

Theatre and Performance Theory

Series Editor

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Each volume in the Theatre and Performance Theory series introduces a key issue about theatre's role in culture. Specially written for students and a wide readership, each book uses case studies to guide readers into today's pressing debates in theatre and performance studies. Topics include contemporary theatrical practices; historiography; interdisciplinary approaches to making theatre; and the choices and consequences of how theatre is studied, among other areas of investigation.

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Professing Performance

*Theatre in the Academy from Philology
to Performativity*

Shannon Jackson

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Acknowledgments

The idea for this project began, appropriately enough, during my transition from graduate student to assistant professor. As it does for most of us, the transition involved a change of institutions. It was during that process that I became more acutely aware of the institutional construction of knowledge and wanted some kind of how-to manual. What I offer in this book turns out to be less of a how-to; after all, the variety of institutions makes the idea of a manual impossible. This book does, however, offer a way of thinking about institutional variety. At base, *Professing Performance* asks colleagues, scholars, and students to allow the recognition of difference and contingency to structure our professional and disciplinary lives. At a time when disciplinary wars have hit the professing of performance with a certain amount of virulence – resulting in self-righteous declarations, oppositions, and exclusions that push the bounds of both collegiality and reasonable argument – it seems important to learn to welcome institutional variation.

A number of individuals served as necessary interlocutors at Northwestern, Harvard, and the University of California at Berkeley (my three sites of employment) and at the symposia, scholarly organizations, and other speaking engagements where I have shared this material. For critiques, citations, patience, and perspective during many manic conversations, I particularly want to thank Phil Auslander, Sally Banes, Larry Buell, Judith Butler, Charlotte Canning, Anne Cheng, Dwight Conquergood, Marianne Constable, Elin Diamond, Jill Dolan, Harry Elam, Marjorie Garber, Mark Griffith, Bill Handley, Barbara Johnson, Caren Kaplan, Loren Kruger, Jeff Masten, José Muñoz, Peggy Phelan, Della Pollock, Martin Puchner, Joseph Roach, Miryam Sas, Rebecca Schneider, Kaja Silverman, Eric Smoodin,

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This book is dedicated to Michael Korcuska, the person with whom I learned to face the personal and geographic hazards of institutional transition and with whom I now happily share its personal and geographic rewards.

1 Discipline and performance: genealogy and discontinuity

“Differentiation is one strategy that disciplines employ to protect themselves against incursion and self-doubt. But how about the opposite strategy: emulation, imitation, envy?” Marjorie Garber¹

“It is not easy to say something new.” Michel Foucault²

Coming to terms

“Isn’t ‘performativity’ the latest thing in ‘English’ theory?”

It was one of those over-determined moments in the life of a theatre academic. I had been asked as a faculty member in an English department to participate on a panel responding to a production of the American Repertory Theatre. The question came from a dramaturg – the in-house academic of the theatre profession – as we ate dinner before the ART’s subscriber event. The director of the production also sat at the table, looking slightly amused.

“Yes, it’s actually pretty trendy,” I said, picking up my fork and being fairly certain that neither of them really wanted to hear about the trends.

“Perform-a-tivity,” repeated the director, and then once again, “per-form-a-tiv-ity. That’s what they call it?”

“Yeah,” said the dramaturg, “I hear it alot.”

“So maybe I should start using that,” the director was laughing, “No, I’m sorry; I’m not a director. I’m a Performativity Coordinator.”

We all laughed. I took another bite of food, hoping that the conversation was finished.

“So what do . . . what does . . . they mean . . . that mean?” the two asked one on top of each other.

I continued chewing. I swallowed.

"Well," I began, dreading what would follow, "the concept of 'performativity' within literary studies is a reworking of the ideas of this guy, J.L. Austin . . ."

This guy, *this guy* . . .?

" . . . and he was, well, a kind of philosopher called a speech act theorist. He wrote a book called *How to Do Things With Words* . . ."

Did they want to hear this? I found myself staring at the table while I talked.

" . . . and there he argued that words are not purely reflective . . . that linguistic acts don't simply reflect a world but that speech actually has the power to *make* a world."

Reductive but brief. I looked up and was somewhat comforted to see that the two had been listening. The director nodded casually and picked up his fork again.

"Oh," he said, "you mean like theatre."

This type of exchange is fairly familiar in theatre and performance studies. In what follows, I want to work from similar moments – as well as even more bizarre and friction-ridden ones – in order to understand the varied forces that produce such conversations. At dinners, in deans' offices, in department meetings, at academic conferences, in office hours, in rehearsals, such interactions testify to an awkward and emergent period in the study and practice of theatre and performance. I happen to believe that it is necessary both to analyze the dispositions that produce that awkwardness as well as to embrace awkwardness as a condition of emergence. The conversation is familiar in part because it incarnates the scholar-versus-artist divide that persistently shadows a variety of disciplines in the humanities and arts. The provisional resolution at the end of the conversation is perhaps less familiar, entrenched as scholar/artist binaries are epistemologically, professionally, even socially in delineating amongst those of us who have decided to make performance a lifelong preoccupation. Certainly other academic fields face similar theory/practice conundrums and navigate internal divisions within themselves – splits between sociologists and social workers, art historians, and studio artists, political scientists and activists, literary scholars, and "creative writers." One of the tasks of this book will be to trace how the link between scholars and artists has been alternately disavowed and celebrated, touted and feared, re-termed

and re-organized – in institutional controversies, in "new" intellectual frameworks, in genre debates, in curricula, in artistic movements, in performance history itself.

There is more percolating in this exchange than scholar/artist or theory/practice oppositions, however. When the dramaturg asked about the trend of the word "performativity" in "English theory," he presumed that he was asking about a literary concept with some bearing on, or interest in, his own world of theatre studies. The nature, indeed existence, of either that bearing or that interest is still uncertain. P-words of various sorts – couched amongst various prefixes and suffixes – circulate in the contemporary academic discourse of various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. The specific intellectual roots of performativity to which I referred are located within a genealogy of speech-act theory, a philosophical school that distinguished the performative from the constative function of language and explored how certain types of speech (e.g. promises) enact their world-creating power in the moment of utterance. Such an orientation has tremendous implications for the discipline of theatre studies, though the nature and direction of those implications have been less well-developed and occasionally received with indifference from both literature and theatre scholars. The director's delightfully assured come-back in the phrase "like theatre" would have been roundly contested by J.L. Austin himself who argued against an alignment between speech-act theory and theatre, famously characterizing theatrical language as "hollow or void" and as "parasitic upon its normal use."³ As I explore in a later chapter, Austin reproduced a neo-Platonic notion of derivativeness to add a kind of "anti-theatrical performativity" to the long list of anti-theatrical prejudices that have vexed Western intellectual history. For that reason, scholars within theatre and performance studies have been as suspicious of the language of performativity as they are intrigued by its theoretical potential.

At this point in the differently emergent and partially overlapping fields of theatre and performance studies, it is worth trying to place the vocabularies, goals, assumptions, and objects of inquiry of various critical schools in conversation with each other. Any rapprochement requires some excavation, however, especially of how hybrid intellectual histories get elided by the sledge-hammer dichotomies and false consensuses that surround

certain keywords. The fact of the matter is that speech-act theory is only one of the many disciplinary strains that contribute to the intellectual ferment surrounding performance, even if it is the orientation most emphasized in literary and rhetorical studies. Scholars drawing from anthropology, sociology, art history, folklore, and media studies have developed vocabularies of performance to understand artifacts and events ranging from parades to television, from story-telling to religious ceremonies. The aspects of performance that these scholars emphasize can be quite different; the theoretical models that they derive may be incompatible, and even the reality principles that they assume may appear to undermine each other. Scholarship looks uninteresting to some when there is no abstraction, ungrounded to others when there is no description, romantic when there is no consideration of structure, incomplete without an account of production, determinist without a theory of agency, naive when it assumes a real historical referent, apolitical when too theoretical, apolitical when it is not theoretical enough. Such are the opportunities and hazards of interdisciplinarity. Comparisons amongst different types of performance discourse show this complexity and, more importantly, encourage vigilance against various kinds of synecdochic fallacies in cross-disciplinary inquiry – moments when scholars assume that one body of texts adequately represents an entire field.

