to work without a net, to walk on hot coals, to search in a dark alley at midnight for a black cat that isn't there. We are the lovers on Keats' Grecian urn, eternally in pursuit.

But the flipside of finding oneself at the center of such an intellectual vortex is the tendency – especially for the newcomer – toward disorientation. How does one idea relate to another? Where do academic disciplines overlap? Is performance studies properly a discipline at all, or is it a kind of way station, an academic version of Grand Central Terminal, where ideas and idea-makers brush up against each other on the way from one place to another? “Your attention please, this is the final boarding call for Cultural Studies, making all local stops including Women's Studies, African Studies, Asian Studies, Queer Theory, and Cultural Studies. If you're not going to Cultural Studies, you're on the wrong train!” And even if readers know, or think they know, how to connect the dots from where they've come from to where they are to where they would like to go, it is not always easy to stick to the path, given the converging and diverging rush of words, images, and performances that swirl about in every direction.

And I subsequently thought: someday, when I am a professor, I shall write a book which organizes the myriad disciplines and dissents of performance studies into a neat, coherent narrative, while still respecting the complexity of this interdisciplinary and intercultural project. This book would serve as a map of the complex and ever-changing landscape of the field. It would survey the terrain from above, assisting students and other visitors in orienting themselves, and reminding more experienced readers how they got there. This was, perhaps, an over-ambitious goal for a student, but performance studies is an enterprise which encourages (not to say induces) such ambition. In a landscape where boundaries are blurred and borders routinely violated, where your view changes with each step, who is immune to the temptation to simply set out in search of the Emerald City?

Richard Schechner got there first. Of course, he had a head start. As one of the pioneers of the field, the person who coined the very term “Performance Studies,” Schechner was the ideal person to write *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (Routledge, 2002), now in its second edition (2006). In that book – which this volume is meant to accompany – Schechner charts the evolution and development of the field, from its intellectual roots in theater, anthropology, and other disciplines through fundamental concepts such as ritual, play, and performativity, to comprehensive discussions of the act of performing, of performance processes, and of global and intercultural performances. Though, as Schechner notes, “The one overriding and underlying assumption of performance studies is that the field is wide open” (1),

Performance Studies: An Introduction gives students a stable frame of reference against which their own avenues of inquiry can be measured.

Because *The Performance Studies Reader* is designed as a companion to Schechner's *Performance Studies*, you will find the essays in this volume organized into eight parts, one part keyed to each chapter of Schechner's text. In that way, teachers of performance studies can use the two books in concert (or employ each independently, if they so desire). The material in each part expands or comments upon the ideas contained in the corresponding chapter: “What is performance studies?,” “What is performance?,” “Ritual,” “Play,” “Performativity,” “Performing,” “Performance processes,” and “Global and intercultural performance.”

But it is very important to note that the articles in *The Performance Studies Reader* do not repeat or rehash the material in Schechner's text, nor are they dependent on it. Rather, taken as a group, these writings provide an even more expansive kind of introduction to Performance Studies as an academic discipline. If *Performance Studies: An Introduction* is the coherent guide to the field that I longed for as a student, *The Performance Studies Reader* is a more experiential and immediate map of the area, drawn from street-level. It navigates the discipline by introducing readers to key thinkers in the field. These thinkers in turn identify the major landmarks of “PS Land.” Used either by itself or in conjunction with Schechner's book, the *Reader* encourages teachers and students to discover their own pathways from one to another. Some of these landmarks look different close up than they do on the larger map; some stand at the very limits of the field; a few stand outside the boundaries which performance studies scholars usually draw, beckoning readers to stretch further.

In other words, this *Reader* is both a supplement to Schechner's *Performance Studies* and a means to providing a qualitatively different reading and learning experience. Ideally the two volumes will work together handsomely, providing the basis for “a compact course in performance studies” (Schechner 2006: ix).

Within these pages, you will find acknowledged “classics” – works whose canonical status in performance studies is rarely challenged – such as Erving Goffman's “Performances: belief in the part one is playing” from *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* and J.L. Austin's “Lecture II” from *How to Do Things With Words*. You will also find works so current that the ink is barely dry, such as Mary Zimmerman's “The archaeology of performance” and Diana Taylor's “Translating performance.” You will find work by the “stars” of the field, and you will find work by scholars whose names may be new to you. You will find short excerpts from book-length works, and a handful of journal articles reprinted in their entirety. If you've previously used the first edition of this *Reader*, you will find all the same articles here, along with eight new pieces (one for each Part) selected especially for the current edition. These new chapters have been selected with an eye toward keeping the *Reader* current with the emerging field: seven of the eight have been published since 2001. For those using the *Reader* in conjunction with *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, all eight are listed as “suggested readings” in the second edition of Schechner's text.

Because performance studies draws healthily on its eclectic roots and branches, the authors of the works collected here often assume a familiarity on behalf of the reader with ideas and works that may be outside your experience. To help you along, each part begins with a brief introduction which contextualizes the articles in that part and explains their

relationship to one other. At the end of each chapter, you will find cross-references to other articles in the *Reader*; like everything else in performance studies, the thematic divisions between parts of this book are provisional and contested; there are numerous ways to connect the articles and ideas in this collection, and readers are encouraged to seek out those paths that speak to them the loudest. You may also note that within each thematic part, the articles are arranged chronologically, so that you can more easily follow the historical evolution of certain concepts.

Finally, I sincerely invite you to experience the wonders of being a performance studies reader. This book is offered as a resource for anyone who wishes to chart a path through the field of performance studies, and for anyone who wishes to get lost in it.

Part I

WHAT IS PERFORMANCE STUDIES?

Richard Schechner writes, "Theoretically, performance studies is wide open; practically, it has developed in a certain way" (Schechner 2006: 1). This "certain way" has, in the academy, been shaped in large part by institutional imperatives. In the 1980s and 1990s, university theater departments began to rethink their mission. Teachers of theater and dance, and of speech communication saw their traditional European and American curriculum growing gradually disconnected with the increasingly multi-cultural and media-driven world of the professional performing arts. At the same time, the shift of colleges and universities toward a corporate model (the university delivers a "product" to student-consumers) placed increased pressure on all disciplines to assert their relevance in the global marketplace.

The essays in this section trace the development of performance studies as an academic discipline in response to these challenges. As the editor of *TDR: The Journal of Performance Studies* and a professor at New York University's Department of Performance Studies (the first of its kind), Schechner became the leading advocate for this paradigm shift. Schechner's 1988 essay "Performance studies: the broad spectrum approach" calls for a "wholesale reconstruction of curricula" to include the study of performance in ritual and social contexts. For those who would still study aesthetic performance, Schechner and others suggested a de-emphasizing of literary, text-based criticism in favor of performance-based analysis. W.B. Worthen explores the debate around text and performance in "Disciplines of the text/sites of performance" (1995). Drawing on the work of literary theorists such as Roland Barthes, Worthen shows how the disciplinary evolution of performance studies raises important questions about authorship and originality.

Jon McKenzie's "The liminal-norm," excerpted from his 2001 book *Perform Or Else*, notes another distinguishing characteristic of performance studies as an academic enterprise: it is self-consciously positioned as "liminal" – between two states of being (e.g. between theater and ritual), and belonging to neither. Because this liminal position is often understood as a space for transgression or resistance (ideas and acts that go against the mainstream), many performance studies scholars have come to consider social activism a defining characteristic of the field. McKenzie, whose goal is to develop a "general theory of performance," here

explores some of the implications of this "challenge of efficacy." Like McKenzie, Shannon Jackson turns a critical eye on the university and how resistance to traditional disciplinary structures helped shape contemporary performance studies. Her 2001 essay "Professing performances: disciplining genealogies" traces the genealogy of the field back to the establishment of performing arts departments in American universities in the early twentieth century.

In "Performance studies," Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett surveys the development of the field since its establishment in the early 1980s. This essay – a detailed account of where performance studies has been, and where it may be headed – is based on a 1999 report given to the Rockefeller Foundation by Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, the first Chair of NYU's Department of Performance Studies (1981–1993), and was revised and updated in 2002. To close Part I, John Bell's "Performance studies in an age of terror" (2003) revisits Schechner's call for curricular change, arguing for the utility of performance studies as a framework for the analysis of twenty-first century global culture. Through the provocative suggestion that both terrorism and the responses to it can be understood as performance, Bell's essay anticipates questions of definition that are further explored in Part II.

Students and other newcomers to performance studies may find this intellectual history daunting or abstract. The concern with disciplinary boundaries and interdisciplinary formations may seem too far removed from what we ordinarily call performance. Scholars writing about how scholarship is practiced may seem excessively reflexive. Yet it is important to remember that how we structure our thoughts is often a determining factor in what we are able to think, and what we are able to think *about*. Moreover, as the essays in this section demonstrate, this self-awareness of the issues and methods that shape our work has defined performance studies as a field for its entire existence. This is not simply a function of performance studies' genesis in a reflexive, postmodern era. Such self-awareness is an essential characteristic of performance itself.

PERFORMANCE STUDIES

The broad spectrum approach

Richard Schechner

It's April 1988. I've been traveling a lot these past few months – India, China, Ann Arbor, Texas, Chicago. And I've seen lots of performances ranging from *jingju* (Beijing Opera) to performance art, from classic dramas to rehearsals of new works by students. I've listened to what people from several cultures and several regions of the United States have to say about the future of the live performing arts: how they are taught, practiced, evaluated; what their recent history has been; and what their near future might be. I've observed classes and performances; spoken to, and debated with, artists, students, and teachers.

The impression I get is that colleagues in India and China are searching through their alternatives concerning training, scholaring, and producing both classic and new works. Although the situation in each of these vast multicultural countries is distinct, and there are many problems, there appears to be agreement on two fronts. First, that a working relationship has to exist between those who are training theater workers and professionals in the field. Second, that performance – as distinct from any of its subgenres like theatre, dance, music, and performance art – is a broad spectrum of activities including at the very least the performing arts, rituals, healing, sports, popular entertainments, and performance in everyday life.

The training of professional performing artists does not coincide with the way either theater and dance majors or performance studies students are educated. In too many American colleges and universities the training of professionals and the educating of majors has been conflated, to the detriment of both professional training and the education of young people who are "interested in" dance and theater but will never earn their living as performing arts professionals.

In my travels I met too many students who were sullen or angry. Entering as wide-eyed freshmen preparing for professional careers or as graduate students expecting to become university-level teachers, they are ripening into extremely disillusioned people. Jobs either as theater workers or as teachers are precious few (see Comments in [*TDR* journal] T113 and T114). The regional theater, television, and film industries are not going to grow much. As far as teaching is concerned, even with the expected wave of retirements coming during the next fifteen years there is little chance that performing arts departments will expand

significantly from their current base. I met many faculty who were entrenched, marking time, and scared of the future.

As for the broad spectrum approach – treating performative behavior, not just the performing arts, as a subject for serious scholarly study – this idea is just beginning to make some headway among the academic establishment. In too many American theater and dance departments there is an almost bitter resistance to the broad spectrum approach. Academic inertia crushes thinking that goes beyond the Western traditions of drama or dance and beyond the idea of the performing arts as activities that take place on theater stages.

What needs to be discussed is a wholesale reconstruction of curricula both within performing arts departments and in the university at large. Performing arts departments need to expand their areas of study so that the training of would-be professionals is only a part of what they do. The number of new actors, choreographers, dancers, directors, designers, costumers, and techies should be reduced until the supply more nearly fits the demand. Training and production programs should be reorganized along the lines I outlined in my Comment in [TDR] T116. Instead of training unemployable performance workers, theater and dance departments should develop courses that show how performance is a key paradigm in many cultures, modern and ancient, non-Western and Euro-American.

Performing arts curricula need to be broadened to include courses in performance studies. What needs to be added is how performance is used in politics, medicine, religion, popular entertainments, and ordinary face-to-face interactions. The complex and various relationships among the players in the performance quadrilog – authors, performers, directors, and spectators – ought to be investigated using the methodological tools increasingly available from performance theorists, social scientists, and semioticians. Courses in performance studies need to be made available not only within performing arts departments but to the university community at large. Performative thinking must be seen as a means of cultural analysis. Performance studies courses should be taught outside performing arts departments as part of core curricula.

How hard will it be to get universities to use performance studies as part of their core curricula? At Stanford, the faculty has voted to include studies of non-Western and minority cultures and feminism as part of the required core “civilization” course. How will this be achieved? I recommend a performance studies approach. It is no accident that when nations wish to improve their relations they most often begin by exchanging performing artists. This is because performances both express particular cultural traits and are enjoyable. They are “from somewhere” definite, but they give pleasure everywhere. Exciting, robustly intellectual world-civilization courses can be built around studying dance, theater, rituals, popular entertainments, and sports – buttressed by necessary readings in history and literature, and accompanied by spirited discussions.

Are the teachers of such courses at present available? Can today’s theater and dance departments be handed the assignment of developing core curriculum performance studies courses? For the most part, no. The shift I am talking about will emerge gradually. NYU’s Department of Performance Studies is a good beginning. The movement toward developing performance studies departments and courses by Northwestern, Brown, and Wisconsin Universities, and at Franklin and Marshall College and several other institutions is

encouraging. Young teachers coming from these programs need to be placed as performance studies specialists not only in theater and dance departments but in history, English, women’s studies, communications, anthropology, sociology, area studies, popular culture, and ethnomusicology departments. Dialog has to open between performance studies specialists and those who are responsible for planning undergraduate core curricula.

I realize that what I’ve been saying may sound self-serving. Here I am, a member of NYU’s Performance Studies Department; and here I am, editor of *TDR: A Journal of Performance Studies*. But the urgent activities of NYU’s department and of *TDR* can also be read as evidence that my colleagues and I are willing to put up so that we don’t have to shut up. We are working toward what I have roughly outlined above.

I believe that if the study of performance does not expand and deepen, going far beyond both the training of performance workers and the Western tradition of drama and dance, the whole academic performing arts enterprise constructed over the past half-century or so will collapse. The happy alternative is to expand our vision of what performance is, to study it not only as art but as a means of understanding historical, social, and cultural processes.

READER CROSS-REFERENCES

- Worthen, McKenzie, Jackson, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, J. Bell – implications of the broad spectrum approach on college and university curricula.
 Geertz, C. Bell – views of the expanded notion of performance from the disciplinary standpoint of anthropology
 Fabian, Turner and Turner, Conquergood – on performance as a means of understanding historical, social, and cultural processes
 Taylor – translating “performance studies” into other languages

DISCIPLINES OF THE TEXT

Sites of performance¹

W.B. Worthen

What is in fact curious about all these gestures, these angular and abruptly abandoned attitudes, these syncopated modulations formed at the back of the throat, these musical phrases that break off short, these flights of elytra, these rustlings of branches, these sounds of hollow drums, these robot squeakings, these dances of animated manikins, is this: that through the labyrinth of their gestures, attitudes, and sudden cries, through the gyrations and turns which leave no portion of the stage space unutilized, the sense of a new physical language, based upon signs and no longer upon words, is liberated. These actors, with their geometric robes seem to be animated hieroglyphs.

Antonin Artaud (1958: 54)

Observing the Balinese dancers, Antonin Artaud undertakes a complex act of intercultural reading. On the one hand, what impresses Artaud is the immediacy of the performers, the sense in which their performance is not an act of re-presentation, but instead a kind of "pure theater, where everything, conception and realization alike, has value, has existence only in proportion to its degree of objectification *on the stage*" (1958: 53). At the same time, though, Artaud also sees their performance hollowing out the dancers, objectifying them: they become "animated manikins" making "robot squeakings"; they undergo a thorough and "systematic depersonalization" (58). Although their gestures "make useless any translation into logical discursive language," Artaud's account of the dancers nonetheless attempts such a translation: their movements demonstrate the value "of a certain number of perfectly learned and above all masterfully applied conventions," they have the "evocative power of a system," a system that verges, surprisingly enough, on "mathematics" (55). Artaud, the theorist of "no more masterpieces," working to evacuate the logos-like authority of scripted texts, nonetheless *reads* the Balinese dancers' bodies, produces these bodies and their performance as a *text*.²

Artaud's reading is arresting for other reasons, too, not least for its imperial dimension: we might suspect that the Balinese bodies become texts so readily because, for Artaud, the Balinese are already just things. I open with Artaud's wild ethnology in order to tease out

some contemporary assumptions about the relationship between texts and performances, assumptions that structure some of the fault lines that run through the various disciplinary and institutional formations that claim the study of drama/theatre/performance today: cultural studies, English, literature, performance studies, theatre history, theatre studies. Like many negotiations, boundary wars are as much a contest of authority and power as of "truth" or "method" – recall the 1993 American Theatre for Higher Education (ATHE) squabble about admitting Performance Studies as a FORUM member, or the summons in recent ads for *TDR: The Drama Review*, "The Journal of Performance Studies" to "Join the move to performance studies!" Here, I want to explore the relationship between texts, textuality, and performance as an issue deeply inflected by notions of authority – not so much professional authority, but the stabilizing, hegemonic functioning of the Author itself. I am interested in the ways that notions of authority are covertly inscribed in recent discussions of performance, often at just those moments when the supposedly liberating "textuality" of performance is most urgently opposed to that Trojan horse of the absent author, the text. Reconsidering how, or whether, texts are actually *opposed* to performances is one way to rethink the disciplinary instruments that map the contours of drama/theatre/performance studies today.

As Clifford Geertz has remarked, "The great virtue of the extension of the notion of text beyond things written on paper or carved into stone is that it trains attention on precisely this phenomenon: on how the inscription of action is brought about, what its vehicles are and how they work, and on what the fixation of meaning from the flow of events – history from what happened, thought from thinking, culture from behavior – implies for sociological interpretation" (1983: 31).³ Geertz envisions a continuum between texts and the textuality of behavior, one that enables us to read performances as texts, analyze how performances signify, and to interrogate the subsequent rewriting of those performances, the "fixation" of their meanings in texts. In theatre studies, however, a surprisingly romantic sentimentality tends to creep into this issue, opposing "performance" (transgressive, multi-form, revisionary) to the (dominant, repressive, conventional, and canonical) domain of the "text." It's odd that texts should be regarded in this way (where would intertextuality come from without texts?), and this incoherence perhaps suggests that *texts* are not what is really at issue, but how they are construed as vessels of authority, of canonical values, of hegemonic consensus.

Part of this confusion stems from three interlaced ways we think of a "text": (1) as a canonical vehicle of authorial intention; (2) as an intertext, the field of textuality; (3) as a material object, the text in hand. In "From Work to Text," his now classic celebration of textuality, Roland Barthes provides a convenient discrimination between the first two senses, one that informs contemporary discussions of the textuality of performance. Barthes describes an "epistemological slide" (1988: 155) in the conception of written texts, from "the traditional notion of the *work*" to the more relativized sense of the *text* (156), and then characterizes several features and consequences of this slippage. The *work*, that "fragment of substance, occupying a part of the space of books (in a library for example)" (156–7), is the vehicle for authorized cultural reproduction, a "signified" approached through interpretation; the *work* discloses a "secret, ultimate, something to be sought out" (158). The *text*,

on the other hand, is the field of production rather than interpretation; its "field is that of the signifier," governed by a metonymic rather than a hermeneutic logic, best approached through "the activity of associations, contiguities, carryings-over," through "playing" (158).⁴ As an object of authorized interpretation, the *work* is, finally, "normally the object of a consumption" (161); the *text* is not an object but a field, "that social space which leaves no language safe, outside, nor any subject of the enunciation in position as judge, master, analyst, confessor, decoder" (164). If the *work* is authorized, interpreted, consumed, the *text* is encountered as a field of "play, activity, production, practice" (162). It's not surprising that Barthes's opposition between the *work* (authoritarian, closed, fixed, single, consumed) and the *text* (liberating, open, variable, traced by intertexts, performed) proves so useful to contemporary discourse about performance, in part because Barthes's sense of the *text* is self-consciously performative. Barthes's *text* is the field of the signifier, of textuality, of play, of production – and, of course, of *jouissance*, "a pleasure without separation" (164). Where interpretation is earnest, concerned with fidelity and obedience, performance is insouciant, rewriting and disseminating the words of the text in various ways. Contemporary "studies" – cultural, literary, theatre, and performance – have gained analytical and theoretical leverage from this textualization of performance, the sense that performed events operate discursively, and that meanings arise from the slippage and interplay between signifying formalities. Yet despite the widespread application of "textuality" to reading the body and performance, these two conceptions of the text (*text-as-work*, *text-as-textuality*) often become blurred, compacted in one another, and compacted with that third sense of text, the material words on the page. This confusion most often takes place precisely when an opposition between text and performance is invoked to mark different disciplinary accounts of drama and performance, and the different institutional fields in which the study and practice of drama, theatre, and performance take place.

Stage vs. page, literature vs. theatre, text vs. performance: these simple oppositions have less to do with the relationship between writing and enactment than with power, with the ways that we authorize performance, ground its significance. Not surprisingly, both strategies of authorization – literary and performative – share similar assumptions, what we might call a rhetoric of origin/essence. This rhetoric appears to ground the relationship between text and performance, a relationship that is always conceived, as John Rouse suggests, as "a question both of the possible and the allowable" (1992: 146). From the "literary" perspective, the meaning, and so the authority, of performance is a function of how fully it expresses the meanings, gestures, themes located ineffably in the structures of the work, which is taken both as the ground and origin of performance and as the embodiment of authorial intention, the work. Though performance may discover meanings or nuances not immediately available through "reading" or "criticism," these meanings are nonetheless seen as latent potentialities located in the words on the page, the traces of the authorial work. The performative perspective generally avails itself of the same emphasis on origins: stage production is, in a sense, the final cause for the writing of plays, which gain their fullest, their essential meaning only in the circumstances for which they were originally intended: theatrical performance. Stanley Wells epitomizes this position in his "General Introduction" to the 1984 Oxford *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*: "Nevertheless, it

is in performance that the plays lived and had their being. Performance is the end to which they were created, and in this edition we have devoted our efforts to recovering and presenting texts of Shakespeare's plays as they were acted in the London playhouses which stood at the centre of his professional life" (1984: xxxvii).⁵ (It might be noted that this argument traces authorial intention in the generalized practices of the stage.) Much as the text-centered view essentializes and universalizes reading or interpretive practice (the meanings of the play are then *in* the text, regardless of the ways we have been conditioned to read them), so this view essentializes and universalizes notions of stage performance (the meanings of the play emerge *on* the stage, regardless of how we have been conditioned to produce or read them). The text here is merely the signifier of the essentially performative nature of the play, an enabling accident of the performance.

I have phrased this dichotomy crudely, in part to suggest how notions of legitimacy and authority persist in thinking about dramatic performance. Think of acting students, for example, dismissing some baroque interpretation of *Hamlet* or *Godot* as unactable, not assimilable to the contemporary (i.e., "natural") discourse of stage production, and so illegitimate to the study of drama. Or of theatre reviewers (or literary scholars) dismissing some "experimental" production of *Agamemnon* as "experimental," trendy, somehow not "faithful" to the meaning, intention of the originating text. Or of stage directors talking about letting the stage release the intentions of the author; of the more theatrically oriented stage directions of the new *Oxford Shakespeare*; of the American Repertory Theatre (ART) *Endgame* debacle.⁶ The desire to ground the meaning of theatrical production by attributing its authority either to the work or to the institutions of the stage afflicts both the popular and the academic conception of theatrical meaning.

Part of the problem in the way that text and performance are conceived has to do with reductive assumptions of the formal consistency of published texts, of texts as material objects that house the *work* of the author. For although it is now conventional to see performance as traced by a variety of gestural, figural, and ideological textualities, the notion that there *is* a text to produce onstage is surprisingly resistant to change. And yet recent controversies in textual studies – bibliography as it was once called – over the relationship between texts as material objects and notions of the authorial *work* have sharply undermined the supposed authority (intentional or otherwise) of *the* text. Much of this work in English studies surrounds the production of Shakespearean dramatic texts, the ways in which the history of editorial practice – from Heminge and Condell's publication of the folio *Works* of Shakespeare in 1623, through the "scientific" bibliography of W.W. Greg (1954) and Fredson Bowers (1964) – has been designed to produce books that claim to embody the "original" or at best a close approximation to the author's intended inscription, a fleshing out of the spiritualized *work*. But as Leah Marcus asks,

What if, rather than flowing effortlessly and magically from Shakespeare's mind onto the unalterable fixity of paper, the plays were from the beginning provisional, amenable to alterations by the playwright or others, coming to exist over time in a number of versions, all related, but none of them an original in the pristine sense

promised by Heminge and Condell? Nothing we know about the conditions of production in the Renaissance playhouse allows us to hope for single authoritative versions of the plays.

