Reading Richard Schechner:

Allegories of Performance

by

Kate Hammer

1998

A thesis in partial fulfilment for the degree of PhD

Department of Drama and Theatre Studies,

Roehampton Institute London

University of Surrey
Reading Richard Schechner: Allegories of Performance

Abstract

Reading Richard Schechner explores the theatre, theory, and academic leadership of a key figure in American theatre studies, engaging critically with Schechner's contributions, in order to assess their value for future theatre research.

Chapter One considers how Schechner's theatre participated in social change and situates Schechner's analogy of theatre to ritual within an avant-garde theatrical tradition. Chapter Two models Schechner's career in terms of a singular performance project which moves from its early focus on theatre production, through performance theory, leading finally to his leadership of Performance Studies as an institutionally validated area. I examine the interplay between Schechner's theatre and his growing interest in anthropology, identifying the ways in which anthropological discourse supported his authority as a theatrical auteur. These chapters include case studies of his productions Dionysus in 69 and The Tooth of Crime.

Chapter Three develops the relation between creative authorship and academic authority by introducing two key concepts. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital characterises the rewards for successful and authoritative authorship which, I argue, Schechner has pursued. Allegory articulates the historical relation between creative authorship and socially empowered authority. The logic of Schechner's performance paradigm is analysed as an allegorical structure, following Joel Fineman's definition. Chapter Four concentrates on the ways in which, over time, Schechner has repositioned theatre as subordinate to the broad spectrum he defines as performance.

I give grounds for rejecting Schechnerian performance as a viable paradigm for theatre's study. Furthermore, I reinterpret it as an enterprising intermedia arts project aiming to disrupt the institution from within. To deauthorise Schechnerian performance in this way is also to reauthorise it, by returning its ostensibly objective structures to their origin in creative acts. To this end, I conclude by sketching a portrait of Richard Schechner as an author of avant-garde theatre and theory.
Epistemology is in itself ethics,  
and ethics is epistemology.  

— Herbert Marcuse (1964)

... the great ages of performance 
america of piracy, plagiarism, and parody

— Richard Schechner (1985)
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements i

Author's note iii

Introduction v

## Chapter One:
Recalling Richard Schechner's Performance Theatre
1.1 Performance Theatre: The case of *Dionysus in 69*
   A. Introduction to performance theatre
   B. Introducing *Dionysus in 69* 21
1.2 Participating in Social Change 44
1.3 Ritual theories relating art and life 57

## Chapter Two:
Schechnerian Performance in Academic Institutions
2.1 The Performance Project Built by Richard Schechner 86
2.2 Thinking Through Theory in the Theatre
   A. Authority in *Dionysus in 69* 121
   B. Establishing Authority by Recourse to Anthropology 131
2.3 Performance Studies in and for Institutions 167

## Chapter Three:
Authorship & Authority for Performance
3.1 Authorship and Authority 181
   A. A strategic use of "the authentic" 197
   B. The Rhetoric of Appropriation 209
3.2 Allegory and Auteurism 233
3.3 The Performance Paradigm as a Literary Function 245

## Chapter Four:
An Authoritative Repositioning of Theatre and its Study
4.1 Theatre as a Node 258
4.2 The dispersion of theatre into theatricality 271
4.3 Performance as Paradigm 292
4.4 Schechner's Enduring Avant-Gardism 319
4.5 Thinking Theatre 332

Conclusion 348

Appendix One 364

Bibliography 372
Acknowledgements

My thanks goes first and foremost to Peter Reynolds, for offering me the opportunity and providing the bursary for this research. Also, to Christopher Spratt for the impetus to begin and the liberty to proceed in my studies. Thanks to my Director of Studies, Professor Baz Kershaw, for his insight and advice; to Dr. Joseph Kelleher for his generosity and galvanising dialogue; and to Professor Alan Read for seeing this work to its completion. Finally, a special thanks to my examiners, Lizbeth Goodman and Graham Ley, for giving my work an audience.

Many more people have infused this work with vigour, rigour, and a sense of possibility. Fellow Graduate Assistants Ernst Fischer, Helen Spackman, and my confidant Julie Child have all assisted me in articulating my vision. As my undergraduate thesis advisor, Professor Neil Lazarus taught me some of the key commitments I work to sustain; then, and now as my friend, he has recommended pivotal readings. Dr. Roy Bhaskar enriched my understanding of dialectical critical realism and confirmed my application of it to the study of theatre. Departmental staff, including Adrian Kear, Maggie Pittard, and Sylvia Vickers and students Zoe Crick, Steve Moore, and Steven Rothwell also contributed to my work.

I am indebted to the staffs at Roehampton’s Learning Resources Centre, Media and Computing Services for their assistance. Also, to the Senate House Library at the University of London, the British Library and the Theatre Museum Library for invaluable access to materials. Crucial material from American libraries was secured by my dear friend Elisa Slattery at Duke University and my brother David Hammer at Columbia University. Thanks to the Research Degrees Administrator, Karen De-Netto, and her predecessor, Sally Ann Thompson. Thanks also to Marcel Bancroft, Dr. Chris Bernard, Salima Bhatia, Lucy Douch, Anne Holloway, Grethe Larsen, Dr. Barry Redhead, Bettina Schrey, Dr. Vivian Taylor, Dr. Lucy Marks and Phil Yates for support and assistance; and to my colleagues at P.A. Listings for their friendship, encouragement, and perspective.


Former acting teachers Jim Calder, Bill Graham, Mark Hammer (my father), Halo Wines, and the late Paul Walker have made a huge impact on my understanding of theatre. For insight into and vision of theatre’s possibilities, I thank Todd London, Aleta Margolis, Zelda Fichandler, Helen Patton Pluscyzk, Chris Westberg, Diana Winston (who first showed me Dionysus in 69), and my former colleagues at the now disbanded No Neck Monsters Theatre Company.

If those people convinced me of the need to work in theatre studies, others still made me ready to accept the brief. For teaching me to write, I thank Joy Adier. For conviction in my voice, I thank Gay Hammerman. For a model of stamina when it comes to theatre research, I thank my mother, Dr. Edna Clark. Coursework with Professor Anne Fausto-Sterling first granted me access to the natural sciences as a discourse subject to critical thought. Without that access, it’s unlikely I would have produced my first play, Conceptions, read Thomas Kuhn or enjoyed critical realism’s critique of empiricism. Coursework in American and French feminist thought with Dr. Linda Alcoff and Dr. Rosi Braidotti honed my analysis. The (transnational) friendships of Caroline Agostini, Kathleen Donohue, Marci Kanstoroom, Elisa Slattery
and Jean Snell as we all worked on doctorates has been invaluable. My wager with Christophe Braouet (now over a decade old) has also been a delicious incentive. Enthusiasm for this project from Rustom Bharucha, Lisa Brancaccio, and Norma Bowles came at strategic times, and I thank them.

Finally, thanks to Leslie Findlen and Robert Cohen. Leslie gave me confidence to follow my instincts, and Robert put my instincts and analysis to work on the Corewave game where I rehearsed the art of thinking of distinctions and connections, contradictions and connections.

Kate Hammer
June 1998
London, England
Author's Note

This text has been prepared using the citation system given in Joseph Gibaldi's MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Fourth Edition published by the Modern Language Association in New York in 1995. With the exception noted below, the parenthetical remarks in the body of the text refer the reader to the author's surname and the page number of the work. A full list of works consulted appears in the bibliography. In the event that two or more works are listed for a single author, or two or more authors share the same surname, an abbreviation of the title is also indicated in the parenthetical remark.

For this reason, items in the bibliography are alphabetised by author's surname and sub-organised in the alphabetical order of the titles, excluding the articles "a," "an," and "the." The date or dates of publication for each item appear after the title of the work is given.

The exception to this system is the frequent citations to books by Richard Schechner. These are identified by acronyms of their titles. A list of acronyms appears overleaf. Full bibliographic references to these works also appear in the Bibliography, and the reader may refer to either list for the books' complete title and publication details. The bibliography also contains the full publication details of the other works by Richard Schechner cited less often.
Abbreviations of Schechner's Works

**Public Domain:** Essays on the Theatre. Indianapolis, IN: Bobbs-Merrill, 1969. Hereafter abbreviated in the text as PD.


**Performative Circumstances, From the Avant-Garde to Ramlila.** Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1983. Hereafter abbreviated in the text as PC.


Introduction

The conceptual climate in which I am "reading Richard Schechner" is one organised by three related changes in the social sciences, philosophy and cultural production. In the social sciences since the 1970s, there has developed an increasing awareness of the creativity involved in producing social knowledge. In philosophy, there has been a growing interest in theatre and performance as metaphors of or images for social and metaphysical processes. In cultural production, there has been an increasing hybridisation of art forms which often implicate theatre and performance as modes of production and/or distribution. Natalie Crohn Schmitt argues that these movements are interconnected by the changes in the physical sciences, especially quantum physics. "In science, it has come to be understood that the event is the unit of things real -- that energy, not matter, is the basic datum. [...] Increasingly, the study of science is no longer nature itself but the interplay between nature and ourselves. We are part of the web we seek to study" (231, 233). In the quantum age, she argues, observation and self-reflexivity become key activities, and the transitory nature of theatrical transformation as well as the subjectivity of its impressions embody central concerns. In Schmitt's view, these features make both performance and critical theory irresistible. In order to introduce the particular critical theories about performance developed by Richard Schechner, I will briefly consider below the three cultural shifts in the social sciences, philosophy, and cultural production. These changes situate Schechner's project of rethinking theatre as part of performance.

The changing status of knowledge about the social world is most salient in anthropology. The illegitimate offspring of imperialism, anthropology is a younger and softer discipline than its sociological and psychological cousins. Its role in justifying colonialism or rationalising imperial exploration has obviously diminished, and anthropological discourse now serves as something like the conscience for a
multicultural world in which difference provokes no less animosity or oppression than it did in the days of old-style imperialism. Current concerns with the poetics of ethnography have come to dominate discussions of the function, purpose, and interests vested in anthropological discourse. Esteemed practitioners including Clifford Geertz, James Clifford, and George Marcus have each contributed to the sense that social scientific research is a sibling to, if not a sub-genre of, literary production. As a reaction to the inadequate mechanism of earlier structuralist models, these authors have effectively argued for ways of entering into and describing cultural processes which defy the scientism of an earlier generation.