This book asks how and why all of these kinds of judgements are made and what kinds of enabling illuminations and disabling blindspots they produce. While my argument develops differently over the course of each chapter, there are some relevant issues and themes that serve as discursive touchstones for the project as a whole. First of all, this book takes seriously Michel Foucault's unsettling notion of "genealogy" in the fabrication of intellectual history, an approach that has appeared throughout Foucault's work. Before his elaboration of this concept in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, Foucault's early archaeology of knowledge found that "the problem arises of knowing whether the unity of a discourse is based not so much on the permanence and uniqueness of an object as on the space in which various objects emerge and are continuously transformed."⁴ The non-unity of discourse is thus, for Foucault, a principle operating assumption. Consequently, my analysis acknowledges the value of assuming the discrete stability of something like "performance" – and related terms such as "theatre," "speech,"

"drama," or "dance" – while simultaneously tracking the discursive dispersal and decidedly indiscreet saturation of such references with that which they claim not to be. The effort to account for "theatre and performance theory" – to invoke the title of this series – is an examination of the referents in a "unity of a discourse" that paradoxically requires an awareness of "their non-identity through time, the break produced in them, the internal discontinuity that suspends their permanence."⁵

My contention, however, is that an account of scholarly development offers only a partial accounting of the space in which knowledge is produced. Hence, I have also found it necessary to focus on what might be called the "institutional genealogies" of knowledge formation. The modern university is itself a formidably complex and self-contradicting array of institutional practices. Its modes of knowledge production are propelled by the vagaries of institutional power, pedagogical process, and occupational structure as much as by felt desire and intellectual curiosity. In addition to such consideration, I also take seriously critiques of the professional intellectual and of the role of the arts and humanities in higher education. As it happens, such critiques are particularly resonant for (and made more resonant by) comparison with the discontinuous cluster of knowledges that come under the term performance. Consider, for instance, John Guillory's critique of the class status of the intellectual and the assumption of the knowledge-worker's progressivism.

While it has always seemed necessary to define intellectuals by their inclination to dissident political stances, it has also been possible to ground the analysis of intellectuals in the socioeconomic domain by positing a constitutive distinction between intellectual and manual labor, a distinction that for good historical reasons implicates intellectual labor in the system of economic exploitation. It is quite difficult on that basis to demonstrate how the fact of intellectual labor becomes the condition for the innate tendency to progressive or even leftist politics that is assumed to characterize intellectuals. . . . What troubles such an account is certainly not its "optimism of the will" to use Gramsci's phrases, but rather an unfounded optimism of the intellectual, an analysis of intellectuals in which identity is defined by generalizations about their innately progressive political nature or tendencies.⁶

The suggestion that the phenomenon of the intellectual rests upon an opposition to manual labor reflects back on the conversation that opened this introduction. As much as the opposition

between "theory" and "practice" is erroneous, as much as both terms have a hugely complicated set of references, it would be disingenuous to ignore the fact that this conversation took place across different occupational positions. I will suggest that the enmeshment of "practice" and "production" in performance-related fields is one that blurs and hence exposes the opposition between the intellectual and the manual on which so much humanistic knowledge-making relies. This is just one of many moments where an awareness of the institutional genealogies of knowledge help to give a keener, albeit more confounding, picture of the internally discontinuous status of performance knowledge in the academy.

This predicament relates to another issue that will return throughout the book – what might be called the hyper-contextuality of performance. The *enmeshment* to which I referred above characterizes not only the occupational life of performance but also its intensely contingent status as a research object, a radical contextuality that makes it difficult to locate as a research object at all. The production and reproduction of knowledge is, to some extent, a formalist operation in de-contextualization. To the extent that the discernment and dissemination of knowledge requires boundedness and containment, performance has fared unevenly in the academy. The imprecise boundaries of the theatrical event made it difficult to know where the research object ended and its relevant context began. The intensely intimate, varied, social, and inefficient character of performance pedagogy make it less amenable to mass reproduction on the grand scales of a modernizing university. For Foucault, of course, every knowledge formation resists such structures. For me, however, performance tends to flout the conventions of knowledgeability more explicitly. If Foucault's project and that of cultural materialism more generally is to expose the contingencies of apparently pure forms, then we have in the case of performance a form that knows contingency all too well, indeed, was too manifestly enmeshed in context to effect the disavowal of materialism even when it was trendy to do so. As such, performance sometimes calls the bluff of more recent critical turns toward material analysis as well as more recent calls for innovative pedagogy.

In the rest of this chapter, I want to think more specifically about the notion of disciplinarity as it affects the study and

practice of theatre and performance. In theatre, in performance studies, and in related fields such as dance, rhetoric, visual arts, and cultural studies, participants continually enjoy and endure the paradoxes of interdisciplinary exchange. Sometimes these encounters happen self-consciously. Indeed, origin narratives behind the formation of performance studies are filled with interactions between theatre directors and anthropologists, between folklorists and psychoanalytic critics, all working to graft a conversation based in avowedly different modes of knowing. At other times, these encounters happen less self-consciously, often in situations where epistemological consensus is assumed only to be thwarted by the return of repressed difference. I want to examine such instances of intended and unintended boundary crossing even as I critique assumptions of where such boundaries lie. In the current context, the term *interdisciplinary* serves sometimes as a facile index of the "new," opposing itself to a *disciplinarity* retroactively construed as old. As such, these terms function as fundamental, if not always helpful, pivots on which questions of theatre and performance studies turn. By extension, questions of interdisciplinarity broach the obscure operations of boundary formation, asking what is inside and what is outside – which may or may not line up with the question of what is "in" and what is "out." An analysis of interdisciplinarity asks what kinds of knowledge formations are considered multiple and which are considered singular. What gets labeled generalist and what is specialist? universal and particular? different and the same? What may seem *inter-disciplinary* in one locale can be experienced as solidly *intra-disciplinary* in another. Indeed, a historical, institutional, and theoretical consciousness of disciplinary formation demonstrates how variable and contextual the boundaries of knowledge can be. It also reveals how very difficult it is to say something new.

After introducing the range of debates and the range of associations attached to the term "performance," I situate its study historically in a changing modern university. Focusing on the issue of "interdisciplinarity" in theatre and performance studies allows a point of entry into a number of other contemporary concerns – debates about scholars and artists, about canons and counter-canons, about professionals and amateurs, and about movements in feminism, multiculturalism, and "theory" of various guises. The problem of interdisciplinarity further provides

a way of analyzing the relation between disciplines and institutions, a saturation between scholarship and employment that is not always transparent. The chapter concludes by offering a vocabulary for analyzing the epistemological glitches that such debates leave in their wake – a set of conceptual tools that will reappear in the case studies of subsequent chapters.

Discontinuous performances

At this point, it is worth reflecting briefly on the framing of disciplinary debates in theatre and performance – the two terms that title the editorial series in which this book appears. In the United States, disciplinary change has clustered around two institutional narratives at New York University and Northwestern University, what Jon McKenzie calls the “Eastern” and “Midwestern” strains of performance studies.⁷ The more oft-repeated origin story involves Richard Schechner and a cohort of thinkers at NYU. The narrative focuses on Schechner’s generative interactions with the anthropologist, Victor Turner, who took the study of performance beyond the proscenium stage and into the carnivals, festivals, protests, and other cultural rituals of an intercultural world. As Peggy Phelan notes, this Performance Studies story is an intriguing one in which “two men gave birth.”⁸ It is also a heroic story of disciplinary breaking and remaking, one framed by the language of the rebel, the renegade, and later, incorporating new schools of critical theory, the subversive and the resistant. Key moments in this “Eastern” institutional narrative note the avant-garde experimentation of the 1960s, the transfer of location and orientation of the *Tulane Drama Review* to New York’s *TDR*, the hiring of an interdisciplinary faculty of anthropologists, folklorists, musicologists, and dance theorists at NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts, the Performance Studies name change in 1980, and the hosting of the first meeting of the eventually incorporated Performance Studies International at NYU in 1995. Another notorious moment in that history occurred at the 1992 meeting of the Association of Theatre in Higher Education where keynote speaker Richard Schechner called for the abolition of theatre departments, for the Kuhnian adoption of a performance studies “paradigm” shift, and for an acknowledgment that the art form of theatre had become “the string quartet”

of the new era.⁹ A decided irony, noted by many, was that field practitioners continually invoked the language of rebellion and subversion while simultaneously seeking institutional solidity and professional security.¹⁰ Others were distressed to hear that an articulation of epistemological transformation – something to be expected in any field – needed to cast theatre and performance in oppositional terms. While the scholarly rhetoric called for cultural inclusion under the performance umbrella, the institutional rhetoric sounded much more adversarial. As I hope to show, this kind of irony is not specific to performance studies but can be seen as symptomatic of a larger set of paradoxes in the institutionalization and employment of the arts and humanities at the end of the twentieth century.