(1988: 44)⁷

Marcus suggests that the notion of a printed text as the embodiment of the organic unity of an author's "work" is foreign to the circumstances of Renaissance publishing, and perhaps to all textual production, in Shakespeare's era.⁸

But the "textual condition" – in Jerome McGann's apt phrase – haunts all texts, not only those produced in the early modern period. For as McGann suggests, "a 'text' is not a 'material thing' but a material event or set of events, a point in time (or a moment in space) where certain communicative interchanges are being practiced" (1991: 21). In this sense, no single printed text corresponds to the authorial *work*, which can only be conceived as "the global set of all texts and poems which have emerged in the literary production and reproduction process" (32) – texts which are, of course, necessarily contradictory of one another, usually in their linguistic as well as in their material elements. The *work* is always absent, an ideal construction assigned to an equally absent "author." Much as the "author's name manifests the appearance of a certain discursive set and indicates the status of this discourse within a society and a culture" (Foucault 1979: 147), so the *work* is a site of regulation, containment, a way to fix and stabilize meanings by predetermining the range of appropriate interpretation, of licensed reading. Yet the *work* is never present in the text; the text is its signifier and its supplement, signifying the *work's* absence at the same time that it locates a material space for it, here, in and not in this particular materialization, this book. What Barthes means by *text* is in some sense more like what we usually mean by performance: a production of a specific state of the text in which a variety of intertextual possibilities are realized. In this sense, performance has the same relation to the material *text* (the printed text, the text on the page) that the text has to the authorial *work*: the performance signifies an absence, the precise fashioning of the text's absence, at the same time that it appears to summon it into being, to produce it as performance (remembering that reading is as much a performance, a production of the text, as a stage performance is). The material text, the text as object, deconstructs the *work* even before we encounter it, play it, produce it as reading, criticism, enactment.

Though eccentric in the history of publishing, in many ways dramatic texts are normative of the "textual condition." The contemporary controversy surrounding Shakespearean editing may seem like a special case, but it's really not: the publication of a play is usually guaranteed to produce a text that violates any sense of a stable relation between published "text," organic "work," and authorial "intention." As Philip Gaskell has remarked in his study of Tom Stoppard's *Travesties*, contemporary plays often exist in several quite different, equally "authoritative" printed versions: a preproduction text, a text published in conjunction with the premiere, subsequent editions published after later productions, texts incorporating revisions which may or may not have been made directly by the author, collected editions, acting editions (1978).¹⁰ The acting editions common in the theatre usually include much nonauthorial material (property plots, for example), but even trade

editions include text of dubious provenance; stage directions (which often derive from the practice of the initial production) are notably suspect – though many directors (but not scholars or critics) regard them as dispensable anyway.¹¹ The publisher generally prescribes the overall format of the play on the page; plays are much less conventionalized in their layout than novels, but are not usually susceptible to the kinds of idiosyncratic layout that frequently accompany modern poetry (Ntozake Shange and Heiner Müller are two exceptions that prove this rule). A publisher's production team will generally determine the punctuation and positioning of speech prefixes, the amount of space between speeches, the typography, location, and positioning of stage directions, and so on.¹² And, of course, plays now appear in a variety of electronic formats, which enable "readers" both to read a text and to view video performances more or less simultaneously on a computer screen. These accidentals may seem truly incidental to the integrity of the *work*, but they are only incidental if we regard the printed text as the poorly materialized body of the *work's* spirit. If, on the other hand, we are interested in how texts are produced in the world, these accidents are the record of that production – they encode the publisher's sense of the audience and purpose of the volume, as well as the means by which it will be read, be performed. To read *Endgame* in the familiar Grove Press edition, in the double-column format of a drama anthology, or on a computer screen – where, of course, the reader may be able to interact with, change the text while reading it – is to recognize how deeply the material form of the text affects the kinds of attention we bring to bear on it, the ways we read it. The material text determines the sense of the *work* that we may finally achieve.¹³

To see the book itself as a production complicates traditional notions of the authority of meaning, since any *work* turns out not to be the origin of the text, but its effect, an effect of a panoply of performances, of textualizations. Indeed, it might be argued that to engage the text textually, to think of the text as a production of the work, is to attribute to the text (and to its performance as reading) the functions of performance: that performance works rhetorically, to accomplish "the appearance of substance," the "compelling illusion" of a motivating identity which is, of course, always absent (Butler 1990: 271). By locating the *work* in the text, rather than seeing it as an effect, an ascription derived from the text, the "text vs. performance" argument makes an odd eventuality possible: the unacknowledged importation of the kinds of authority associated with the *work* into the performance itself. Performance becomes the place where the Author is realized, that "principle of closure, of semiotic inhibition, employed in the conflict of interpretations to privilege certain readings and control 'unruly meanings'" (Berger 1987: 153).

Although this spectral movement of cultural authority from the *work* to the performance is visible in a variety of places, the example I would like to develop here is taken from a discussion of intercultural performance – just the kind of discussion which we might expect to dispel notions of the authority of the *work* in performance. In a fine article on a kathakali production of *King Lear*, Phillip Zarrilli describes how Australian playwright David McRuvie and French actor-director Annette Leday collaborated with the Kerala State Arts Academy, using "a group of highly regarded senior kathakali artists" (1992: 18) to stage a production of Shakespeare's play. This is an important and suggestive piece of work, and Zarrilli both documents and interrogates a range of intercultural issues arising from the production –

working arrangements between producers and performers, the play's reception in both European and Malayali press, and the reactions of two institutionalized custodians of canonicity (the Shakespeare industry/press, on the one hand, and the kathakali performers and audiences on the other). Both Zarrilli and the producers have a delicate and nuanced sense of how this intercultural performance exchange might work, and of how it actually did work. Yet at the same time, in both the producers' conception and to a lesser extent in Zarrilli's account, the interculturalism of the *Kathakali King Lear* depends on relatively essentialized notions of text and performance: "Leday and McRuvie wanted the production to speak equally to both its original audiences. For Malayalis the production was intended to provide a kathakali experience of one of Shakespeare's great plays and roles. Assuming that many in the European audience would know Shakespeare's play, the production was intended as an accessible way of experiencing kathakali" (19). And yet it is precisely this notion of origin that is undone – as it must be – by the process of production. Neither *King Lear* nor kathakali were produced here/both *King Lear* and kathakali were produced here. Zarrilli notes that McRuvie's "reelaboration of the *King Lear* text to conform with kathakali's theatrical criteria . . . radically transformed the original. The typed English adaptation ran barely twenty pages for the two-hour-plus performance. The action focused exclusively on Lear and his three daughters. The Gloucester subplot was completely cut, as were Kent, Cornwall, and Albany" (19–20).¹⁴ Similarly, kathakali discourse had to be altered as well: the narrative, sung dialog, and gestural passages that structure kathakali performance had to be simplified, and the roles of *King Lear* needed to be adapted to the conventional types of kathakali characterization, exerting a certain pressure on each.

Characterizing the British response to the performance, Zarrilli notes that one review described it as having "little to do with Shakespeare"; it had equally little to do with kathakali in a traditional sense (27). What is surprising, then, is that given the extraordinary reelaboration of both textual modes, the producers and Zarrilli claim to be trying to reproduce some essential "experience," via the intercultural discourse of *Kathakali King Lear*. The fissuring of the text is not really at issue: the work for this production was in many senses not unlike the cutting and reelaborating necessary for any production, even those that work to encode themselves as "faithful" to the text. In some essentials, this *King Lear* is no less and no more "Shakespeare's" *King Lear* than Peter Brook's famous *Endgame*-inspired production, or the plays produced by Edward Bond or Howard Barker under different titles (*Lear*, *Seven Lears*). As Terry Eagleton has argued, "text and production are distinct formations – different material modes of production, between which no homologous or 'reproductive' relationship can hold. They are not two aspects of the same discourse – the text, as it were, thought or silent speech and the production thought-in-action, articulate language; they constitute distinct kinds of discourse, between which no simple 'translation' is possible" (1978: 66). We have to forego, then, the notion that any production speaks the text in some unmediated, or faithfully mediated way. All productions betray the text, all texts betray the idealist *work*. Although McRuvie and Leday scorn "some hypothetically universal realm of communication" (Zarrilli 1992: 36), their test of intercultural performance is finally predicated on some hypothetically stable and universal "content" to be communicated. "King Lear" remains, even with the cast cut, the plot changed, the language changed, and so

on; kathakali can be experienced in some essential manner, even when the formal and cultural traditions of the performance have been altered.

What makes this project – for all its ambition, for all the excitement and promise it holds – finally disappointing is that the "experiment," far from testing the condition of performance (intercultural or otherwise), merely confirms it; or, to be more precise, it confirms the conditions of authority and authorization animating much Western performance. McRuvie and Leday rewrite, "transgress" the written text, but texts are always a field of transgression; at the same time, they see their activity as authorized by its fidelity to the *work* – Shakespeare's work, kathakali tradition. Much as texts always point to an absent origin, so the *Kathakali King Lear* points to an absence as well: kathakali, *King Lear*. To say that the *Kathakali King Lear* rewrites but preserves Shakespeare's play is to understand performance in fundamentally conservative terms, underwritten less by the "text" than by the phantom Author who haunts and exceeds it. How the "author" or "intention" or "meaning" is said to fill that absence is, I would argue, where the politics of performance, and the hegemony of literature, exert themselves.¹⁵ How does thinking about texts, authority, and performance in this way relate to the bondage of our disciplinary evocations of drama and performance? Eagleton's remarks on text and performance as incommensurable modes of production imply that, rather than locating the authority of performance in the text or its enactment, we need instead to interrogate the practices – critical, histrionic, directorial – that claim this homology, that forge a specific kind of produced meaning onstage. This clearly dialectical interrogation may sound easier to accomplish than it is; I'd like, finally, to illustrate this difficulty by considering some of the disciplinary claims of "performance studies." Performance studies has, of course, provocatively challenged many assumptions about what performance is, where performance is, and how performances signify. By expanding the investigation of performance into the social and cultural sphere, and by interrogating a range of performance modes, forms, and occasions, performance studies participates in the kind of disciplinary remapping characteristic of intellectual life in the *fin de siècle*. Like other questions of representation – gender studies, queer theory, postcolonial studies, semiotics, to name just a few – performance studies takes place in a variety of institutional locations not currently labeled "performance studies" departments. This seems to me not a disabling situation, though it is certainly a disempowering one within the institutional structure of the university, and the way to combat it – to inaugurate the "move to performance studies" – is, of course, to suggest that performance studies constitutes a "new paradigm."

In its particular blending of ethnology with literary and cultural theory, as well as in the productive eclecticism it sponsors, performance studies has certainly brought new questions into view, new ways of thinking, writing, and teaching into practice. But to define this "new paradigm" in opposition to theatre studies – or, indeed, to the other "paradigms" from which performance studies often draws its theoretical armature and methodological practice – is, finally, to reinscribe performance studies with at least some of the analytical hierarchies its practitioners would contest. In his now notorious paper first delivered at the 1992 ATHE convention in Atlanta, Richard Schechner suggests that "theatre as we have known and practiced it – the staging of written dramas – will be the string quartet of the twenty-first century: a beloved but extremely limited genre, a subdivision of performance," and so calls

for a conceptual remapping of our current disciplinary and institutional horizons: "The new paradigm is 'performance,' not theatre. Theatre departments should become 'performance departments'" (1992: 8, 9). Schechner is certainly right to view performance as "about more than the enactment of Eurocentric drama," and I am in sympathy – though, obviously, not in complete agreement – with his sense that "performed acts, whether actual or virtual, *more than the written word*, connect and negotiate the many cultural, personal, group, regional, and world systems comprising today's realities" (9, my emphasis). I don't want to go into Schechner's sense of this "new paradigm" here, however, in part because this brief, occasional essay gives a poor accounting of it – largely multiplying "objects" of study (that is, merely expanding the turf) under the banner of "intercultural" performance, rather than articulating the conceptual paradigm that would offer new modes of analysis and explanation, a new sense of what *counts* and of how it counts in the identification, analysis, and explanation of performance. This is not an unusual problem in the interdisciplinary world, and it afflicts most areas of the humanities at the moment – expanding the canon of literature, history, art, and so on has challenged the notion of a single embracing paradigm in ways that have yet to be resolved.¹⁶

Where Schechner's new paradigm seems most fairly to evoke a Kuhnian conceptual revolution is in the area of pedagogy, how performance – especially intercultural performance, the hallmark of performance studies in Schechner's formulation – will be taught. The basic premise of this innovation is a familiar split, an opposition between *reading* and *doing*: "It is not only a question of studying different cultures from a scholarly perspective, but of seeing and doing rituals, dramas, celebrations, and festivals from Africa, Asia, Europe, Native America, and Latin America"; "Students need to practice various kinds of social customs, dress, religious observances, and aesthetics" (9). The learning of the body is critical to any education, but Schechner's dichotomy between reading and doing is suspiciously evocative of the dichotomy between texts and performances, and suggests how difficult it is to articulate a new paradigm through a merely binary rhetoric.¹⁷

What are the consequences of conceiving reading as the domain of textual domination, of the explicit transmission of the repressive and canonical authority of dominant culture, and of performance as the means of evading such authority? In "Dramatic Ritual/Ritual Drama: Performative and Reflexive Anthropology," Victor Turner describes his collaboration with Schechner in a performance/anthropology workshop that offers one version of this pedagogy. In this workshop, participants (Turner, his wife Edith Turner, and students both of performance and of anthropology) enacted various rituals of the Ndembu people, who had been the subject of much of Turner's anthropological fieldwork and analysis. Turner was, naturally, sensitive to the limitations of this experiment: "Surely, at so many removes, must not the whole performance have seemed highly artificial, inauthentic? Oddly enough, according to the students, it did not" (1982: 96). The fact that *authenticity* is at issue here is revealing, and troubling. Although there is an intertextual element to this workshop, "performance" is finally a mode of fidelity – to the offstage authority of the *work* being reproduced here, the authentic Ndembu ritual. At the moment that this performance becomes truly intercultural and intertextual – when, we might say, the rituals of NYU and the Ndembu finally deconstruct one another, subvert notions of authorized performance

altogether – it loses its value for Turner, precisely because that "authentic" other disappears from view, is replaced by a performance whose only authority is in the performance itself. Attempting to perform a girls' puberty ritual – which takes place in a culture in which inheritance was matrilineal but "politics was mainly in the hands of males" (1982: 97–8) – the performers tried to get inside the "affective dimension" of the ritual through a kind of intercultural performance "framing":

They began a rehearsal with a ballet, in which women created a kind of frame with their bodies, positioning themselves to form a circle, in which the subsequent male political action could take place. Their idea was to show that action went on within a matrilineal sociocultural space. Somehow this device didn't work – there was a covert contemporary political tinge in it which denatured the Ndembu sociocultural process. This feminist mode of staging ethnography assumed and enacted modern ideological notions in a situation in which those ideas are simply irrelevant.

(1982: 97)

Irrelevant to whom? This performance is "irrelevant" only if we believe that performance can achieve authenticity, that it can become (unlike the *text*) the faithful vehicle of the immanent, authorized *work*. Much as the *Kathakali King Lear* is haunted by notions of Shakespearean authority imported at precisely the moment that "text" is opposed to "performance," so here Ndembu rituals assume the status of a *work*, which governs the performance as its "signified": the performance is relegated to the status of interpretation, a means of echoing meanings which already exist elsewhere rather than being a site for the production of meaning, a site where the ways in which meaning is produced can be interrogated, inspected, performed. Turner's students, in a manner of speaking, might as well have been staging scenes from *Hamlet* in an English class.

Although Turner wants to oppose reading and doing here, escaping the deadly authority of the text for the exploratory activity of live – and enlivening – performance, his performing bodies are, in effect, *readers* of the most conventional kind, searching in their performance to reproduce not merely the "text" of Ndembu ritual – which, like all other texts, deconstructs the thing it represents – but the absent, authoritative, authoritarian *work*. Their bodies, in a sense, become like the bodies of Artaud's Balinese, not a site of intertextual production, nor of intercultural dissonance; performance is the site for the reproduction of authority, the authority of the innate meaning of Ndembu ritual. I don't mean to suggest that the use of performance in teaching, or intercultural performance, or performance studies itself must necessarily fail to fulfill the promise of a "new paradigm": indeed, the promise of this shifting can be felt precisely in the variety of work that can be characterized as "performance studies."¹⁸ But I do mean to suggest how difficult it is to discover such a paradigm without understanding the notions of "paradigm" and "discipline" we use to frame and authorize our activities in a sufficiently dialectical manner. New paradigms are often ghosted by their history in ways that are difficult to recognize, acknowledge, and transform; to understand "performance studies" through a simple opposition between text

and performance is to remain captive to the spectral disciplines of the past. Both texts and performances are materially unstable registers of signification, producing "meaning" intertextually in ways that deconstruct notions of intention, fidelity, authority, present meaning. At the same time, texts and performances retain the gesture of such semiosis, and discussions of both text and performance remain haunted by the desire for authorization. If I have fairly captured even part of the complexity of this situation, it should be clear that no simple opposition between text and performance – or, I would argue, between the "paradigms" we constitute to frame them – will be sufficient to capture the rich, contradictory, incommensurable ways that they engage one another. Given this difficulty, I think we should be eager not to foreclose understanding, to preempt new critical practice, by reaching too quickly and irritably for the certainty that notions of "paradigm" and "discipline" appear to offer. At this moment of undisciplined, interdisciplinary flux, euphoria, uncertainty, mystery, and doubt, perhaps what's called for is a little negative capability.

NOTES

- 1 I would like to thank Oscar G. Brockett for inviting me to give an earlier version of this paper at the 1993 American Society for Theater Research annual convention, and Shannon Jackson, of the Performance Studies Department at Northwestern University, for taking the time to read and comment on an earlier draft. Finally, my thanks – come what may – to Richard Schechner for putting this "forum" together.
- 2 On the notion that the theater of cruelty is a noninterpretive theater, see Derrida (1978: 245).
- 3 Dominick LaCapra, among others, has criticized the "excessively homogenizing" aspect of Geertz's "anthropological model" when it is applied to "societies which in the modern period have been sources of both emulation and imperialistic imposition on the rest of the world"; he also suggests that Geertz's "insistence on the autonomy of symbolic forms may avoid reductionism at the price of regressing to precritical idealism" (1988: 378). Despite the conventional opposition between the repressive text and transgressive performance, the concept of textuality and of the discourse of behavior have critically enabled the contemporary discussion of performance, theatrical and otherwise. A genealogy of the textualization of performance might trace the impact of Saussurean linguistics in the "human sciences," first felt in France in the 1950s, and then in Anglo-American scholarship and theory in the 1960s; the elaboration of semiotic and semiological analysis in literature, the arts, and culture generally, especially Jacques Derrida's sense of the interminable play of signifiers, of there being no "outside" or "beyond" the text; Jacques Lacan's formulation of the unconscious as a language; the ramifications of Louis Hjelmslev's articulation of the "subject" of discourse; related notions of the subject traced and textualized by ideological production associated with Louis Althusser, Göran Therborn, and others; and – most urgently in feminist theory, in gay and lesbian work, and in studies of the production of "race," ethnicity, and colonial subjects in performance – the ways the body itself is taken as a site of representation, traced by textualities that both encode and "naturalize" the body while at the same time framing the possibility of performative subversion.
- 4 Moreover, while the *work* is bound to the irreducible, single voice of the author, the *text* "is plural as . . . it accomplishes the very plural of meaning, an *irreducible* (and not merely an acceptable) plural. The Text is not a co-existence of meanings but a passage, an overcrossing; thus it answers not to an interpretation, even a liberal one, but to an explosion, a dissemination" (Barthes

1988: 159). To read the *work*, then, is to be "caught up in a process of filiation. [. . .] The author is reputed the father and the owner of his work: literary science therefore teaches *respect* for the manuscript and the author's declared intentions, while society asserts the legality of the relation of author to work (the '*droit d'auteur*' or 'copyright,' in fact of recent date since it was only really legalized at the time of the French Revolution)" (160–1). The *text*, on the other hand, "reads without the inscription of the Father. [. . .] The metaphor of the Text is that of the *network*" (161).

- 5 Michael Vanden Heuvel presents a more subtle version of this distinction: "dramas are written within an aesthetic and semiotic framework that includes theatricality or spectacle" (1993: 160–1).
- 6 Gerald Rabkin describes this controversy in detail. "Director JoAnne Akalaitis and the ART producers essentially adhered to the letter of the printed text despite a few cuts and alterations," but set the play in "a desolate length of subway tunnel replete with derelict cars and the detritus of modern technological civilization" rather than in Beckett's "bare interior." Barney Rossett (his American agent at the time) informed Beckett of the production and threatened legal action. When the play opened in December 1984, the program included disclaimers by Beckett and Rossett, as well as a statement by the ART Artistic Director, Robert Brustein: this was the compromise that prevented legal action (1987: 146–8).
- 7 Marcus continues,

Shakespeare wrote his own name in many different ways; his spelling of other words appears also to have been unregularized in the extreme. His dramatic language was "prelexical," to use Margreta de Grazia's apt phrase, in that it failed to conform to codified notions of language which had not yet been invented. He appears to have punctuated quite sparsely, opening the playtexts up to a variety of 'senses' rather than establishing a single governing interpretation. We have no reason to suppose that the larger structures of the plays were less malleable and open to the proliferation of meaning.

(1988: 44–5)

- 8 In their fine recent article on "The materiality of the Shakespearean text," Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass argue that the materiality of Renaissance texts – the "old typefaces and spellings, irregular line and scene divisions, title pages and other paratextual matter" – insists "upon being looked *at*, not seen *through*. Their refusal to yield to modern norms bears witness to the specific history of the texts they make up, a history so specific that it cannot comply with modern notions of correctness and intelligibility" (1993: 256–7). In an era in which a play might appear under several different titles, and in which even Shakespeare's signature can be conceived as "a collaborative field, not the private property of a single individual" (278), it is difficult to maintain the Enlightenment regard for print as the transparent vehicle of the immanent authorial *work*.
- 9 In a powerful reading of August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, Sandra L. Richards argues that performance traditions – the traditions of blues performance, in this case – while literally absent from the written text often provide the means for "filling" moments otherwise apparently "blank" on the page. I am grateful to Sandra Richards for sharing the text of her 1993 English Institute essay with me.
- 10 Gerald Rabkin develops this issue, and a reading of Barthes's "From work to text," in relation to the specific texts of theatrical production, and issues of copyright and censorship. He notes, for example, that performers and directors accept "the text's privilege" in a variety of ways, not least at those moments – ignoring stage directions, for instance – where they seem to oppose the authority of the text.

That privileging, however, is not necessarily accepted by theatre discourse's truncation of 'manuscript into the unique signifier, the *script*. Unlike critics, most actors and directors rarely talk about the text; they talk of the script which they hold in their hands as they rehearse. The script is inscribed, it may indeed be published, but it carries a provisional authority. The script is something to be used and discarded as its textuality is corporealized in performance.

(1985: 150)

It should be remarked, though, that if the script is taken as a vehicle of authority, discarding it does not do away with that privilege; it has merely been rewritten into the corporeal discourse of the stage.

- 11 It is also important to note that editions change text depending on the venue; Trevor Griffith's play *Comedians* is a case in point. Early in the play, Gethin Price recites this limerick to the other comedians-in-training of the play: "There was a young lady called Pratt/ Who would hang from the light by her hat/ With a frightening cough/ She would jerk herself off/ By sinking her teeth in her twat" (Faber edition, 1976a: 17-18; Grove Press edition, 1976b: 18-19). The Samuel French edition, which advertises the American production of the play at the Music Box Theatre, alters the limerick, presumably for American audiences: "There was a young lady called Hunt/ Who had a remarkable stunt/ With a frightening cough/ She would jerk herself off/ By sinking her teeth in her cunt" (Samuel French edition, 1976c: 19). The fact that *this* limerick was altered, rather than many other culturally specific points in the dialog, points precisely to the ways that the text embodies notions of audience and reception, not merely authorial expression or intention: the producers of the play, and the publishers of its American acting edition, have clearly felt that "translating" this misogynist limerick is essential to the play's "meaning" in ways that other British English/American English inconsistencies are not.
- 12 In part this problem is a function of the rise of playwrights to the social status of "authors," and the desire — of the playwright, his or her estate, publishers, the culture industry — to preserve and promote an authoritative edition: the various editions of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* are a good example here, as are the fortunes of playwrights whose careers were made by publishing their plays — Shaw, Ibsen, Beckett, for example.
- 13 As McGann rightly has remarked,

To read, for example, a translation of Homer's *Iliad* in the Signet paperback, in the edition published by the University of Chicago Press, in the Norton Critical Edition, or in the limited edition put out by the Folio Society (with illustrations), is to read Homer's *Iliad* in four very different ways. Each of these texts is visually and materially coded for different audiences and different purposes.