Similarly, in philosophy, a sea change has brought a fresh relation to the iconography of culture production, as thinkers since Wittgenstein continue to wrestle with the conventionality of language and its apparent efficacy to represent adequately in a social dimension our desires. J. L. Austin, founder of Speech Act Theory, regarded language's purchase on social effects as "performative" and his term unleashed a growing interest in the imagery of theatre as a means to apprehend social being. The recourse to artifice and illusion was hardly new, for Renaissance thinkers had often placed mortals on a stage constructed by a divine being. Nevertheless, there has been a growing sense that "philosophy has begun to shed some of its anti-theatrical prejudices" (Parker and Sedgwick 2). Instead of condemning mimesis, as does the Platonic tradition, contemporary philosophers and social thinkers have looked to theatre as a model of belief production; of subject formation; of bad faith; of repetition and role-play; of gender. Theatre semiotician Erika Fischer-Lichte observes that "Many studies in philosophy and psychology, in anthropology, ethnology and sociology, in political, historical and communication sciences, in cultural semiotics, in the history of art and literature employ the concept of theatre as a heuristic model to a wide extent" ("Theatricality" 85). Sarah Bryant-Bertell maintains:
At present, critical theories from psychoanalysis and Marxism to post-colonialism, speech-act theory, feminism, and deconstruction all claim 'performance' and 'performative' as a framework for their postmodernist discourses, which make metaphors of terms such as 'stage', 'actor', 'act', 'dialogue', 'spotlight', 'wings', and so on. (98)

Marvin Carlson echoes and expands these observations, pointing to the way in which "[w]ith performance as a kind of critical wedge, the metaphor of theatricality has moved out of the arts into almost every aspect of modern attempts to understand our condition and activities, into almost every branch of the human sciences – sociology, anthropology, ethnography, psychology, linguistics" (Performance 6-7). Tobin Nellhaus predicates theatre as "a model for realist philosophy" because "even more surely than theory, theatre is a 'statement-picture complex'" (527) of the sort philosopher of science Rom Harré predicated as "the prime vehicle for thought" (qtd. 521). Robert Crease, another philosopher of science, turns to theatrical performance as a means to reconciling the practical variability of scientific experimentation with its validity.

The shift in anthropology from structural knowledge to authored writing and the enhancement of theatre's position within contemporary thought across disciplines poses distinctive challenges for theatre researchers. In assessing its susceptibility to figuration, Elizabeth Burns defines theatre as follows:

theatre thus reveals itself as a ritual device for the consonant renewal of belief in human autonomy for individuals required constantly to submit to the vexatious necessities of consistent, recognisable role behaviour in the world of ordered social life. The actor is the visible, literally corporeal, vehicle of this ritual reaffirmation, conceived by culturally selected individuals but enacted on the stage on our behalf. (144)

---

What Bums apprehends is the role of delegation in theatre. Similarly, the requirement for delegation is what allows sociologist Pierre Bourdieu to specify the power gradients integral to the formation and reproduction of symbolic capital, the ineffable currency fuelling social transactions. As an example of capitalised social process, Bourdieu tallies instances described in a French book about Catholic liturgy where liturgy's performance fails because of errors of personnel, place, time, tempo, behaviour, language, dress, and sacraments which equally testify to its institutionality and its contingency (Language 108-14). The tally illustrates that “Ritual symbolism is not effective on its own, but only in so far as it represents -- in the theatrical sense of the term -- the delegation” (115). Here, the analogy between theatre and world includes a sense of occasion as well as theatre's ambiguous ontological status (as laboured, and sometimes efficacious, pretence). Bourdieu contends against Austin and his followers, that

The power of words is nothing other than the delegated power of the spokesperson, and his speech -- that is, the substance of his discourse and, inseparably, his way of speaking -- is no more than a testimony, and one among others, of the guarantee of delegation which is visited in him. This is the essence of the error which is expressed in its most accomplished form by Austin (and after him, Habermas) when he thinks that he has found in discourse itself [...] the key to the efficacy of speech. [...] the stylistic features which characterize the language of priests, teachers and, more generally, all institutions, like routinization, stereotyping and neutralization, all stem from the position occupied in a competitive field by these persons entrusted with delegated authority. (107-9)

Bert O. States testifies that the characteristic relation of audiences to actors bears the sign of such a divide in the shared space. “Thus theater has the lineaments of a secular sacrifice in the implicit meaning of Grotowski's statement that the actor is not there for us but instead of us” (Great 39-40).

This primary division within theatre between stage and house, actor and spectator, is one which classicist Jane Harrison says is integral to the development of
theatre from ancient ritual. The transformation of such "things done" (the Greek *dromenon* meaning "rite") into *drama*, (which also means in ancient Greek "things done") is wrought, according to Harrison, through the dissolution of the collectivity presumed by her definition of ritual action; this dissolution produces spectators as witnesses rather than as participants (10-14). Harrison apprehends the issue of authority which is so central to Bourdieu's conception of theatre and social performances, by defining rites as being "done publicly by a collective authorized body" (14). Yet the sense of an intrinsic division in which certain powers of play are delegated to a minority is one which the insistent figuration of theatre in contemporary social thought undermines. Fischer-Lichte articulates the blatant error informing much of it.

There can be no difference between theatre and 'reality', or everyday life, for in theatre as well as in everyday life we construct our own reality, proceeding from our perception of more or less the same kind of material (human beings in an environment). In any case, reality is the product of a subjectively conditioned and performed process of construction. ("From" 103)

There is something so reductive, so undialectical in this view. Marx provides the necessary limits on the powers Fischer-Lichte exalts when he maintains at the start of "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," "Men make their own history but they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past" (97). Neihaus suggests substituting either "theatre" or "science" in Marx's phrase, to remind us that each labours with materials "found, given and transmitted from a reality at least partially independent of human consciousness" (527).

There is, ultimately, a kind of Catch-22 which conditions not only how knowledge of the social world is produced but also how such production is regarded. Brecht sums it up neatly in a poem:

To observe  
You must learn to compare  
To be able to compare
You must have observed already
From observation comes knowledge.
But knowledge is needed to observe.
He who does not know
What to make of his observation
Will observe badly (Poems 19).

There is, Brecht is suggesting, a dialectical dance from self to world, through which we observe and learn, without which we know and "observe badly" (emphasis mine). That dialectical dance is organised by theories of knowledge. Theories, adequate or not, seep into our frameworks of perceiving and belief, and their effects in the world may be both material and lasting. Bourdieu describes "the theory effect which, by helping to impose a more or less authorized way of seeing the social world, helps to construct the reality of that world" (Language 106, emphasis mine). The climate of change in social and philosophical thought has challenged the authority of certain inherited views about the discreteness of science and art, of knowledge and belief; while at the same time concentrating attention on the social construction of discourse, subjectivity, and the things hitherto regarded as "the truth." Theatre, as the real presence of the imagination, incorporated, located in space, playing in and with time, cannot resist becoming implicated in these explorations.

Indeed, theatre and its allied arts has become an agent in the climate of cultural change I've described in intellectual terms above. For even as philosophy rediscovers theatre,

theater studies has been attempting, meanwhile, to take themselves out of (the) theater. Reimagining itself over the course of the past decade as the wide field of performance studies, the discipline has moved well beyond the classical ontology of the black box model to embrace a myriad of performance practices, ranging from stage to festival and everything in between (Parker and Sedgwick 2).

The terms "performance art" and later simply "performance" concretise this move from conventional suppositions about theatre organisation. The move is analogous, and developmentally related, to the expansion of visual arts from the boundaries of the picture frame. Tracing that expansion to the cubists' use of collage, Allan Kaprow
"simplifies] the history of the ensuing evolution into a flashback" which vividly encapsulates what happened: the pieces of paper curled up off the canvas, were removed from the surface to exist on their own, became more solid as they grew into other materials and, reaching out further into the room, finally filled it entirely. Suddenly there were jungles, crowded streets, littered alleys, dream spaces of science fiction, rooms of madness, and junk filled attics of the mind ...
(qtd. in Aronson, History 157-58).^  

Transactions in space and time became the stuff of art. Theatre, as an art in which production and reception coincide by virtue of the mandatory co-presence of (at least some of) the actors and audiences, became irresistible to artistic experimenters. In performance art, visual art and theatrical traditions intersected. Interdisciplinary cross-fertilisation, collaboration, and imbrication became characteristic of the new arts. Carol Simpson Stern and Bruce Henderson offer the following features as characteristics of the new performance forms.

(1) an antiestablishment, provocative, unconventional, often assaultive interventionist or performance stance; (2) opposition to culture's commodification of art; (3) a multimedia texture, drawing for its materials not only upon the live bodies of the performers but also upon media images, television monitors, projected images, visual images, film, poetry, autobiographical material, narrative, dance, architecture, and music; (4) an interest in the principles of collage, assemblage, and simultaneity; (5) an interest in using 'found' as well as 'made' materials; (6) heavy reliance upon unusual juxtapositions of incongruous, seemingly unrelated images; (7) an interest in the theories of play [...] including parody, joke, breaking of rules, and whimsical or strident disruption of surfaces; and (8) open-endedness or undecidability of form. (qtd. Carlson, Performance 80)^

---

^ Citation originally from Allan Kaprow, Assemblages, Environments and Happenings (NY: Abrams, 1966) 165.

^ Citation originally from Carol Simpson Stern and Bruce Henderson, Performance: Texts and Contexts (White Plains: Longman, 1993) 382-405.
In these terms, performance is central to the neo-avant-gardism of post-war European and American art. Performance occupies an "expanded field" like the one Rosalind Krauss describes for sculpture: like "the categories of sculpture and painting," performance has "been kneaded and stretched and twisted in an extraordinary demonstration of elasticity, a display of the way a cultural term can be extended to include just about anything" (31).

The performance umbrella covers everything from the most rigorous avant-garde work to off-beat, middle-brow entertainment, from body art to stand-up comedy, and solos to ensemble theatre productions, with the result that there are no longer agreed-upon critical standards or art values in which to address any work. These distinctions have become more fluid and imprecise, even irrelevant, in the context of contemporary art and culture as the vocabulary of performance is used increasingly to interpret all kinds of human expression, artistic or otherwise. Today performance has come to designate a way of being in the world, a life style or form of social activism. (Marranca, "University" 68)

For Krauss, the expansion of sculpture is the effect of a "strategy for reducing anything foreign in either time or space, to what we already know and are" (31). For performance, the impulse might be seen as the opposite, revealing a tendency to distance and bracket ways of being which are in themselves contradictory or difficult to describe. To say that such-and-such "is a performance" is not to specify clearly much at all.

The opacity of the category of performance is revealed by the frequent attempts to subdivide it into subcategories with distinctive aims or contrasting characteristics. Marvin Carlson divides performance into the display of skills, the display of cultural encoded patterns, and the display of competence (4-5). Bonnie Marranca articulates "two crucial distinctions [...] one, between being and acting out; the other, between social role-playing and performing a role on a stage" (University 68). David Graver seeks to distinguish theatre from performance art as overlapping but not coincident by attributing to theatre the commitment "to representing a
particular world rather than performing before a particular audience" ("Violent" 45). This view is echoed by artist Allan Kaprow's distinction between theatrical performance and non-theatrical performance which "does not begin with an envelope containing an act (the fantasy) and an audience (those affected by the fantasy)" (173). At its limit, non-theatrical performances "work in nonart modes and nonart contexts but cease to call the work art, retaining instead the private consciousness that sometimes it may be art too" (175). Because for Kaprow, such work takes the form of "systems analysis, social work in a ghetto, hitchhiking, thinking, etc."; he "know[s] of no one who fits [this description] who hasn't simply dropped out of art entirely" (176).