The development of Northwestern’s department of Performance Studies proceeds from a different direction. To some, its narrative is less often recounted. To others, of course, it is the only one that matters. There are occasional stories of men giving birth – though Wallace Bacon and Robert Breen are a generation older than Schechner – and of performers meeting anthropologists – though the figures might be Dwight Conquergood and Mary Douglas. The institutional landscape of such stories is quite different, however. The department of (Oral) Interpretation had a decades’ long existence in a very different institutional milieu – that is, inside a School of Speech, one that also housed distinct departments of Communication Studies, Radio/TV/Film, and Theatre. Thus, unlike the progenitors at NYU who broke from a prior institutional identity as Theatre, Northwestern’s department had considered itself something other than Theatre for its entire institutional existence. Oral Interpretation was most often positioned as an aesthetic subfield within Speech, Communication, and/or Rhetoric. Its proponents drew from a classical tradition in oral poetry to argue for the role of performance in the analysis and dissemination of cultural texts, specializing in the adaptation of print media into an oral and embodied environment. Northwestern was unusual for devoting an entire department to this area. Most of that faculty’s colleagues and former graduate students would find themselves in the oral interpretation slot of a larger Communication department – in the Midwest, the South, the Southwest, the West, and on the East Coast. This made for a dispersed kind of institutional network. It also

meant that the decision to shift nomination and orientation to Performance Studies occurred within that network rather than exclusively within a department. The division within the National Communication Association was renamed Performance Studies, and field practitioners around the country followed suit. Thus, while it is large-minded of McKenzie to note regional variation in the formation of Performance Studies, the East/Midwest focus on two departments actually obscures central figures and deliberative societies in other parts of the United States.

If these two stories show that institutional contexts differently constitute disciplinary identity, they also imply that the history of a discipline changes depending upon where one decides to begin. One way to resituate this two-pronged story of a late twentieth-century formation is to cast Performance Studies as the integration of theatrical and oral/rhetorical traditions. This framework necessarily invites reflection on a longer history of separation between the theatrical and the rhetorical or, as it often appears institutionally, between Theatre and Speech. There are many ways one might take up this relationship and, after Foucault, pursue its "non-identity through time."¹¹ One might note classical antagonisms and alliances in the history of poetics, rhetoric, and the performer/orator, investigating nineteenth-century discussions on the role of elocution and argumentation in higher education, attending to the cultivated antipathy between proponents of theatre and proponents of oratory at the turn-of-the-century, attending to the cultivated alliances between proponents of theatre and oratory in their shared effort to distinguish themselves from the solidifying profession of literary studies. Such reflection might also include the transformation of speech under the influence of social science, the transformation of theatre within an arts and liberal arts education, the return of rhetoric in a new form under the legitimating paradigms of Theory in the late-twentieth century, the return of performance in a new form under the legitimating paradigms of Theory in the later twentieth century. Whatever corner of the rug one decides to pick up, whatever moment in time one decides to posit as a relevant origin, such investigations can only be done with an awareness of the contingent, slippery, and decidedly contextual nature of knowledge formation. Behind a story of disciplinary docility there is no unitary

knowledge formation from which "new" epistemologies break. This also means using Foucault to temper the Kuhnian language of "paradigm" in order to suggest a "genealogical" awareness of the partial and entangled relationships amongst knowledges that are too conveniently opposed and aligned.¹² The predecessors of one's current allies turn out to be antagonists. The predecessors of one's current antagonists were once allies. Somewhere in this history that many of us unwittingly share, there are too many alliances and oppositions to imagine unbroken chains of continuity or radical breaks from the past.

What institutional critic Gerald Graff says of debates within and around the field of literature seems appropriate to the predicament of theatre and performance: "teach the conflicts."¹³ This means not only acquainting students with various points of view, something that is already difficult for many, but also developing a more historical and complicated sense of what those conflicts are. Indeed, such teaching might also mean recognizing how conflicted the terms of opposition are, acknowledging that the various "sides" of an argument may share less-emphasized concerns and institutional genealogies. In this spirit, this book works from the notion that performance studies and theatre (along with adjacent and related performance forms such as oratory, performance art, folklore, and dance) might be usefully understood within a shared, if internally discontinuous, institutional history. Consequently, I will use the term "performance" generally to describe instances of performance pedagogy in the American university since the nineteenth century, distinguishing subsidiary forms such as theatre, dance, and oratory when necessary and using the phrase "performance studies" to refer more specifically to scholarship and scholars that self-consciously composed a late twentieth-century intellectual formation. Despite my general belief in the historical and epistemological connections amongst these various terms, "conflicts" of various sorts will abound.

The vagaries of the interdisciplinary encounter are compounded by the vagaries of the term "performance." In a cross-disciplinary conversation, interested parties may engage in a conversation only to find that performance means different things to different people. The confusion derives from the fact that performance

has been a site of epistemological anxiety in many societies for quite some time; Western intellectual history's centuries' old anti-theatrical prejudice is only one case in point. Consequently, performance scholars who have worked to make sense of current interdisciplinary trends in light of contemporary and historical theoretical movements have had quite a job to do. Scholars continually find themselves rehearsing and revising various kinds of intellectual histories, recounting trajectories from Bakhtin or Bateson, from Turner or Goffman, from Dewey or Austin, from Derrida or Lacan, from Butler or Sedgwick. Depending upon a prior disciplinary affiliation, some may emphasize certain figures over others. To those who proceed from literary studies and linguistic philosophy, J.L. Austin is a rediscovered intellectual predecessor; Richard Bauman figures more prominently for folklorists just as Kenneth Burke does for social theorists, Victor Turner for anthropologists, Judith Butler for queer theorists, and so on. Marvin Carlson required an entire book – *Performance: A Critical Introduction* – just to describe the possible paths of intellectual influence.¹⁴ Any attempt to be comprehensive will inevitably exclude thinkers or craft chronologies that miss important connections.

Rather than offer a corrective intellectual history, I hope to provide ways of negotiating this discursive complexity and of accepting it as a condition of performance research. Joann Kealiinohomoku's attempt to make sense of the way "dance" has been abstractly interpreted offers an illuminating example of a larger problem in disciplining performance. In preparing an essay entitled "An Anthropologist Looks at Ballet as a Form of Ethnic Dance," Kealiinohomoku reread "pertinent writings by DeMille, Haskell, Holt, the Kinneys, Kirstein, Le Meri, Martin, Sachs, Sorell, and Terry."¹⁵ What she says of the contradictions in dance scholarship can be said of those found within performance more generally:

This survey of the literature reveals an amazing divergence of opinions. We are able to read that the origin of dance was in play and that it was not in play, that it was for magical and religious purposes, and that it was not for those things; that it was for courtship and that it was not for courtship; that it was the first form of communication and that communication did not enter into dance until it became an "art." In addition we can read that it was serious and purposeful and that at the

same time it was an outgrowth of exuberance, was totally spontaneous, and originated in the spirit of fun. Moreover, we can read that it was only a group activity for tribal solidarity and that it was strictly for the pleasure and self-expression of the one dancing.¹⁶

The kind of malleable historicization outlined by Kealiinohomoku generates a reciprocally malleable conceptualization. Different approaches and contexts emphasize certain kinds of associations while in turn the connotations of various terms influence what histories get told. Such flexibility helps to clarify how scholarship within and without the fields of dance, theatre, and performance work with different operating assumptions.

In order to create a compass for navigating this complexity, consider the range of connotations that have galvanized performance research in the past and in the present. First, an etymological angle yields one particular type of emphasis. The word *performance* derives from a Greek root meaning "to furnish forth," "to carry forward," "to bring into being." In this guise, the term foregrounds not only instances of making but also the active and processual aspect of that making. To extend the etymological tack, the word *theatre* derives from a root meaning "a place for viewing," emphasizing the spectacular qualities of a thing beheld as well as a vision-based locus of reception and interpretation. A second angle yields another network of connotations derived from the many artistic registers at which performance operates. This tack propels different strains of conceptual thinking. Performance conventionally employs bodies, motion, space, affect, image, and words; its analysis at times aligns with theories of embodiment, at times with studies of emotion, at times with architectural analysis, at times with studies of visual culture, and at times with critiques of linguistic exchange. Consequently, one visual analyst who speaks of sutures and gazes may struggle to translate that perspective to another who speaks of uptakes and perlocutions. Moreover, none of these associations are themselves internally consistent. One "theorist of embodiment" may derive from phenomenology, another from social theory, and another from kinesthesiology, all of which may operate with different notions of identity, agency, and bodily integrity. For one scholar, concepts of space may be synonymous with an abstract public sphere while for another it is enmeshed quite literally in

architecture's study of material entrances, exits, thresholds, and barriers. The many registers of performance thus have many registers of meaning. As a result, interdisciplinarity at the site of performance can feel like an epistemological conundrum of imponderable proportions.