(1991: 115)

- 14 Zarrilli also implies that the nine scenes of the play included some material not in Shakespeare's version — "the wedding and departure of Cordelia and France," for instance (1992: 20).
- 15 One dimension of Zarrilli's piece I haven't addressed here is its political dimension, the politics of such adaptation and reproduction. What does it mean to produce a text like *King Lear* in this manner, what are the vectors of power that undergird or inform this activity, and do those vectors alter depending on the site of performance? What possibilities for resistance — political, cultural, performative — are encoded in the relationship between the canonicity of texts and the canonicity of performance modes, and in the contestatory strategies of authorization this production presumes?
- 16 Schechner is clear that the subject of intercultural performance "is the difficulties brought up by multiculturalism, the misunderstandings, broken languages, and failed transactions occurring when and where cultures collide, overlap, or pull away from each other" (1992: 7). Performance

studies attempts to resolve this situation largely through accumulation: "performance studies" will include the study of "different cultures from a scholarly perspective"; how "performances are used in politics, medicine, sports, religion, and everyday life"; the "four great realms of performance: . . . entertainment, education, ritual, and healing"; the relationship between "authors, performers, directors, and spectators"; the whole range of performance activity — training, preparations, warm-ups, performing, cool down, and aftermath"; and the entire range of "popular entertainment — . . . rock concerts, discos, electioneering, wrestling, congames and stings, college and professional sports, vogueing, street theater, parades, demonstrations, and a panoply of religious rituals ranging from staid old church services to hot gospel sings, to the rituals of Asian and African religions, to the practices of New Age Shamanism" (9-10). Several disciplines have long had some interest in what Schechner describes as "popular entertainment," though without a paradigmatic commitment to performative signification. For a recent attempt to forge a rapprochement between theater studies and performance studies, see Dolan (1993).

- 17 This dichotomy, it might be noted, is enshrined in the "TDR Writers' Guidelines" (1993) as well, where potential contributors are informed that "We are not interested in drama as such, the analysis of playtexts with no reference to their actual life in performance," as though the text and one's reading of it were only a kind of virtual reality, not a performance, not the actual life of the text or of the reader.
- 18 As in other fields — literary criticism and theory, or cultural studies, for instance — which have drawn methods, interpretive priorities and practices, and even objects of inquiry from other "disciplines," it becomes particularly difficult to insist on a single "paradigm" of disciplinary inquiry. Consider, for example, the various ways in which "ethnography" and "performance" are constructed by Dwight Conquergood (1992), Margaret Thompson Drewal (1992), and Richard Schechner (1992); or the interrelationship between cultural history, theater history, literary criticism, ethnography, and performance in Joseph Roach's understanding of performance genealogy (1992); or of Peggy Phelan's articulation of performance, cultural critique, and psychoanalysis (1993).

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- Schechner — on the need for a new, interdisciplinary way of teaching and studying performance
- Geertz — also cautions against the limits of an interdisciplinary approach
- De Marinis — on the semiotic definition of "text" as it relates to performance
- Turner and Turner — describe a ritual re-enactment similar to the one cited by Worthen
- Conquergood — notes the bias of Western academics toward text-based inquiry, and the political implications of that bias
- Zimmerman — on the status of the text and "the work" in her process of devising theatre

THE LIMINAL-NORM

Jon McKenzie

Let us again assemble two paradigms of efficacy, two models of cultural performance legible from our readings. In the first, efficacy grounds itself in embodied transgressions, in practices honed by theater, ritual, and other trainings of the body. Performance here is between theater and ritual: its limen is the theatricalization of ritual and the ritualization of theater. Face-to-face encounters, site-specific events, the co-presencing of individual and social bodies – these instantiate the transformative power of performance in the first decades of performance studies, prior even to its appellation. The second model of efficacy, that of resistance, takes off from the discourses of critical theory and the experiments of performance art: its cutting edge is the theory of practice and the practice of theory. Mediated encounters, parodic appropriations, bodies constructed by and through discourse: increasingly (though not exclusively) these have come to make up the efficacy of performance in the last two decades. Passing between the two models, the challenge of efficacy turns itself outside in: from transgressing a totalitarian power from an outside site to resisting a hegemonic power from within that very power arrangement.

Theater and ritual have in no way been left behind in this passage from transgressive to resistant efficacy. They remain two of the most important objects of study, and while their role as models has diminished, it has not been eliminated. Today, the field of cultural performance and the paradigm of performance studies cannot be *thought* without citing theater and ritual. They remain, as it were, specific and historical touchstones for any general theory of cultural performance. Theater continues to offer an important formal reference for conceptualizing cultural performance; in addition, theater departments and organizations such as the Association for Theatre in Higher Education and the American Society for Theatre Research provide important bases for its teaching and research. Similarly, the discipline of anthropology continues to provide performance scholars with important methodological approaches, especially those related to ethnographic fieldwork.

Furthermore, between theory and performance art, liminality remains one of the most frequently cited attributes of performative efficacy. Carlson, for instance, closes his 1996 survey with a section entitled "Conclusion: what is performance?", which ends with the following definition, one that touches upon both liminality and theatricality:

[Performance] is a specific event with its liminoid nature foregrounded, almost invariably clearly separated from the rest of life, presented by performers and attended by audiences both of whom regard the experience as made up of material to be interpreted, to be reflected upon, to be engaged in – emotionally, mentally, and perhaps even physically. This particular sense of occasion and focus as well as the overarching social envelope combine with the physicality of theatrical performance to make it one of the most powerful and efficacious procedures that human society has developed for the endlessly fascinating process of cultural and personal self-reflexion and experimentation.¹

Scholars also continue to stress the liminality or "in betweenness" of the paradigm itself. In a 1998 essay, "What is performance studies anyway?", Schechner writes: "Performance studies is 'inter' – in between. It is intergeneric, interdisciplinary, intercultural – and therefore inherently unstable. Performance studies resists or rejects definition. As a discipline, PS cannot be mapped effectively because it transgresses boundaries, it goes where it is not expected to be. It is inherently 'in between' and therefore cannot be pinned down or located exactly."² Liminality, then, remains key to articulating the efficacy of both cultural performance and performance studies, whether that efficacy be conceived as transgressive or resistant.

Cutting-edge practices, fringe groups and marginalized peoples, border crossings, transgressions of boundaries and limits – these can and have been theorized in terms of liminality. What is performance? What is performance studies? "Liminality" is perhaps the most concise and accurate response to both of these questions. Paradoxically, the persistent use of this concept within the field *has made liminality into something of a norm*. That is, we have come to define the efficacy of performance and of our own research, if not exclusively, then very inclusively, in terms of liminality – that is, a mode of activity whose spatial, temporal, and symbolic "in betweenness" allows for social norms to be suspended, challenged, played with, and perhaps even transformed. The concept has not simply been applied to performances; it has also helped us to *construct* objects of inquiry by guiding the selection of activities to be studied, their formal analysis, and their political evaluation. And as we have seen, the liminal rite of passage also functions as a striking emblem of the paradigm itself, both of its initiation and of its subsequent development.

To underscore the normative dimension of liminality, I have come to call it the *liminal-norm*. More generally, the liminal-norm operates in any situation where the valorization of liminal transgression or resistance itself becomes normative – at which point theorization of such a norm may become subversive. I made up the term "liminal-norm" not long after reading another citation of rites of passage, this one by Michel Foucault. In an interview entitled "Rituals of exclusion," Foucault discusses how capitalist norms are inscribed pedagogically:

There is the first function of the university: to put students out of circulation. Its second function, however, is one of integration. Once a student has spent six or seven years of his life within this artificial society, he becomes "absorbable": society

can consume him. Insidiously, he will have received the values of this society. He will have been given socially desirable models of behavior, so that this ritual of exclusion will finally take on the value of inclusion and recuperation or reabsorption. *In this sense, the university is no doubt little different from those systems in so-called primitive societies in which the young men are kept outside the village during their adolescence, undergoing rituals of initiation which separate them and sever all contact between them and real, active society. At the end of the specified time, they can be entirely recuperated or reabsorbed.*³

In other words, the very same rituals which performance scholars have long cited in theorizing the efficacy of performance, Foucault cites to explain the university's normative function within contemporary society.⁴

Turner himself recognized the conservative function that liminal rites of passage ultimately play in agrarian, pre-industrial societies, where they almost always reinforce existing social structures. Turning to cultural performances found in industrial societies, he came to distinguish the liminal from the liminoid, the latter referring to cultural activities found in "advanced" societies marked by the sharp separation of labor and leisure.⁵ However, there is little doubt that Turner's interest and passion lay in the anti-structural elements he theorized in both liminal and liminoid activities, and it was these elements which he stressed in his critical dialogue with Schechner and other performance scholars (elements Foucault does not mention in the text cited above, although elsewhere he does emphasize the importance of "limit-experiences" to his own theoretical work).⁶

The liminal-norm is important here for several interrelated reasons. *First*, it demonstrates how forces of normativity can become mutational, and vice versa. In his ethnographic research, Turner recognized that the liminal practices of Ndembu society could lead to either schism or reinforcement of existing social structures, with reinforcement being the most common outcome. However, as liminality was generalized across the emerging field of cultural performance – that is, as it was re-cited, decontextualized, and recontextualized – the relatively rare instances of schism and radical transformation quickly came to the fore as performance scholars sought to theorize the efficacy of cultural performance during the social unrest found in North America and Western Europe during the 1960s and early 1970s. Liminality almost exclusively became a space and time of transgression and subversion; thus, a concept and practice primarily associated with normative forces had become the embodiment of mutational forces. However, the very success of this generalization process inevitably produced the normalizing effects already noted: the concept of liminality has helped to guide the selection and construction of objects as well as their analysis and evaluation, and in addition it has shaped Performance Studies' image of itself, the self-representation of the paradigm in relation to both the academy and society at large. Again, re-citation, decontextualization, and recontextualization, only here liminal efficacy has become a liminal-norm.

Second, the liminal-norm also suggests that any given conceptual model, even one constructed and deployed to theorize transgression or resistance, is necessarily limited in terms of both its formal and its functional resistance, is necessarily limited in terms of both its

formal and its functional aspects. This does not imply that one must – or even can – avoid modelization or generalization altogether. As indicated earlier, the formation of theoretical concepts presupposes movements of generalization, as does the emergence of a research paradigm such as performance studies. The challenge, then, is not to abandon conceptual modelization, but rather to inscribe this movement within one's specific situation, to fold generalization back on itself in order to avoid reducing performance to any one model, be it theater or ritual or performance art or such theoretical models as formalism, psychoanalysis, feminism, deconstruction, queer theory, or postcolonial theory. These models have all been extremely productive to the study of cultural performance, yet all have their own perspectives, their own limits. The task is thus also to multiply the models at one's disposal while at the same time opening up these models to their "own" alterity. To cite yet another model: Félix Guattari describes schizoanalysis as a process of "metamodelisation," one that, "rather than moving in the direction of reductionist modelisations which simplify the complex, will work toward its complexification, its processual enrichment, toward the consistency of its virtual lines of bifurcation and differentiation, in short towards its ontological heterogeneity."⁷ I have attempted here to analyze the workings of not one but several models crucial to the emergence and development of performance studies. In doing so, I have focused special attention on liminal rites of passage because they are a particularly rich and productive model of the paradigm's movement of generalization. This modelization process I have nicknamed the "passage to paradigm." In other words, liminal rites provide us with a (and not *the*) metamodel of the paradigm, one that I have tried to crack open by citing its normative and mutational dimensions, as well as other models and movements.

Third, as a metamodel, the liminal-norm can help us resituate the borders and limits of performance studies itself. This resituation or displacement of borders is crucial to the challenge guiding our entire project, the rehearsal of a general theory of performance. This project entails challenging performance studies, that is, challenging ourselves. By focusing on liminal activities, on transgressive and resistant practices, or, more generally, upon socially efficacious performances, we have overlooked the importance of *other* performances, performances whose formalization and study also took off in the United States and which have since gone global. These other performances are not metaphorical displacements of theatrical or cultural activities, though they are certainly and mistakenly can be reduced to them. Nor would we describe these other performances as primarily transgressive or resistant; far from it. As we shall see, their function is for the most part highly normative, so normative in fact that one might justifiably align them with the Establishment, the System, the Machine – in short, with the very institutions and forces against which cultural performance has directed much of its efficacious efforts over the past half-century. But recognizing one's own involvement with these normative performances is, paradoxically, essential to making such efforts more diverse, more concrete, more efficacious. It is also essential to our general theory.

The development of such a theory is highly problematic. Carlson writes that if we "consider performance as an essentially contested concept, this will help us to understand the futility of seeking some overarching semantic field to cover such seemingly disparate usages as the performance of an actor, of a schoolchild, of an automobile."⁸ I agree. But at

stake in such usages is not simply different meanings of the term "performance," but also entirely different sets of discourses and practices, different infrastructures and histories, different paradigms of performance. More profoundly, what's at stake in our general theory is not an overarching semantic field of performance, but rather an underworldly stratum of performative power and knowledge, a pragmatic formation upon which all this contesting of performance unfolds. The question "What is performance?" perhaps remains inescapable, especially when surveying a paradigm or defining a field, but to map different terrains of this stratum – which is less a metaphysical foundation than an onto-historical sedimentation of forces – a more urgent question becomes "which performance?"

Philosophically speaking, to pose the question "What is?" presupposes a unified form while promising a single, correct answer, while the question "Which one?" assumes a multiplicity of forces that must be *actively* interpreted and evaluated.⁹ This will be my assumption. Rehearsing a general theory of performance, we must not only use different concepts, nor only contest and critique them; we must also *create* concepts, *initiate* models, *launch* movements of generalization. Performance studies scholars have obviously created multiple and diverse concepts and continue to do so. However, this multiplicity and diversity are themselves largely determined by our paradigmatic perspective, which I have called here the challenge of efficacy. Direct, or rather internal, analysis of this perspective can only proceed so far, for we cannot easily get a perspective on our perspective, on the critical and affective investments in a field we have constructed and to some extent been constructed through. To open an angle on what amounts to our paradigmatic presuppositions and prejudices, we must turn elsewhere, for "prejudices are found by contrast, not by analysis."¹⁰ Our rehearsal of a general theory must thus seek out other sites, other premises, other performances.

NOTES

- 1 Marvin Carlson. *Performance: A Critical Introduction*. London: Routledge, 1996, 198–9.
- 2 Richard Schechner. "What is performance studies anyway?" *The Ends of Performance*. Ed. Peggy Phelan and Jill Lane. New York: New York University Press, 1998, 360.
- 3 Michel Foucault. *Foucault Live (Interviews, 1966–84)*. Trans. John Johnston. Ed. Sylvève Lotringer. New York: Semiotext(e), 1989, 66, my emphasis.
- 4 Significantly, Foucault also pejoratively characterizes the university environment as a "fictitious, artificial and quasi-theatrical" one in which "the student is given a gamelike way of life." See "Rituals of exclusion." In *Foucault Live (Interviews 1966–84)*. Trans. John Johnston. Ed. Sylvève Lotringer. New York: Semiotext(e), 1989, 65.
- 5 See Turner's essay "From liminal to liminoid, in play, flow, and ritual: an essay in comparative symbology." In *From Ritual to Theater: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: PAJ Publications, 1982. Within performance studies, "liminoid" has never been as widely accepted a term as "liminal."
- 6 See the interview "The experience-book." In *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*. Trans. R. James Goldstein and James Cascalto. New York: Semiotext(e), 1991.
- 7 Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*. Trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995, 61.
- 8 Carlson. *Performance*, 5.

- 9 For a discussion of the differences between the Platonic (formal) question "What is?" and the Nietzschean ("forceful") question "Which one?" or "What is it *for me?*," see Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, 75–8.
- 10 Paul Feyerabend. *Against Method: Outline of an Anarchistic Theory of Knowledge*. London: Verso, 1978, 31.

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- Jackson – on the opposition of performing arts to traditional academic disciplines
 Carlson – McKenzie directly refers to his definition of performance
 Turner – definition of liminality
 Phelan – liminality in performance art

PROFESSING PERFORMANCES

Disciplinary genealogies

Shannon Jackson

In 1905, Professor George Lyman Kittredge, Chairman of the English department at Harvard University, dropped a note to his colleague Professor George Pierce Baker. The latter had been concerned that one of Kittredge's new hires might have designs on the teaching of "the drama" and thus designs on Baker's own curricular territory. Kittredge sought to mollify Baker's anxiety. "You may feel quite secure," he wrote, "as to any cutting into your special field" (in Baker, 19 March 1905). The sentence reproduced the content and form of an all-too-familiar interaction between empowered chairman and paranoid colleague. And, as is often true of such interactions, it also revealed a hint of intellectual condescension within its gesture of institutional assurance, one that left flexible whether the word "special" had the connotation of the extraordinary, the narrow, or the peripheral.

Lately, I have been looking at documents surrounding individuals like George Pierce Baker and other white academic American men – Hiram Corson at Cornell, Brander Matthews at Columbia, Thomas Dickinson at Wisconsin, Frederick Koch at North Carolina, Thomas Wood Stevens at Carnegie Tech – who figure prominently in the early institutionalization of "performance" in the United States. This is to trace something that most often called itself drama at that point, later dance, sometimes rhetoric, oratory, or speech. Spending so much time with such documents would have been inconceivable to me a few years ago and is still sometimes only barely sustainable. What does sustain me is an interest in understanding their implications for the institutionalization of performance studies now. My effort is a little different from others that have speculated on the future of our field. Rather than venturing into what the 1999 conference of Performance Studies International (PSi) called "the hinterlands," this article is a return to areas already mapped – fortified castles such as theatre departments, speech departments, and literature departments – seeing in them less stability and more cartographical complexity than it might always be expedient for performance studies scholars to acknowledge. Investigating issues of performance's institutionalization is lamentably not always the same as investigating developments in performance scholarship. Indeed, this study came out of my naïve frustration in recognizing how little the institutional operations with which performance studies contends seem to "know" what performance studies scholarship says it "knows." Confronting mechanisms

such as department divisions, school divisions, job placement, graduation requirements, building infrastructures, curricular breakdowns, and departmental divisions of labor has thus provoked my heretofore inconceivable research. Part of a larger project that will explore a number of institutional relationships among performance and other fields such as anthropology, folklore, classics, cultural studies, and more, these reflections will focus on only one historical network of relations between speech, theatre, and literature. I hope that my reasons for picking up this corner of the rug will become clear as I continue. Rather than defending or rejecting terms such as "drama" or "theatre" or "speech" or "literature," I am most interested in thinking about how such concepts become discursive touchstones for certain kinds of principles that fare better or worse at different historical moments in the academy. Often this is about re-casting stories that we already know about past disciplinary history into a differently aimed kind of argument.

What I have decided and will schematically argue is that such institutional questions and their very complicated histories turn out to unsettle the somewhat oppositional epistemology driving, for instance, the provocative title of the 1999 Performance Studies International conference: "'Here be Dragons': Mapping the Undiscovered Realms of Performance Studies." I am neither the first nor the last person to deconstruct our "dragon" metaphor and the quest for the "undiscovered realms" that permeated that gathering. But consider in this light Baker's paranoia and his concern about remaining "special." It derived of course from a particular kind of marginality, one that wants recognition but not in a form that jeopardizes its self-constructed identity as an outsider. In our current discourse, there is a danger now of turning such an internally conflicted predicament into a jealously held position. There is a strange paradox in the attempt to position oneself as an inhabitant of unclaimed territory, for the gesture itself not only maps that territory but also stakes the claim. It simultaneously suggests that no one was there before, disavowing its relationship to the practices of earlier, colonial cartographers. Nevertheless, the divisions, buildings, maps, and curricular structures generated in the early professing of performance remain in altered forms today. Even though Baker and his like developed their special field into a highly mapped terrain from which many of us would say that we are departing, we still unevenly enjoy and endure its operations, discourses, and professional privileges. As such, a consideration of institutional history can, in Brechtian fashion, be an illuminating exercise in defamiliarization. It further demonstrates how saturated oppositional discourse is with what it claims not to be and how necessary the notion of the dragon-filled zone is to the idea of a dragon-free zone. At the same time, and even more pointedly for a field enamored of its renegade status, such institutional history illustrates how over-written (or over-mapped) the position of the dragon is by the castle it might claim to be storming.

In my opening anecdote of 1905, Chairman Kittredge and Professor Baker inhabited an English department that was in the midst of an intellectual transformation in the field of literary studies. As such, they were also negotiating the interpersonal conflicts and inter-office paranoias that drive and derive from such intellectual changes. The late nineteenth to early twentieth century was a period of debate, change, retrenchment, and more debate as US colleges and universities grappled with their relationship to a changing American society. They argued over access to higher education for women, for newer immigrants, for

African-Americans, and for the children of both the industrial bourgeoisie and the working classes. As numerous historians of higher education have demonstrated, this period would also usher in the era of "professionalism," an economic and discursive formation that differently but pervasively inflected both professors' sense of their students' educational goals and their own sense of their positions as "career academics." The always conflicted position of the academic thereby came to inhabit another type of conflicted situation with which we are now quite familiar, though not necessarily reconciled. As the role of the US university was increasingly positioned as preparation for entrance into the managerial classes, academics worked to maintain a separate social position outside the so-called professions while simultaneously legitimating themselves curricularly and institutionally within professionalizing terms. Humanities professors in particular tried to create and maintain a legitimating sphere of cultural capital, a realm that distinguished itself both from the manual training of vocational schools as well as the nonmanual technical training of preprofessional schools. At the same time, and noteworthy in various discussions about what the "i" in PSi might mean, US bastions of higher education worked to figure out what it meant to be a specifically "American" university, alternately disavowing and reproducing the structures and intellectual movements developed in foreign lands (where of course "foreign" meant the ever so exotic countries of England, France, and Germany).

The story of the professionalization of literature within this situation is quite interesting and has already been told a few times, though I find the retelling of this story with an eye to a performance genealogy even more intriguing. Literature was in danger of not faring very well within professionalist modes of legitimation. As John Guillory (1993) and Gerald Graff (1987) have argued, it thus manifestly had to make itself "rigorous," to become a science based in evidence, an object of knowledge with clear rules to replace nebulous belletrism. German philology entered and/or was imported precisely to lend the study of literature this necessary positivism, a specialist training in historical research, etymology, and the accumulation of facts that pushed to develop a science of the literary and thus to assure all involved that literature professors really had an object of study. To give this some contemporary institutional significance, Graff and Guillory both situate current training in "theory" on a historical plane with philology (with New Criticism in between). Thus, despite the fact that philology and most critical theory are very different in the content of their intellectual assumptions, they occupy a similar structural position from the perspective of professional history; they both serve a similar function in the mechanics of professionalization and scholarly "training" within the arts and humanities. Such manifest rigor also warded off feminizing discourses of delegitimation that derived from the university's changing demographics of class, ethnicity, and gender. Philology kept literature from appearing to be a sentimental field that appealed only to coeds. At the same time, however, philology was criticized. It was accused of being too scientific, of being over-specialized, and of compromising the experience of literature. Occasionally, its American critics appealed to nationalist allegiances by accusing its followers of slavishly imitating the Europeans, more specifically the Germans. As such, philology anticipated many subsequent "theory" movements accused of being specialist, jargon-ridden, and ruinous to the humanities – or of being French. This kind of history certainly defamiliarizes 1999 *New York Times* debates on

the role of "specialized language."¹ Indeed, such institutional and disciplinary genealogies expose a constant cycle of rotation and disavowal where one era's "specialization" becomes the next era's "common sense"; groundbreaking theoretical movements look like dunder-headed empiricism to subsequent generations.

By 1905, George Lyman Kittredge had emerged as one of the foremost practitioners of literary philology in the United States. As such, the moment when Chairman Kittredge dropped his administrative note was also a moment when the promoter of a then "trendy" intellectual movement – philology – was in the midst of exercising a position of institutional power. As Susan Harris Smith (1997) has suggested, however, the position of "drama" (and its teachers) within this literary transformation was an ambivalent one. Dramatic literature, especially drama performed, risked associations with the feminine, the primitive, and the commercial in a way that threatened the profession of literature's redefined story about itself. Something similar held true for Baker's original field of rhetoric, whose emphasis on oral communication would, in English departments, increasingly transmogrify into the teaching of written communication. From there came the phenomenon of the composition class, a teaching responsibility increasingly placed on the lower rungs of the literature profession's academic ladder. Indeed, in some institutions, the denigration or excision of "drama" and "speech" was fundamental to the intellectual redefinition and professional rise of the literary. The categories of drama, speech, and theatre thus functioned ambivalently, on the one hand heightening vulnerabilities over the cultural capital of literary studies while, on the other hand, threatening to derail the new scientific rigor of literature's gendered professionalization. Whether theatre and rhetoric could transcend these associations and/or be recuperated along rigorous philological lines was still debatable in the early twentieth century. Hence the condescending assurance and hedged institutional protectiveness of a trendy philologist like Kittredge vis-à-vis a rhetoric-cum-drama professor like Baker.²

Baker's background was similar to many of his contemporary pro-performance colleagues at other universities. Though twenty years later Baker would become the founder of the oft-renowned Yale School of Drama, at the turn of the century he was a teacher of rhetoric in an English department. He was a professor whose interests in oral pedagogy had transmogrified from a respectable focus on argumentation to a curious fixation on the oral performance of the drama, proceeding apace down a slippery slope that went from the oral performance of Shakespeare to the oral performance of "drama other than Shakespeare," to the promotion of campus play production, to the fostered creation of so-called "original" plays by the students themselves. He was something of a dragon at Harvard's gate. As most of us teaching in the United States know at least indirectly, Baker was one of a cohort of individuals – often couched as heroic in the departmental chronicles of theatre – who broke from English to form separate departments. What is less incorporated, however, is under what principles that disciplinary break happened and, more to the point, how that history situates and so defamiliarizes the disciplinary reunions performance studies is attempting to effect now.

While the stories of particular persons and institutions vary enormously, Baker's location paralleled that of a number of his pro-performance colleagues and serves as an index of a larger epistemological and institutional fallout around the professing of performance.