The disappearance of art into life, through the sublimation of creative impulses into nonart modes used in nonart contexts, finds its mirror image in the disappearance of life into art, as predicated by Erika Fischer-Lichte. Art subsumes life when the latter is aestheticised. Life is rendered aesthetic when its formal character is privileged over its material conditions and their real effects. It is only possible when the stakes for any activity are either minimal or, if exaggerated, merely symbolic. The latter cases are rare. No one looks at capital intensive professional sports, rich with revenues generated by corporate advertising and broadcast sales, and concludes that World Cup football is "just a game". It is entertaining to its spectators, but it attracts so many only because it remains solvent as big business. The low-stakes nature of art is honoured in the current interest in both art and philosophy with repetition. Allan Kaprow sounds this when he defines Happenings:

Happenings are events that, put simply, happen. Though the best of them have a decided impact—that is, we feel, 'here is something important' — they appear to go nowhere and do not make any particular literary point. In contrast to the arts of the past, [...] their form is open-ended and fluid; nothing obvious is sought and therefore nothing is won, except the certainty of a number of occurrences to which we are more than normally attentive. They exist for a single performance, or only a few, and are gone forever as new ones take their place. (16-17)
Their constituent activities have no compelling relevance to the broader world, even if they are adopted from practices of everyday life.

Theatre has traditionally been the domain of repetition. Activities which are repeatable are activities which, if they are causing irrevocable change, are causing change either only at a microscopic level or change of a temporary nature. Repetition becomes one of the features of theatre which performance examines. An artist like Chris Burden challenges our conception of the insubstantiality of theatrical acts by shooting himself “Getting shot is for real ... there's no element of pretense or make-believe in it” (Carlson, *Performance* 103). Here, the artist surrenders his ability not only to improvise, but also to revise. In doing so, he sacrifices art peculiar articulations in relation to the everyday. For theatre, that is its ability to emerge from quotidian circumstances using ordinary materials (bodies, gestures, sounds, speech, silence, light, shadow, tempo, rhythm) to stage corporeal “images” (Read 10) shadowed by a “schizophrenic awareness of [their] own unreality” (Birringer 3).

When Alan Read speaks of theatre’s beginning “from a point of coalescence, not a polarity” he defends “a theatre which values the relationship it has with people's everyday lives and the vastly more complex panorama of the body and its practices that theatre of any worth has to command” (11). Obliterating its possibilities, as Burden's shooting does, cancels theatre's potential. The case of Joe Coleman's “infamous routing of the audience at the Kitchen in 1981” makes this literal: “After breaking a bottle on his forehead, igniting explosives attached to his chest, biting the heads off mice, and throwing snakes at the audience, finally cleared the hall by threatening everyone with a shotgun” (Graver, “Violent” 49). Certain performances make the audience disappear.

---

4 Citation originally from Willoughby Sharp and Liza Bear, Interview with Chris Burden, *Avalanche* 8 (1973) 61.
To me, the most interesting projects are those in which art and life are treated in a dialectical relation of emergence and interplay. The dialectic takes many forms. For example, in reviewing the legacy of Squat Theatre, Alisa Solomon declares:

*Squat* invented a performance style that constantly tested and redefined theatrical space and time. Squat made spectators regard themselves in the act of spectating, and contemplate the complicity of their imaginations in the construction of fictive events. Luring us back and forth over the boundary between art and life, they didn't seek to make that boundary vanish, as, say, the audience participation of the Living Theatre does. Nor, like Happenings, did they try to blur that boundary. Instead, they kept redrawing it. Just when yousettled into the comfort of knowing what was part of the play and what was not -- just when your mind adjusted to a mode of seeing, the way the eyes adjust to a new pair of glasses -- an action would unsettle the system. The result was a series of cognitive double-takes, each startling and instantaneous, and complicating the one that had come before. (in Buchmüller and Koós, iii)

This negotiation is characteristic of artists and thinkers who recognise theatre's unique power to suspend activity, bracketing its effects and rendering it clearly as "action." The suspension relates to "the temporal structure of performance: the work on stage and the process of its creation are suspended and then disappear." Theatre "cannot hold on to the reality it imagines and produces, and the lived body of work becomes a fiction the moment it vanishes" (Birringer 3-4). Memory, private and collective, becomes the repository for theatre's makings. In memory, the "phenomenological image in its isolation" meets "other images" formed within each of us by the ordinary and extraordinary encounters constitutive of everyday life. Only then, through the "relations between the materiality of images and the mental capacities of audience and performer" does theatre's native "insufficien[cy]" resolve into effects perceptible in living (Read 82-83). Those effects call for a theatre pragmatics developed through questions like "is it good?" 'does it work?' and 'for whom does it work?" (12). These questions engage memory to find their local answers. For example, in coming to grips with the experiments he called the "theatre
of mixed means," Richard Kostelanetz suggests, "perhaps, all reviews of unfamiliar art should be written long after the performance takes place" for then memory can do its work in valuing past experience (287). If, as Alan Read suggests, the "empty space must be rethought as a populated place" (19), people and places are only some of its furniture; memory, vision, and desire also pass through, and it is these that theatre is most ready to reshape.

The issues I've discussed above are taken up in very particular ways by a contemporary performance theory that investigates theatre as analogous to religious ritual. The ritual theory of theatre envisions a return to primal communality through the rigidly hierarchical performances of rituals and ritual-like theatre. It finds an ardent proponent in Richard Schechner, and his work is the primary target of my research. When I propose to re-read Richard Schechner's work, I do it against the backdrop I've described above. I am particularly interested in the ways in which his work takes up both the creative turn in anthropology and the theatrical turn in the human sciences more broadly, and plays within the expanded field of "performance" in cultural productions. Schechner responds to, capitalises upon, and contributes to the conceptual ecology I've described above. He anticipates the poetics of ethnography by using anthropological discourse as a resource for his creative production. Like an anthropologist, his overseas travels have shaped his conceptions of theatre. "My trips to Latin America in 1968 and to Asia in 1971-72 have had deep, lasting effects on me" Schechner writes ("Foreword" vii). With a vivid sense of theatre's potential efficacy derived from his academic and field studies of ritual, he interrogates the performance of everyday life by creating theatrical scenarios in which actor and character are co-present, in which spectators are actively, corporeally engaged and (at times) able to redirect theatrical events by their interventions (or resistances). What's more, he frames his discoveries in terms of knowledge, claiming his "studies of anthropology, social psychology, psychoanalysis, and gestalt therapy are the bases of [his] belief that performance theory is a social
science, not a branch of aesthetics” (vii). He argues for performance as central to studies of the social world, as something ubiquitous and unceasing. “Everything and anything can be studied 'as' performance,” Schechner contends (“Draft” n.p.). This suggests a very different temporal rhythm than that of theatre’s occasions, which although rehearsed and remembered, are themselves ephemeral. It is this apparent departure from (or extension of) theatre as a praxis and as a singular object of study that makes Schechner’s work interesting.

Eugenio Barba, Peter Brook, and Jerzy Grotowski are all noted for their attempts to push beyond theatre’s conventional limits, departing in order to arrive at what Brooks called “a form of theatre that’s totally new” (qtd. in Mitter 129). For each of these artists, the investigation has meant at times abandoning theatre as given. Schechner aligns himself with their experimentalism, but has failed as a theatre worker to sustain an investment in inventing a radically new theatre (see Aronson, History 198, 204). Instead, he has devoted himself to developing performance theory, the praxis of which is his primary project. Consequently, even as he continues to stage theatre works, I do not believe that his view on theatre’s present or future can be read in the same vein as those other avant-gardists, since his relation to thinking theatre is professionalised (he is a professor) and institutionalised (in the performance studies paradigm) in ways which extend beyond the realm of aesthetic commentary. For the institutionally-empowered professor, proselytising has attractive awards. For aesthetic experimenters who do not produce manifestos, it hardly appears on their agenda. Yet because Schechner’s work arises from the period in Anglo American theatre culture when the writings first of Artaud, Brecht, and soon Grotowski and Brook were changing not simply the practice of theatre but its self-image (Ley 253-54), it is tempting to place Schechner’s work on a par with theirs. In this thesis, however, I will argue that Schechner’s writings have a different effect, deriving from their position within a broader performance project which includes but
exceeds Schechner’s work in theatre and in theatre theory. It is the totality of this performance project that I attempt to read.

Perhaps paradoxically, Schechner is an important figure for contemporary theatre studies because of his pioneering defence of theatre practice as research. Indeed, Schechner’s facility at working in a range of modes is exemplary. He works in three distinct but overlapping areas of production: as a theatre director, as an academic writer, and as an institutionally empowered leader of scholarship. This final role is fulfilled through his pioneering leadership of Performance Studies at New York University and in his editorships, most notably at The Drama Review/TDR. Because these sites of production all serve Schechner’s aim of instituting a ritual theory for theatre, I consider them as constituting a singular performance project. I come to understand this project by reading it around certain key figures within Schechner’s work. These figures include: audience participation in “environmental” theatre, the director as auteur, the efficacy-entertainment braid, the theory of restored behavior, theatricality, and the performance spectrum. This list does not exhaust Schechner’s concerns, but it does effectively survey his contributions to contemporary theatre research. While it seems evident that success in one domain of production supports success in the others, what I am interested in is the ways that the frustrations or failures in one area propel engagement in others. This angle reads Schechner’s fluency in a number of forms as compensating for setbacks. The overarching goal of his work is, I will argue, to secure his position as an authoritative author.

To engage with Schechner’s work is to broach questions about art’s relation to life, as I have done above. In the thesis, I will argue that the fusing of art and life which Schechner’s work attempts is characteristic of avant-gardism in general. Because Schechner pursues this aim not only in the theatre productions he directs, but also in the academic theories he publishes and the scholarly formation he has pioneered, I will come to regard Schechner’s avant-gardism as directed ultimately at
the institutions of academia, rather than solely at the organisation of arts. When I have demonstrated the inadequacy of Schechner’s performance paradigm as a legitimate paradigm directing academic study, I will argue that in its totality, Schechner’s work is a creative production, an intermedia avant-gardist art project which he pursues in theatrical, theoretical, and institutional frames. Through considering key productions within this project, I will identify its dominant modes as allegorical and come to describe Schechner as an author in terms of the authorial images produced within the matrix of his texts.