Connotations of a third type are also attached to performance, associations that are not based so much in etymology or in the various media of the form. Rather they are a reflection of the term's location in a philosophical history as well as in a contemporary theoretical context. They also reflect not simply how varied but also how contradictory performance's referentiality can be. For instance, theorists of various stripes have foregrounded performance as a vehicle of community formation as often as others have emphasized its function as a site of social transgression. Sometimes both of these associations can appear in the work of the same scholar, often without note of the variation. Another area of theoretical emphasis has been the question of repetition in performance. To many scholars, performance's repeatability has been fundamental to its theorizing, whether couched in Richard Schechner's restoration of behavior, derived from Linda Hutcheon's theory of parody, or echoed in Judith Butler's adaptation of Derridean citationality. While such scholars have been quick to add that repetition occasionally entails variation and difference, their point of entry differs markedly from that of Peggy Phelan who argues for performance as fundamentally non-repeatable, as a reiteration whose chief feature is its non-reproducibility. Competing associations revolve around other performance registers, further confounding the quest for theoretical purity. For some philosophers, performance is an intentional realm of purposive action; for others, it is an unintentional realm of spontaneous or habitual enactment. Some theorists, spurred by recent cultural theory, link performance to innovative realms of creation and resistance; others, reproducing new versions of older Platonic condemnations, link performance to derivative realms of conformity and tertiary imitation. Finally, the occupants of many theatre departments use a language of the actual, the real, and the authentic to distinguish their practices of artistic production from a presumably "less real" practice of scholarly research. Their rhetoric contrasts starkly, sometimes obviously, with the long-held assumptions of theatre's fakery,

artifice, and inauthenticity that still circulate in most other wings of the university. In sum, performance is about doing, and it is about seeing; it is about image, embodiment, space, collectivity, and/or orality; it makes community and it breaks community; it repeats endlessly and it never repeats; it is intentional and unintentional, innovative and derivative, more fake and more real. Performance's many connotations and its varied intellectual kinships ensure that an interdisciplinary conversation around this interdisciplinary site rarely will be neat and straightforward. Perhaps it is time to stop assuming that it should.

"Old" genealogies

The notion of interdisciplinarity depends, of course, on a notion of disciplinarity. Since a central mission of this study is to deploy institutional history in order to resituate debates in theatre and performance studies, I would like briefly to consider the history of disciplinarity in the emerging American university. "Teaching the conflicts" of theatre and performance studies is sharpened, concretized, and complicated by a larger understanding of modern knowledge production. The concept of an academic discipline is actually a fairly recent formation. It emerges in concert with the rise of the modern university, an arc whose beginnings historians place in the late nineteenth-century.¹⁷ A number of social factors converged slowly and unevenly to redefine American higher education. Earlier understood as an elite education based in a classical tradition, university reformers sought a more democratic institution based in a vernacular and (in the United States) "practical" education oriented toward the professional ambitions of a rising middle class. The unevenness of this shift was determined by a number of factors including region, religion, university traditions, alumni influences, and the individual preoccupations of university faculty and administrators. The enrolment of a non-aristocratic group of young white men challenged the self-conception of the university in some ways. The admitting of white women and students of color to some institutions challenged it in other ways as did the rise of all-black colleges and the changing self-definitions of all-female institutions. Ivy League universities such as Princeton, Harvard, and Yale differed from each other in their acceptance of democratic

ideals, sometimes touting a new civic ideal for the university toward its public, other times expressing alarmist concerns over the lowering of university standards.

The profile of higher education underwent a significant change as the result of the Morrill Federal Land Grant of 1862. This act created the phenomenon of the "land-grant college" – what would be referred to as the state university – and sought to enable young people from a variety of backgrounds to attend college with public support.¹⁸ The democratic ideals of the land-grant college rested not only on demographics and on public financing but also on a "practical" emphasis. Inspired by the potential for applying scientific innovation to "real world" concerns, land-grant universities and changing modern universities sought to create a curriculum that applied scientific research to the arenas of industry and agriculture. While midwestern colleges initially emphasized agricultural innovation, the language of practical knowledge and of applied education permeated various wings of the university, providing a discursive vehicle with which to legitimate or to de-legitimate the utility of a variety of educational fields. The opposition between practical and liberal arts curricula fueled heated conversations in all-black colleges; often historicized as the Washington-DuBois debate, interested parties disagreed about which kind of curriculum would further racial advancement.¹⁹ The language of the practical made its way into some wings of the Ivy League universities and not into others. As the only Ivy League school that also claimed the funds and the identity of a state institution, Cornell University particularly sought to temper the traditions of a classical education with a use-oriented focus on agricultural and industrial education. This emphasis in turn affected the genealogy by which theatre appeared on campus; it is perhaps no coincidence that Cornell's theatre department first established itself in a revamped machine shop.

Other factors contributed to the changing identity of the modern university, factors that did not always dovetail with democratic or pragmatic goals. While the term "professional" could sometimes justify a utilitarian curriculum in higher education, the term also occupied a wider and more flexible discursive sphere. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw the rise of "professionalism," or what Andrew Abbott calls "the system of professions," in a number of arenas.²⁰ In traditional fields

such as law and medicine, in newer fields of employment such as social work, and in changing occupations such as academia itself, the term professionalism was also synonymous with the concept of "expertise" and denoted an arena of rigorously trained experts. The modern concept of "discipline" thus arose when the discursive strain of professional expertise met the exigencies of a restructuring university. This meeting sustained a social transformation in the occupation of "the intellectual" – a figure who increasingly required university training and affiliation – and altered this figure's relationship to the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge.²¹ Bruce Kuklick summarizes:

During the late nineteenth century the university as we understand it, the social organization defining the modern professoriate – came into existence. Amateur intellectuals, those without an institutional base, all but disappeared as the university came to be the sole focus in the production and distribution of knowledge. Various areas of study hived off from older and vaguer 'departments' of inquiry, and scholarly disciplines were established as limited fields of knowledge in the university, distinguished by special techniques and an accepted set of doctrines. Academic departments grew up, and disciplinary integrity was defined by the number of positions in a given field the university would finance. Teachers were trained and placed in this field by an intensified apprenticeship leading to the doctorate and an appointment as a college professor.²²

Kuklick's language repeats the fundamental assumptions of contemporary doctoral training, a model that is so common-sensical now that its historical contingency is barely recognized. His language also finds a progressive narrative behind this shift, attributing "vagueness" to earlier "amateur" intellectual formations and the status of a "grown up" to later ones. Indeed, the concept of the amateur switches during this period from a largely salutary term based in the love of certain pursuits to a largely derogatory term.²³ While intellectual vagueness is retroactively measured from the standpoint of a present context's sense of its own integrity, the turn into the twentieth century was nevertheless distinguished by the quest for highly distinct forms of knowledge. A nineteenth-century "humanities" curriculum that in hindsight looked like an amalgam of philosophy, literature, rhetoric, and moral inquiry began gradually to divide itself into separate fields with their own departments, professional

societies, hirings, curricula, standards, and self-justifications. Attributions of "amateurism" and "professionalism" were thus newly deployed to delineate and confer value upon increasingly higher degrees of specialization. A variety of fields professionalized during this period – Literature, Philosophy, History, Art History – spurred by the emphasis on specialization and by a university structure that rewarded disciplinary distinction in both senses of the word. While there still existed university professors who worked as "generalists," the recognition of that generalism could be greeted with suspicion and, like the term "amateur," could connote vagueness and imprecision. Of course, the term specialist depended upon the concept of generalist in order for the rigor of the former or the expansiveness of the latter even to be registered.

The movement toward disciplinary specialization was also spurred by the influence of foreign university models. American administrators and faculty looked with eyes both wary and fascinated to the creation of the new research universities in Germany. Opposing themselves to arenas of vocational testing and training, German universities received substantial state funding to create an educational structure that serviced, as much as possible, the research careers of its professors. Teaching schedules and curricular mechanisms were geared toward facilitating further faculty specialization; when professors taught, their classrooms provided arenas for their focused questions and a body of students who aided their exploration. The goal of student training was coincident with the unadulterated pursuit of knowledge; such students trained for careers inside the university itself.

University schooling was in fact little connected with professional practice or knowledge. The two level examinations reflected in part a differentiation between education and professional training that emerged between 1780 and 1860. These years saw the rise of the *Bildung*, a concept variously defined as 'cultivation,' 'a combination of taste, learning, and judgement,' . . . *Bildung* entailed a resolutely anti-professional pedagogy. Preprofessional studies were ridiculed as *Brotstudium* (literally, bread studies). The professors executed their assault on professionalism with vigor.²⁴

Germany's research professors adapted a scientific discourse of legitimacy to other arenas of inquiry in order to tout the noble and rigorous pursuit of pure knowledge. The disingenuous

element of the *Bildung* model rested on its anti-professional discourse, a disavowal that still persists in faculty self-descriptions today. Despite their own rhetoric, Germany's faculty were of course an intensely professionalized body, substantially influenced by the conventions of rigor, expertise, hierarchy, apprenticeship, and specialization that circulated throughout the discourse of professionalism more generally.²⁵ The professorial disavowal would persist in future rationalizations of research and graduate training, denying the legitimacy of a pre-professional education unless it happened to fulfill the occupational requirements of a professional academic.