Arguing for drama and performance against and yet within the already conflicted field of the English department produced multiple ambivalences. I will consolidate a few issues under three conundra in order to give a sense of their contemporary relevance: (1) the institutional tension around the "interdisciplinarity" of performance, (2) the hypercontextuality of the performed event as an object of knowledge, and (3) the legitimation of oral and theatrical "practice" as a valued educational activity. Without being able to recount fully the professional histories of "generalism" and "specialization" in the space of the present article, it is perhaps generally understood that the principles behind departmentalization, curriculum reform, funding, and resource allocation do not always keep step with the heterogenous models, methods, and bibliographic citations that appear in interdisciplinary scholarship. This is something we all know and can knee-jerkedly critique the Institution for inhibiting. But the disconnect between institutional structure and interdisciplinary rhetoric is particularly stark and, I think, a little bit chastening in light of Baker's concern about his "special field." Of course, it came out of a fear of Chairman Kittredge's brand of interdisciplinary engagement, one that rationalized disciplinary takeover in the name of interdisciplinary expansion. Though they didn't use the word "interdisciplinary" at the time, this colonialist model – the "every field shall become (like) mine" model of interdisciplinarity – is perhaps somewhat familiar to theatre scholars such as Jill Dolan (1992) who critique other fields for "the midnight raiding" of theatre studies. However, the direction of such a critique shifts with an awareness of academic theatre's various stages of institutionalization. Baker was still somewhat traumatized by his experience at Harvard when he founded the Yale School of Drama, one whose model other universities would replicate. There, he would fend off fears of colonialist interdisciplinarity with his own paradoxical brand of isolationist interdisciplinarity, constantly celebrating the theatre for being a form that integrated literature, art history, and the study of human behavior while simultaneously creating a structure that short-circuited interaction with the university departments that specialized in the study of literature, art history, and human behavior. Thus, the rhetoric of disciplinary multiplicity coexisted surprisingly easily with a practice of institutional singularity, a fact that should stall any easy assumptions about what "interdisciplinarity" means to theatre and performance studies now.

Disjunctures among disciplines and institutions appear in other places. Writing in 1903 as the first professor of dramatic literature in the United States, Brander Matthews of Columbia University published treatises such as *A Study of the Drama* (1910) that exemplify performance's epistemological predicament and that laid the foundations for the antitraditional break that would eventually become the tradition of theatre studies methodology. In assuring their colleagues that theatre had a right to separate institutional status, scholars reproduced turn-of-the-century conventions of historical singularity and progressive continuity, mapping new principles of similarity and difference on which the "itself" of theatre could rest securely. It was in such a professionalizing university climate, by extension, that the evolutionary paradigm of "from ritual to theatre" became invoked and later routinized. As performance studies scholars seek to undo the ideological, national, and global consequences of such a construct, it is probably equally important to remember its institutional expediency; knowledge was made more teachable, useful, and justifiable to a

professionalizing university when it took shape in the clear categories and progressive arcs of a delineated "survey."

Furthermore, occupying the liminal position of the legitimated margin, while Matthews and like-minded souls occasionally pitted themselves against philological trendiness, they most often borrowed and adapted its methods. Theatre scholars took philology's emphasis on historical research and on the conventions of literary transmission to rationalize the investigation of such "extra-literary" realms as street layouts, building configurations, set designs, managerial structures, actors, and audiences. Indeed, to a philological method acutely preoccupied with the accumulation of "facts," the circumstances of the performed event offered an endless supply of discoverable data, even if they were not always the kind of facts that most literary philologists were interested in or skilled at discovering. Theatre's excessive contextuality thus called literary philology's bluff to such a degree that the former could not remain under the umbrella of the latter.

This kind of disciplinary past foregrounds a number of discontinuous genealogies that are of concern to present institutional discussions. First of all, it reminds us of how saturated the "origin" of positivist theatre history (remember those buildings, those ticket prices, those actor biographies) is with the discipline of literary studies – and with a once-trendy enterprise within literary studies at that. It resituates, for instance, a recent theatre history conference in which a panel asked the question "Is jargon really necessary?" The question forgets theatre history's historical alliance with a turn-of-the-century methodology that was accused in its own time of being over-specialized and employing an anti-humanist and jargon-ridden vocabulary. Admittedly, when trends in literary studies turned toward New Criticism and its decontextualizing practices of close reading in the 1940s, the contextualized study of theatre made it more securely "the opposite" of the literary. At the same time, the ever-changing discipline of literature suggests that those who routinely denounce the literary study of theatre and performance might want to be clearer about which "literary" they mean.

From another direction, this genealogy also stalls the easy alignments and differentiations that are sometimes drawn in current self-labeled progressive contexts of cultural study. This is to ask what it means for performance studies scholars to meet cultural theorists, many of whom were originally trained as literary theorists and whose institutional predecessors once found it necessary to excise performance from a self-legitimizing equation. What does it mean for all of these disconnected or disavowedly connected scholars to form contemporary connections? Whether gathered under the banner of structuralism or poststructuralism, materialism or new historicism, reader-response or speech act theory, such cultural studies arenas generally argue against the notion of a pure aesthetic form, knowable outside of a context of production. The methodological direction of this kind of cultural critique means something particular for a performance genealogy. What one realizes is that, as individuals trained in different disciplines, we also enter with different historic institutional privileges. As such, we might have different notions of what the hinterland is. One person's discovery turns out to be another's disciplinary home. One would-be dragon may look, from another's angle of vision, like the occupant of a historically well-appointed castle. All may be embedded in histories with different assumptions about who

they are fighting. There is not, for instance, an unproblematic equivalence between cultural theory's critique of New Criticism's conservatism and performance studies' critique of theatre history's conservatism. Besides enduring a retroactive ahistoricism in the conservative appellation, theatre history cannot be adequately critiqued for ignoring the "new" methodological dicta of cultural studies. Indeed, theatre has long been a form where text was less easily sliced from something like context and where the apparatus of production was all-too frustratingly difficult to disavow. Matthews was theorizing the importance of audience response long before Wolfgang Iser (1980, 1989; to say nothing of John Fiske 1987, 1989) elaborated on reception theory. This does not mean that there is not a great deal to critique in theatre studies but rather that the direction of the critique – one that homogenizes and assumes equal solidity in all that is already mapped – can sometimes be misplaced. This disciplinary complexity is thus another moment when it is not quite clear who is playing rebellious dragon to whose fortified castle. As certain contemporary strains of performance studies seek alliances with certain strains of literary studies – in theoretical models, in progressive politics, in journals, in curricula, conferences, bibliographies, hirings, and graduate placements – it will be important to investigate such blind spots and to be careful not to perpetuate the disabling institutional structures from which they derive.

Other genealogical investigations produce different kinds of defamiliarizing moments. Consider briefly two different kinds of arguments for the legitimation of oral performance or performance "practice" in the academy. On the one hand, one can look at someone like Hiram Corson at Cornell for whom the oral performance of literature was synonymous with a nearly spiritualized encounter (Graff and Warner 1989: 90). Mapping his interest in this pedagogical mode to prevailing binaries of the day, Corson ended up arguing for oral performance by opposing it to philology, riding an antispecialist and antitheoretical sentiment (at a time of course when historical research was "theoretical"), casting performance as the realm of the unmediated and the unrigorous. The success of Corson's argument produced new institutional structures whose limits – as we debate the legacy of oral interpretation in performance studies – we now face in current debates over the institutional future of performance studies. Meanwhile, a second strain of academic performance studies came as part of the break of drama/theatre from English departments. As pro-performance theatre professors argued for new buildings and the apparati of theatre-making, it is quite clear in retrospect how much the pro-performance discourse threatened the shaky class politics of redefining universities. When Baker and Thomas Wood Stevens – who started a theater department within the engineering-oriented environment of Carnegie Tech – argued for performance "practice," they employed a language of workshops, labs, and industrial "plants," of workmanlike ingenuity, of craft, trade, and daily labor that came dangerously close to a discourse of manual training (Stevens 1913–25). As such, they tread close to the realm of the vocational school from which many a university was eager to distance itself and even farther from the humanist discourse of cultural capital that would have ensured that theatre was, after all, a "humanity." Breaking free from literature meant that speech and theatre gained the success of institutional autonomy, but it also short-circuited their connection to the literature and humanities departments' claims of "cultural capital" in rationalizing their role in the academy.

This transformation was one of many reasons why the discourse of nonacademic professionalization – the claim of a somewhat shaky bridge to economic capital rather than cultural capital – became part of how speech and theatre departments began to talk about themselves. Theatre came to include courses on audition techniques. Speech communication departments began to teach organizational communication and tips for on-camera broadcasting. Such departments became places where the teaching faculty were engaged in different spheres of professionalization, many of them outside of the academy. In such departments, issues of interdisciplinarity are often erroneously elided with issues of inter-professionalism – and they, I would submit, turn out not to be the same thing. A union between an artist and a scholar turns out not to be entirely equivalent to a union between a literature scholar and a philosopher, for the interdisciplinary encounter of the latter is compounded by further differences in professionalization, standards of career success, and models of productivity that underpin the former. However, it would be disingenuous for arts and humanities academics to distance themselves self-righteously from such "pre-professional" developments without recognizing how imbricated such arguments for their alternative are in a notion of cultural capital – even cultural capital that calls itself progressive in content. Such cultural pedagogy occurs in that nebulous space that is not manual training and not nonmanual technical training; as such, its critique of preprofessional "vocationalism" also needs to reckon with its own unique class and institutional location – as well as its own imbrication in a discourse of professionalism.

Once again, who is the dragon here?

Finally, I think that we can find help in sorting through these conundra by testing them next to related arguments on the role of technical and practical training in humanist fields. In *The Employment of English* (1998), Michael Berubé has joined and advanced a larger conversation on the status of composition within the English department, asking us to consider the class politics of literary professionalization and to reconceive courses in writing technique so that they become central to the cultural work of a progressive literary education. Similarly, in a 1997 issue of MLA's publication *Profession*, Russell Berman echoes others by asking colleagues to question the denigrated position of language teaching in foreign literature departments – "the line of class division, corresponding precisely to the distribution of rewards by the university, that runs through all our departments" – and to argue against a conception of second-language proficiency as a "merely technical skill" (63–4). Faculty and graduate students in theatre and performance studies can make use of these arguments, it seems to me, appropriating them to think through with more complexity the much-beleaguered theory/practice division that undergirds our field and to consider the class politics that this division reifies. Furthermore, the kinship among composition, language teaching, and theatre training suggests that we might want to be more vigilant about our uses of the word "practice" – another unstably referential term – and to track instead the discontinuous histories of labor, professionalism, technical training, vocation, and cultural and economic capital in which such a materialist term is embedded. Finally, since many humanists can be found revising the very structure of humanities education and research, it may be that theatre's historic ill fit as a humanistic field could now provide an intriguing site for conducting this revision. In a 1999 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher*

Education, once English professor now Vice Provost Cathy Davidson asks the provocative question "What if scholars in the humanities worked together, in a lab?" It occurs to me that theatre faculty have been approaching something like this lab-based model for quite some time. While the fact that we did so contributed to our status as not-quite-humanists, such current creative rethinking about the nature and function of the humanities might realign our connection to the term.

Institutional history suggests that there are several maps operating simultaneously and, moreover, that there might be a more unacknowledged interdependence between castles and hinterlands than a homogenized oppositional discourse allows. Disciplinary genealogy is neither a celebratory search for origins nor a self-satisfied rejection of the stodgy. It is, after Foucault, a means of approaching the past to unsettle the heretofore stable. Writing such a genealogy often means revisiting categories that performance studies itself resists or de-centers – words such as "drama," "theatre," "speech," or "literature." If we think of such labels – and others such as "theory," "practice," "interdisciplinary" – less as stably referential terms than as discursive sites on which a number of agendas, alliances, and anxieties collect, then I think that the institutionalization of performance studies and the institutionalization of something like "theatre" or "speech" or "literature" turn out to have more to do with each other than current conversations let on. Such terms function inconsistently at different times and at different places; they are invoked out of convenience at moments when knowledges need reorganization or when vague institutional developments require some discursive support. As such, they also sustain a network of disavowed connection and disavowed difference, an array of blind spots, synecdochic fallacies, and reinvented wheels. In such a complicated space, one scholar's experiment turns out to be another's tradition; one scholar's core comes back as another's periphery. One field finds it too expedient to cast a dominant form as marginal in order to prop up its own centrality; another finds it too expedient to cast a marginal form as dominant in order to better stage its own rebellion. Rather than wholly succumbing to the language of the new, it seems to me at least as interesting theoretically and secure institutionally for performance studies to expose the historical entanglements of the already-was and thus still-still-kind-of-is. It seems important to show how disciplinary breaks were saturated with the terms of the field that they were fleeing and to suggest that contemporary innovations sometimes derive from arenas that once devalued that which they now celebrate. Institutional history also suggests that assumptions of the "special" status of performance studies, enticing as they are, could do with a genealogical jolt.

NOTES

¹ After the journal *Philosophy and Literature* awarded its Bad Writing Award to Judith Butler and Homi Bhabha in December 1998, articles and editorials debated the function of theory and specialist language. See, for instance, the *New York Times* articles in the "Arts and Ideas" section of 27 February 1999 and on the editorial page of 3 March 1999 and 20 March 1999.

² Theater's gendered association received institutional reinforcement from the fact that it was Radcliffe women's college rather than Harvard that initially supported George Pierce Baker's courses in playwriting. Baker's efforts to disentangle himself from this association was partially successful (he eventually taught playwriting at Harvard) but only after producing a self-defensive, masculinist argument for theater's legitimacy.

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READER CROSS-REFERENCES

- Schechner, J. Bell – on performing arts curricula
- McKenzie – how performance studies as a discipline is self-consciously oppositional to traditional disciplinary structures
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett – an institutional history of performance studies
- Parker and Sedgwick – the genealogy of performativity, a fundamental concept in performance studies
- Conquergood – on how performance studies can challenge traditional academic hierarchies
- Taylor – explores the genealogy of the term "performance"

PERFORMANCE STUDIES

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett

The field of Performance Studies takes performance as an organizing concept for the study of a wide range of behavior. A postdiscipline of inclusions, Performance Studies sets no limit on what can be studied in terms of medium and culture. Nor does it limit the range of approaches that can be taken. A provisional coalescence on the move, Performance Studies is more than the sum of its inclusions. While it might be argued that "as an artform, performance lacks a distinctive medium" (Carroll 1986: 78), embodied practice and event is a recurring point of reference within Performance Studies.

Performance Studies starts from the premise that its objects of study are not to be divided up and parceled out, medium by medium, to various other disciplines – music, dance, dramatic literature, art history. The prevailing division of the arts by medium is arbitrary, as is the creation of fields and departments devoted to each. Most of the world's artistic expression has always synthesized or otherwise integrated movement, sound, speech, narrative, and objects. Moreover, the historical avant-garde and contemporary art have long questioned these boundaries and gone about blurring them. Such confounding of categories has not only widened the range of what can count as an artmaking practice, but also given rise to performance art that is expressly not theatre and art performance that dematerializes the art object and approaches the condition of performance (Carroll 1986; see also Sayre 1989; Schimmel *et al.* 1998). Performance Studies takes its lead from such developments. This field is not only intercultural in scope and spirit, but also challenges aesthetic hierarchies and analyzes how they are formed. Performance Studies encompasses not only the most valorized, but also the least valued, cultural forms within these hierarchies.

Like other new knowledge formations (Cultural Studies, Visual Culture, Postcolonial Studies, Gender Studies), Performance Studies starts with a set of concerns and objects and ranges widely for what it needs by way of theory and method. Performance Studies has made common cause with, and is contributing to, the many fields from which it draws. By theorizing embodiment, event, and agency in relation to live (and mediated) performance, Performance Studies can potentially offer something of a counterweight to the emphasis in Cultural Studies on literature and media, text as an extended metaphor for culture, and enrich the discussion of discourse, representation, the body (to be distinguished from embodiment), and identity. One can even discern what might be called a performative

turn in contemporary cultural, aesthetic, and political theory.¹ Ray Birdwhistell argued that "Performance is an inherent constituent of all communication" (Birdwhistell 1970, in Sullivan 1986: 7), while Dell Hymes suggested that "It is through the study of performance that one could look forward to an integration of the social sciences and humanities" (Hymes 1975, in Sullivan 1986: 3). The possibilities are signaled by Peggy Phelan, who writes that "To date . . . there has been little attempt to bring together the specific epistemological and political possibilities of performance as it is enacted in what are still known, for better or worse, as 'theater events' and the epistemological and political openings enabled by the 'performative' invoked by contemporary theory" (Phelan 1993: 15). She is referring here to the work of J.L. Austin and, based on his concept of performative utterances, the efforts of Judith Butler and others to theorize gender and sexuality.

During the last two decades Performance Studies programs have been established in the United States, Australia, England, Wales, France, and Brazil, among others.² Increasingly, individual Performance Studies courses are being included in existing theatre history and speech and communication curricula, as well as in folklore, anthropology, ethnomusicology, art history, literature, history, cultural studies, and area studies programs including American, Asian, and Africana, among others. There are several indications that the field has come of age, including a series of highly successful international conferences during the 1990s, the formation of professional associations,³ several specialized journals,⁴ and an increasing number of programmatic essays, textbooks, readers, and book series.⁵

While they converge at many points, these programs and organizations offer at least three different paradigms for the field, thanks both to their particular disciplinary genealogies and to their visions for the future.⁶

Broad spectrum approach (New York University)

In 1980, New York University's Graduate Department of Drama changed its name to Department of Performance Studies. The change of name followed almost twenty years of preparation, much of it recorded in the pages of *TDR: The Drama Review* and the writings of Richard Schechner. Schechner has long advocated a broad spectrum approach:

We believe that if the study of performance does not expand and deepen – going far beyond both the training of performance workers and the Western tradition, far beyond the analysis of dramatic literature – the academic, performing-arts enterprise constructed over the past half century or so will collapse. A happier alternative is to widen our vision of performance, studying it not only as art but as a means of understanding historical, social, and cultural processes.

(see pages 7–9 in this volume for full text)

NYU's program developed in the context of contemporary experimental performance, with links to the historical avant-garde. Its faculty (Richard Schechner, Michael Kirby, Brooks McNamara) were themselves active in the Off Off Broadway movement. To align their artistic practice with their pedagogy, they abandoned a traditional curriculum in

European and American drama and theatre and set out to create an innovative Performance Studies program almost from scratch. Euro-American theatre would thenceforth find its place within an intercultural, intergeneric, and interdisciplinary intellectual project as one of many objects of study. Taking their lead from the historical avant-garde and contemporary experimental performance, NYU's faculty was determined that Western theatre and the dramatic text would not be at the center of the new Performance Studies curriculum, though it continues to play an important role. As Schechner stated: "Performance is a very inclusive notion of action; theatre is only one node on a continuum that reaches from ritualization in animal behavior (including humans) through performances in everyday life – greetings, displays of emotion, family scenes, and so on – to rites, ceremonies and performances: large-scale theatrical events" (Schechner 1977: 1). Writing ten years later, Peggy Phelan articulated the notion that animated the establishment of Performance Studies at New York University as follows: "Was 'theatre' an adequate term for the wide range of 'theatrical acts' that intercultural observation was everywhere revealing? Perhaps 'performance' better captured and conveyed the activity that was provoking these questions. Since only a tiny portion of the world's cultures equated theatre with written scripts, performance studies would begin with an intercultural understanding of its fundamental term, rather than enlisting intercultural case studies as additives, rhetorically or ideologically based postures of inclusion and relevance" (Phelan and Lane 1998: 3).

Aesthetic communication approach (Northwestern University)

The name changes at Northwestern University chart the movement over the course of more than a century from a nineteenth-century Department of Elocution to a Department of Oral Interpretation, which, in 1984, became the Department of Performance Studies. Much of Northwestern speech, communication, rhetoric, and oral interpretation curriculum remains intact even as new courses in Performance Studies proper have been added. Northwestern's program "produces research and creative work in the performance of literature; the adaptation and staging of texts, particularly narrative works; cultural studies and ethnography; performance theory and criticism; performance arts and dance theatre; and the practice of everyday life."⁷ It does so in a spirit that has been characterized as inclusionary, noncanonical, "democratic and counterelitist" – Performance Studies "celebrate[s] the performative nature of human communication" (Pelias and VanOosting 1987: 221).

If NYU initially enlarged the concept of theatre to include many other kinds of performance, Northwestern expanded the notion of literature in terms of text, broadly conceived, to include not only literature but also "cultural texts." The two programs differ in several other important ways. First, NYU took a revolutionary approach to the transformation of a drama department into a Performance Studies one, whereas at Northwestern University and elsewhere the shift from oral interpretation to performance studies tends to be understood as evolutionary:

What may be said with certainty is that paradigm shift [from oral interpretation to performance studies], if such it is, is *not* a revolutionary denial of oral interpretation as the antecedent schema. Rather, the new nomenclature affirms the study and performance of literary texts as central to, but not limiting, its theory and methodology. Hence, the paradigmatic relationship between oral interpretation and performance studies might display the performance of literature as the central circle in a concentric figure widening out to include social dramas, rituals, storytelling, jokes, organizational metaphors, everyday conversations, indeed any communication act meeting the criteria of aesthetic discourse.

(Pelias and VanOosting 1987: 229)

Second, NYU has made performance the umbrella under which all kinds of performance can be and are studied, and, at least in theory and despite its history as a drama department, none has precedence. In contrast, within speech and communication field, the metaphor of concentric circles places the performance of literature at the center. Stated another way, performance studies becomes a "subunit within speech communication" (Strine *et al.* 1990).

Ethnoscenology (University of Paris VIII)

The third and most recent model of Performance Studies is that of Ethnoscenology, whose mission is "to avoid any form of ethnocentrism in the study of the performing arts and practices in their cultural, historical, social context" by refusing to privilege the "Western theatre model." The object of study is "the organized human performing practices (OHPP)" of all cultures. Ethnoscenology's transdisciplinary perspective brings together "scientific disciplines devoted to the exploration and analysis of human behavior" (ethology, psychology, neurobiology, cognitive sciences, anthropology, ethnomusicology); humanities; performers and their practical knowledge; and "the proper implicit and explicit local paradigm." Inspired by Marcel Mauss's notion of techniques of the body and Eugenio Barba's Theatre Anthropology, Ethnoscenology rejects mind/body dualism and integrates the cognitive and the somatic. In contrast with Northwestern's paradigm, Ethnoscenology does not take text as its point of departure, but rather the "knowing body" and the corporal dimension of performance.⁸ Consistent with NYU's Performance Studies paradigm, contemporary experimental performance continues to animate the Ethnoscenology enterprise.

New directions/sources of creativity

New directions and sources of creativity within Performance Studies arise from the living, breathing symbiosis between aesthetic practices and the study of them. There is an active interchange between theory and practice, scholar and artist, art form and knowledge formation. New objects of study, particularly the unruly objects of contemporary art, destabilize not only what counts as art but also how they and all that came before them might be studied. Performance Studies is not simply a more encompassing version of theatre studies.

What is at stake is not inclusiveness per se, for inclusions are often structured in ways that reproduce the conditions of their exclusion. Rather, Performance Studies picks up the gauntlet thrown down by resistant artistic and cultural practices. This requires the fashioning, however provisional, of a (post)disciplinary subject adequate to the task. It is in that spirit that Performance Studies questions the relationship between disciplinary formations, disciplinary subjects, and their objects of study.

Performance is a more welcoming and productive concept for a truly intercultural field of study than concepts that are more tightly bound up with culturally specific divisions of the arts by medium and genre, as is the case with theatre, for example. This is not to underestimate the historical conditioning of the term performance. As is true of any keyword, "the problem of its meanings" are "inextricably bound up with the problems it [is] being used to discuss" (Williams 1983: 15). Performance has a long history and wide range of meanings in everyday English usage, from high performance in technology and performance measures in management and finance to the legally defined performance requirements of contracts. Only recently has the word performance entered other languages, almost exclusively to designate performance art. It is essentially untranslatable. *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis* (Pavis 1998), which was translated from French, provides no entry for the term performance, though it does include entries for performance analysis, performance art, and performance text.⁹

An expanded view of performance requires more than simply adding to the inventory of what has historically been considered theatre (or oral interpretation). It requires a reconceptualization of performance in light of each and every inclusion. In other words, performance is a responsive concept, rather than a procrustean bed. It is not simply a big tent under which all may gather, but an organizing concept under revision in light of the many activities to which it is addressed. Those activities may be taken for granted, part of the quotidian world. They may derive from traditions with great historical depth and theories about themselves, to mention only the *Natyashastra* for India and Zeami for Japan. Or, they may arise from contemporary experimentation, whether Happenings, performance art, postmodern dance, or installation art. This set of possibilities is as vital for artists as it is for scholars.