Reading Richard Schechner: Allegories of Performance is comprised of four chapters of more or less equal length. Chapter One is entitled “Recalling Richard Schechner’s Performance Theatre” and here the reader is introduced to Schechner as a theatre director whose career began amidst the aesthetic and social turbulence of the 1960s. Schechner’s most celebrated production, Dionysus in 69 is described in great detail in order to sketch Schechner’s characteristic concerns and tools and because it directly reflects upon the cultural change taking place in the late 1960s. In addition to describing Schechner’s performance theatre in its art historical context, Chapter One introduces ritual theories of art and their relevance to Richard Schechner. At this point, avant-gardism is used as a descriptive term applied to theatre artists like Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, and Jerzy Grotowski. Subsequently, the term itself will be considered more critically, in order to refunction it for use in my arguments.

Chapter Two is entitled “Schechnerian Performance in Institutions” because it presents Schechner’s work in relation to academic institutions. It begins by describing Schechner’s career in terms of the domains of his achievement, including theatrical production, academic publishing, and academic organisation. On the basis of the portrait provided, I discern three phases to Schechner’s undertaking: an early theatre phase, an intermediate phase in which performance theory occupies his greatest attention, and the later (and current) phase of institutional leadership. These
phases do not describe exclusive commitments but rather the relative priority of Schechner's interests as they changed over time. In order to establish a link between these interests, I consider in some detail case examples in which Schechner's theatre and theory interact. At issue in these cases is Schechner's authority, as a creative author in the theatre, and as an academic. Authority is also at stake in the final discussion of performance studies at the institutional level. I compare and contrast performance studies with the emergence of semiotics as a degree-granting field in the United States. The comparative study makes clear that at the level of discipline, a study project participates in the pragmatic dimension in important ways. Understanding the pragmatics of Schechnerian performance is one key aim of this study. Without a better, more critical understanding of it, theatre scholars in the United States, Britain, and elsewhere may be limited in their ability to assess its viability as a model for future theatre studies.

The future of theatre studies is clearly something which occupies Schechner. This begins to emerge in discussions in Chapter Two. Its significance depends on a conception of authority, however, which is not discussed in detail until Chapter Three. There, I address "Authorship and Authority for Performance" by considering historically the ways in which authorship and authority have been inter-related. Allegory as a rhetorical category—a way of reading and of writing—emerges as their intersection. Because allegories work by projecting figurative meaning onto literal terms, they tend to blur the divisions between reading and writing. Perhaps paradoxically, however, allegories are also related to those powerful authors called auteurs who control all aspects of a production apparatus in order to guide forcefully the reader's interpretation. Schechner, I suggest, strives to be an auteur. Because he fails in theatre, he looks to academic theory as a site for his control. Chapter Three concludes with a description of Schechner's paradigm for performance studies as a literary function, organised by the operations characteristic of allegory.
The significance of a literary enterprise standing in for a scholarly paradigm is assessed in Chapter Four, entitled “The Authoritative Repositioning of Theatre by Performance.” Here I track three key moments in Schechner’s work where he has redefined on theoretical grounds the meaning or importance of theatre and its study. In these definitions and the repositioning of theatre, Schechner participates in the larger shifts described above in this introduction. However, he does so in his own terms. That is to say, his own interests in securing himself as an acknowledged and acclaimed author and a recognised authority determine the ways in which Schechner reworks theatre. By assailing both the theoretical and the historical grounds upon which Schechner executes this, I de-authorise his view. By accessing it in relation to his eclipse in theatre production, I re-authorise Schechner’s project by attaching its ostensibly scientific aspects to Schechner as a creative author. In my conclusion, I share my judgements about the kind of authorial figure Schechner appears to be, based on my readings of his work.

In thinking through the implications of Happenings for concepts of art in relation to everyday life, Allan Kaprow has written “if any action of an artist meant as a renunciation of art can itself be considered art, then in those circumstances non art is impossible” (76). By expanding performance to include all aspects of social life and cultural production, in “politics, medicine, religion, popular entertainments, and ordinary face-to-face interactions” (PR 21), Schechner has made “non art [...] impossible.” To understand Schechner’s work in its totality, I suggest that we read Kaprow’s observation in reverse, and consider that when “non art is impossible” “any action of an artist meant as a renunciation of art can itself be considered art,” including Schechner’s claim to “reject aesthetics” (“Foreword” vii). In sum, my reading of Schechner’s project rejects his rejection of aesthetics, and calls the performance project not social science, but art. Furthermore, because Schechner has consistently worked to blur the relations of art and life, I consider his work in theatre, theory, and academic organisation to be art in the avant-gardist tradition. To
suggest that performance develops not as a credible scholarly paradigm but as an
erful academic enterprise according to an avant-gardist agenda is to reframe the
importance of Schechner as its creative author.

In rethinking Schechner as a creative and enterprising author, I owe a great
debt to Lisa Jardine’s study of Erasmus. Man of Letters: The Construction of
Charisma in Print. Jardine is an exemplary new historicist. In this work, she
“uncover[s] a story of extraordinarily complex and sophisticated manipulations of
writing and printing, designed to construct a worldwide reputation both for a
movement (Low Countries humanism) and an individual” (4). She

show[s] how masterfully [Erasmus] manipulated the
new contemporary media – the supremely illusionistic
painting and the printed book (in particular, the volume
of published ‘familiar letters’) – exploiting their
sophisticated use for communication in a thoroughly
innovative way. [...] He invented the charisma of the
absent professor – the figure who creates awe by his
name on the title page, not by his presence in the
classroom [...] whose presence was evoked in portrait,
woodcut, or published collection of personal letters, set
alongside the wildly successful, constantly reissued,
revised, and re-edited textbooks, translations, and
editions. (5)

I had already formed many of the views I articulate here before I read Jardine’s work.
What this encounter contributed was an invaluable confirmation that the pragmatics
of intellectual production may reveal a scholar “shaping his own persisting trace in
intellectual history, adjusting his public image, editing the evidence to be left for his
biographers, managing the production of influences and contemporary movements to
enhance his own posthumous renown” (4). In other words, a scholar knowingly
playing the field, not in the interests of truth alone, but for the sake of power.
Erasmus, like Schechner, was a great reviser and Jardine reveals him “as reader and
active responder to his own work, vigorously keeping his printed text open and alive,
trying to prevent the living text from sliding into dead textbook” (26). Erasmus
emerges through Jardine’s study as “an exemplary figure” operating within “a
network of influences in common, shared projects, mutually inhabited spaces, and
collaborative understandings" (22-23). For Schechner, we his contemporaries, supply an important part of that network.

For a man who has striven to reorient theatre and its study, Schechner's influence is difficult to read off the larger world. Schechner is often positioned as an authority, but I have yet to meet anyone who agrees substantially with his views. His work occupies a confusing position, known by many, cited by few. When we meet Schechner through his texts, we may be struck by the relatively small role played by colleagues and peers. While his sources of inspiration are, as Arnold Aronson remarked, "eclectic" (History 197), Schechner's salutes to the works of others are often only as long as his acknowledgements to publishers for permission to reissue previously printed material. In the syllabuses of courses Schechner teaches at New York University, he positions himself in the list of the century's great directors, alongside Brook and Grotowski. But there is little evidence that anyone else does; none of the doctoral theses addressing his theatre have yet to be published in book form. Schechner has written most of the sources for material on his theatre used by historians. Christopher Bigsby groups Schechner with Chaikin and the Becks as following in the amalgamated tradition of Artaud, Grotowski, Kaprow, and Cage. Christopher Innes identifies him as a disciple of Grotowski. In the view of Arnold Aronson, "the work of Richard Schechner has not been especially innovative" but has rather recapitulated strategies and visions previously employed (195, 198). Aronson credits Schechner with one salient "legacy to theatre history": the codification and naming of environmental theatre.

[H]is significance lies in the creation of a body of general theory and criticism. By giving a disparate collection of theatre work a focus (and a name) he turned it into a 'movement' and was responsible, more than anyone else, for the dissemination of information that would influence and inform much of the scenography of the late sixties and seventies. [...] It is indicative of the success of this style of theatre that a production staged in this manner is no longer noteworthy and reviewers use the term 'environmental theatre' with as much ease as they use 'naturalism' or
‘absurdism.’ This term may be Richard Schechner’s legacy to history. (195, 204)

If it is his sole legacy, I doubt Schechner will be satisfied. In Reading Richard Schechner, implicitly I aim to explain why.

I call my reading “allegories of performance” for a number of reasons. Allegory is a recurring concern of this thesis. As a kind of literature, allegory describes the fables Schechner staged, as well as the reading process by which classic texts are adapted and adopted by contemporary writers such as Schechner. More importantly, however, allegory as a rhetorical category addresses the convergence within cultural production of authority and authorship. For this reason, it is a kind of emblem for my key concerns. Finally, allegory is an artistic strategy or attitude which Craig Owens and Elinor Fuchs declare is a salient feature of a lot of postmodernist art. In these ways, allegory forms part of the content of my explorations of Richard Schechner’s enterprise. However, there is a further relevance of allegory to this study. Allegory also in some sense describes its form. Although the thesis itself is not a story, it tells several stories. Furthermore, it develops a reading of Schechner’s career around a narrative structure, named by phases in which one or another mode of production takes precedence.

In undertaking an interdisciplinary reading of a key figure in American academia, I am implicitly engaging in a project which is, at its roots, feminist. My suspicions of founding fathers, my scepticism of authority, my querying of the theatre studies canon, and my interest in the dialectical relations of art and life, knowledge and experience all have their roots in a feminism which has developed in intellectual and practical arenas. It is also Marxist, insofar as its dialectics defend the power and value of material conditions and human labour’s ability to reshape them. The influence of Frankfurt School theorists is evident in the text. Less articulate, but probably far more directly influential, has been the discourse of dialectical critical realism and the writings of its chief pioneer, Roy Bhaskar. At its simplest, for
Bhaskar, dialectic "depends upon the art of thinking the coincidence of distinctions and connections" (Dialectic 180); this statement clearly summarises the fundamental method in this thesis. Because Bhaskar follows John Locke in predicating for philosophy the role of under-labourer rather than master-builder, and because this thesis argues against a master-builder of sorts, I feel confident in my choice to use critical realist thinking without deploying its terminology. At the same time, I predict that as Richard Schechner recedes as a figure of some prominence for current generations, dialectical critical realism will grow in importance. In any event, I hope that in the future, my work will be of use to theatre thinkers who embark upon a study of this exciting, demanding, and expanding body of work, and to critical dialecticians interested in seeing its application in the study of cultural production.
I begin re-reading Richard Schechner in relation to his theatre praxis for two reasons. First, Schechner's existing place in theatre books more often refers to his theatre than to his performance theory. The implication is that his theatre praxis rather than his performance theory determines existing evaluations of Schechner's contributions to theatre and its study. Second, Schechner's success as a theatre director predates his sustained commitment to developing performance theory. This chronology suggests that his work in theatre may well have informed not only the content and trajectory of his theorising, but also the impulse to pursue a theoretical framework. It is by no means obvious that anyone might choose both theatre and theoretical discourse as productive modes. Nor is it necessary that the writings of a theatre practitioner would constitute a body of theory as such. My hypothesis is that by beginning with a critical discussion of Schechner's theatre, we are better poised to understand why in this case, theory and theatre came to work as partners in a more extensive, and long-term performance project.