The first American university founded on the Germanic model was, most famously, Johns Hopkins University. Ivy League as well as land-grant colleges began to adopt aspects of this model. Historians of the American university interpret this change with differing amounts of celebration and ambivalence. Frederick Rudolph's study notes that "the collegiate tradition in the United States could not find new inspiration in the spirit of the German university without some loss to the collegiate way."²⁶ Rudolph chooses to interpret the combination of influences within a nationalist frame. The state universities that began developing as research institutions, he writes, "would combine in a typically American institution that Jeffersonian emphasis on excellence and learning which had become the special commitment of Johns Hopkins and the Jacksonian emphasis on numbers and on the practical which had become the special commitment of the land-grant colleges."²⁷ Here Rudolph reroutes the Germanic influence through an American presidential history, casting the research emphasis as a return to a Jeffersonian tradition rather than as an imitation of a European model. Whether or not the international influence was acknowledged or disavowed, American universities integrated the research model in various ways and appealed to its disciplinarity for intellectual legitimacy. They thus participated in the occupational transformation that would eventually place the concept of "Research" in the forefront of a faculty member's job description and professional evaluation. For a variety of reasons and with notable exceptions, theatre and oral performance initially tended to find more welcome institutional homes in land-grant universities such as University of Iowa, University of Wisconsin, and Indiana University. The

newer universities responded to the modified "practical" orientation of these fields. Moreover, as such universities simultaneously began making a play for disciplinary distinction, they found that they could secure prestige more immediately by cultivating newer fields.

Before returning to a more contemporary context, it might be important to keep some of these historical qualifiers in mind. Current debates about the academic legitimization of performance, theatrical and otherwise, need to be situated within larger histories of the university. Remaining cognizant of such changes is both a reminder of how relatively recent our "old" models actually are and a warning to remain vigilant about the complex and often contradictory ways that performance has found its way into the academy. Turn-of-the-century American administrators and faculty debated constantly the role of both "new" and "traditional" skills in higher education, arguing for or against them within competing "practical" and "research" models of the new university. On the one hand, rhetorical performance and the acquired competency in verbal arts were part of an *old* form of liberal education in the nineteenth century before the modern concept of the research university fell into place. As such, performance was and can still be framed as a hyper-traditional form of pedagogy that underwent significant change, reassignment, devaluation, and reinterpretation as the university's identity and mission changed. On the other hand, performance in its theatrical guise was a *new* disciplinary field at the turn of the century, one of many arguing for itself within individuating terms. It bubbled from within a newly professionalizing field of literature at certain universities. At others, it grew out of an aesthetic strain in rhetoric or in the fine and performing arts, and at others, its design and technical elements were emphasized to rationalize its location inside schools of industrial and practical arts. With varying degrees of intensity, the would-be discipline of theatre indiscriminately borrowed the language of disciplinary specialization, of practicality, of scholarly rigor, of democracy, or of civic ideals. At some universities, the Germanic influence oriented programs toward the methods of *Theaterwissenschaft*, focusing on theatre as a research object to be analyzed with the fact-based lens of the science-loving philologist. Meanwhile, more programs in the United States focused on theatre as a produced event and with an

eye toward the development of the professional artist. Depending upon region, tradition, and the temperament of a university president, theatre's institutionalizers drew from available legitimating discourses, arguing for performance in expedient and occasionally contradictory terms whose institutional consequences still confuse us now.

An awareness of the various transformations of the twentieth-century university makes the shaky academic position of theatre and oral performance somewhat more interpretable. As fields of inquiry that emphasized theatrical production and technical skills in the verbal arts, performance had a "practical" side that appealed to the Jacksonian discourse of educational utility. Nevertheless, it did not immediately appear to have the scientific character of conventionally applied knowledges, such as agriculture. Moreover, while rhetorical performance could be construed as a training ground for professional competence in law and business, theatre's model of "practice" did not come with the clear capitalist promise of economic advancement. In other words, theatre's version of the practical did not appear all that pragmatic. At the same time, theatre and rhetorical performance could also have a stake in the humanistic dimensions of the university, the commitment to *Bildung* and cultural expansion that legitimated departments of English, Art History, Philosophy, and more. The tendency, however, to associate theatre with a debased and feminized form of culture kept it from being a full participant in pedagogies of acculturation. Furthermore, the emphasis on practical production – however economically impractical – spawned a fettered and cumbersome method of knowledge making, one that did not match the pure and ascetic conventions of scholarly research. Similarly, and discussed further in Chapter Two, classrooms for oratorical performance increasingly became defined as a technical arena – akin to, and eventually replaced by, the composition class; with such a move, performance's technicality became opposed to the mind-expanding classrooms of a cultural education. Of course, these larger transformations varied from university to university. In pockets, alternate pedagogies remained; some professors in the oral performance of literature worked to sustain an arena that taught technical skills alongside the cultivation of a *Bildung*-like cultural consciousness. In the mid-twentieth century, furthermore, certain colleges around

the country formed with the express intention of developing an arts-based pedagogy, a phenomenon that I consider in Chapter Four.²⁸

While admitting variation, it is important to take into consideration the larger social currents that structured if not determined the development of our fields and subfields. These and related institutional concerns of the *Bildung/Brotstudium* dialectic give more traction to current one-dimensional discussions of “theory” and “practice” in both theatre and performance studies. They demonstrate the historical contingency of this opposition as well as the skewed referentiality of the terms. They also suggest that the associations attached to these paradigms can be neither blithely opposed nor blithely unified. The attempt in so many theatre and performance departments to integrate the realm of the scholar-academic and the realm of the artist-practitioner is, amongst other things, an attempt to reconcile historically different occupational structures. Consequently, the relationship between theory and practice, between research and production, between scholarly and “non-scholarly” skills, requires a careful understanding of the very heavy institutional, industrial, cultural, and professional forces weighing in on such terms, on the institutional missions that they legitimate, and on the behaviors that they produce.

“New” genealogies

The current interdisciplinary discussions in the fields of performance are also structured by another historically specific influence – the restructuring of higher education based on intercultural, feminist, and non-Western critiques of its exclusions. Various labels “the canon wars,” “the culture wars,” “identity politics,” and/or “multiculturalism,” different aspects of a liberal arts curriculum came under scrutiny during the last two decades of the twentieth century. Attempts to expand the gender, racial, and global representation of undergraduate texts were met with defenses of traditional canons and academic “standards.” Conservative thinkers such as William Bennett, E.D. Hirsch, Harold Bloom, Dinesh D’Souza, and Roger Kimball painted a nightmare vision in which great works of Western intellectual history were replaced by the lesser works of white women and writers

of color; this is what Gerald Graff parodied as the “Great *Color Purple* Hoax.”²⁹ Issues of interdisciplinarity came to the fore during this period, often supported by critiques of the canon, often castigated by defenses of the canon.

The emergence of Performance Studies in the United States was enabled, albeit unsystematically, by these adjacent movements in feminism, multiculturalism, theory, cultural studies, as well as disciplinary critiques, canon wars, and a host of other concurrent debates. While such movements spurred a variety of curricular reforms within and outside theatre departments, Richard Schechner’s discourse targeted the field and departmental structures of theatre itself. As such, the phrase “performance studies” often served as a touchstone for a larger epistemological shift that promised or threatened to transform theatre’s institutional status in the US academy, one that promised or threatened to transform the epistemological and political status of the arts and humanities more generally. When performance studies scholars called for an expansion of favored objects of study from drama to performance, the rhetoric sounded quite familiar. When Schechner told the ATHE membership to consider performance beyond “the enactment of Eurocentric drama,” he echoed the anti-canonical arguments that were circulating in other disciplines. Similarly, Dwight Conquergood told the readers of speech communication journals that performance was key to understanding marginal cultures and their acts of resistance. Later, in Great Britain, Baz Kershaw’s discussion of “the radical in performance” cast theatre as limited and conservative and performance as subversive. In all of these scenarios, performance studies aligned itself with the canon-busters, calling for the recognition of heretofore excluded people and cultural forms.

The most pained reactions against performance studies tended to accept these alignments without accepting their value system. In an essay entitled, “The Death of Literature and History,” Richard Hornby castigated *The Drama Review*’s frame of reference and, under Schechner’s editorship, the appearance of “articles about figure skating, folk drama in Spain, and an avant-garde performance artist in Germany” without regard for “traditional theatre.”³⁰ Working from an affiliation in Oral Interpretation, Ted Wendt published a parallel lament on the de-privileging of oral interpretation by the frame of performance studies, a process

that he argued participated in the de-valuing of literature in favor of marginal forms of cultural expression.³¹ In both cases, Hornby and Wendt echoed the language of the culture wars, casting interdisciplinary expansion as disabling relativism. "The difference between figure skating and a production of *Hamlet* is not trivial," wrote Hornby.³² The statement played into the humanist conspiracy theories of the 1990s in theatrical form. As humanist conservatives warned of the replacement of Shakespeare by Alice Walker, so their counterparts in the performing arts worried over the replacement of Shakespeare by Tonya Harding.