As Schechner is quick to note, "long before scholars took an interest, artists had an expanded view of performance. From futurism through dadaism, in the arts and rituals of many non-Western cultures, in the practice and ideas of Vsevolod Meyerhold, Antonin Artaud, John Cage, Suzuki Tadashi, Anna Halprin, and Allan Kaprow (to name just a very few)" (Schechner 1990: 16). Oskar Schlemmer, who developed the Bauhaus theatre during the 1920s, laid out just such an expanded view in his "Scheme for Stage, Culture, and Popular Entertainment, According to Place, Person, Genre, Speech, Music, Dance" (in Gropius 1996: 19). This scheme integrated the sermon, Wagner, mass gymnastics, ancient tragedy, and circus within a utopian vision of what theatre of the future might become. As Schlemmer's scheme suggests, when the historical avant-garde and postwar experimentalists mounted their opposition, they turned to all that was outside prevailing categories of art. Artaud declared, "No more masterpieces," Marinetti proclaimed, "The distinction of the senses is arbitrary," and decades later, Kaprow would propose, "nonart is more art than Art art."

Such radical artistic practices produce notions of performance of special interest to Performance Studies. A lively interchange between scholars and artists (and a blurring of the distinction) has informed the theatre anthropology (Eugenio Barba), intercultural performance (Peter Brook), poor theatre (Jerzy Grotowski), environmental theatre (Richard Schechner), theatre of the oppressed (Augusto Boal), reverse anthropology (Guillermo Gómez-Peña), and the Los Angeles Festival (Peter Sellars). (See Schechner 1993; Pavis 1996; Jeyifo 1996; Bharucha 1997.) As such artists look to everyday life, industry, popular culture, and ritual, to the outmoded and the repudiated, and to other cultures, so too do the scholars who study them. Noel Carroll encapsulates how Performance Studies emerged from such developments:

The repudiation of mainstream theater led performance artists to seek out, resurrect, and adopt forms of theatrical performance overshadowed or forgotten as parts of our theatrical heritage because of the dominance of the well-made play. This maneuver itself was heralded by Artaud's interest in Balinese ritual. As a result, since the sixties, experimentation in performance art has embraced revivals of circus, nightclub acts, ritual, storytelling, masques, mime, puppetry, stand-up comedy, television game shows, and talk shows. Indeed, a new academic category, Performance Studies, has been developed, replacing Drama, in order to accommodate the proliferation of the new paratheatrical avant-garde while also documenting the history of the forgotten theatrical forms from which avant-garde performance art is drawing its inspiration.

(Carroll 1986: 77)

Not only are some artists theorists in their own right, but also the symbiosis between artists and theorists has been consequential for artmaking (see Clifford 1988).

Science and technology

Performance as an organizing idea has been responsive not only to new modes of live action, but also new technologies. Citing mediated performance art, Philip Auslander (1992) takes issue with the assumption of human agents, live bodies, and presence as organizing concepts for Performance Studies. According to Jon McKenzie (1994: 86), virtual reality and the technologies that produce it make "the distinction between human and technological performance . . . increasingly problematic." Both can be understood in terms of "experience design" (88). If boundaries are to be blurred, why not also the line between live and mediated performance? Artists cross that line and Performance Studies has followed suit. One result can be seen in Stephen Kaplin's "puppet tree," which plots the distance between performer and object all the way from Balinese shadow plays to computer generated figures and virtual objects (Kaplin 1999).

Technology is integral to the history of performance. First, the theatre itself can be understood as a machine, to cite only the extraordinary stage machinery of the Baroque theatre. Its inner workings are related to ship technologies, as can be seen at Drottningholm,

near Stockholm, where shipbuilders applied their knowledge of ropes and wooden winches, pulleys, and capstans to create the inner workings of one of the best-preserved Baroque theatres in the world. Scene design is related to the history of what Jonathan Crary calls "techniques of the observer." Second, the body itself has been imagined as an intelligent performing machine, from historical automata, whose mechanisms are related to those of clocks, to the microchip, which "has replaced clockworks as the intelligence driving performing objects" (Tillis 1999; see also Sussman 1999).

Performance is integral to the history of technology. The notion of *gestural knowledge* is critical to an understanding of bodies of practice in the laboratory. Otto Sibum, Research Director at the Max Planck Institut für Wissenschaftsgeschichte, defines gestural knowledge and its value for a history of science as follows:

Despite the fact that one often knows the outcome of the historical experiments through publications of note book entries, undertaking to perform the experiment remains a highly valuable, investigative study, acting on a trial basis. It will become obvious that getting the experiment to work demands a great deal of embodied capabilities, many of which are no longer known at all well. Therefore success in repeating the trial depends above all on the improvisational work and knowledge of the researcher. Material objects (as well as accompanying texts) serve as a kind of choreography for this performance because they provide partial direction of our thinking and acting . . . gestural knowledge in doing the experiment represents a resource in its own right, which complements the usually static representations of past practices like historical texts and material objects. *Doing* the experiment, and recognizing the troubles encountered in getting it to work, creating an awareness of the behaviour of the historical experimenter and the practices, possibly unarticulated, which are indispensable for the performance of the experiment. This acquired gestural knowledge can serve as a heuristic device in developing interpretations of the existing textual representations of the historical experiment.

(Sibum 1995: 28)

Sibum explores how *instruments of precision* molded *gestures of accuracy*, taking as a case in point the brewing industry in England and Benjamin Joule's experiments to find an exact way of measuring heat. In other words, the issue is not whether or not to uphold a particular definition of performance over and against media and technology, but rather to work with the relationships between them. Critical to the history of Performance Studies is, for example, the cybernetic thinking of Gregory Bateson, who was drawing from the field of communications engineering long before the digital revolution of our time. (See Bateson 1972 for essays spanning four decades.)

Objects, ideas, knowledge industries

At a time when media – and, in particular, digital technologies – have altered our relationship to the material world, including our very own bodies, Performance Studies has much to

offer to an understanding of materiality, embodiment, sensory experience, liveness, presence, and personhood as they bear on being-in-the-world and as they are mediated by technologies old and new.¹⁰ As the volume of information increases and with it the artificial intelligence necessary to manage it, Performance Studies seeks to understand the kinds of knowledge that are located in the body. Fruitful contributions to this topic include Marcel Mauss's *techniques of the body*; Otto Sibbum's *gestural knowledge*; Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus*; and Paul Connerton's *body memory*. This is not to essentialize the body as technology's other, but rather to redefine and resituate the issues, including the technologizing of the body, the question of its boundaries, its history, and much that might once have been taken for granted about corporeality, somaticism, and the senses.¹¹

If the body is one site of performance analysis, objects are another. As suggested above, object performance provides a particularly rich arena for the relationship between people and things. This, among other themes, is taken up by Performance Studies scholars working on museums. The museum and the theatre are historically related, in connection not only with the architectural form of the memory palace but also with Protestant opposition to theatre. Museums, in this context, are one response to what Jonas Barish has called the anti-theatrical prejudice. They might be considered a form of Protestant theatre. A grand instance of object performance, the museum stands in an inverse relationship to the theatre. In theatre, spectators are stationary and the spectacle moves. In the museum, spectators move and the spectacle is still (until recently). Exhibition is how museums stage knowledge. They do this by the way they arrange objects, broadly conceived, in space and by how they install the visitor. The experience, however visual it may be, is corporeal. The key sense – so key that it is invariably overlooked – is proprioception or how the body knows its own boundaries and orientation in space. The museum is an archeological site for excavating the history of the body, understood in these terms. If anything, technologies of virtual reality, for example, have heightened awareness and required more sophisticated theories of embodiment. (See Moser and MacLeod 1996.)

The museum, particularly the natural history, science, and technology museum, is an archive of outmoded knowledge formations that have sedimented themselves in collections, catalogues, storage arrangements, particular modes of display, and the historically formed dispositions of its viewers. Many fields were once housed in museums. They were based upon collections formed in the course of research and provided the foundation for analysis. As those fields migrate to the laboratory and the university, a tension arises in museums between the historical value of old collections and the challenges of presenting new knowledge that is not collection based. In the process, museums have changed their relationship not only to their collections but also to exhibition as a medium. If anything, museums and their exhibitions have become more theatrical – even operatic – than ever. In the way they do what they are about – I have in mind museums of redress such as Holocaust museums – they are more performative than ever. They have also become prime sites for applying new technologies of information and display, to the point that museums are established without collections and exhibitions may not feature objects. (See Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1998.) This does not spell the end of objects. Rather, the question of the role and

meaning of things requires attention to objecthood and materiality in an era so concerned with information and virtuality.

Cultural equity

Because of the inclusionary spirit of Performance Studies (and the theoretical concern with what "inclusion" presumes), the field is particularly attuned to issues of place, personhood, cultural citizenship, and equity. Artists and scholars concerned with *intercultural performance* deal with these issues by bringing diverse performance cultures into conversation and collaboration with one another. At the same time, Performance Studies scholars are developing theories of heritage as a mode of cultural production that have implications for cultural policy dealing with preservation and equity in a variety of contexts. (See Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1995 [Appendix B] and 1998.) It could be said, for example, that heritage is a way of producing the local for export, tourism being a global market for this commodity. Or, put another way, processes of globalization produce the local, while altering the very nature and value of the local. Issues of equity and social justice inform the work of activists, both artists and scholars, concerned with a wide range of issues, from labor, immigration, and homelessness to homophobia, racism, AIDS, violence, and censorship. (See Boal 1998; Cohen-Cruz 1998; Muñoz 1999; Thiong'o 1998; Kondo 1997; Piper 1996; and Taylor 1996.)

Performance Studies is a promising context for exploring issues of culture and creativity in relation to the challenges of 20th century science and technology, changing knowledge industries, shifting configurations of the global and local, and issues of equity and social justice.

NOTES

- 1 Performance now appears as a keyword in several lexicons. See, for example, Pavis 1998 and Lentricchia and McLaughlin 1995. See also, *The Johns Hopkins Guide to Literary Theory and Criticism* http://www.press.jhu.edu/books/hopkins_guide_to_literary_theory/b-index.html, where a search for the keyword *performance* brought up such entries as Semiotics, Drama Theory, Speech Acts, Linguistics and Language, Discourse Analysis, Anthropological Theory and Criticism, and Psychoanalytic Theory and Criticism (The Post-Lacanian). The term also appears in business, legal, medical, technology, and computer lexicons. See <http://www.onelook.com/cgi-bin/cgiwrap/bware/dofindt.cgi?word=performance&type=type a>. On the notion of performance in legal thought, see Hibbitts 1992.
- 2 Among the institutions that have established performance studies programs are Indiana University (Bloomington), University of Sidney, University of Warwick, Centre for Performance Research at the University of Wales. At the University of Paris VIII and Salvador de Bahia, Jean-Marie Pradier has created his own version of Performance Studies under the banner of Ethnoscenology. See Pradier 2001. See also the new Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, a innovative consortium of artists, scholars, and institutions in the Americas, organized by Diana Taylor. Founding members are in Brazil, Peru, and the United States. <http://lrw.net/~hemisphere/index2.html>

- 3 During the 1980s, a Performance Studies focus group was established within ATHE (Association for Theatre in Higher Education) and a Performance Studies Division was formed within the Speech Communication Association. Last year, P*Si* Performance Studies International was formally constituted at the fifth annual Performance Studies Conference.
- 4 *TDR: The Drama Review, A Journal of Performance Studies*, which is edited by Richard Schechner at New York University and published by MIT Press, was established in 1956 as *Tulane Drama Review*. *Performing Arts Journal*, edited by Bonnie Maranca and Gautam Dasgupta and published by Johns Hopkins University Press, was established in 1976. *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, established in 1983, is edited and published at New York University. *Performance Research*, which is edited by Richard Gough at the University of Wales and published by Routledge, was established in 1995. *LIMEN: an electronic journal dedicated to the performance paradigm* was published by the Centre of Theatre Practice/Kaos Theatre and Murdoch University during the mid-1990s.
- 5 Among the presses supporting a Performance Studies book series are Routledge and University of California Press. See the attached Bibliography for programmatic essays, readers, and textbooks.
- 6 Such paradigms pose a challenge to existing fields of study, particularly theater and oral interpretation. See Schechner 1990; Dolan 1993; Worthen 1995; Lee 1999.
- 7 Northwestern University, *The Graduate School Bulletin 1997/1999*, Performance Studies. <http://www.nwu.edu/graduate/bulletin/programs/speech/spch-pfst.html>.
- 8 This discussion is based on Pradier's 2001 article "Ethnoscenology: the flesh is spirit."
- 9 Rather than provide an entry for *performance*, this *Dictionary* refers the reader to the term *spectacle*, which is offered as the French translation of *performance*. However, a chart comparing *spectacle* (French) and *performance* (English) explains that "the generic notion of 'spectacle' and 'spectacularity' is missing in the English *performance*," without suggesting what is missing from *spectacle* (French) (Pavis 1998: 256). Similar incommensurabilities are found in other languages as well.
- 10 The increasingly technologized body, on the one hand, and the question of personhood in digital media, on the other, are lively areas of concern within Performance Studies. See for example, the special issue of *Women and Performance* devoted to "Sexuality and cyberspace: performing the digital body," <http://www.echonyc.com/~women/Issue17/index.html>.
- 11 See, for example, the special issue of *Performance Research* (1999) devoted to food and performance.

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- J. Bell, Santino, Taylor – the potential of performance studies to reconceptualize contemporary issues and events

PERFORMANCE STUDIES IN AN AGE OF TERROR

John Bell

I remember in 1992 at a conference of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE), Richard Schechner arguing in a keynote speech that the whole concept of theater as a separate, self-contained discipline was no longer relevant. Schechner predicted that theater or drama departments themselves would eventually face extinction, to be superseded (of course) by more broadly focused concepts (and departments?) of performance studies. The advantage of this, it seemed to me at the time, would be that we would no longer have to pursue the charade that live, text-based realistic performance (reverently known as "The Drama") was as central a modern cultural form as it had appeared to have been from the nineteenth century until, say, 1928, when Broadway theater production reached its numerical highpoint; or certainly until 1940, by which time Thornton Wilder had written to Gertrude Stein that Hollywood had finally surpassed Broadway (Stein 1996: 254).

However, a decade has gone by and I think Schechner underestimated the conservative nature of academic thought processes and academic change, because the academic study of The Drama is still central, and performance studies is still considered by many to be a fringe discipline seeking to dilute time-honored boundaries among performance forms and their concomitant standards of artistic greatness. The curious monster of performance studies, of course, *wants* to cross boundaries and consider the Western dramatic tradition not simply in solipsistic terms, but in the context of world culture, popular performance, mass-media spectacle, and the performative rituals of contemporary life.

What does this have to do with our post-9/11 world?

Five days after the destruction of the World Trade Center, the celebrated modernist composer Karlheinz Stockhausen landed in a heap of trouble by allowing his analysis of art-making to be applied to the recent events in Manhattan. In a Hamburg press conference about a new 28-hour-long performance cycle entitled *Licht*, Stockhausen explained how the piece incorporated such traditional characters from the Western cultural pantheon as Saint Michael, Eve ("the mother of life"), and Lucifer ("the prince of light") (Zander 2002). Stockhausen's inspired artistic sense saw these figures not simply as outdated metaphors of "cultural history," as a reporter put it, but as persistent, contemporary forces. Stockhausen offered as an example that Lucifer "is very present [. . .] in New York at the moment," and

then went on to make a colossal public relations blunder by referring to the destruction of the World Trade Center as Lucifer's handiwork: "*das größte Kunstwerk, das es je gegeben hat*" — "the greatest work of art there has ever been" (in Hilferty 2002). Of course, all hell broke loose as a result of Stockhausen's analogy, and the 73-year-old composer was termed, among other things, a lunatic. Stockhausen claimed he had been quoted out of context, and that his reference to Lucifer as "the cosmic spirit of rebellion, of anarchy," who "uses his high degree of intelligence to destroy creation" had been misunderstood (Stockhausen in Deutsch 2001).

My point here is not to defend Stockhausen, but to point out a big problem concerning the concept of "art," because it is specifically the word "art" that made the composer's comments so obscene, so clueless. (They would have been just as obscene if he had termed the events of 9/11 "theater" or "drama.") This is because by 2001 modernist and post-modernist notions of what art is, what artists do, and what functions art serves in Western culture were overwhelmingly dominated by the image of the artist as an isolated romantic genius who creates objects, sounds, or events that by definition can only connect to our lives as high-end cultural products.

Would it have been considered any less obscene for Stockhausen to call the destruction of the World Trade Center "performance"? Not "performance *art*," because that postmodern formal tradition is also often lovingly restricted to isolated and impenetrable cultural products, but "performance" in, say, Schechner's terms, as "twice-behaved behavior." I'm not sure if by doing so Stockhausen would have avoided media outrage, but I want to argue that the term "performance" is invaluable for understanding not only what the 9/11 terrorists did, but also for understanding much of what has happened before and after 9/11, and what will happen in the years to come as the United States develops its worldwide "war on terrorism."

Using the tools of performance studies to analyze how calculated violence is employed in media-saturated society is not an insult to the memories of those who died, but an essential means of understanding the undeniably symbolic level at which global conflict is now being played out. It is clear that such vivid terms as "Axis of Evil," "Homeland Security," and "Weapons of Mass Destruction" have been put into play with full cognizance of their semiotic value, and we will only understand the actual implications of these concepts and the actions connected to them — performatives all — if we are able to comprehend them on an equally sophisticated level of analysis.

The concept of performance, and our studies of performance, can help us understand and respond to these new exigencies. From the temporary public shrines that sprouted up all over Manhattan immediately after 9/11 (so wonderfully documented and chronicled by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2003)); to the public protests, marches, and rallies all over the world that have followed 9/11 in almost weekly regularity; to the conscious manipulation of the threat of terror by the United States government both at home and abroad in highly professional propaganda campaigns; and finally to the onset of a global war without end on the part of our "world's largest army," the idea of performance offers concepts, means of analysis, and methods of action which can help us figure out where we are and what we ought to do — certainly better than concepts of "art" or "drama" and "theater,"

which seem to be, consciously or unconsciously, now scrupulously estranged from the things of import that happen around us.

In other words, at the onset of the twenty-first century, the idea of performance and the young tradition of performance studies are critical to any understanding of our present situation. We can use and develop the tools of performance studies to explain to ourselves and to others what is going on around us. The analytic frameworks of "theater," "drama," and "art" analysis clearly don't allow us this opportunity, as Stockhausen's experience shows. But performance studies does.

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 Goffman, Gabler – everyday events as performance
 Santino – public shrines as a response to September 11, 2001
 Kaprow – the blurred boundary between life and art

Part II

WHAT IS PERFORMANCE?

The term "performance" most commonly refers to a tangible, bounded event that involves the presentation of rehearsed artistic actions. We may, for example, attend a performance of a play, a dance, or a symphony. We can extend this idea of a performance to other events that involve a performer (someone doing something) and a spectator (someone observing something): a clergy member's performance of a religious service, an athlete's performance on the court, a politician's performance in a debate. Performance may also be understood more generally as any activity that involves the presentation of rehearsed or pre-established sequences of words or actions. Schechner calls this "restored behavior" or "twice-behaved behavior."

But performance is also a concept, a way of understanding all types of phenomenon. Shakespeare's idea that "all the world's a stage" is not new; it was probably not new to Shakespeare. But the idea of the world as performance has become increasingly relevant throughout the last century, displacing an earlier idea of the world as a book. While the language we use to describe this worldview often borrows from the stage (actors, roles) it is important to remember that understanding the world as performance can mean both more and less than understanding the world as "theater."

In his 1959 book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, anthropologist Erving Goffman explored how much of our everyday social interactions consist of pre-established patterns or routines. In the section excerpted here, "Belief in the part one is playing," Goffman draws on theatrical language (*show, audience, setting*) to describe the various expressive tools which individuals employ to indicate social status, noting that these everyday life performances may be "cynical" (intended to deceive) or "sincere" (intended to reflect "reality"). Goffman was one of the first (among many) social scientists to turn to the theater for a framework with which to interpret non-theatrical behavior. Conversely, many of Goffman's contemporaries in the humanities were turning to social theories to help analyze theatrical and literary events. Writing in 1983, Clifford Geertz ("Blurred genres: the refiguration of social thought") casts a critical eye on these interdisciplinary borrowings and what they may suggest for the subsequent study of performance.

One of the most thorough recent attempts to define performance in the field of performance studies is Marvin Carlson's 1996 book *Performance: A Critical Introduction*. In his

introduction, "What is performance?" excerpted here, Carlson dissects several different uses of the term, while recognizing its "essential contestedness" (see p. 70). Carlson's consideration of performance art as a genre reminds us that the term "performance" does not always connote fiction or artifice. Used in contrast to "theater" or "drama," "performance" makes a claim to authenticity.

Neal Gabler, in an excerpt from *Life the movie* (1988), brings us back to the question of performance in everyday life. Like Goffman, Gabler suggests that social roles are performed, but Gabler takes it a step further, declaring "after decades of public-relations contrivances and media hype, [. . .] life has become art, so that the two are now indistinguishable" (see p. 76). This proposition is put to the test in a more oppositional way by performance artists such as Marina Abramović who enact everyday behaviors for audiences in art galleries and elsewhere. Peggy Phelan's 2004 essay considers Abramović's work with an eye toward issues of consciousness, liveness, and the artist's body. How and why are these issues essential to performance?

As the chapters in this section demonstrate, the limits of what is performance and what can be considered as performance are not fixed. The boundaries between performance and not performance are constantly being tested, challenged, and remapped by artists and theorists alike. This dynamic and flexible characterization of our object of study is one of the hallmarks of performance studies.

PERFORMANCES

Belief in the part one is playing

Erving Goffman

When an individual plays a part he implicitly requests his observers to take seriously the impression that is fostered before them. They are asked to believe that the character they see actually possesses the attributes he appears to possess, that the task he performs will have the consequences that are implicitly claimed for it, and that, in general, matters are what they appear to be. In line with this, there is the popular view that the individual offers his performance and puts on his show "for the benefit of other people." It will be convenient to begin a consideration of performances by turning the question around and looking at the individual's own belief in the impression of reality that he attempts to engender in those among whom he finds himself.

At one extreme, one finds that the performer can be fully taken in by his own act; he can be sincerely convinced that the impression of reality which he stages is the real reality. When his audience is also convinced in this way about the show he puts on – and this seems to be the typical case – then, for the moment at least, only the sociologist or the socially disgruntled will have any doubts about the "realness" of what is presented.

At the other extreme, we find that the performer may not be taken in at all by his own routine. This possibility is understandable, since no one is in quite as good an observational position to see through the act as the person who puts it on. Coupled with this, the performer may be moved to guide the conviction of his audience only as a means to other ends, having no ultimate concern in the conception that they have of him or of the situation. When the individual has no belief in his own act and no ultimate concern with the beliefs of his audience, we may call him cynical, reserving the term "sincere" for individuals who believe in the impression fostered by their own performance. It should be understood that the cynic, with all his professional disinvolvement, may obtain unprofessional pleasures from his masquerade, experiencing a kind of gleeful spiritual aggression from the fact that he can toy at will with something his audience must take seriously.¹

It is not assumed, of course, that all cynical performers are interested in deluding their audiences for purposes of what is called "self-interest" or private gain. A cynical individual may delude his audience for what he considers to be their own good, or for the good of the community, etc. For illustrations of this we need not appeal to sadly enlightened showmen

such as Marcus Aurelius or Hsun Tzú. We know that in service occupations practitioners who may otherwise be sincere are sometimes forced to delude their customers because their customers show such a heartfelt demand for it. Doctors who are led into giving placebos, filling station attendants who resignedly check and recheck tire pressures for anxious women motorists, shoe clerks who sell a shoe that fits but tell the customers it is the size she wants to hear — these are cynical performers whose audiences will not allow them to be sincere. Similarly, it seems that sympathetic patients in mental wards will sometimes feign bizarre symptoms so that student nurses will not be subjected to a disappointingly sane performance.² So also, when inferiors extend their most lavish reception for visiting superiors, the selfish desire to win favor may not be the chief motive; the inferior may be tactfully attempting to put the superior at ease by simulating the kind of world the superior is thought to take for granted.

I have suggested two extremes: an individual may be taken in by his own act or be cynical about it. These extremes are something a little more than just the ends of a continuum. Each provides the individual with a position which has its own particular securities and defenses, so there will be a tendency for those who have traveled close to one of these poles to complete the voyage. Starting with lack of inward belief in one's role, the individual may follow the natural movement described by Park:

It is probably no mere historical accident that the word person in its first meaning, is a mask. It is rather a recognition of the fact that everyone is always and everywhere, more or less consciously, playing a role . . . it is in these roles that we know each other; it is in these roles that we know ourselves.³

In a sense, and in so far as this mask represents the conception we have formed of ourselves — the role we are striving to live up to — this mask is our truer self, the self we would like to be. In the end, our conception of our role becomes second nature and an integral part of our personality. We come into the world as individuals, achieve character, and become persons.⁴

This may be illustrated from the community life of Shetland.⁵ For the last four or five years the island's tourist hotel has been owned and operated by a married couple of crofter origins. From the beginning, the owners were forced to set aside their own conceptions as to how life ought to be led, displaying in the hotel a full round of middle-class services and amenities. Lately, however, it appears that the managers have become less cynical about the performance that they stage; they themselves are becoming middle class and more and more enamored of the selves their clients impute to them.