I will begin reading Richard Schechner's theatre in relation to the historical account written by the English scholar of American theatre Christopher Bigsby. Bigsby uses the category of performance theatre to discuss the Living and Open Theatres along with the Performance Group which Schechner founded in 1967 and led until 1980. These performance theatres pioneered ensemble-based explorations of ritual. Bigsby positions performance theatre in a time of cultural change.

Performance drama is very much a phenomenon of the 1960s and early 1970s, with its concern with the free expression of the senses, its communitarian impulse, its search for personal transcendence, its optimistic and even naively sentimental presumption about the essential goodness and even holiness of
human nature. And in its naivety, like other groups in the 1960s equally dedicated to the propagation of personal freedom and self-perception, [the Performance Group] developed at times a dangerously programmatic and exclusivist version of freedom. Its methods became in some ways as coercive as were those they sought to displace. It was not inappropriate, therefore, that by the late 1970s the movement should have effectively run its course. (73)

The performance theatres of Julian Beck and Judith Malina, Joseph Chaikin, and Richard Schechner attracted significant attention as each sought to create authentic experiences of ritual significance in theatres, asking “no validation beyond the immediate authenticity of the moment, the magic of the performance” (73). Because of the ritual and anti-literary character of this performance theatre, Bigsby suggests that because it privileged experience in the present tense, rather than contemplation, “it remains in some final sense immune to critical attack” (73). Together, these contentions about the irrelevance of validation and critical immunity suggest that any critical historian approaching the performance theatres faces a difficult task in apprehending them. If their essence resides only in “the magic of performance,” as Bigsby claims, then what is the historian left to consider?

In addition to the difficulty Bigsby poses in relation to past performances, there is the problem of the apparent closure of performance theatre as a category describing contemporary production. “[F]or a decade performance theatre commanded a respect and interest on an international scale which had not always typified the American theatre,” Bigsby contends (73). And yet, by the end of the 1970s, performance theatre’s moment had passed. For Bigsby, the end of performance theatre is marked by the death of the counterculture, or its subsumption into the advancing corporatism of imperial America after the crises of Vietnam and Watergate were resolved. I believe that Bigsby’s sense of performance theatre’s eclipse derives from his assumption about ritualised theatre’s refusal of conventional critical standards. I believe that by resisting the sense of
closure Bigsby articulates, the ritual features of Schechner's theatre can be opened up for critical discussion. That is my aim in this first chapter. By recalling Richard Schechner's early theatre in terms building, rather than settling on Bigsby's, I aim to disrupt the closure Bigsby institutes, in order to open a vista for a more long-term view of Schechner's theatrical explorations of ritual's relation to art and life.

Performance theatre has sustained on-going impact on contemporary theatre and theatre research, as an historical form, remembered, celebrated, or excoriated. Any adequate historical account has to allow for these on-going effects. Bigsby argues that its ritual aspects are obstacles to criticism of performance theatre. Instead, I regard its interest in ritual as the feature that poses the greatest possibilities for developing a critical history of Schechner's performance theatre. The critical history I will develop takes greater account of performance theatre's relation to performance theory. Although Schechner is both a theatre maker and a theoretician of theatre and the performing arts, criticisms of him have tended to subordinate or collapse one to the other. Instead, I am to treat them dialectically, by considering their distinctions and connections. It may be the case that performance's alignment of ritual and life and its preference for an "ameliorative theatre" (Malina in Beck 9) acting efficaciously on rather than simply entertaining its audiences (PT 106-52) did derive from the matrix of possibilities and obstacles of the 1960s and early 1970s counterculture. But, by arguing for a more sustained performance project authored by Richard Schechner, I will show that its crucial association of ritual art and life did not cease at the era's close. Instead, it was sustained through the development of Schechner's performance project in theatre, theory, and institutionalised study paradigm. For this reason, the approach to Schechner's theatre I propose below is better able to examine the tenacity with which Schechner has pursued the relation of ritual art and everyday life which lies at the heart of performance theatre, as Bigsby himself constitutes the category. The
aim of re-reading Schechner's theatre is to register the full effects of the interplay of theatre, theory, and academic power which characterises Schechner's career. To do so, it's necessary to understand the legacy of Schechner's directing within and beyond the terms in which it has been written. This is the task of the present chapter.

This chapter comprises three sections, which together develop a contemporary reading of Schechner's early work in theatre. In the first subchapter, I describe the historical context for and summarise one celebrated production, Dionysus in 69 (1968), in order to establish Schechner's activity as a theatrical innovator in the context of a period of rapid (and in some respects, radical) cultural and social change. In the second section, the theme of social change is developed, by considering Schechner's performance theatre as an active and self-conscious participant in that change. There, Dionysus in 69 will be further described as both a symptom of the social and cultural change, and as a parable explicitly addressing it. Then the question of performance theatre's participation in social change will be broadened, to include the wider aims of linking art and life through the activation of ritual in performance. This ritualised link between art and life is the topic of the third subchapter. It lies at the heart of Schechner's aesthetics, affiliating it with other avant-gardist theatres. In the present chapter, terms like "new," "alternative," "experimental," and "avant-garde" are used as descriptive terms, uncritically. In time, however, the term "avant-garde" will be redefined in relation to contemporary critical theories. Understanding a ritualised link between art and life is a necessary first step towards re-reading Richard Schechner's work in terms of avant-gardism.

---

The critical opening of the category of avant-gardism begins in Chapter Two, and is extended in Chapter Three, to be refined in Chapter Four.
1. Performance Theatre: The case of Dionysus in 69

A. Introduction to performance theatre

The 1960s marked a period of change in American theatre, during which

the theatre of character, of problems and solutions, the theatre of beings uttering intelligently formed, balanced utterances, the theatre of significant scenes, of fortuitous events (Sainer 12)

was called into question by a "radical loosening" (9) of dramatic and theatrical conventions. In the place of the Broadway apparatus and its off-shoot, Off-Broadway, and in the stead of the luminary dramas of Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, and Tennessee Williams:

a new American theatre was just sending down its roots; it was beginning to nourish a new uncertainty, beginning to ask questions that had to do with the presumptions with which humankind lived conscious and subconscious lives. (12)

Calling the Broadway theatre the "vanity stage" because of its "ideal clothing, ideal speech" Julian Beck declared it was "the vanity stage against which we have pitted our being, not yet knowing what tools to use, nor how to use them, unsafe, witless, a barefoot army of straggler" (7). Arthur Sainer, once a comrade of Beck's in the 1961 General Strike for Peace (Sainer 282-85; Tytell 170-77), contributed as a playwright and Village Voice theatre critic during this period of experimentation. He explains:

We were trying to find a new way to express what we had begun to understand about character and society; we had to find a new way to express who we were becoming or who it was that we wanted to become as spectators, more responsible beings, not mesmerized by fictional creatures set in little jewel boxes carrying out their own lives; as writers, directors, and performers, beings who were more aware of the workings of our inner lives and more responsive to the social and political forces at work around us. (12)
For Schechner, as for Beck and Malina, the search was for a theatre that made a difference in people's lives; each, through distinctive paths, turned to ritual as a model for a new theatre. "The ambition to make theatre into ritual," Schechner explained in 1971, "is nothing other than a wish to make performance efficacious, to use [theatrical] events to change people" (qtd. in Innes, Avant-Garde 11). While in 1970, Julian Beck reasoned that

the social structure would have us believe that no theatre can be created outside of its domain. It believes in itself as the ultimate Eden, a self-deception that has been forcibly injected into the general consciousness. But the impertinence is disposed of by the dances and rituals of primitive societies. A different aesthetic is the answer. (43)

The Living Theatre would return again and again to the theatrical possibilities of performing "a ritual to drive the old culture out of the head to unify/the forces to raise hope" (106).

By virtue of that "new American theatre" and the new aesthetics which Beck, Schechner, Sainer, and others, envisaged, contributed to, and sustained through their published writings, it made sense for theatre historians to speak, as they did, of a distinctively American alternative theatre. The new theatre would function as

an alternative to the theatre of the dominant complacent middle-class society which tended to perpetuate the status quo in its aesthetics, politics, working methods, and techniques. The alternative theatre companies directed themselves to the new audiences [...] explored new working methods, new techniques, and new aesthetic principles that would be in harmony with their convictions and could be used to express their new theatrical conceptions. (Shank 1)

---

This new alternative or experimental theatre was the discursive location for the early, and most celebrated, theatre work by Richard Schechner. This new American theatre summarised by Shank will be described briefly, as a preliminary step to assessing how Schechner is currently figured in contemporary theatre history.