In most of these discussions of the relation between theatre and performance studies, there is a recurrent pattern of sense-making which elides a series of conceptual binaries. Dramatic theatre and oral interpretation are aligned with the dominant, with the canonical, and with disciplinary singularity while performance studies is aligned with the marginal, with the anti-canonical, and with disciplinary multiplicity. These moves conveniently ignore the fact that oral interpretation and dramatic literature have had marginal canonical status in the humanities, effectively treating a relatively subordinate field as dominant through an argument based on analogy rather than on institutional analysis. Given a longer academic tendency to associate theatre with a lower, feminized, and more primitive form of literary culture, the assertion of the dominance of the Western theatrical canon rings strangely hollow. The same goes for the field of "oral interpretation." The oral performance of literature is not one that most literature professors recognize as part of their field – and have not since the break between Speech and English in the early twentieth century. In sum, dramatic literature was already outside the literary canon; the oral interpretation of literature was already a marginal cultural expression. Neither "traditionalists" nor anti-traditionalists in theatre and performance studies found it expedient to remember that history, however; they both chose to assume its stability – whether to call for canonical maintenance or to condemn a monolithic canonical enemy. In all cases, an appeal to "literature" served to link certain dramatic and oral performances to "tradition" despite the historic location of both on the periphery of the literary.

The elision of binaries such as old and new, disciplinary and interdisciplinary, Western and non-Western, conservative and

progressive, theatre and performance, creates more obfuscations than it clears. It threatens, for instance, to ignore the scholarly and institutional efforts of those whose work addresses issues of gender, race, sex, class, and globalization from within the theatre context. An expansion of the genre of drama to the realm of performance may permit the recognition of non-Western cultures. However, if Western/non-Western too easily maps to drama/performance, then the work of, say, an African playwright is relegated to a conceptual blindspot. For some institutions, the adoption of a performance studies perspective went hand in hand with a feminist curricular revision. However, those masculinist origin stories recounted above suggest that it is just as possible to align performance studies with a macho, homophobic quest to dissociate from the feminized realm of theatre.³³ Indeed, the gendered, racial, and sexual relations between theatre and performance studies are intensely varied, contextual, and complicated. No one falls neatly into any kind of good guy/bad guy opposition. The complete elision of double binaries too neatly bypasses a variety of circuitous connections and backgrounded histories.

The class dimensions of theatre and performance studies debates are even harder to assess. It is especially difficult since class analysis returns us to the social role of higher education in a democratic state, to the cultural and economic capital upon which it relies, and to the different professional structures occupied by humanists, artists, and their students. As debates about canonical inclusion and exclusion raged during the "culture wars" of the late-twentieth century, several critics adopted a different view by considering the social location of humanities education more generally. For John Guillory, it was no coincidence that such "wars" took place in the domain of "culture" and that critiques focused on the literary-humanist syllabus. The acculturating curriculum was responsible for exposing students to a realm of philosophical, imaginative, and moral reflection, separate from – and often subordinated to – the domains of knowledge associated with economic advancement. Thus, the earlier twentieth-century legitimation of and by *Bildung* had transmogrified into a liberal humanist legitimation of and by "cultural capital." Canon wars erupted in this sphere partly because the economic stakes were lower. Debates could occur on a

cultural front that was both symbolically significant and socio-economically subordinate.

The contours of those debates were complicated further by reflection on the institutional history of higher education and on the status of the "intellectual," considering not only the early twentieth-century genealogies of the "modern university" but also the various turns taken by a professionalizing professoriate in the middle to late-twentieth century. The GI-funded era of the big university contributed to both the centralizing and the marginalizing currents of liberal arts education. The promise of acculturation attracted returning students to the large lectures of the humanist syllabus while the political climate of the Cold War turned to the sciences and engineering for a relevant academic curriculum. Humanities education during the increasingly radical decade of the 1960s inherited this kind of partial and backhanded form of legitimacy while simultaneously changing its political terms. For many, the notion of "relevancy" was redefined, changing from patriotic pre-professionalism to dissident student activism. For some leftists, the space of acculturation became the space of "culture work." Though the sciences and engineering were loudly touted as the arena for the most radical forms of intellectualism, humanist intellectuals sought to channel their domain to serve radical ends. This gesture, however, was internally conflicted. Was the elite history behind the concept of acculturation so easily thrown off by the desire to create an arena of culture work? Might, furthermore, such dissident intellectualism be compromised by the fact that it increasingly took place in a professionalizing university? It was precisely by ignoring rather than addressing these questions that something like a "canon" could be figured as a site of activism. The symbolic inclusions and exclusions of cultural capital could be debated while the class politics of culture's pedagogical location could remain unremarked. The situation thus produced another version of professionalist disavowal in a new generation of academics, something anticipated in John and Barbara Ehrenreich's "The Professional-Managerial Class," developed in Alvin Gouldner's study of the "New Class," and parodied in the notion of the "literary left." The generation of 1960s dissidents who became 1980s academics could cast a suspicious eye on the content of canons

while remaining obliviously blind (or self-hatingly in denial) of the professional undercurrents of humanist intellectualism.

Such class politics and histories reflect unevenly on the status of theatre, oral interpretation, performance studies, and other performance-related fields. As fields with a historically marginal status vis-à-vis the literary canon, theatre and oral interpretation had an attenuated relationship to the arena of cultural capital and an uncertain status as humanist forms of inquiry. This made the claim to canonical status resonant at some moments and misdirected at others. At the same time, and as intellectual occupations became further politicized, these fields taught skills in embodied expression that could claim an active pedagogy, an "on your feet" approach to education that underscored the "work" in culture work. Considering this complicated puzzle, it might be fruitful to adopt a both/and approach to reconciling performance in a classed chronicle of higher education. On the one hand, the proponents of performance in all its disciplinary varieties were subject to the same discursive paradoxes that shadowed other fields of both conservative and dissident humanist inquiry. As such, debates around the theatre and performance curriculum had the tone, structure, and institutional position of a canon war. On the other hand, performance exposed the class politics of literary and humanist fields. The ill-fit of its productive pedagogy placed the conventions of acculturation into high relief. To incorporate theatre and performance into the space of "culture" – whether in appreciation or as a form of activism – required not only canonical critique but also the teaching of very different skills.

The same both/and class argument applies, not only to discussions of curricular content, but also to occupational security. As Pierre Bourdieu has argued in *Homo Academicus*, the position of the humanities professor may be subordinated to the purveyors of economic capital, but it is still dominant relative to the conventionally less secure position of the artist.

As *authorities* whose position in social space depends principally on the possession of cultural capital, a subordinate form of capital, university professors are situated rather on the side of the subordinate pole of the field of power and are clearly opposed in this respect to the managers of industry and business. But, as holders of an institutionalized form

of cultural capital, which guarantees them a bureaucratic career and a regular income, they are opposed to writers and artists: occupying a temporarily dominant position in the field of cultural production, they are distinguished by this fact, to differing degrees according to the faculties, from the occupants of the less institutionalized and more heretical sectors of the field.³⁴

If professors and artists thus usually occupy different sectors, then it becomes clear why it can be so difficult to install the heretical arts into the institutionalized academy. In a limited field of cultural power, professors' dominance (and regular income) is dependent upon the maintenance of professional distinctions. One distinctive, if often conflictual, aspect of performance departments is that they most often hire occupants of both sectors of the cultural field. As such, they experience the tensions and possibilities of incorporated heresy.

Of course, those possibilities more often manifest as tensions. They occur every time a professor and an artist tussle over the symbolic significance of a particular art work – and, with it, jockey for the authority to make such determinations. They occur every time a theatre director seeks academic employment in order to secure medical insurance, and every time a theatre professor castigates this ignoble motivation. They occur every time an artist disdains involvement with a campus production as outside a professional career, and every time a university's promotional policy affirms that disdain. They occur every time a tenured theory professor condemns the "conservatism" of a contracted acting teacher. Indeed, class allegiance is key to understanding many a conflict between the professional artist and the professional intellectual. In performance departments of all kinds, furthermore, a varied array of occupational structures means that attributions of professional and amateur are shifting and complicated. The theatre history professor who directs a campus production may not be a "professional" to a theatre artist. The choreographer who reads Merleau-Ponty is not a "professional" to the theory professor. In these departments, all of us function as the amateur to someone else's professional, each serving as a foil for propping up the identity of the other. Such tensions perhaps too painfully expose the political genealogies of our profession. Even self-nominated "progressive" performance scholars are, like many other scholars, pulled by what Andrew Ross

calls the "contradictory political interests" of the New Class: "elitist in its protection of guild privileges secured by cultural capital, but also egalitarian in its positivist vision of social emancipation for all; anti-capitalist in its technocratic challenge to the rule of capital, but also contemptuous of the 'conservative,' anti-intellectual disrespect of the popular classes."³⁵ These kinds of contradictions help to situate the conflicts in performance as a discourse and as an academic practice. Performance studies is not the only inheritor of New Class paradoxes. The same sensibility can be found in the liberal arts study of theatre where an admirable desire to preserve the imaginative realm of cultural reflection can simultaneously prompt a cultivated disdain for the work-a-day curriculum of the professional theatre artist, one that many scholars have conveniently called "conservative" or "anti-intellectual."