Another illustration may be found in the raw recruit who initially follows army etiquette in order to avoid physical punishment and eventually comes to follow the rules so that his organization will not be shamed and his officers and fellow soldiers will respect him.

As suggested, the cycle of disbelief-to-belief can be followed in the other direction, starting with conviction or insecure aspiration and ending in cynicism. Professions which the public holds in religious awe often allow their recruits to follow the cycle in this

and often recruits follow it in this direction not because of a slow realization that they are deluding their audience — for by ordinary social standards the claims they make may be quite valid — but because they can use this cynicism as a means of insulating their inner selves from contact with the audience. And we may even expect to find typical careers of faith, with the individual starting out with one kind of involvement in the performance he is required to give, then moving back and forth several times between sincerity and cynicism before completing all the phases and turning-points of self-belief for a person of his station. Thus, students of medical schools suggest that idealistically oriented beginners in medical school typically lay aside their holy aspirations for a period of time. During the first two years the students find that their interest in medicine must be dropped so that they may give all their time to the task of learning how to get through examinations. During the next two years they are too busy learning about diseases to show much concern for the persons who are diseased. It is only after their medical schooling has ended that their original ideals about medical service may be reasserted.⁶

While we can expect to find natural movement back and forth between cynicism and sincerity, still we must not rule out the kind of transitional point that can be sustained on the strength of a little self-illusion. We find that the individual may attempt to induce the audience to judge him and the situation in a particular way, and he may seek this judgment as an ultimate end in itself, and yet he may not completely believe that he deserves the valuation of self which he asks for or that the impression of reality which he fosters is valid. Another mixture of cynicism and belief is suggested in Kroeber's discussion of shamanism:

Next, there is the old question of deception. Probably most shamans or medicine men, the world over, help along with sleight-of-hand in curing and especially in exhibitions of power. This sleight-of-hand is sometimes deliberate; in many cases awareness is perhaps not deeper than the foreconscious. The attitude, whether there has been repression or not, seems to be as toward a pious fraud. Field ethnographers seem quite generally convinced that even shamans who know that they add fraud nevertheless also believe in their powers, and especially in those of other shamans: they consult them when they themselves or their children are ill.⁷

Front

I have been using the term "performance" to refer to all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers. It will be convenient to label as "front" that part of the individual's performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance. Front, then, is the expressive equipment of a standard kind intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance. For preliminary purposes, it will be convenient to distinguish and label what seem to be the standard parts of front.

First, there is the "setting," involving furniture, décor, physical layout, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the spate of human action played

out before, within, or upon it. A setting tends to stay put, geographically speaking, so that those who would use a particular setting as part of their performance cannot begin their act until they have brought themselves to the appropriate place and must terminate their performance when they leave it. It is only in exceptional circumstances that the setting follows along with the performers; we see this in the funeral cortege, the civic parade, and the dream-like processions that kings and queens are made of. In the main, these exceptions seem to offer some kind of extra protection for performers who are, or who have momentarily become, highly sacred. These worthies are to be distinguished, of course, from quite profane performers of the peddler class who move their place of work between performances, often being forced to do so. In the matter of having one fixed place for one's setting, a ruler may be too sacred, a peddler too profane.

In thinking about the scenic aspects of front, we tend to think of the living room in a particular house and the small number of performers who can thoroughly identify themselves with it. We have given insufficient attention to assemblages of sign-equipment which large numbers of performers can call their own for short periods of time. It is characteristic of Western European countries, and no doubt a source of stability for them, that a large number of luxurious settings are available for hire to anyone of the right kind who can afford them. One illustration of this may be cited from a study of the higher civil servant in Britain:

The question how far the men who rise to the top in the Civil Service take on the "tone" or "color" of a class other than to which they belong by birth is delicate and difficult. The only definite information bearing on the question is the figures relating to the membership of the great London clubs. More than three-quarters of our high administrative officials belong to one or more clubs of high status and considerable luxury, where the entrance fee might be twenty guineas or more, and the annual subscription from twelve to twenty guineas. These institutions are of the upper class (not even of the upper middle) in their premises, their equipment, the style of living practiced there, their whole atmosphere. Though many of the members would not be described as wealthy, only a wealthy man would unaided provide for himself and his family space, food and drink, service, and other amenities of life to the same standard as he will find at the Union, the Travellers', or the Reform.⁸

Another example can be found in the recent development of the medical profession where we find that it is increasingly important for a doctor to have access to the elaborate scientific stage provided by large hospitals, so that fewer and fewer doctors are able to feel that their setting is a place that they can lock up at night.⁹

If we take the term "setting" to refer to the scenic parts of expressive equipment, one may take the term "personal front" to refer to the other items of expressive equipment, the items that we most intimately identify with the performer himself and that we naturally expect will follow the performer wherever he goes. As part of personal front we may include: insignia of high office or rank; clothing; sex, age, and racial characteristic; size and looks; posture; speech patterns; facial expressions; bodily gestures; and the like. Some of these vehicles for conveying signs, such as racial characteristics, are relatively fixed and

over a span of time do not vary for the individual from one situation to another. On the other hand, some of these sign vehicles are relatively mobile or transitory, such as facial expression, and can vary during a performance from one moment to the next.

NOTES

- 1 Perhaps the real crime of the confidence man is not that he takes money from victims but that he robs all of us of the belief that middle-class manners and appearance can be sustained only by middle-class people. A disabused professional can be cynically hostile to the service relation his clients expect him to extend to them; the confidence man is in a position to hold the whole "legit" world in this contempt.
- 2 See Taxel, op. cit. [Harold Taxel, "Authority structure in a mental hospital ward" (unpublished master's thesis, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1953)], 4. Harry Stack Sullivan has suggested that the tact of institutionalized performers can operate in the other direction, resulting in a kind of *noblesse-oblige* sanity. See his "Socio-psychiatric research," *American Journal of Psychiatry*, x, 987-8.

A study of "social recoveries" in one of our large mental hospitals some years ago taught me that patients were often released from care because they had learned not to manifest symptoms to the enviroing persons; in other words, had integrated enough of the personal environment to realize the prejudice opposed to their delusions. It seemed almost as if they grew wise enough to be tolerant of the imbecility surrounding them, having finally discovered that it was stupidity and not malice. They could then secure satisfaction from contact with others, while discharging a part of their cravings by psychotic means.

- 3 Robert Ezra Park, *Race and Culture* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1950), 249.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 250.
- 5 Shetland Isle study [research conducted by Goffman in a Shetland Island farming community. Reported in part in Goffman, "Communication conduct in on island community" (unpublished PhD dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1953)].
- 6 H.S. Becker and Blanche Greer, "The fate of idealism in medical school," *American Sociological Review*, 23, 50-6.
- 7 A.L. Kroeber, *The Nature of Culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 311.
- 8 H.E. Dale, *The Higher Civil Service of Great Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), 50.
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READER CROSS-REFERENCES

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- Kaprow - the blurring of art and life from the artist's point of view
- Faber, Harding - the presentation of self in ritual contexts
- Butler - gender as part of the presentation of self
- Phelan - the self framed as art
- Santino - the commemorative uses of setting

BLURRED GENRES

The refiguration of social thought

Clifford Geertz

The drama analogy for social life has of course been around in a casual sort of way – all the world's a stage and we but poor players who strut and so on – for a very long time. And terms from the stage, most notably "role," have been staples of sociological discourse since at least the 1930s. What is relatively new – new, not unprecedented – are two things. First, the full weight of the analogy is coming to be applied extensively and systematically, rather than being deployed piecemeal fashion – a few allusions here, a few tropes there. And second, it is coming to be applied less in the depreciatory "mere show," masks and mummery mode that has tended to characterize its general use, and more in a constructional, genuinely dramaturgical one – making, not faking, as the anthropologist Victor Turner has put it.

The two developments are linked, of course. A constructionalist view of what theater is – that is, poiesis – implies that a dramatistic perspective in the social sciences needs to involve more than pointing out that we all have our entrances and exits, we all play parts, miss cues, and love pretense. It may or may not be a Barnum and Bailey world and we may or may not be walking shadows, but to take the drama analogy seriously is to probe behind such familiar ironies to the expressive devices that make collective life seem anything at all. The trouble with analogies – it is also their glory – is that they connect what they compare in both directions. Having trifled with theater's idiom, some social scientists find themselves drawn into the rather tangled coils of its aesthetic.

Such a more thoroughgoing exploitation of the drama analogy in social theory – as an analogy, not an incidental metaphor – has grown out of sources in the humanities not altogether commensurable. On the one hand, there has been the so-called ritual theory of drama associated with such diverse figures as Jane Harrison, Francis Fergusson, T.S. Eliot, and Antonin Artaud. On the other, there is the symbolic action – "dramatism," as he calls it – of the American literary theorist and philosopher Kenneth Burke, whose influence is, in the United States anyway, at once enormous and – because almost no one actually uses his baroque vocabulary, with its reductions, ratios, and so on – elusive. The trouble is, these approaches pull in rather opposite directions: the ritual theory toward the affinities of theater and religion – drama as communion, the temple

as stage; the symbolic action theory toward those of theater and rhetoric – drama as persuasion, the platform as stage. And this leaves the basis of the analogy – just what in the theatron is like what in the agora – hard to focus. That liturgy and ideology are histrionic is obvious enough, as it is that etiquette and advertising are. But just what that means is a good deal less so.

Probably the foremost proponent of the ritual theory approach in the social sciences right now is Victor Turner. A British formed, American re-formed anthropologist, Turner, in a remarkable series of works trained on the ceremonial life of a Central African tribe, has developed a conception of "social drama" as a regenerative process that, rather like Goffman's of "social gaming" as strategic interaction, has drawn to it such a large number of able researchers as to produce a distinct and powerful interpretive school.

For Turner, social dramas occur "on all levels of social organization from state to family." They arise out of conflict situations – a village falls into factions, a husband beats a wife, a region rises against the state – and proceed to their denouements through publicly performed conventionalized behavior. As the conflict swells to crisis and the excited fluidity of heightened emotion, where people feel at once more enclosed in a common mood and loosened from their social moorings, ritualized forms of authority – litigation, feud, sacrifice, prayer – are invoked to contain it and render it orderly. If they succeed, the breach is healed and the status quo, or something resembling it, is restored; if they do not, it is accepted as incapable of remedy and things fall apart into various sorts of unhappy endings: migrations, divorces, or murders in the cathedral. With differing degrees of strictness and detail, Turner and his followers have applied this schema to tribal passage rites, curing ceremonies, and judicial processes; to Mexican insurrections, Icelandic sagas, and Thomas Becket's difficulties with Henry II; to picaresque narrative, millenarian movements, Caribbean carnivals, and Indian peyote hunts; and to the political upheaval of the 1960s. A form for all seasons.

This hospitableness in the face of cases is at once the major strength of the ritual theory version of the drama analogy and its most prominent weakness. It can expose some of the profoundest features of social process, but at the expense of making vividly disparate matters look drably homogeneous.

Rooted as it is in the repetitive performance dimensions of social action – the re-enactment and thus the reexperiencing of known form – the ritual theory not only brings out the temporal and collective dimensions of such action and its inherently public nature with particular sharpness; it brings out also its power to transmute not just opinions but, as the British critic Charles Morgan has said with respect to drama proper, the people who hold them. "The great impact [of the theater]," Morgan writes, "is neither a persuasion of the intellect nor a beguiling of the senses . . . It is the enveloping movement of the whole drama on the soul of man. We surrender and are changed." Or at least we are when the magic works. What Morgan, in another fine phrase, calls "the suspense of form . . . the incompleteness of a known completion" is the source of the power of this "enveloping movement," a power, as the ritual theorists have shown, that is hardly less forceful (and hardly less likely to be seen as otherworldly) when the movement appears in a female initiation rite, a peasant revolution, a national epic, or a star chamber.

Yet these formally similar processes have different content. They say, as we might put it, rather different things, and thus have rather different implications for social life. And though ritual theorists are hardly incognizant of that fact, they are, precisely because they are so concerned with the general movement of things, ill equipped to deal with it. The great dramatic rhythms, the commanding forms of theater, are perceived in social processes of all sorts, shapes, and significances (though ritual theorists in fact do much better with the cyclical, restorative periodicities of comedy than the linear, consuming progressions of tragedy, whose ends tend to be seen as misfires rather than fulfillments). Yet the individuating details, the sort of thing that makes *A Winter's Tale* different from *Measure for Measure*, *Macbeth* from *Hamlet*, are left to encyclopedic empiricism: massive documentation of a single proposition – *plus ça change, plus c'est le même changement*. If dramas are, to adapt a phrase of Susanne Langer's, poems in the mode of action, something is being missed: what exactly, socially, the poems say.

This unpacking of performed meaning is what the symbolic action approaches are designed to accomplish. Here there is no single name to cite, just a growing catalogue of particular studies, some dependent on Kenneth Burke, some on Ernst Cassirer, Northrop Frye, Michel Foucault, or Emile Durkheim, concerned to say what some bit of acted saying – a coronation, a sermon, a riot, an execution – says. If ritual theorists, their eye on experience, tend to be hedgehogs, symbolic action theorists, their eye on expression, tend to be foxes.

Given the dialectical nature of things, we all need our opponents, and both sorts of approach are essential. What we are most in want of right now is some way of synthesizing them. In my own analysis of the traditional Indic polity in Bali as a "theater state" – cited here not because it is exemplary, but because it is mine – I have tried to address this problem. In this analysis I am concerned, on the one hand (the Burkean one), to show how everything from kin group organization, trade, customary law, and water control to mythology, architecture, iconography, and cremation combines to a dramatized statement of a distinct form of political theory, a particular conception of what status, power, authority, and government are and should be: namely, a replication of the world of the gods that is at the same time a template for that of men. The state enacts an image of order that – a model for its beholders, in and of itself – orders society. On the other hand (the Turner one), as the populace at large does not merely view the state's expressions as so many gaping spectators but is caught up bodily in them, and especially in the great, mass ceremonies – political operas of Burgundian dimensions – that form their heart, the sort of "we surrender and are changed" power of drama to shape experience is the strong force that holds the polity together. Reiterated form, staged and acted by its own audience, makes (to a degree, for no theater ever wholly works) theory fact.

But my point is that some of those fit to judge work of this kind ought to be humanists who reputedly know something about what theater and mimesis and rhetoric are, and not just with respect to my work but to that of the whole steadily broadening stream of social analyses in which the drama analogy is, in one form or another, governing. At a time when social scientists are chattering about actors, scenes, plots, performances, and

personae, and humanists are mumbling about motives, authority, persuasion, exchange, and hierarchy, the line between the two, however comforting to the puritan on the one side and the cavalier on the other, seems uncertain indeed.

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- J. Bell, Phelan, Kaprow – "art" as blurred genre in social thought

WHAT IS PERFORMANCE?

Marvin Carlson

The term "performance" has become extremely popular in recent years in a wide range of activities in the arts, in literature, and in the social sciences. As its popularity and usage have grown, so has a complex body of writing about performance, attempting to analyze and understand just what sort of human activity it is. For the person with an interest in studying performance, this body of analysis and commentary may at first seem more of an obstacle than an aid. So much has been written by experts from such a wide range of disciplines, and such a complex web of specialized critical vocabulary has been developed in the course of this analysis, that a newcomer seeking a way into the discussion may feel confused and overwhelmed.

In their very useful 1990 survey article "Research in interpretation and performance studies: trends, issues, priorities," Mary Strine, Beverly Long, and Mary Hopkins begin with the extremely useful observation that performance is "an essentially contested concept." This phrase is taken from W. B. Gallie's *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding* (1964), in which Gallie suggested that certain concepts, such as art and democracy, had disagreement about their essence built into the concepts themselves. In Gallie's terms: "Recognition of a given concept as essentially contested implies recognition of rival uses of it (such as oneself repudiates) as not only logically possible and humanly 'likely,' but as of permanent potential critical value to one's own use or interpretation of the concept in question."¹ Strine, Long, and Hopkins argue that performance has become just such 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 positions and therefore a fuller understanding of the conceptual richness of performance."² In his study of the "post-structured stage," Erik MacDonald suggests that "performance art has opened hitherto unnoticed spaces" within theatre's representational networks. It "problematizes its own categorization," and thus inevitably inserts theoretical speculation into the theatrical dynamic.³

The present study, recognizing this essential contestedness of performance, will seek to provide an introduction to the continuing dialogue through which it has recently been articulated, providing a variety of mappings of the concept, some overlapping, others quite divergent. Recent manifestations of performance, in both theory and practice, are so many and so varied that a complete survey of them is hardly possible, but this [study] attempts to

offer enough of an overview and historical background to single out the major approaches and sample significant manifestations in this complex field, to address the issues raised by the contested concepts of performance and what sorts of theatrical and theoretical strategies have been developed to deal with these issues.

My own background is in theatre studies, and my emphasis will be on how ideas and theories about performance have broadened and enriched those areas of human activity that lie closest to what has traditionally been thought of as theatrical, even though I will not be devoting a great deal of attention to traditional theatre as such, but rather to that variety of activities currently being presented for audiences under the general title of "performance" or "performance art." Nevertheless, in these opening remarks it might be useful to step back at least briefly from this emphasis and consider the more general use of the term "performance" in our culture, in order to gain some ideas of the general semantic overtones it may bear as it circulates through an enormous variety of specialized usages. I should perhaps also note that although I will include examples of performance art from other nations, my emphasis will remain on the United States, partly, of course, because that is the center of my own experience with this activity, but, more relevantly, because, despite its international diffusion, performance art is both historically and theoretically a primarily American phenomenon, and a proper understanding of it must, I believe, be centered on how it has developed both practically and conceptually in the United States.

"Performing" and "performance" are terms so often encountered in such varied contexts that little if any common semantic ground seems to exist among them. Both the *New York Times* and the *Village Voice* now include a special category of "performance" – separate from theatre, dance, or films – including events that are also often called "performance art" or even "performance theatre." For many, this latter term seems tautological, since in simpler days all theatre was considered to be involved with performance, theatre being in fact one of the so-called "performing arts." This usage is still much with us, as indeed is the practice of calling any specific theatre event (or for that matter specific dance or musical event) a "performance." If we mentally step back a moment from this common practice and ask what makes performing arts performative, I imagine the answer would somehow suggest that these arts require the physical presences of trained or skilled human beings whose demonstration of their skills is the performance.

I recently came across a striking illustration of how important the idea of public display of technical skill is to this traditional concept of "performance." At a number of locations in the United States and abroad, people in period costume act out improvised or scripted events at historical sites for tourists, visiting schoolchildren, or other interested spectators – a kind of activity often called "living history." One site of such activity is Fort Ross in Northern California, where a husband and wife, dressed in costumes of the 1830s, greet visitors in the roles of the last Russian commander of the fort and his wife. The wife, Diane Spencer Pritchard, in her role as "Elena Rotcheva," decided at one time to play period music on the piano to give visitors an impression of contemporary cultural life. But later she abandoned this, feeling, in her words, that it "removed the role from living-history and placed it in the category of performance."⁴ Despite taking on a fictive personality, dressing in period clothes, and "living" in the 1830s, Ms. Pritchard did not consider herself

"performing" until she displayed the particular artistic skills needed to give a music recital. Normally human agency is necessary for a "performance" of this sort (even in the theatre we do not speak of how well the scenery or the costumes performed), but the public demonstration of particular skills can be offered by nonhuman "performers," so that, for example, we commonly speak of "performing" dogs, elephants, horses or bears.⁵

Despite the currency of this usage, most of her audience probably considers Ms. Pritchard to be performing as soon as she greets them in the costume and character of a long-dead Russian pioneer. Pretending to be someone other than oneself is a common example of a particular kind of human behavior that Richard Schechner labels "restored behavior," a title under which he groups actions consciously separated from the person doing them — theatre and other role playing, trances, shamanism, rituals.⁶ Schechner's useful concept of "restored behavior" points to a quality of performance not involved with the display of skills, but rather with a certain distance between "self" and behavior, analogous to that between an actor and the role the actor plays on stage. Even if an action on stage is identical to one in real life, on stage it is considered "performed" and off stage merely "done." Hamlet, in his well-known response to the Queen concerning his reactions to his father's death, distinguishes between those inner feelings that resist performance and the actions that a man might play with a consciousness of their signifying potential.

Hamlet's response also indicates how a consciousness of "performance" can move from the stage, from ritual, or from other special and clearly defined cultural situations into everyday life. Everyone at some time or another is conscious of "playing a role" socially, and recent sociological theorists [. . .] have paid a good deal of attention to this sort of social performance.

The recognition that our lives are structured according to repeated and socially sanctioned modes of behavior raises the possibility that all human activity could potentially be considered as "performance," or at least all activity carried out with a consciousness of itself. The difference between doing and performing, according to this way of thinking, would seem to be not in the frame of theatre versus real life but in an attitude — we may do actions unthinkingly, but when we think about them, this introduces a consciousness that gives them the quality of performance. This phenomenon has been perhaps most searchingly analyzed in the various writings of Herbert Blau, to which we also will return later.

So we have two rather different concepts of performance, one involving the display of skills, the other also involving display, but less of particular skills than of a recognized and culturally coded pattern of behavior. A third cluster of usages takes us in rather a different direction. When we speak of someone's sexual performance or linguistic performance or when we ask how well a child is performing in school, the emphasis is not so much on display of skill (although that may be involved) or on the carrying out of a particular pattern of behavior, but rather on the general success of the activity in light of some standard of achievement that may not itself be precisely articulated. Perhaps even more significantly, the task of judging the success of the performance (or even judging whether it is a performance) is in these cases not the responsibility of the performer but of the observer. Ultimately, Hamlet himself is the best judge of whether he is "performing" his melancholy actions or

truly "living" them, but linguistic, scholastic, even sexual performance is really framed and judged by its observers. This is why performance in this sense (as opposed to performance in the normal theatrical sense) can be and is applied frequently to non-human activity — TV ads speak interminably of the performance of various brands of automobiles, and scientists of the performance of chemicals or metals under certain conditions. I observed an amusing conflation of the theatrical and mechanical uses of this term in an advertisement by the MTA (Metropolitan Transportation Authority) on the New York subway in October 1994, when the subway was celebrating ninety years of service. This was billed as "New York City's longest running performance."

If we consider performance as an essentially contested concept, this will help us to understand the futility of seeking some overarching semantic field to cover such seemingly disparate usages as the performance of an actor, of a schoolchild, of an automobile. Nevertheless, I would like to credit one highly suggestive attempt at such an articulation. This occurs in the entry on performance by the ethnolinguist Richard Bauman in the *International Encyclopedia of Communications*.⁷ According to Bauman, all performance involves a consciousness of doubleness, through which the actual execution of an action is placed in mental comparison with a potential, an ideal, or a remembered original model of that action. Normally this comparison is made by an observer of the action — the theatre public, the school's teacher, the scientist — but the double consciousness, not the external observation, is what is most central. An athlete, for example, may be aware of his own performance, placing it against a mental standard. Performance is always performance *for* someone, some audience that recognizes and validates it as performance even when, as is occasionally the case, that audience is the self.

When we consider the various kinds of activity that are referred to on the modern cultural scene as "performance" or performance art, these are much better understood in relation to this over-arching semantic field than to the more traditional orientation suggested by the piano-playing Ms. Pritchard, who felt that so long as she was not displaying a virtuosic skill she could not be "performing." Some modern "performance" is centrally concerned with such skills (as in the acts of some of the clowns and jugglers included among the so-called "new vaudevillians"), but much more central to this phenomenon is the sense of an action carried out *for* someone, an action involved in the peculiar doubling that comes with consciousness and with the elusive "other" that performance is not but which it constantly struggles in vain to embody.

Although traditional theatre has regarded this "other" as a character in a dramatic action, embodied (through performance) by an actor, modern performance art has, in general, not been centrally concerned with this dynamic. Its practitioners, almost by definition, do not base their work upon characters previously created by other artists, but upon their own bodies, their own autobiographies, their own specific experiences in a culture or in the world, made performative by their consciousness of them and the process of displaying them for audiences. Since the emphasis is upon the performance, and on how the body or self is articulated through performance, the individual body remains at the center of such presentations. Typical performance art is solo art, and the typical performance artist uses little of the elaborate scenic surroundings of the traditional stage, but at most a few props,

a bit of furniture, and whatever costume (sometimes even nudity) is most suitable to the performance situation.

It is not surprising that such performance has become a highly visible – one might almost say emblematic – art form in the contemporary world, a world that is highly self-conscious, reflexive, obsessed with simulations and theatricalizations in every aspect of its social awareness. With performance as a kind of critical wedge, the metaphor of theatricality has moved out of the arts into almost every aspect of modern attempts to understand our conditions and activities, into almost every branch of the human sciences – sociology, anthropology, ethnography, psychology, linguistics. And as performativity and theatricality have been developed in these fields, both as metaphors and as analytic tools, theorists and practitioners of performance art have in turn become aware of these developments and found in them new sources of stimulation, inspiration, and insight for their own creative work and the theoretical understanding of it.

Performance art, a complex and constantly shifting field in its own right, becomes much more so when one tries to take into account, as any thoughtful consideration of it must, the dense web of interconnections that exists between it and ideas of performance developed in other fields and between it and the many intellectual, cultural, and social concerns that are raised by almost any contemporary performance project. Among them are what it means to be postmodern, the quest for a contemporary subjectivity and identity, the relation of art to structures of power, the varying challenges of gender, race, and ethnicity, to name only some of the most visible of these.