Looking at this new theatre's more prominent proponents serves to situate Schechner's theatre, both in its socio-historical context, and in the discursive matrix which grew from and sustained the new theatre. Above, I introduced the affiliation made between the performance theatres of Beck and Malina, Joseph Chaikin, and Richard Schechner (see also Innes, Avant-Garde 173-92). These theatres were among a generation of experimenters; beginning with The Living Theatre's production of Gelber's The Connection, the period from 1959 to 1979 was one dominated by ensembles: "this was," recalls Schechner "an age of groups, communes, collectives" (EH 22). Schechner himself is tempted to draw up a "homeric list" of the ensembles, practitioners, and projects of the period which have become part of American theatrical legend (EH 21-23). A briefer list can be compiled by looking for those theatres discussed in two or more of the existing critical surveys. The critical surveys addressing this "new theatre" from an historical perspective include: American Alternative Theatre (1982) by Theodore Shank and Bigsby's A Critical Introduction to Twentieth Century American Drama, Volume Three: Beyond Broadway (1985). Hungarian Americanist Zoltán Szilassy's monograph American Theater of the 1960s (1986) succeeds in short order to set the ensembles discussed by Shank in relation to the dramaturgy and regional theatre movements which structured the decade's theatrical vibrancy, while still foregrounding the importance of intermedia happenings and emergent performance theories. Other sources amplify the historical and critical significance of the period of experimentation. For example, avant-gardism and radical theatre in an international frame are documented in Christopher Innes's books, The Holy Theatre
(1981) and its revision as Avant-Garde Theatres, 1892-1992 (1993) and also in Eugene van Erven's thematic study of Radical People's Theatre (1988) in and beyond America. Another valuable thematic study is Arnold Aronson's The History and Theory of Environmental Scenography published by UMI in 1981. A more personalised perspective derives from Arthur Sainer's Radical Theatre Notebook, recently updated and reissued by Applause Books (1997). Equally, John Lahr's thought-provoking journalism describing New York's theatre in the late 1960s and first years of the 1970s was published as Acting Out America: Essays on Modern Theatre (1972). Bonnie Marranca's criticism of the Theatre of Images appeared beginning in the mid 1970s, and includes introductory essays, playtexts, and critical descriptions of the projects sustained by some of the American experimenters from the mid 1970s through the 1990s. Of the groups discussed in two or more of these histories and criticism, most are New York-based and run (if not solely) by men (Bigsby's study of 440 pages allots women's theatres 20 pages of text).³ If by prominence we mean groups discussed in two or more of the histories (by Bigsby, Shank, or Szilassy) and also included in a significant discussion in at least one of the other critiques listed above, then the short-list of prominent American experimenters comprises ten companies. In addition to the performance theatres -- The Living Theatre⁴; the Open Theatre⁵; and The Performance Group⁶ -- the

³ Other New York groups addressed only cursorily in the studies above include: Caffe Cino (Bigsby 417; Canning 49-51; Gruen 78); Café LaMama/Experimental Theatre Club (Canning 51-52; Gruen 84-85 and passim); Gut Theatre/Enriquez Vargas (Lahr 42-54); The Manhattan Project (Lahr 159-71); Ridiculous Theatre Company (Bigsby 416-19; also Brecht, Queer; Sainer 357-62). The notable women performance artists and women-run groups of the same era include At The Foot Of The Mountain; IARTBW Theater; Los Angeles Feminist Theater; María Irene Fornes (see Arnold); Linda Montano; Karen Malpede; Meredith Monk (whom Aronson, Marranca, Sainer, Schechner address, but who is hardly cited by Bigsby and ignored by Shank); Carolee Schneeman; Spiderwoman Theatre (again Sainer includes them while Bigsby and Shank settle for brief mentions); and Megan Terry (whose career included but stretched beyond the Open Theater scene). For an overview, see Canning.

⁴ The footnotes after each of the following groups listed in the text refer readers to the discussions in the listed books and to relevant works by other authors. On The Living Theatre, see Aronson, History 165-66, 171-76; Bigsby, 74-96; Innes, Avant-Garde 181-92;
shortlist includes the San Francisco Mime Troupe; El Teatro Campesino; Bread and Puppet Theater. Mere mentions in Szilassy but more substantial coverage in either Bigsby's or Shank's histories adds to this short list Richard Foreman's Ontological-Hysteric Theatre; Byrd Hoffman Foundation/Robert Wilson; Mabou Mines; and Squat Theatre.

The end date for the period of experimentation is mid to late 1970s (depending on whether one follows Bigsby or Schechner). Yet the primary figures leading each of these groups, if not the groups themselves, all continued working...
into, and in some cases, through the 1980s. If their work is to be representative of a new, alternative American theatre such as Shank sets out to document, then this celebrated past and its contemporary significance remains an open, unsettled historical question. Bonnie Marranca, for one, is convinced of the historical significance of this period of experimentation.

Theatre has been slow to redefine space and movement primarily because of the traditional need for theatrical performance to serve as an illustration of the dramatic narrative. [...] The building of non-proscenium theatres helped to remedy the situation somewhat as did the playwrights of the sixties. But the major challenge came with The Living Theatre, The Open Theater, the Happenings movement and, more recently, the environmental theatre experiments of The Performance Group. These groups defied conventional uses of space and text, with the result that the rigidity of theatrical practice broke down, performance values gained ascendancy over dialogue, and the visual image began to supplant language in the hierarchy of theatrical elements. The actor’s body was freed to function in a setting designed with new spatial concepts in mind. The text more often than not served as a basis for verbal-visual collage. (Images 114)

If their methods endure, so too do many of the people and companies who made these significant advances in theatrical production. For example, Bread and Puppet, El Teatro Campesino, Mabou Mines, Ontological-Hysteric Theatre Company, and San Francisco Mime Troupe still produce works in the 1990s. No doubt each company has found ways to endure, if not prosper, from its longevity. Bread and Puppet, once at home in New York City’s parks, has played in Joseph Papp’s off-Broadway Public Theatre (with tickets priced at $17.50); Richard Foreman regrouped after selling the loft where his work had always been performed in 1979 (PC 229-30), staging works in the 1980s in The Performing Garage and, in the 1990s, in a dedicated space Ontological-Hysteric occupies in a converted church in the East Village. Foreman was recently honoured with a sizeable grant from the MacArthur Foundation’s fellowship programme (Marranca, Images 187).
He continues his practice of using actors with little experience or formal theatre training. It seems unlikely now that Foreman’s work will cease any earlier than ill health or infirmity insists. While Bigsby declares that by the time they returned to the U.S. in the early 1970s, the Living Theatre’s “rhetoric [...] was quickly outflanked by events and by other rhetorics” (93), the Living’s subsequent history reveals the tenacity of theatre workers not matched by theatrical categories. The Living Theatre as it then was returned to New York City in 1984 after extended periods of exile in South America and Europe, leading “their current generation of vagabonds back into the bourgeois palaces” (Sainer 311) with a repertory at the off-Broadway Joyce Theatre which was panned by the critics (Sainer 304-11; Tytell 338-48). Upon returning, both Beck and Malina won lucrative roles in Hollywood, the salaries of which sustained their current work. Even after Julian Beck’s death in 1985, the Living Theatre carried on, relocating from 1989 to 1993 in a deep storefront on Third Street and Avenue C in Alphabet City on the Manhattan’s lower East Side where, with a mere $20,000 in grants per annum and about half again in private donations, the Living Theatre continued to produce and tour (Tytell 345-47). Bigsby’s closure of the performance theatre category – “by the late 1970s the movement should have effectively run its course” (73) obscures the Living’s later years on principle, as if the loss of acclaim should deprive an ensemble’s standing in theatre histories. The labours of people escape the critical categories used to codify them. The critical categories must make sense both of the history and the present of these innovators.

That said, by no means all those companies identified with the theatrical renaissance of America in the 1960s have sustained themselves into the present decade. The Open Theater was the first on the above list to dissolve, formally disbanding in late 1973, following which Chaikin established his Winter Projects in 1976 as an ongoing workshop among collaborating actors, musicians, directors and
a dramaturg. The Winter Projects worked for six seasons, until Chaikin disbanded
the ensemble in 1983 (Blumenthal 222-25). In the 25 years since the Open Theater
last existed, Chaikin has also acted and directed in nationally known repertory and
experimental companies across the U.S. (including American Repertory Theatre,
LaMama, Manhattan Theatre Club, The Public Theatre, and San Francisco’s Magic
Theater). While Chaikin has staged works in London, Paris, and Israel, the most
international of these American pioneers is Robert Wilson, who with great panache
has carved a career straddling North America, Europe, and the Middle East. Wilson
works as an individual auteur, in collaboration with artists but without the
entanglements of ensembles. Squat, a relative latecomer to the New York scene,
arrived as political refugees from Budapest via Baltimore in 1977, surviving a split in
1984-85 into Squat and Squat/Love (Robinson 48), which produced work until 1990
and up to 1995 respectively (Buchmuller and Koós 223-26). In 1996, Artists Space
in New York published a book logging and critiquing Squat’s work, compiled by
former members Eva Buchmuller and Anna Koós, with an introduction by Village
Voice journalist/CUNY professor Alisa Solomon. Perhaps uniquely, Squat created a
local presence, with storefront theatre on New York’s West 23rd Street, while
maintaining a presence at European arts festivals. Like Robert Wilson, Squat’s
members engaged in a range of aesthetic practices, including decorative painting,
film-making, and installations; and like Wilson, current works by former members
address European audiences and art institutions.

Finally, we come to the theatre work by Richard Schechner. The period of
his work apprehended by Bigsby’s category of “performance theatre” includes the
eyear work with the ensemble he founded, produced, and directed, called The
Performance Group. The Group formed, dissolved, and re-formed on several
junctures during Schechner’s tenure; in 1980, it metamorphosed into The Wooster
Group under the artistic directorship of former TPG member Elizabeth LeCompte.
The Wooster Group took its name from the legal title granted to the incorporated
group in 1968 when it first hired the premises known as the Performing Garage at
number 33, on Soho's Wooster Street. It endured a political and highly publicised
funding cut in the 1980s, which Schechner wrote about in his essay for the
Performing Arts Journal, "The Decline and Fall of the (American) Avant-Garde"
(revised for publication in EH 11-76). The company weathered the cash crisis, and
continues to produce its eclectic form of cerebral devised performance taking their
cues from cultural detritus and canonical remnants like Thornton Wilder's Our Town,
Miller's The Crucible, Chekhov's Three Sisters, and iconic figures like Timothy Leary
and St. Anthony. Its unique working methods were documented in detail by
"authorized chronicler" David Savran in Breaking the Rules (1986) and by rehearsal-
researcher Susan Letzler Cole (91-23). Arnold Aronson ("Wooster"), Philip
Auslander (Presence 83-104), Elinor Fuchs (85-88, 112-14, 183-85) and Bonnie
Marranca (Theatre 123-26) have written performance criticism on Wooster Group
works.

The period since the mid to late 1970s remains a rich one for the theatre
artists discussed above. If one considers the endurance of many of the key
theatrical pioneers, it becomes more difficult to punctuate the period of change in
purely theatrical terms. (The retrenchment of radical social change in political and
sociological terms following from the mid-1970s remains inarguable; see Carroll and
Noble 367-437). This complicates the sense of closure given in the accounts of
radical theatrical experimentation presented by Christopher Bigsby and Christopher
Innes. There's a pleasurable and instructive irony to Elinor Fuchs's coining the term
"performance theater" without knowledge of Bigsby's work; Fuchs's follows Michael
Vanden Heuvel in using it to describe works by Foreman, Wilson, LeCompte and
Stuart Sherman which like the "conventional theater of dramatic texts" "situate[e] the
theatrical event in an imaginative world evoked by visual, lighting, and sound
continuous awareness of itself as performance, and [...] its unavailability for representation" (79). This definition of performance theatre follows Timothy J. Wiles's use of the term to describe productions in which, "[i]nstead of speaking from within a character, as in Stanislavskian acting, or stepping outside of it, as in Brecht's theatre, their actors stand in the place of traditional characters, and address the audience directly" (qtd. in Arnold 191).¹⁴ Fuchs's redefinition of performance theatre's theatricality rather than its ritual instrumentality reopens the category, in much the same way that the ongoing productivity of most of the era's pioneers disrupts their fixity in a theatrical "past" Bigsby in particular seeks to inscribe. Indeed, the closure argued by Bigsby fails to consider the implications of the endurance of the new theatrical culture of the 1960s through its lasting impact on how theatre is conceived. Specifically, as authors in their own right, Julian Beck, Joseph Chaikin, Richard Foreman, Arthur Sainer, and Richard Schechner have published works not only about their own theatres but also addressing theatre in general. As a consequence, their impact on current conceptions of theatre's possibilities, aspirations, and limits are reflected in both historical documentation/criticism and in memoirs and polemics. Through these forms, the legacies of the New American Theatre of the 1960s and 1970s continue to influence American theatre and its conceptualisation to this day. (Indeed, I suggest that the recent re-issuing by Applause Books of Sainer's Radical Theater Notebook, revised with a fourth section entitled "Towards the Millennium" is manifesting precisely the endurance both in discourse and in practice of these pioneers.) Assessing the

¹⁴ Citation originally from Timothy J. Wiles, The Theatre Event (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980) 111. Wiles offers the phrase as if by default, saying that "Since its spokesmen find performance so central, this theater might well be called 'performance theater'" (117). Wiles cites John Lahr's Up Against the Fourth Wall as a source for the term to describe "the new theatrical movement which succeeds naturalism and epic theater" (118).
variability in the contemporary effects of this once-new theatre is one aim of the reading of Richard Schechner I propose.