While tracts from the self-nominated "Right" have used similar political paradoxes to condemn progressivism in higher education, others such as those by Guillory, Graff, Ross, Michael Bérubé, and Cary Nelson have used them to encourage more self-reflection on the part of left-leaning academics. Surely it is possible to scrutinize relationships of class, gender, race, and occupation in presumably progressive education without assuming an anti-progressive position. Ross's critique of left narratives of the intellectual might also apply to narratives of the performance avant-garde.

[T]heories of the new class, or the professional-managerial class, have taken their toll on those intellectuals' traditions that rest upon the codes of alienated dissent or social disaffiliation. Humanists and social critics, especially, have always been loath to share the term 'intellectual' with less bona fide word brokers, and with number workers. Increasingly positioned by the contractual discourses of their institutions and professions, they have had to forsake the high ground and recognize the professional conditions they share, for the most part, with millions of other knowledge workers. The loss of this high ground has been much lamented, especially when linked to romantic left narratives about the 'decline of the public intellectual,' who, in the classical version, is a heroicized white male, and who if he is like C. Wright Mills, still rides a Harley-Davidson to his university workplace. Professional intellectuals who are not self-loathing have come to insist that it is necessary to examine their institutional affiliations in order to transform the codes of power that are historically specific to their disciplinary discourses.³⁶

As an "anti-discipline" born in the 1960s and consolidated in the 1980s, performance studies participates in that era's brand of professional disavowal. As such, its language of subversion co-exists uneasily next to the language of institutionalization. Once again, it is important to note that such a contradiction is not peculiar to performance studies – and might just as easily occur in a literature, philosophy, art history, or theatre department. Thus, what Jon McKenzie identifies as the "liminal norm" in performance discourse – the impulse to link a p-word to instances of transgression, resistance, and liminality – can be seen as symptomatic of a broader thought-structure in late-twentieth-century disciplinary discussions.³⁷ It replicates the paradoxes, privileges, and conventions of resistant humanism. The intellectual formation that called itself performance studies can be seen as one amongst many for whom some kind of liminality became a routine way of invoking a dissident status while disavowing an increasingly professionalized one.

Discipline envy

Institutional histories are complicated; the project of interdisciplinarity is thorny; the conceptual vocabulary of performance is wide ranging. Yet all of these factors structure the terms and practices in which we work and in which we imagine we will work in the future. Theatre, dance, and performance scholars in the last decades of the twentieth century spent a great deal of time claiming to be saying something new. As Foucault's essays on the archaeology of knowledge remind us, however, the enunciative moment of an epistemic shift like performance studies is always dependent upon enabling enunciative conditions. Furthermore, the pronounced newness of such a shift is also disputable. Epistemological breaks reproduce conventions of knowledge as much as they alter them, often quietly or unself-consciously repeating aspects of the traditions that they claim to reject.

In the absence of interdisciplinary harmony, one can become knowledgeable about the relationships amongst these factors and develop tools for interdisciplinary vigilance. In the remainder of this chapter, I would like to offer a vocabulary for navigating such institutional and interdisciplinary puzzles. First of all, if there is anything that cross-disciplinary interaction teaches us, it

is that attributions of sameness and difference are variable, contextual, and highly charged. Hence, it is important to be wary about the axes of sameness and difference that can present themselves as common sense or that structure interactions in unacknowledged ways. Sameness/difference constructs can work at a number of levels; institutional operations can have the character (and endure the pain) of the most intimate forms of subject formation. As such, one's disciplinary identity occurs, like any identity formation, when one is in the presence of an Other. It is in the contrast, in an encounter with difference, that one comes to understand with more complexity (or to consolidate with more jealousy) who one is and who one is becoming. Such encounters produce a psychic structure that exacerbates what Sigmund Freud called the "narcissism of minor differences."³⁸ One is moved to speak "as an historian" or "as an anthropologist" at precisely those times when one is speaking to people who are not historians or not anthropologists. Hence, these moments simultaneously contain the possibility for the most intense kind of self-evaluation *and* the potential for the most vociferous forms of self-delineation and disciplinary retrenchment. For some, such encounters force people to realize that they *have* a distinctive approach or perspective, that what had been a normalized, unquestioned procedure was actually a unique and contingent method of analysis. For others, such encounters serve simply to reconfirm the superiority of their own perspectives or approaches. Faced with recalcitrant Others whose perspectives and reality principles do not easily assimilate, a subject might be just as likely to foreground and reify difference. In this increasingly paranoid scenario, less similar terms are further opposed. Heretofore unnoticed attributes of one's own identity now become symbolic of one's difference, sufficiency, and uniqueness. And, when perceived power differentials unbalance the encounter, an "everyone is unlike me" strategy can easily augment into what Sverre Sjølander calls an "everyone but me is an idiot" stance toward interdisciplinary interaction.³⁹ And, like any identity formation, one's structural position and relative institutional power will probably influence which of these options one takes. In the university context, the relative distribution of economic and cultural capital creates the uneven power field in which such choices emerge.

energy behind the quest for self-differentiation can also flip into an opposite, and equally aggressive, quest for sameness. A subject's encounter with an Other can take an excessive *we are all alike* model of cross-disciplinary sameness. In this alternatively narcissistic scenario, superficial similarities are misrecognized as indicators of similarity. The same keyword, an alliterative link between less similar definitions, methods, and objects belong under one umbrella of orientation – what might be called a *narcissism of sameness* – becomes even more urgent, furthermore, the principle of sameness is one's own umbrella. Unevenly distributed intellectual power differentials, the "we are all alike" quickly transmogrifies into an "everyone is just like me" where the components of one's own identity – one's own objects of inquiry, one's own reality principles, one's own department – are held up as the unifying solution to one's own confusion. In the evangelical urge to craft a new form of sameness – such as performance studies – the risk of fragmentation of minor samenesses is probably even more acute. Words can be assumed to cohere, indeed must cohere to establish epistemological legitimacy, renegade sameness.

Sameness and difference face another register of complexity in such Self/Other constructs meet the multiplicity/singularity of interdisciplinary thinking. While interdisciplinary thinking is conceived as a realm of the multiple – and opposes disciplinary thinking's realm of the singular – it turns out that the multiplicity and singularity are variable and site-specific, relying on shared and reproducible assumptions of sameness and already the same. Thus, a mode of sameness may be comprised of various components that, through exercises of disciplinary self-instruction, come to be attributed to the same field. Meanwhile, the same sameness might be received from a different perspective to reproduce different fields of inquiry. For instance, a theatre department's mid-century division of academic labor into literary historians, dramatic literature scholars, and directors. While these orientations occupied the same field of inquiry, each mirrored a different network of methods,

skills, and reality principles, networks that appeared separately in History, English, and Art departments. The question of whether such clusterings constitute divisions of labor within the Same or are interdisciplinary indicators of Difference is far from clear. In a more recent context, attributions of multiplicity and singularity were further confused. While one might assume a trans-historical equivalence between generalism and interdisciplinarity, certain kinds of interdisciplinarity appeared quite specialist to certain eyes. Similarly, while a multicultural movement sought to value multiplicity, it received the specialist appellation (often "special interest") from conservative thinkers for whom Western intellectual history was paradoxically more general. Rather than approaching this puzzle with the hope of absolutely assimilating or absolutely differentiating selves, others, and their internal attributes, it is perhaps more useful to operate knowing that heterogeneity and homogeneity are never absolute but shift with altered perspective – and political interest.

An analytic knowledge of academic institutional structures and of the history of academic institutions facilitates such destabilizing, and hence illuminating, alterations in perspective. It is probably no surprise to most critical theorists to hear that narcissism and paranoia – in both their productive and paralyzing forms – go hand in hand with interdisciplinary interaction. In addition to the multiplicity/singularity construct, the psychologically complicated conundrums of sameness/difference also interact with other terms of alliance and opposition, dyads such as "old and new" or "inside and outside." Significantly, such terms and psychic mechanisms emerge and maintain their potency by acting in concert with institutional structures and histories. They become most forceful in naturalizing the organization of knowledge, especially when such structures and histories are disavowed. Recognizing their influence thus assists in defamiliarizing normalized categories of knowledge, even categories that neither self-proclaimed progressive nor conservative scholars are always interested in interrogating. Historical knowledge questions the ease with which delineations of old and new are mapped. Sometimes movements cast as traditional turn out to be relatively recent and once transgressive formations. Other times, movements cast as new turn out to reproduce many of the conventions

and structures that they claim to transcend. Institutional structures further affect what we perceive to be inside and outside our own lines of inquiry, tacitly dividing our understanding of what is internal to our field and what is external. Comparative and historical analyses of different universities reveal the contingency of such constructs. Since each university found its own way of responding to the utilitarian, disciplinary, and demographic pressures of the twentieth-century university, each positioned theatre and performance somewhat differently as well.