NOTES

- 1 W.B. Gallie, *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding*, New York: Schocken Books, 1964, 187–8.
- 2 Mary S. Strine, Beverly Whitaker Long, and Mary Frances Hopkins, "Research in interpretation and performance studies: trends, issues, priorities," in Gerald Phillips and Julia Wood (eds.), *Speech Communications: Essays to Commemorate the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Speech Communication Association*, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990, 183.
- 3 Erik MacDonald, *Theater at the Margins: Text and the Post-Structured Stage*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993, 175.
- 4 Diane Spencer Pritchard, "Fort Ross: from Russia with love," in Jan Anderson (ed.), *A Living History Reader*, vol. 1, Nashville, Tenn.: American Association for State and Local History, 1991, 53.
- 5 Like most uses of "performance," this one has been challenged, particularly by the noted semiotician of the circus Paul Bouissac. Bouissac argues that what seems to be performance is actually an invariable natural response to a stimulus provided by a trainer who "frames" it as performance. In Bouissac's words, the animal does not "perform," but "negotiates social situations by relying on the repertory of ritualized behavior that characterizes its species" ("Behavior in context: in what sense is a circus animal performing?," in Thomas Sebeok and Robert Rosenthal (eds.), *The Clever Hans Phenomenon: Communication with Horses, Whales, Apes, and People*, New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1981, 24). This hardly settles the matter. As we shall see, many theorists of human performance could generally accept Bouissac's alternate statement, and moreover anyone who has trained horses or dogs knows that, even accounting for an anthropomorphic bias, these animals are not simply negotiating social situations, but are knowingly repeating certain actions for physical or

emotional rewards, a process that, to me at least, seems to have important features in common with human performance.

- 6 Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985, 35–116.
- 7 Richard Bauman in Erik Barnouw (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of Communications*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

READER CROSS-REFERENCES

- Schechner – performance as an organizing principle for academic inquiry
- Goffman – the presentation of self in everyday life
- Faber, Kaprow, Gómez-Peña, Lane – performance art
- Parker and Sedgwick – the contestedness of the term "performativity"
- Taylor – the untranslatability of the term "performance"
- Phelan – the role of the live in defining performance

- 17 Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, trans. Richard Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquense University Press, 1985).
- 18 Peggy Phelan, "The ontology of performance: representation without reproduction," in *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 146–66.
- 19 For a fuller discussion of the ethical and the aesthetic see "Performance, live culture and things of the heart: Peggy Phelan in conversation with Marquard Smith," *The Journal of Visual Culture*, 2(3) (2003): 291–302.
- 20 Jacques Lacan, "The signification of the phallus," in *'crits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Schneider (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977), 281–92.
- 21 RoseLee Goldberg, "The theater of the body," in *Marina Abramović: The House with the Ocean View* (Milan: Charta, 2003), 157.
- 22 In addition to the commentaries already cited in the *New York Times* and the 2003 Charta catalog devoted to the piece, other significant essays include: James Westcott, "Marina Abramović: The House with the Ocean View," *The Drama Review* 47(3) (T179): 129–36; and Laurie Anderson, "Marina Abramović," *Bomb Magazine* 84, <http://www.bombsite.com/abramovic/abramovic.html>. This essay includes a wide-ranging interview – more of a conversation – between the artists.
- 23 Peggy Phelan, "On seeing the invisible," in *Marina Abramović: The House with the Ocean View* (Milan: Charta, 2003), 171–79. The essay will also appear in *Live*, ed. Adrian Heathfield (London: The Tate Modern, 2004).

READER CROSS-REFERENCES

- Carlson – performance art
- Gómez-Peña – performance art's relationship to mediatization
- Faber – the ordeal art of Orlan
- Gabler – life as art
- Kaprow, Lane – performances that resist commercialization

Part III

RITUAL

Rituals are performances that provide structure and continuity to our lives. They are a means of ordering the world to fit our perception. We perform rituals to mark the passage of time (harvest festivals, birthday parties), to transform our social status (weddings, graduations), or to ensure good fortune (blessings, certain prayers). In this way, rituals provide us with a sense of control over an uncertain existence. Rituals are based on repetition, and though most rituals change somewhat over time, we look to them as fixed points from which we measure the rest of our experience. Generally speaking, rituals exemplify and reinforce the values and beliefs of the group that performs them. Conversely, communities are defined by the rituals they share.

Though virtually all performances contain some ritualized behavior, ritual itself is a particular kind of performance. It emphasizes efficacy over entertainment, adherence to tradition over technical virtuosity. Ritual has "real" consequences. Religious or sacred rituals express or enact belief, connecting the participants to a spiritual power. Secular rituals, while not specifically religious, nevertheless invoke the authority of some concept larger than the individual: the state, the community, tradition. Even a private individual ritual such as one's daily grooming routine takes on enhanced significance as a means of defining oneself in relation to society at large.

In disciplinary terms, ritual is where theater and anthropology overlap. It is the art of performance mobilized in the service of a social or religious imperative. In "Liminality and communitas" (1969), anthropologist Victor Turner emphasizes the liminal, or in-between, status of the ritual subject, suggesting that this aspect of ritual can lead to a feeling of *communitas*, a social bond between the participants. This is illustrated with an example from the rite of passage performed by the Ndembu tribe of Zambia. For Turner, rituals are part of "social dramas" that allow a culture to maintain a balance between what he calls "structure and anti-structure." Catherine Bell, in "'Performance' and other analogies" (1992), considers the impact of Turner and others' performance analysis on ethnography. While agreeing that performance can be a powerful lens through which to view ritual, Bell cautions that its utility is limited, because the performance analogy contains intrinsic assumptions about participant-observation, meaning, and efficacy that may affect our ability to understand a culture.

Michael Atwood Mason's "The blood that runs through the veins" (1993) and Alyda Faber's "Saint Orlan" (2002) provide detailed descriptions of contemporary ritual practice. Mason examines a traditional Afro-Cuban ritual, *Santería Dilogún* divination, exploring how it can provide comfort and reassurance to those in crisis. Faber, by contrast, considers an oppositional ritual, the violent manipulation of religious imagery by French performance artist Orlan. Finally, in this section, Jack Santino's "Performative commemoratives: the personal, and the public" (2004) considers an emerging class of rituals which are designed for public display, and which invite participation from a general audience. Such performances, which often memorialize victims of violence, challenge traditional notions of *communitas* and suggest new understandings of the relationship between ritual and performativity.

Taken collectively, these essays show us that the colloquial use of "ritual" to mean *pro forma* or "without impact" is far from the truth. Ritual, both as a cultural practice and as a lens through which to understand performances of various kinds, continues to shape our lives, and to affect communities large and small throughout the world.

LIMINALITY AND COMMUNITAS

Victor Turner

Form and attributes of rites of passage

In this chapter I take up a theme I have discussed briefly elsewhere (Turner, 1967: 93–111), note some of its variations, and consider some of its further implications for the study of culture and society. This theme is in the first place represented by the nature and characteristics of what Arnold van Gennep (1909) has called the "liminal phase" of *rites de passage*. Van Gennep himself defined *rites de passage* as "rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age." To point up the contrast between "state" and "transition," I employ "state" to include all his other terms. It is a more inclusive concept than "status" or "office", and refers to any type of stable or recurrent condition that is culturally recognized. Van Gennep has shown that all rites of passage or "transition" are marked by three phases: separation, margin (or *limen*, signifying "threshold" in Latin), and aggregation. The first phase (of separation) comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure, from a set of cultural conditions (a "state"), or from both. During the intervening "liminal" period, the characteristics of the ritual subject (the "passenger") are ambiguous; he passes through a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state. In the third phase (reaggregation or reincorporation), the passage is consummated. The ritual subject, individual or corporate, is in a relatively stable state once more and, by virtue of this, has rights and obligations *vis-à-vis* others of a clearly defined and "structural" type; he is expected to behave in accordance with certain customary norms and ethical standards binding on incumbents of social position in a system of such positions.

Liminality

The attributes of liminality or of liminal *personae* ("threshold people") are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize

social and cultural transitions. Thus, liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon.

Liminal entities, such as neophytes in initiation or puberty rites, may be represented as possessing nothing. They may be disguised as monsters, wear only a strip of clothing, or even go naked, to demonstrate that as liminal beings they have no status, property, insignia, secular clothing indicating rank or role, position in a kinship system – in short, nothing that may distinguish them from their fellow neophytes or initiands. Their behavior is normally passive or humble; they must obey their instructors implicitly, and accept arbitrary punishment without complaint. It is as though they are being reduced or ground down to a uniform condition to be fashioned anew and endowed with additional powers to enable them to cope with their new station in life. Among themselves, neophytes tend to develop an intense comradeship and egalitarianism. Secular distinctions of rank and status disappear or are homogenized. The condition of the patient and her husband in *Isoma* had some of these attributes – passivity, humility, near-nakedness – in a symbolic milieu that represented both a grave and a womb. In initiations with a long period of seclusion, such as the circumcision rites of many tribal societies or induction into secret societies, there is often a rich proliferation of liminal symbols.

Communitas

What is interesting about liminal phenomena for our present purposes is the blend they offer of lowliness and sacredness, of homogeneity and comradeship. We are presented, in such rites, with a "moment in and out of time," and in and out of secular social structure, which reveals, however fleetingly, some recognition (in symbol if not always in language) of a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of structural ties. These are the ties organized in terms either of caste, class, or rank hierarchies or of segmentary oppositions in the stateless societies beloved of political anthropologists. It is as though there are here two major "models" for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating. The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of "more" or "less." The second, which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders.

I prefer the Latin term "communitas" to "community", to distinguish this modality of social relationship from an "area of common living." The distinction between structure and communitas is not simply the familiar one between "secular" and "sacred," or that, for example, between politics and religion. Certain fixed offices in tribal societies have many sacred attributes; indeed, every social position has some sacred characteristics. But this "sacred" component is acquired by the incumbents of positions during the *rites de passage*, through which they changed positions. Something of the sacredness of that transient humility and modelessness goes over, and tempers the pride of the incumbent of a higher

position or office. This is not simply, as Fortes (1962: 86) has cogently argued, a matter of giving a general stamp of legitimacy to a society's structural positions. It is rather a matter of giving recognition to an essential and generic human bond, without which there could be no society. Liminality implies that the high could not be high unless the low existed, and he who is high must experience what it is like to be low. No doubt something of this thinking, a few years ago, lay behind Prince Philip's decision to send his son, the heir apparent to the British throne, to a bush school in Australia for a time, where he could learn how "to rough it."

Dialectic of the developmental cycle

From all this I infer that, for individuals and groups, social life is a type of dialectical process that involves successive experience of high and low, communitas and structure, homogeneity and differentiation, equality and inequality. The passage from lower to higher status is through a limbo of statuslessness. In such a process, the opposites, as it were, constitute one another and are mutually indispensable. Furthermore, since any concrete tribal society is made up of multiple personae, groups, and categories, each of which has its own developmental cycle, at a given moment many incumbencies of fixed positions coexist with many passages between positions. In other words, each individual's life experience contains alternating exposure to structure and communitas, and to states and transitions.

The liminality of an installation rite

One brief example from the Ndembu of Zambia of a *rite de passage* that concerns the highest status in that tribe, that of the senior chief Kanongesha, will be useful here. It will also expand our knowledge of the way the Ndembu utilize and explain their ritual symbols. The position of senior or paramount chief among the Ndembu, as in many other African societies, is a paradoxical one, for he represents both the apex of the structured politico-legal hierarchy and the total community as an unstructured unit. He is, symbolically, also the tribal territory itself and all its resources. Its fertility and freedom from drought, famine, disease, and insect plagues are bound up with his office, and with both his physical and moral condition. Among the Ndembu, the ritual powers of the senior chief were limited by and combined with those held by a senior headman of the autochthonous Mbwele people, who made submission only after long struggle to their Lunda conquerors led by the first Kanongesha. An important right was vested in the headman, named Kafwana, of the Humbu, a branch of the Mbwele. This was the right to confer and periodically to mediate the supreme symbol of chiefly status among tribes of Lunda origin, the *lukanu* bracelet, made from human genitalia and sinews and soaked in the sacrificial blood of male and female slaves at each installation. Kafwana's ritual title was *Chivwikankanu*, "the one who dresses with or puts on the *lukanu*." He also had the title *Mama yaKanongesha*, "mother of Kanongesha," because he gave symbolic birth to each new incumbent of that office. Kafwana was also said to teach each new Kanongesha the medicines of witchcraft, which made him

feared by his rivals and subordinates – perhaps one indication of weak political centralization.

The *lukanu*, originally conferred by the head of all the Lunda, the Mwantiyavwa, who ruled in the Katanga many miles to the north, was ritually treated by Kafwana and hidden by him during interregna. The mystical power of the *lukanu*, and hence of the Kanongesha-ship, came jointly from Mwantiyavwa, the political fountainhead, and Kafwana, the ritual course: its employment for the benefit of the land and the people was in the hands of a succession of individual incumbents of the chieftainship. Its origin in Mwantiyavwa symbolized the historical unity of the Ndembu people, and their political differentiation into subchiefdoms under Kanongesha; its periodic medication by Kafwana symbolized the land – of which Kafwana was the original “owner” – and the total community living on it. The daily invocations made to it by Kanongesha, at dawn and sunset, were for the fertility and continued health and strength of the land, of its animal and vegetable resources, and of the people – in short, for the commonweal and public good. But the *lukanu* had a negative aspect; it could be used by Kanongesha to curse. If he touched the earth with it and uttered a certain formula, it was believed that the person or group cursed would become barren, their land infertile and their game invisible. In the *lukanu*, finally, Lunda and Mbwela were united in the joint concept of Ndembu land and folk.

In the relationship between Lunda and Mbwela, and between Kanongesha and Kafwana, we find a distinction familiar in Africa between the politically or militarily strong and the subdued autochthonous people, who are nevertheless ritually potent. Iowan Lewis (1963) has described such structural inferiors as having “the power or powers of the weak” (111). One well-known example from the literature is to be found in Meyer Fortes’ account of the Tallensi of northern Ghana, where the incoming Namoos brought chieftainship and a highly developed ancestral cult to the autochthonous Tale, who, for their part, are thought to have important ritual powers in connection with the earth and its caverns. In the great Golib Festival, held annually, the union of chiefly and priestly powers is symbolized by the mystical marriage between the chief of Tongo, leader of the Namoos, and the great earth-priest, the Golibdaana, of the Tale, portrayed respectively as “husband” and “wife.” Among Ndembu, Kafwana is also considered, as we have seen, symbolically feminine in relation to Kanongesha. I could multiply examples of this type of dichotomy many times from African sources alone, and its range is world-wide. The point I would like to stress here is that there is a certain homology between the “weakness” and “passivity” of liminality in diachronic transitions between states and statuses, and the “structural” or synchronic inferiority of certain personae, groups, and social categories in political, legal, and economic systems. The “liminal” and the “inferior” conditions are often associated with ritual powers and with the total community seen as undifferentiated.

To return to the installation rites of the Kanongesha of the Ndembu: The liminal component of such rites begins with the construction of a small shelter of leaves about a mile away from the capital village. This hut is known as *kafu* or *kafwi*, a term Ndembu derive from *ku-fwa*, “to die,” for it is here that the chief-elect dies from his commoner state. Imagery of death abounds in Ndembu liminality. For example, the secret and sacred site where novices are circumcised is known as *ifwilu* or *chifwilu*, a term also derived from

The chief-elect, clad in nothing but a ragged waist-cloth, and a ritual wife, who is his senior wife (*mwadyi*) or a special slave woman, known as *lukanu* (after the royal bracelet) for the occasion, similarly clad, are called by Kafwana to enter the *kafu* shelter just after sundown. The chief himself, incidentally, is also known as *mwadyi* or *lukanu* in these rites. The couple are led there as though they were infirm. There they sit crouched in a posture of shame (*nsonyi*) or modesty, while they are washed with medicines mixed with water brought from Katukang’onyi, the river site where the ancestral chiefs of the southern Lunda diaspora dwelt for a while on their journey from Mwantiyavwa’s capital before separating to carve out realms for themselves. The wood for this fire must not be cut by an axe but found lying on the ground. This means that it is the product of the earth itself and not an artifact. Once more we see the conjunction of ancestral Lunda hood and chthonic powers.

Next begins the rite of *Kumukindiyila*, which means literally “to speak evil or insulting words against him”; we might call this rite “The reviling of the chief-elect.” It begins when Kafwana makes a cut on the underside of the chief’s left arm – on which the *lukanu* bracelet will be drawn on the morrow – presses medicine into the incision, and presses a mat on the upper side of the arm. The chief and his wife are then forced rather roughly to sit on the mat. The wife must not be pregnant, for the rites that follow are held to destroy fertility. Moreover, the chiefly couple must have refrained from sexual congress for several days before the rites.

Kafwana now breaks into a homily, as follows:

Be silent! You are a mean and selfish fool, one who is bad-tempered! You do not love your fellows, you are only angry with them! Meanness and theft are all you have! Yet here we have called you and we say that you must succeed to the chieftainship. Put away meanness, put aside anger, give up adulterous intercourse, give them up immediately! We have granted you chieftainship. You must eat with your fellow men, you must live well with them. Do not prepare witchcraft medicines that you may devour your fellows in their huts – that is forbidden! We have desired you and you only for our chief. Let your wife prepare food for the people who come here to the capital village. Do not be selfish, do not keep the chieftainship to yourself! You must laugh with the people, you must abstain from witchcraft, if perchance you have given it already! You must not be killing people! You must not be ungenerous to people!

But you, Chief Kanongesha, Chifwanakenu [“son who resembles his father”] of Mwantiyavwa, you have danced for your chieftainship because your predecessor is dead [i.e. because you killed him]. But today you are born as a new chief. You must know the people, O Chifwanakenu. If you were mean, and used to eat your cassava mush alone, or your meat alone, today you are in the chieftainship. You must give up your selfish ways, you must welcome everyone, you are the chief! You must stop being adulterous and quarrelsome. You must not bring partial judgments to bear on any law case involving your people, especially where your own children are involved. you must say: “If someone has slept with my wife, or wronged me, today I must not judge his case unjustly. I must not keep resentment in my heart.”

After this harangue, any person who considers that he has been wronged by the chief-elect in the past is entitled to revile him and most fully express his resentment, going into as much detail as he desires. The chief-elect, during all this, has to sit silently with downcast head, "the pattern of all patience" and humility. Kafwana meanwhile splashes the chief with medicine, at intervals striking his buttocks against him (*kumubayisha*) insultingly. Many informants have told me that "a chief is just like a slave (*ndung'u*) on the night before he succeeds." He is prevented from sleeping, partly as an ordeal, partly because it is said that if he dozes off he will have bad dreams about the shades of dead chiefs, "who will say that he is wrong to succeed them, for has he not killed them?" Kafwana, his assistant, and other important men, such as village headmen, man-handle the chief and his wife — who is similarly reviled — and order them to fetch firewood and perform other menial tasks. The chief may not resent any of this or hold it against the perpetrators in times to come.

Attributes of liminal entities

The phase of reaggregation in this case comprises the public installation of the Kanongesha with all pomp and ceremony. While this would be of the utmost interest in study of Ndembu chieftainship, and to an important trend in study of Ndembu chieftainship, and to an important trend in current British social anthropology, it does not concern us here. Our present focus is upon liminality and the ritual powers of the weak. These are shown under two aspects. First, Kafwana and the other Ndembu commoners are revealed as privileged to exert authority over the supreme authority figure of the tribe. In liminality, the underling comes uppermost. Second, the supreme political authority is portrayed "as a slave," recalling that aspect of the coronation of a pope in Western Christendom when he is called upon to be the "*servus servorum Dei*." Part of the rite has, of course, what Monica Wilson (1957: 46-54) has called a "prophylactic function." The chief has to exert self-control in the rites that he may be able to have self-mastery thereafter in face of the temptations of power. But the role of the humbled chief is only an extreme example of a recurrent theme of liminal situations. This theme is the stripping off of preliminal and postliminal attributes.

Let us look at the main ingredient of the *Kumukindiyila* rites. The chief and his wife are dressed identically in a ragged waist-cloth and share the same name — *mwadyi*. This term is also applied to boys undergoing initiation and to a man's first wife in chronological order of marriage. It is an index of the anonymous state of "initiand." These attributes of sexlessness and anonymity are highly characteristic of liminality. In many kinds of initiation where the neophytes are of both sexes, males and females are dressed alike and referred to by the same term. This is true, for example, of many baptismal ceremonies in Christian or syncretic sects in Africa: for example, those of the *Bwiti* cult in the Gabon (James Fernandez; personal communication). It is also true of initiation into the Ndembu funerary association of *Chiwila*. Symbolically, all attributes that distinguish categories and groups in the structured social order are here in abeyance; the neophytes are merely entities in transition, as yet without place or position.

Other characteristics are submissiveness and silence. Not only the chief in the rites under discussion, but also neophytes in many *rites de passage* have to submit to an authority that is nothing less than that of the total community. This community is the repository of the whole gamut of the culture's values, norms, attitudes, sentiments, and relationships. Its representatives in the specific rites — and these may vary from ritual to ritual — represent the generic authority of tradition. In tribal societies, too, speech is not merely communication but also power and wisdom. The wisdom (*mana*) that is imparted in sacred liminality is not just an aggregation of words and sentences; it has ontological value, it refashions the very being of the neophyte. That is why, in the Chisungu rites of the Bemba, so well described by Audrey Richards (1956), the secluded girl is said to be "grown into a woman" by the female elders — and she is so grown by the verbal and nonverbal instruction she receives in precept and symbol, especially by the revelation to her of tribal *sacra* in the form of pottery images.

The neophyte in liminality must be a *tabula rasa*, a blank slate, on which is inscribed the knowledge and wisdom of the group, in those respects that pertain to the new status. The ordeals and humiliations, often of a grossly physiological character, to which neophytes are submitted represent partly a destruction of the previous status and partly a tempering of their essence in order to prepare them to cope with their new responsibilities and restrain them in advance from abusing their new privileges. They have to be shown that in themselves they are clay or dust, mere matter, whose form is impressed upon them by society.

Another liminal theme exemplified in the Ndembu installation rites is sexual continence. This is a pervasive theme of Ndembu ritual. Indeed, the resumption of sexual relations is usually a ceremonial mark of the return to society as a structure of statuses. While this is a feature of certain types of religious behavior in almost all societies, in preindustrial society, with its strong stress on kinship as the basis of many types of group affiliation, sexual continence has additional religious force. For kinship, or relations shaped by the idiom of kinship, is one of the main factors in structural differentiation. The undifferentiated character of liminality is reflected by the discontinuance of sexual relations and the absence of marked sexual polarity.

It is instructive to analyze the homiletic of Kafwana, in seeking to grasp the meaning of liminality. The reader will remember that he chided the chief-elect for his selfishness, meanness, theft, anger, witchcraft, and greed. All these vices represent the desire to possess for oneself what ought to be shared for the common good. An incumbent of high status is peculiarly tempted to use the authority vested in him by society to satisfy these private and privative wishes. But he should regard his privileges as gifts of the whole community, which in the final issue has an oversight over all his actions. Structure and the high offices provided by structure are thus seen as instrumentalities of the common weal, not as a means of personal aggrandizement. The chief must not "keep his chieftainship to himself." He "must laugh with the people," and laughter (*ku-seha*) is for the Ndembu a "white" quality, and enters into the definition of "whiteness" or "white things." Whiteness represents the seamless web of connection that ideally ought to include both the living and the dead. It is right relation between people, merely as human beings, and its fruits are health, strength, and all good things. "White" laughter, for example, which is visibly manifested in the flashing of teeth, represents fellowship and good company. It is the reverse of pride (*winyi*), and the

secret envies, lusts, and grudges that result behaviorally in witchcraft (*wuloji*), theft (*wukombi*), adultery (*kushimbana*), meanness (*chifwa*), and homicide (*wubanja*). Even when a man has become a chief, he must still be a member of the whole community of persons (*antu*), and show this by "laughing with them," respecting their rights, "welcoming everyone," and sharing food with them. The chastening function of liminality is not confined to this type of initiation but forms a component of many other types in many cultures. A well-known example is the medieval knight's vigil, during the night before he receives the accolade, when he has to pledge himself to serve the weak and the distressed and to meditate on his own unworthiness. His subsequent power is thought partially to spring from this profound immersion in humility.

The pedagogics of liminality, therefore, represent a condemnation of two kinds of separation from the generic bond of *communitas*. The first kind is to act only in terms of the rights conferred on one by the incumbency of office in the social structure. The second is to follow one's psychobiological urges at the expense of one's fellows. A mystical character is assigned to the sentiment of humankindness in most types of liminality, and in most cultures this stage of transition is brought closely in touch with beliefs in the protective and punitive powers of divine or preterhuman beings or powers. For example, when the Ndembu chief-elect emerges from seclusion, one of his subchiefs — who plays a priestly role at the installation rites — makes a ritual fence around the new chief's dwelling, and prays as follows to the shades of former chiefs, before the people who have assembled to witness the installation:

Listen, all you people. Kanongesha has come to be born into the chieftainship today. This white clay [*mpemba*], with which the chief, the ancestral shrines, and the officiant will be anointed, is for you, all the Kanongeshas of old gathered together here. [Here the ancient chiefs are mentioned by name.] And, therefore, all you who have died, look upon your friend who has succeeded [to the chiefly stool], that he may be strong. He must continue to pray well to you. He must look after the children, he must care for all the people, both men, and women, that they may be strong and that he himself should be hale. Here is your white clay. I have enthroned you, O chief. You, O People, must give forth sounds of praise. The chieftainship has appeared.