To describe the effects of the New Theatres of the 1960s and early 1970s on theatre and theatre studies in the 1990s, I will introduce a new term, “discursive matrix” which comprehends how activities may end, or substantially change, while their discursive effects endure. By discursive matrix, I mean both the medium in which ideas and art projects are embodied (in the sense given the word by Marshall McLuhan) and the medium in which ideas, art projects, and their reception are located and by virtue of which they are sustained. This latter sense of medium is particularly important to consider for an ephemeral, occasion-specific art such as theatre. Using “medium” in this second way derives from the use of the term to describe the nutritive substance lining a petri dish, in which bacteriological cultures are grown, which is also called a matrix. In the case of Schechner’s work, his theatre is recorded within a discursive matrix which conceives of the American experimental theatre as opposed to its commercial or “non-profit” repertory theatre dedicated to staging scripted dramas for middle- and upper-middle class audiences. Shank has articulated this most succinctly (see above). Meanwhile, Schechner’s theory is situated in the minority discourse of theatre anthropology and/or the interstitial space of interculturalism. By reinscribing experimental theatre and interculturalism as discursive matrices, I aim to identify how each locates, conditions, and is articulated through activities and artefacts associated with Richard Schechner. These discursive matrices operate without constraining or determining them, and it is precisely the spillage of Schechner’s work across the boundaries of distinct forms of theatre and of theory that provokes this new reading.

Although discursive matrices sustain themselves in part through their explanatory success, relating a project to its discursive matrix does not allow the researcher to predict with certainty the texture of the work or its outcomes. Locating
a work within a discursive matrix may help identify salient tendencies in terms of the apparatus of production and reception through which the work is produced. Nevertheless, there is nothing deterministic about referring to practices in relation to relevant discursive matrices, particularly since production and reception of art work may refer implicitly to incommensurable matrices, each of which may be reshaped in time by the friction produced in relation to the other. For this reason, discursive matrices apprehend the more diffuse conceptual ecology out of which activities emerge and to which they refer, however critically. (On this basis, the discourse of stage naturalism remains active in experimentalism’s discursive matrix, thereby shaping Schechner’s theatre and theory as that conception of professional enunciation against which the work pushes.) When I propose, then, to “read Richard Schechner,” I am reading his texts in relation to selected discursive matrices I deem to be active and emergent in shaping his interdisciplinary and intermedia performance project. My use of discursive matrices implies not so much a fresh conception of reading, but rather a robust and ecumenical conception of texts. Most importantly, it concretises a healthy scepticism about the received vocabularies in which theatre histories are transmitted, and it lifts my criticisms of Schechner’s project out of a vocabulary addressed to personal intention.

If one takes seriously the enduring power of discourses about theatre to shape conceptions of and activities in theatre, then the continuing influence into the 1990s of this radical American theatre of the 1960s and 1970s seems inevitable. Its experiments have contributed terms, images, and performative practices to a prevailing discursive matrix that limits the hegemony of literary-based, commercial styles of theatre. But if the claim for continuing influence is unproblematic, it is also, in itself, uninteresting. It is the problem of understanding how the influence has played out which merits attention. This thesis will address the question of the active legacies of this new American theatre of the 1960s through one particular formation:
the formulation of a specific and enduring "performance project" authored by Richard Schechner. Schechner's project strives to authorise and legitimate his conception of ritual's relation to art and life within its own distinctive discursive matrix sited by Schechner "between theater and anthropology." Like "medium," the word "matrix" has a number of distinct meanings; the more marginal meanings of "matrix" indicate replication or relations of stabilisation, whereas the more dominant meanings suggest "growth" and "formation." This slide in its meanings is provocative: it suggests that discursive matrices can become instituted to the degree that they are the site or instrument for reproduction rather than generative growth. The institution of a hybrid discourse is, I will come to suggest, the aim of Schechner's performance project.

To set the formation of such a "performance project" in its contemporary context is to consider its history. And to consider its history requires an understanding of how the experimental theatres of the period were but one network of exchange within a flourishing ecology of cultural production in a range of media. These new theatres were located in an aesthetic culture of change. The allied arts supporting and informing this new alternative American theatre indicate that the relative continuity of innovation must be extended not only historically forward (as I've just argued), but also laterally, into other domains of praxis. The culture of aesthetic change and innovation cradling these experimental new theatres is described with luscious detail by dance historian Sally Banes's account of

---

15 The sense of the word "matrix" I am using is its secondary sense, given in The Oxford English Dictionary as: "a place or medium in which something is 'bred', produced or developed." As "a place or point of origin and growth" the jelly coating a petri dish used to grow bacterial samples is a matrix of the sort I seek to connote. However, matrix's other meanings are certainly provocative for the ecology of structure and meaning I seek to apprehend. For instance, the word derives from late Latin's "womb"; it now designates "the formative part of an animal organ" like the bed of a tooth or nail. More generally, "matrix" describes "an embedding or enclosing mass" but it also means a mold or stamp, and even "the bed or hollowed place in which a monumental brass is fixed" and a "copy of an original disc recording that is used in the making of other copies" (OED, 2nd Edition).
Greenwich Village 1963. Drawing upon Banes's descriptions and the analyses of Nicholas Zurbrugg and Henry Sayre, among others, I will briefly summarise the contemporaneous experimentation in allied arts.

In music, John Cage, LaMonte Young, and Steve Reich were breaking down the boundaries between music and noise, experimenting with chance sounds and with repetition to expand music's potentiality (Banes 119-20; 237-39; Zurbrugg 31-37; 41-49; 52-53). Indeed, to acknowledge the historic significance of Cage's Black Mountain College collaborations with choreographer Merce Cunningham and visual artist Robert Rauschenberg in the early 1950s, Schechner dates the beginning of the era of experimentation in 1952, rather than in the later date I've proposed above. In literature, the oral poetry movement would build upon the Beats' poetic recuperation of the quotidian (Roszak 124-54), to assault the value-laden boundary which had separated literature from writing and from talk (Sayre 177-92). In dance, daily tasks and specific sites were incorporated into choreography that refused to confine its movement repertoire to the conventions of balletic or canonical modern dance (Banes 65-73; Sayre 101-44; Zurbrugg 85-88). And art galleries and artists' studios housed happenings where activities were sculpted with little sense of theatrical style or unleashed, ever resistant to their fixing as an “art object” (Kirby Happenings: Kaprow; Kostelanetz; Sayre 66-100). If art and everyday life interpenetrated in these experiments, the traditional boundaries separating arts similarly eroded.

Theatre, always a synergetic art (Melrose 7) was implicated in this blurring of genres. For Bohemian documenter John Gruen, the “aims of the New Bohemia theater” -- the Experimental Theatre Club (ETC) at Cafe La Mama, Caffe Cino, Engage Coffeehouse, Bridge Theater, Judson Poet's Theater, and the off-off Broadway houses such as the Open Stage, Theatre 62, and the Loft Theater Workshop (78) -- were “identical with those of its cinema, poetry, prose, and art.
Exploration and experimentation reign[ed] supreme in the theaters of [New York City's] East Village” (14). Banes’s brilliant archaeology of the avant-garde experiments in the early 1960s in Greenwich (West) Village illustrates the links forged by artists across media between “an exuberant, carnivalesque, boundary-blurring style art with a cool, ironic attitude toward culture,” thereby laying “the groundwork – in content, style, and technique – for the two distinct branches of vanguard art that would directly follow it: the medium-oriented formalism of the Seventies and the deeply ambivalent, ironic, reflexive art of the Eighties and Nineties (that is, second-generation postmodernism)” (8).

Contemporary commentator John Gruen described the sixties as the era of “the Combine Generation” (6) whose “every creative activity [...] is marked by the wish to see clearly, to make an image of what it is to be alive now, to seek out truths unclouded by useless, stultifying veils of hand-me-down attitudes” (16). This appetite endows the artistic experimentation of the 1960s and early 1970s with a utilitarian function, as part of a broader investigation into the potentialities and limits of individual and social consciousness. The attitude of instrumentality, which regards art as a superior means of encountering the reality and vitality of human existence, locates this experimentation as a descendant of Romanticism. Unlike Romanticism, however, the image of an individual artist as a genius is rejected by the Combine Generation, for whom the audience as active participants in the making of art’s meaning acquired a new importance. According to Gruen’s testimony, the audience developing around the experimentation in the arts was “unique” in that it does not seek entertainment, so much as a sense of participation. Too, it is in attendance less to judge than to identify with, to support experiment in the mutual search for an awakening and deepened use of the senses (16).
To understand the radical theatre of the 1960s and 1970s, then, it is necessary to appreciate its relation to more widespread counter-cultural activity which included but surpassed formal "arts" activities; its articulated relation of art to life, and the roles it evolved for audiences as participants. These are all issues informing The Performance Group's production of Dionysus in 69, and describing the project therefore identifies more specifically the contours of these concerns. The way in which the production is discussed below aims to make sense of the categories in which the historians (Bigsby, Innes, and Shank) have described Schechner's theatre. In Chapters 1.2(B) and Two, I will argue that the characteristic historiographic positioning of Schechner's theatre as explored here and below is insufficient for describing the full scope of his career as an avant-gardist experimenter.
B. Introducing Dionysus in 69

In the following discussion, the delineation of key features of *Dionysus in 69* introduces Schechner's performance theatre. An account of *Dionysus in 69* in performance raises the three issues identified above -- the broader counter-culture, the question of art and life, and the participation of audiences. These facets of the production informed Christopher Bigsby's judgement that *Dionysus in 69* is a "paradigm of performance theatre" (130). For Bigsby:

To the solemn moralising of the American dramatic tradition, [...] performance theatre counterposes a vital, energetic, non-teleological world, a Dionysian celebration of the liberated body and soul (67).