Institutional structures also entail differences of institutional power, an unevenness that affects who borrows from whom in an interdisciplinary encounter, whose histories are foregrounded, and who takes credit for interdisciplinary innovation. These factors can take shape in a number of ways. First, all parties may be subject to the vagaries of the synecdochic fallacy, the tendency to assume that one approach or movement or piece of scholarship can represent an entire discipline. In this scenario, a single famous author stands in for many. A body of texts serves as shorthand for much larger traditions of scholarship. Subfields are misrecognized as entire fields. One variant of the synecdochic fallacy occurs in the selective appropriation of a borrowed discipline in order to stage a break with one's own. The result is a selective "it's new to you" attitude toward a method or an argument that does not remember that such methods or arguments are old to someone else. The fallout of these synecdochic fallacies and these "it's new to you" trajectories will be different based on the relative power of borrowed and borrowing fields. Members of a field whose reputation and cultural capital is solidly rooted in the university may feel more able to experiment without threatening their institutional position. Such scholars' forays into adjacent fields may spice up their own work, give it a new angle or a new object, without seeming to require an investigation of the borrowed discipline's wider discussions and legacies. In this scenario, one scholar's tradition is transformed into another scholar's innovative experiment. Members of a less established field may be just as subject to synecdochic misrecognition; however, as a wide range of cultural theory makes clear, subordinate subjects usually do a better job of learning the ways and wiles of the dominant. Nevertheless, the "borrowing up" performed by scholars in less powerful fields – whether done for experiment or,

more often, for intellectual legitimacy – can also remain ignorant of larger inter-locutionary contexts.

These and related topics will be expanded and re-positioned in the various chapters that follow. Each addresses a particular network of epistemological dilemmas and opportunities via a selected theme and a range of case studies. Together they offer different ways of conceiving and interpreting genealogical continuities and discontinuities in the disciplining of performance. I have selected moments on a loose chronological plane, examining key intellectual developments in philology, new criticism, cultural studies, deconstruction, new historicism, and post-structuralist theory throughout the twentieth century in order to locate "the space" in which performance's epistemological objects emerge. Chapter Two focuses most explicitly on the nature of "institutionalization" as it impinged upon the early formation of theatre studies at the beginning of the twentieth century, using the figure of George Pierce Baker as a springboard. By looking more specifically at how the conventions of professionalization and curricular legitimation affected the development of theatre, rhetoric, and performance, I interrogate terminologies and expose paradoxes that still affect and afflict the status of performance in today's university. Chapter Three considers the intellectual genealogies of the 1940s and 1950s in order to resituate performance's relationship to "cultural studies." While the latter interdisciplinary field is conventionally invoked as a recent and "trendy" intellectual formation, an examination of its earlier history in Great Britain reveals early alignments between the study of drama and the study of "culture," shaky allegiances that nevertheless challenge assumptions of what is old and new, traditional and "cutting edge," in theatre and performance studies scholarship. The association of performance with a kind of anti-intellectual "literalism" and pre-professional "practice" provides the foundation for Chapter Four, using it to speculate more generally on the legacies of philosophical and artistic experimentation of the 1960s and 1970s. This chapter continues Chapter Two's excavation of the role of art production in performance curricula while simultaneously examining discourses in the visual arts and in deconstructive philosophy that complicated the conceptual status of performance in several disciplines. In Chapter Five, I consider the connections and disconnections

between performance and the writing of "history," particularly focusing on the epistemic impact of cultural anthropology and new historicism in the 1980s. Situating the so-called "cultural turn" next to debated practices in theatre historiography and alongside the institutional story of performance studies, this chapter foregrounds less-remembered intellectual genealogies in literature, performance, theatre, and anthropology while considering the gender politics of their disavowal. Finally, Chapter Six takes a sustained look at theatre and performance next to the provocative and multifaceted paradigms of performativity as the twentieth century gave over to the twenty-first. While offering a fuller account and revision of the terms that opened this chapter, I also interrogate the conflicted and contradictory effects of the "culture wars" and "identity politics" on performance practices and performance theorizing.

I have found the case study approach to be selective but essential to tracking the internal discontinuities of theoretical, disciplinary, and institutional processes. While this kind of specificity is necessary to understand epistemological contingency, I do try to abstract key concepts and invite application and revision through other examples. Nevertheless, there are obviously many issues and sites that I do not address in this book. I focus most explicitly on higher education in the United States, noting international influence and variation only selectively. Many of the institutional and disciplinary dilemmas are thus distinctive to or exacerbated by an "American" location; surely the utilitarian celebration and humanist skepticism of a term such as "practice" becomes particularly virulent in its capitalist context. Additionally, though I consider the history of a range of performance forms in higher education, this book emphasizes the institutional histories of theatre, speech, and performance studies in the context of literature, cultural studies, and the general humanities. My ardent hope is that other scholars contribute to the larger story of performance's genealogy in the academy, importing and resituating the arguments that I offer here by analyzing parallel movements in greater North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and Australia and by mapping more specific institutional histories of dance, visual art, folklore, and of key wings in the social sciences.

Performance and performance-inflected vocabularies have an overwhelming number of meanings, connotations, and intellectual legacies. This kind of discursive flexibility interacts with a larger field power – namely the forces of gender, race, sexuality, and class – in diffuse and exponentially complicated ways. Each of my analyses considers such factors while being acutely aware of their variation. In order to characterize some structures within this discursive plenitude, I have found it helpful to focus on what might be termed the "flexible essentialism" of performance, that is, its tendency to inhabit the essentialist as well as anti-essentialist side of any conceptual binary. Terms such as performance or theatre are often used as metaphors for representation and, in other contexts, are invoked to ground the "real." While a history of Western thought associates performance with the figural, the allegorical, and the copy, a host of critical theorists in the late twentieth century used performance examples to characterize the literal, the stable, or the naïvely authentic. These divided tendencies are only exacerbated in a university context, where performance has been the site of some of the most intensely anti-essentialist theoretical speculation and where, conversely, its artistic practitioners often invoke the term to stall theoretical musing. As a result, the disciplinary genealogies of performance tend not to have one feminist reading nor one implication for an anti-racist politics. Attributions of masculinity and femininity in the study of theatre can cut both ways and change with definitional relation. Sometimes, theatre's association with artifice and deception reproduce classical stereotypes of the feminine. Sometimes theatre's practices of collectivity and publicity align it with a masculine performance of democratic citizenship. Sometimes theatre is equated with high-brow elitism; other times, its proponents and its detractors emphasize theatre's infrastructural and technical dimensions to create a classed portrait of industrial labor. White women and people of color may find themselves equivocally positioned by theatre's theoretical flexibility, for a performance frame can simultaneously open the door to non-dominant forms of cultural production while at the same time submitting those forms and those cultures to the most insidious modes of stereotyping. Theatre and performance further change their gendered, race, sexed, and classed associations

depending upon the disciplinary, interdisciplinary, regional, and university context. Attributions of femininity vary if theatre is opposed to film or to literature, to technology or to folklore. Its class allegiances change depending whether it is located in a liberal arts college, a technical school, or a research university. In the disciplining of performance, there are no clear good guys or bad guys, no single silver bullet with which to receive and resolve a critical, political, and occupational puzzle. As the referent for theatre changes, furthermore, the nature of the anti-theatrical prejudice changes with it. Indeed, "the anti-theatrical prejudice" is not a singular thought-structure but itself, multiple, opportunistic, and a constantly moving target. For that reason, a case study approach offers the most responsible way to test analytic approaches, to de-mystify our field's defense mechanisms, and to imagine our field's future.

An awareness of variation and contingency adds more dimension to the interdisciplinary puzzle. It serves as a warning against assuming the normalcy and naturalness of one's own present-day institutional context, forcing a heightened awareness of epistemological complacency. It suggests that an institution's common-sense unions and divisions conceal histories of disavowed difference and disavowed connection. There is a great deal of heterogeneity within sameness and a great deal of similarity within difference. There are also many older legacies repeated within new movements, and a great deal of change within apparent reproductions of tradition. As hard as it is to say something new, it is perhaps (*pace* Foucault) equally impossible not to. Our understanding of disciplinary and interdisciplinary operations should shift with historical perspective and institutional location, a slipperiness that might in turn unsettle easy alliances and convenient oppositions in our current ways of talking about ourselves. The challenge is to make the harder alliances and to devise new types of self-description. Whether falling across axes of multiplicity and singularity, traditional and non-traditional, inside and outside, our conventional assertions of disciplinary sameness and difference can be disrupted by a consciousness of institutional history. That consciousness confronts some of the occupational hazards of inhabiting an emergent field by guarding against its reinvention of the wheel and by loosening the selective vocabularies that threaten to inhibit the breadth and depth of

that emergence. Finally, it provides a variety of templates for the kind of arguments that theatre and performance scholars need to make, preparing us for those vexed and confusing conversations (remember the department meetings, the office hours, the conferences, the rehearsals) where invoking an historical allusion or noting an unacknowledged connection will make the difference in getting some pedagogical work done.