The powers that shape the neophytes in liminality for the incumbency of new status are felt, in rites all over the world, to be more than human powers, though they are invoked and channeled by the representatives of the community.

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- Schechner — close collaborator
- McKenzie — on liminality as a defining concept for performance studies
- Geertz, C. Bell, Fabian, Conquergood — implications of Turner's ritual theory for anthropological and ethnographic practice
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"PERFORMANCE" AND OTHER ANALOGIES

Catherine Bell

In recent years the notion of "cultural performance" has become increasingly popular as a category and general approach. This popularity appears to have been nourished by a variety of sources. Foremost among these are Kenneth Burke's notion of "dramatism," V. Turner's work on social dramas, the multiplication of categories such as "civil ceremonial" and "secular rites," work on the sociology of role playing along with Erving Goffman's interaction rituals, and, last but not least, perhaps, J.L. Austin's and John Searle's analyses of "speech acts."¹

In its own way, performance theory signals a strong dissatisfaction with the traditional categories brought to the study of ritual. At the same time, however, its focus on ritual, theater, or sports as 'genres' or 'universals' of performance appears to involve the construction of very traditional types of relationships and categories.² Some performance theorists have explicitly aspired "to transcend such conventional dichotomies as oral and written, public and private, doing and thinking, primitive and modern, sacred and secular."³ Clearly these dichotomies have contributed to the perception that theoretical analysis is failing to convey something important about how ritual activities are generated and experienced. Grimes has rued how "foreign" ritual has become for us, while V. Turner echoed D.H. Lawrence's quip that "analysis presupposes a corpse."⁴ Turner, in particular, repeatedly argued that a "living quality frequently fails to emerge from our pedagogics."⁵ More specifically, Sherry Ortner suggests that frustration with structural linguistics was responsible for this turning to how language communicates via performance.⁶ Robert Wuthnow supports this idea by explicitly contrasting dramaturgical and structural approaches to analyzing culture. The former, he argues, which focuses on ritual in the broadest sense, is able to incorporate the social dimension lost to structural analysis.⁷ For Wuthnow, the dramaturgical approach recasts the problem of meaning by affording a shift from analysis of the subjective or semantic meaning of symbols to analysis of the conditions under which symbolic acts are meaningful.⁸

Despite their insights into the problems of ritual theory, neither Wuthnow nor the others cited effectively break free of a theoretical framework in which activity is seen as dramatizing or enacting prior conceptual entities in order to reaffirm or reexperience them.

Grimes, for example, argues "the primacy of the human body" in ritual studies, but he equates this primacy with the body's "capacity to enact social roles and body forth cultural meanings."⁹ Although the notion of performance appears to many to offer some solution to the way in which theory fails to grasp action, as a whole the contributions of performance theory and terminology to the formulation of an approach that does not dichotomize doing and thinking remain somewhat obscure. Indeed, the performance approach appears to suggest a further exaggeration of the structured relations between thinking theorist and acting object which I have already examined.

Performance theorists frequently base themselves on two interrelated points originally articulated by Singer. First, as noted previously, people "think of their culture as encapsulated within discrete performances, which they can exhibit to outsiders as well as to themselves." Second, such performances constitute for the outside observer "the most concrete observable units of the cultural structure" — since each performance "has a definitely limited time span, a beginning and an end, an organized program of activity, a set of performers, an audience, and a place and occasion of performance."¹⁰ Although such statements do not constitute an agenda for systematic analysis, they are more than a simple application of the "drama analogy," with its whole system of terms, relationships, and assumptions.¹¹ Singer did not merely suggest an approach to ritual that guarantees direct access to native units of experience and clear observation of sociocultural processes; he also defined culture itself in terms of those very activities that appear to provide such clear access and observation. That is, cultural performances are the ways in which the cultural content of a tradition "is organized and transmitted on particular occasions through specific media."¹² Thus, these performances are the specific and particular manifestations ('instances') of culture aside from which culture is just an abstract category.¹³ However, if culture is the giving of performances, then culture is that which is given to an "audience" or the outside theorist who has joined it. Researchers and theorists are repositioned in performance theory: no longer peering in through the window, they are now comfortably seated as members of the audience for whom the performance is being presented. As such, the theorist-observer has become an important participant, one who is integral both to the actors' ability to act culturally (i.e. to perform) and to their ability to understand their own culture (since such understanding is the result of expressing their general cultural orientations in discrete ritual activities).

In some cases, performance theory appears to promote an even more intense mode of participation. In discussing ritual and social drama, for example, Turner calls for the "performance of ethnography" by both anthropologists and professional actors.¹⁴ John MacAloon refers to the "performance" given by academic participants at a symposium that resulted in the book he subtitled "Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance."¹⁵ Grimes finds that the activities of scattered experiments in improvisational theater are "crucial both to the practice and study of religion, particularly ritual studies."¹⁶

This enhanced participation of the scholar-observer takes an interesting form in Grimes's development of the project of "ritual criticism." Ritual criticism is loosely modeled on the relationship of literary criticism to literature and on cultural-critical developments in anthropology (as described by Marcus and Fischer). Moreover, Grimes's critical evaluation

of ritual can be conducted in a variety of ways: through indigenous forms of emic criticism, etic forms by scholars or foreign critics, and even criticism of one religious tradition by another. In another formulation, he contrasts the criticism practiced by rites and ritualists themselves with the critical activities of "ritologists."¹⁷ The position of the critical observer, Grimes suggests, should be neither scientifically neutral nor theologically normative; the purpose of critical observation is to aid in the recognition of ritual exploitation on the one hand or appropriate revision and borrowing of ritual practices on the other.¹⁸ It appears that two concerns are central to Grimes's project: first, an appreciation of the inadequacy of earlier models of participant-observer relations and, second, a real sense of shared purpose between participants and critics. What Jennings saw as a shared "epistemological" project, Grimes would appear to embrace as a shared project of both cultural critique and reflexive self-observation.

Performance terminology has been used in a wide variety of ways. By far the most cautious performance position was laid out by the British anthropologist Gilbert Lewis. According to Lewis, our tendency to be preoccupied with the intellectual aspects of responses to ritual (i.e. deciphering the meaning of its coded messages) leads us to overlook more immediate sensory responses. He suggests "likening" ritual to the performance of a play or a piece of music, but he cautions against using such insights into ritual to define it.¹⁹

If Lewis has been the most cautious of those who invoke performance, then V. Turner was certainly one of the most enthusiastic. Yet Turner's late work on ritual and performance remains fundamentally within the framework of his early theory of ritual as the transformational dialectic of structure and antistructure (or organization and *communitas*) to serve as a vehicle for unfolding social dramas.²⁰ Social dramas are embodied in ritual, where they have paradigmatic functions that make clear the deepest values of the culture. In Turner's view, such paradigmatic functions also serve to provide the outsider with a "limited area of transparency in the otherwise opaque surface of regular, uneventful social life."²¹ This is the same "window of ritual" evoked by Geertz.

Performance theory probably has one of its most sophisticated presentations in the work of Stanley Tambiah. Tambiah explicitly reacts against the opposition of thought and action and suggests that the devaluation of action embedded in the distinction can be redressed by a focus on performance.²² Like Ortner and Wuthnow, he argues that the social dimension becomes more accessible through performance theory. Tambiah is particularly concerned, in fact, that the significance of the semantic structure of words and acts not lead us to ignore the significance of social relations both within the ritual itself and within the larger context of the rite.²³ He breaks with the Durkheimian approach developed by Gluckman and V. Turner in arguing that ritual does not evoke feelings or express the mental orientation of individuals in any sort of direct and spontaneous way. Rather, he emphasizes the formalism of ritual as having a distancing effect that serves to articulate and communicate attitudes of institutionalized communication.²⁴ Tambiah's appreciation for the social dimension also leads him to amend Austin and Searle by explicating the necessary social conditions under which "saying is doing" and ritual is "a mode of social action."²⁵ Saying is just saying and formalized acts are idiosyncratic, he argues, unless they conform to established social conventions and subject themselves to judgments of legitimacy.²⁶

Tambiah distinguishes three ways in which ritual is performative: (1) it involves doing things, even if the doing is saying in the Austinian sense; (2) it is staged and uses multiple media to afford participants an intense experience; and (3) it involves indexical values in the sense laid out by Pierce. The indexical features of ritual are seen in its graded scale of ostentatiousness, the choice of site, the degree of redundancy or elaboration, and so on, all of which present and validate the social hierarchy indirectly depicted by them. As a system of communication, ritual involves both indexical features that refer to the social hierarchy and symbolic features that refer to the cosmos. Indeed, Tambiah goes on to elaborate a series of opposing features mobilized in ritual, including semantic/referential components versus pragmatic components, form versus content, the cultural and the universal, and indexical symbolism versus indexical iconicity.²⁷ Thus, despite his focus on performance and his concerns about the thought-action dichotomy, he also is drawn into the familiar dilemma of setting out to transcend one bifurcation only to generate others that find their integration in ritual as a mechanism for fusing theoretical distinctions.²⁸

Performance theory rests of course on the slippery implications of an extended metaphor, specifically the analogy between ritual activities and the acts of performing and dramatizing. While it offers a new descriptive vantage point on aspects of ritual activities, as a paradigm or model it is gravely disadvantaged in several ways. First, the increased naturalization of the outside observer that is obtained in the very definition of act as performance takes the relationship between subject and object constructed by the theorist and inscribes it into the nature of the object itself. In other words, ritual comes to be seen as performance in the sense of symbolic acts specifically meant to have an impact on an audience and entreat their interpretive appropriation. Second, the notion of performance as a theoretical tool for approaching certain activities comes to be used as descriptive of the fundamental nature of those activities; in other words, a model of ritual activity provides the criteria for what is or is not ritual. Third, although performance may become a criterion for what is or is not ritual, insofar as performance is broadly used for a vast spectrum of activities, there is no basis to differentiate among ways of performing. An initial focus on the performative aspects of ritual easily leads to the difficulty of being unable to distinguish how ritual is not the same as dramatic theater or spectator sports.²⁹

Rappaport attempts to avoid some of these problems when he maintains that ritual is not drama, although performance, like formality, is a *sine qua non* of ritual.³⁰ In this way he holds on to the primacy of doing and acting that a performance focus promises, but he does not succumb to the slippage of explaining by analogy. In a somewhat similar vein, Emily Ahern also challenges the description of ritual as a dramatization that is meant to affect the participants as opposed to the external world.³¹ In so doing, she points to an interesting problem inherent in the performance metaphor: Since performance theory denies any validity to indigenous claims that certain actions *affect* the gods, the harvest, or anything beyond the dispositions of the actors and audience, how much epistemological sharing can there actually be between Chinese participants and Western interpreters concerning the type of project at stake in a Chinese "soul-settling" ceremony?

Performance theorists, of course, argue that what ritual does is communicate (and hence it does not secure the intercession of deities, pacify the dead, or encourage rain, etc.) and it

is through this function that ritual indirectly affects social realities and perceptions of those realities. However, when performance theory attempts to explain such communication it must fall back on ritual activity as depicting, modeling, enacting, or dramatizing what are seen as prior conceptual ideas and values. The meaningfulness of ritual that such interpretations attempt to explicate has nothing to do with the efficacy that the ritual acts are thought to have by those who perform them. The idiom of communication through symbolic acts maybe a corrective to the notion of magic, but it does little to convey what these acts mean to those involved in them.

In his famous discussion of "blurred genres," Geertz looks at three popular analogies adopted by the social sciences to interpret social behavior.³² He begins with the "game" analogy, then goes on to explore the "drama" analogy, and finally turns to the "text" analogy. The drama analogy, he suggests, affords an appreciation of certain features of action, specifically its temporality, collectivity, public nature, and power to transmute not just opinions but people themselves. However, it lumps all types of social action together as having the same form without any ability to appreciate the differences in content. The game and text analogies likewise illuminate certain features and confuse others. All of these analogies, he argues, are examples of a cases-and-interpretations approach to social theory, rather than the older laws-and-instances approach. Thus, they are concerned with interpretation and meaning — specifically, what "all the usual objects of social-scientific interest" mean to those who are immediately involved in them.³³ Yet it is not at all clear that this actually is the type of meaning derived from the theoretical deployment of these analogies. While Geertz finds that "religious symbols . . . reek of meaning," Tambiah has his doubts.³⁴ Tambiah rejects such "intentionality" theories as inadequate to the interpretation of formalized and conventionalized action and finds the various conceptions of meaning in anthropology a "deadly source of confusion."³⁵ With the exception of Tambiah, however, the popularity of performance metaphors and theories represents something of a consensus about "meaning" as a specifically hermeneutical conception.

In the same vein, Marcus and Fischer suggest that the popularity of ritual as a theoretical focus is based on how readily a public performance can be *read like a text*.³⁶ The text analogy is used explicitly in Alton Becker's study of Indonesian *wayang* performances as "text-building." It is more implicit in James Fernandez's study (with its echoes of Boas and Burke) of ritual as the strategic deployment of a metaphor.³⁷ In both cases, however, the interpretative hermeneutic brought to bear on ritual approaches the rite as if it were a text. In his essay "Deep Play," Geertz also explicitly approaches ritualized activities as a text to be decoded.³⁸ Yet he concludes his later comparison of blurred genres with a recognition of the particular dangers and implausibility of the text analogy. Its application to action is, Geertz argues, an example of "a thorough-going conceptual wrench."³⁹ Hinting at the problems involved in the readiness to decode ritual, Geertz nearly echoes some of Tambiah's reservations after all.

Paul Ricoeur has argued both systematically and pointedly that meaningful action" is indeed like a text, delineating criteria for textuality that meaningful action also fulfills.⁴⁰ For the most part, however, the textual analogy is usually applied with much less clarity. Moreover, the analogy tends to be based not on the assertion of a similarity between texts

and rites but on the similarity of the interpretive position of the theorist in each case. In fact, if we think in terms of the mode of interpretation rather than the similarities of such objects as rite, drama, and text, the text analogy can be seen to underlie the drama analogy and be quite basic to performance theory.

Certainly there is a general tendency in the social sciences to "textualize" the objects of its concern. Such textualization, according to Jameson, is "a methodological hypothesis whereby the objects of study of the human sciences . . . are considered to constitute so many texts which we *decipher* and *interpret*, as distinguished from the older view of those objects as realities or existants or substances which we in one way or another attempt to know."⁴¹ We textualize, he implies, not because rites are intrinsically like texts, but because we approach both looking for meaning as something that can be deciphered, decoded, or interpreted. Developing Geertz's contrast between "law-and-instances" and "cases-and-interpretation" styles of analysis, one might suppose that the shift in cultural studies away from the model of science and the dogma of scientific objectivity has been essentially based on an interpretive-textual model.⁴²

Yet the interpretive project, whether conducted in literary criticism or anthropology, carries some important assumptions. Foremost among them are the assumptions that the text (rite or another example of meaningful social action) is autonomous and unified, on the one hand, and that its latent meaning is fully accessible to a close reading of its manifest form on the other.⁴³ Both assumptions present problems when it comes to the avowed benefits of a performance approach to ritual. For example, the emphasis on the *activity* of ritual which performance theory attempts to develop may actually be something of an illusion. The interpretive endeavor requires, and assumes, that activity encodes something. As the foregoing thought-action argument illustrated, the assumed existence of such a "something," the latent meaning of the act, once again devalues the action itself, making it a second-stage representation of prior values.

It has been suggested that the reasons for the shift to a performance approach, with its underlying interpretive-textual paradigm, are the perceived failures of earlier models and the greater explanative power, particularly in terms of social dimensions, of the new paradigm. The performance paradigm deserves a thorough assessment of its "merits as a concept," as Leach would say, and the results might vindicate this explanation of its popularity. Yet it is also possible to see some basis for its popularity in the distinctive imagery of performance theory (that of a sensitive and appreciative participant interpreter, not a coldly detached, analytic scientist) and in the greater obscurity of the slippage involved (how much more readily "performance" slips from being a tool for analysis to being a feature of the object and thereby validates an approach and a whole discourse). While it is this type of slippage that affords the expedient logic on which many theories of ritual are based, this imagery is an equally powerful incentive for ritual studies.

NOTES

- 1 Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, 3rd edn (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), originally published in 1941; Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1974); Sally F. Moore and Barbara G. Myerhoff, eds., *Secular Ritual* (Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1977); Erving Goffman, *Interaction Ritual* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1967); J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962); and John R. Searle, *Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969). For a good discussion of the various roots of performance theory, see Lawrence E. Sullivan, "Sounds and senses: toward a hermeneutics of performance," *History of Religions* 26, 1 (1986): 2-14.
- 2 On the various "genres" of performance, see Richard Schechner and Willa Appel, eds., *By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theater and Ritual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3.
- 3 John J. MacAloon, *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle: Rehearsals Toward a Theory of Cultural Performance* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984), 1.
- 4 Grimes, *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*, introduction, no pagination; Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theater: The Human Seriousness of Play* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982), 89.
- 5 V. Turner, *From Ritual to Theater*, 89.
- 6 Ortner, "Theory in anthropology since the sixties," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (1984): 144.
- 7 Robert Wuthnow, *Meaning and Moral Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 11-15. He also considers two other approaches which he characterizes as subjective and institutional.
- 8 Wuthnow, 344.
- 9 Ronald L. Grimes, "Ritual studies," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 12, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 423. Emphasis added.
- 10 Singer, *Traditional India*, Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1959, xiii.
- 11 On the drama analogy, see Geertz's "Blurred genres: the refiguration of social thought," in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 19-35. [Also see pages 64-7 in this volume - Ed.]
- 12 Singer, *Traditional India*, xii.
- 13 In her book *Sherpas Through Their Rituals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), Sherry Ortner echoes Singer's definitions of culture and provides another very intelligent definition of ritual that is still governed by the three homologized structural patterns.
- 14 Turner, *From Ritual to Theater*, 89-101.
- 15 MacAloon, 3.
- 16 Grimes, *Beginnings in Ritual Studies*. See Grimes's discussion of the role of the theorist as a critic of ritual in "Ritual criticism and reflexivity in fieldwork," *Journal of Ritual Studies* 2, 2 (1988): 217-39.
- 17 Grimes, "Ritual criticism," 221 and 235. Also see his recent book *Ritual Criticism: Case Studies in Its Practice, Essays on Its Theory* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990).
- 18 Grimes, "Ritual criticism," 218.
- 19 Lewis, 8, 22, 33-4, 38.
- 20 MacAloon, 3.
- 21 Victor Turner, *From Ritual to Theater*, 82; and his *Schism and Continuity in African Society* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1957), 93, quoted in MacAloon, 3.
- 22 Stanley J. Tambiah, "A performative approach to ritual," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 65 (1979): 113-69, particularly 120.
- 23 Tambiah, "A performative approach to ritual," 115; also see Stanley J. Tambiah, "The magical power of words," *Man*, n.s. 3, 2 (1968): 180, 189.

- 24 Tambiah, "A performative approach to ritual," 124.
- 25 Tambiah, "A performative approach to ritual," 119 and 122.
- 26 Tambiah, "A performative approach to ritual," p. 127.
- 27 Tambiah, "A performative approach to ritual," pp. 153-4, 158, and 166.
- 28 Tambiah, "A performative approach to ritual," 139, on the fusion of form and content.
- 29 Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, 19-35.
- 30 Roy A. Rappaport, *Ecology, Meaning and Religion* (Richmond, Cal.: North Atlantic Books, 1979), 176-7.
- 31 Emily M. Ahern, "The problem of efficacy: strong and weak illocutionary acts," *Man*, n.s. 14, (1979): 1-17.
- 32 Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, 19-35.
- 33 Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, 22.
- 34 Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 105.
- 35 Tambiah, "A performative approach to ritual," 123-4, 132.
- 36 George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 61.
- 37 James W. Fernandez, "Persuasions and performances: of the beast in every body . . . and the metaphors of everyman," *Daedalus* 101, 1 (1972): 39-60 (also published in Clifford Geertz, ed., *Myth, Symbol and Culture* (New York: Norton, 1971), 39-60). Also James W. Fernandez, "The performance of ritual metaphors," in *The Social Use of Metaphor: Essays on the Anthropology of Rhetoric*, ed. J. David Sapir and J. Christopher Crocker (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), 100-31.
- 38 Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 412-53.
- 39 Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, 30.
- 40 Paul Ricoeur, "The model of the text: meaningful action considered as a text," *Social Research* 38 (Autumn 1971): 529-62.
- 41 Frederic Jameson, "The ideology of the text," *Salmagundi* 31-2 (Fall 1975/Winter 1976): 205.
- 42 Two recent studies of orality, textuality, and performance highlight some other tensions that come to light in performance theory: while William A. Graham's *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) is concerned to demonstrate the oral and performative dimensions of scriptural texts, Stuart H. Blackburn's *Singing of Birth and Death: Texts in Performance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988) is concerned to argue the importance of texts for oral performance. If their analyses are correct, the first is a justified corrective to an exaggerated stress on textuality and the second to a similar exaggeration of orality. For a demonstration of a comparable set of emphases in recent interpretations of the Javanese *slametan*, see Mark R. Woodward's corrective to Geertz's approach in "The *slametan*: textual knowledge and ritual performance in Central Javanese Islam," *History of Religions* 28, 1 (1988): 54-89. Although performance theory does not appear to offer any resolutions of these oral-text tensions, it may well prove to be a very useful arena in which the larger issues of orality and textuality loom more clearly and may be engaged more directly. This can be seen, for example, in a spate of ethnographies, represented by Joel C. Kuipers's *Power in Performance: The Creation of Textual Authority in Weyewa Ritual Speech* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), or M. E. Combs-Schilling's *Sacred Performances: Islam, Sexuality and Sacrifice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).
- 43 See Jonathan Culler, *The Pursuit of Signs: Semiotics, Literature and Deconstruction* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), especially chapter 1. Culler goes on to question "interpretation" as the goal of a critic's work. Also see Dowling's discussion of Freud's influence on the notion of latent meaning in Jameson's *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 36.

READER CROSS-REFERENCES

- Schechner – the shift to performance theory
 Worthen, Jackson, Fabian, Conquergood – issues of “text” as applied to non-theatrical performance
 Turner – whom Bell cites as the foremost proponent of performance as an anthropological concept
 Goffman – role-playing in non-theatrical contexts
 Geertz – shares concerns about the validity of performance analogy
 Ancelet – application of Geertz’ concept of deep play
 Santino – the application of ritual theory to public displays of mourning
 Austin – source of Tambiah’s performative approach to ritual

“THE BLOOD THAT RUNS THROUGH THE VEINS”

The creation of identity and a client’s experience
 of Cuban-American *Santería Dilogún* divination

Michael Atwood Mason

A woman in Washington, DC, cannot sleep at night. She is restless, nervous; her eyes dart about searching the darkness for a clue to her discomfort. She is about to leave town, move back to her mother’s house after many years away. She realizes that she needs help. Early the next morning, she calls a friend; through him, she makes an appointment to consult an *oriaté*, a diviner and priest in the Afro-Cuban religious tradition of *la Regla de Ocha*.¹

When she and her friend arrive at the diviner’s house, she rings the bell for the upstairs apartment and is let in by a small Cuban woman who explains that her husband, the *oriaté*, is still in the shower. Together, they climb the stairs. The visitors are asked to sit with the newborn baby; the television broadcasts professional wrestling. At the left corner of the far wall, the woman sees the shrine to the *oricha*, the deities of *la Regla de Ocha*. Two bookcases stand side by side, one for the woman who answered the door and one for the *oriaté*; on the shelves are soup tureens in various colors. These tureens contain the sacred stones, or *otanes*, physical manifestations of the *oricha*. Symbols for each *oricha* surround the tureens: There is Obatalá’s white cowtail switch, traditional African symbol of authority, perfect for the senior *oricha*. The bookcase in the corner has a large blue and white tureen on top, with blue carnations next to the tureen; it is for Yemayá, mother of the *oricha* and ruler of the sea. There is Oyá’s black cowtail switch – perfect for the only *oricha* not afraid of the dead – and with it her copper crown and nine tools. There is the *batea Changó*, a wooden covered bowl that rests on top of an overturned wooden mortar; *Changó* is the majestic king. The tureens all have food around them. Yellow pastries are for Ochún, the flowing goddess of rivers and love. The watermelon at the base of the bookcases is for Yemayá. In the right corner stands a small, low table covered with white cloth and containers of water; this is the *bóveda*, the shrine of the dead, and next to it rest several dolls to represent important spirits.

After a while, the *oriaté* appears from the back of the apartment and the woman and her friend follow him into the kitchen. Seated at a table, the diviner has in front of him a small,