Using observations by TPG members, the following account of *Dionysus in 69* identifies how, as exemplary performance theatre, the show is physical rather than cerebral, energetic rather than contemplative, and celebratory rather than moralising. The present discussion proceeds in three stages: a summary of the source play and its themes; a summary of key features of the performance score (which changed over the run); and a summary description of the staging environment.

*Dionysus in 69* adapted Euripides's tale of *The Bacchae* into contemporary vernacular. The original play dramatises the contest between the young king Pentheus and the outlaw god, Dionysus. A useful summary of *The Bacchae* is lodged in Gilbert Murray's *History of Ancient Greek Literature*, published first in 1897, and subsequently guiding twentieth century classicist studies. Of Euripides's late play, Murray writes:

The *Bacchae* is a play difficult to interpret. For excitement, for mere thrill, there is absolutely nothing like it in ancient literature. The plot is as simple as it is daring. The god Dionysus is disowned by his own kindred and punishes them. There comes to Thebes a 'Baccos' -- an incarnation, it would seem, of the god himself -- preaching the new worship. The daughters
of Cadmus refuse to accept his spirit; he exerts it upon them in strength amounting to madness, and they range the hills glorifying him. The old Cadmus and the prophet Teiresias recognise him at once as God; the unearthly joy fills them, and they feel themselves young again. The king Pentheus is the great obstacle. He takes his stand on reason and order: he will not recognise the 'mad' divinity. But Pentheus is the wrong man for such a protest: possibly he had himself once been mad [...] and he acts not calmly, but with fury. He insults and imprisons the god, who bears all gently and fearlessly, with the magic of latent power. The prison walls fall, and Dionysus comes straight to the king to convince him again. Miracles have been done by the Mænads on Cithæron, and Dionysus is ready to show more; will Pentheus wait and see? Pentheus refuses, and threatens the 'Bacchos' with death; the god changes his tone [...] In a scene of weird power and audacity, he slowly controls — one would fain say 'hypnotises' — Pentheus: makes him consent to don the dress of a Mænad, to carry the thyrsus, to perform all the acts of worship. The doomed man is led forth to Cithæron to watch from ambush the secret worship of the Bacchanals, and is torn to pieces by them. The mad daughters of Cadmus enter, Agavê bearing in triumph her son's head, which she takes for a lion's head, and singing a joy-song which seems like the very essence of Dionysiac madness expressed in music. (270-71)

"But," Murray concludes rhetorically, "what does it all mean?" (272). According to Schechner's analysis before rehearsal, The Bacchae was "a bitter tribute to the Athens [Euripides] would never see again" (PD:107). Scheckner regarded the play as

an absurd drama in which the petty and all too human qualities of egoistic vanity and capriciousness, revealed in Dionysus' vengeance, represent a cosmic scheme impossible to comprehend or propitiate. (Innes, Avant-Garde 173)

The play addresses issues of authority, guilt, and murder. These themes TPG further explored in subsequent devised productions, Makbeth (1968-70) and

16 Euripides wrote The Bacchae in 407 BC, at the end of his life, aged seventy-one and "in voluntary exile" (PD 107).

17 See Schechner, "Jealous."
Commune (1970, 1972), as well as in its staging of Ted Hughes's verse adaptation of Seneca's Oedipus in 1977. As actor William Shephard recalls,

> When we first read The Bacchae out loud, we were amazed at how well it suited the Group. To begin with, the basic themes of the play -- violence, madness, ecstasy, challenge of authority, moral choice -- were all issues of great concern in American society at the time, and they seemed particularly suited to the Group's extremely physical, impulse-oriented way of working. Moreover, the basic conflict in the play (in Nietzschean terms, the Appollonian [sic]/ Dionysian conflict) seemed remarkably similar to the Group dynamic which fluctuated between precision and order on the one hand and impulsive action on the other. (52)

If, as Shephard suggests;

> [i]n both the play and the structure of the Group the dramatic tension between social order and anarchy, discipline and impulse, created a highly charged atmosphere of social instability poised between change into a new society and self-destruction, (52)

then a closer look at the play may assist us in comprehending "performance theatre" as a credible category describing a paradoxical theatre praxis.

In The Bacchae, two orders of authority and privilege, the divine and the secular, come into contest, embodied by Dionysus and Pentheus respectively. The destruction of the royal household, through Pentheus's murder by his mother, and her subsequent exile with her father Cadmus, suggests that "Dionysus will by implication [...] now enjoy the honour once publicly bestowed by the polis on Pentheus" (Seaford 256). Pentheus's authority as a secular leader is eroded by the escape from his capture of Dionysus and the Bacchants. The final overthrow of Pentheus and his royal household allows the city to accept Dionysus as a true god, "god of the whole polis" (253).

Subsidiary themes of The Bacchae include the theatricality of disguise and the figure of the alien or outsider. Disguise acquires both an active and an implied role in the play's events. The plot depends upon the masquerading of Teiresias,
Cadmus, and the young King Pentheus; all three are authority figures whose status is undermined by their transformations at the hands of Dionysus. Implicit in the murder of Pentheus, however, is Agave's failure to recognise as her own son the beast she and her sisters slew in Bacchic fury. The broad and decisive transformations of the principal characters and of their city follow from the consequences of an alien's visit to the city. "Dionysus is a god of the wild and the margins who is also a stranger, a foreigner [...] Rather than marking boundaries, he crosses them" (Seaford 250). According to Seaford, Dionysus's foreignness "is emphasized in the prologue and throughout the play" (253). The theatrical possibilities arising from theatrical transformation, disguise, and the destabilising forces of the foreign will be matters which Schechner continues to explore throughout his career.

Most importantly for Schechner's evolving aesthetic, however, remained the possibilities inherent in The Bacchae for inspiring what historian Christopher Innes refers to as "ritual drama" (Avant-Garde 173). In Innes's estimation, Dionysus in 69 represents "Schechner's most overt attempt to recreate ritual drama" (173). In the following summary of the production, its ritual aspects will be identified. The ritual character of Dionysus in 69 can be addressed according to the following key issues:
1. the function of the Group;
2. the use of theatrical sign systems;
3. the activation of audience participation.

There are two principle sources (and one ancillary set of writings) for the following description of Dionysus in 69, a show I never saw. The first source is a book of the same title, published in 1970 by The Performance Group and copyrighted to it as a corporate entity. Its contents -- photographs of live performances and of the actors working in a photographer's studio without an audience, transcription from performance of dialogue and action, and selected texts documenting Dionysus in 69
were edited by Richard Schechner. By offering transcription of the set dialogue and indications of characteristic improvisations, alongside vibrant black and white photographs of actors and audiences, this volume details the texture, imagery, and personal engagement upon which the production relied for its effects. Its greatest value lies in its ability as a totality to stimulate impressions in the reader of a long-past performance. As script and a collage of images and participants' analyses, this palimpsest does not submit to summary. In addition, however, participant actor William Hunter Shephard has recently published an account of the making of Dionysus in 69, which augments accounts of the production published by Richard Schechner in his book Environmental Theater and elsewhere. The following characterisation of Dionysus in 69 is drawn from these resources.

The production was the inaugural work of The Performance Group. The Performance Group (TPG) formed when Richard Schechner began holding workshops to explore psycho-physical theatre following the visit to New York in 1967 by Jerzy Grotowski. Its early investment in the training of the individual actor as an active member of a (more or less) stable ensemble remained characteristic of TPG's work even after it launched a project destined for public performance. The virtual simultaneity of the Group's emergence and the devising of Dionysus in 69 conditioned Dionysus in 69 in at least two ways. One impact pertains to the group's status, while the other relates to the show's content. Each will be discussed in turn.

As the initial undertaking of a fledgling group, Dionysus in 69 represented an "experiment" in more than simply the aesthetic sense of "experimental" or "alternative" theatre. It truly served as the testing ground both for the Group as a producing entity and for Richard Schechner as a directing producer. Schechner himself had previously only directed two productions with the East End Players (Aronson, History 167) and with the New Orleans Group (ET xvii-li) and one, unsuccessful one with the Free Southern Theater (Dent and others 59). Because
of the length of time involved in its development and its run (from January 1968 to July 1969), there were some changes in the show's participating actors. However, as Schechner points out,

[T]he Group is unusual in several ways. First, there has been very little come and go. Everyone who worked on Dionysus throughout its run has been in the Group since the first month, November 1967. Those who left the Group were asked to leave, for one reason or another. The couples in the Group have been reasonably stable and, to the best of my knowing, there has been no sleeping around within the Group. (D69 n.p.)

Consequently, it makes sense to consider that The Performance Group as a productive entity was itself one fruit of the labours of the Dionysus process, for its formation hardly preceded the early investigations of The Bacchae, which began in January 1968. So it's not simply that The Performance Group made Dionysus in 69 beginning in 1968, but that only two months prior, the Group began forming itself. William Hunter Shephard elaborates this premise into a theory of authorship for the project using the theory of the "Group Mind" elaborated by social psychologist William McDougall in a book published in 1923 (44 and passim). Whether one credits Shephard's claims for corporate authorship, it remains the case that the show and the company grew together in mutually conditioning interplay.

The second impact of the coalescing Group on the production concerns its content. Schechner attributes success in group-formation and sustenance to its participants' common "struggle to expose our feelings, to reveal ourselves, to be open, receptive, vulnerable; to give and take hard and deeply, to use impulse and feelings in our work." Because these early TPG members, in Schechner's estimation, "believe[d] that excellence in art is, ultimately, a function of wholeness as a human being" they met together weekly for therapeutic encounter sessions from November 1968 to July 1969 (D69 n.p.). The encounter sessions informed both the interpersonal relations of TPG's members and the mise en scène of
Dionysus. For example, a question and answer exchange based on encounter techniques was interpolated into the show as a means of excluding and of mortifying Pentheus at the point in the play when Dionysus first resists his kingly authority (D69 n.p.; Shephard 60, 105). Such dramatic actions were rendered through a theatrical sequence which abandoned fiction for the reality of the lives of its performers: the questions and answers addressed not the dramatic characters or their imagined lives, but rather the people performing and their everyday lives. When by October 1968, the interchanges stopped seeming honest, Schechner changed the action in order to sustain the metaphor of the king's defeat indicated by the dramaturgy through genuine (if pre-planned) action (ET 205; D69 n.p.).

At the same time as performers were seeking honest self-disclosure in workshops, rehearsals, and performances, they were further empowered as collaborators in the elaboration of a fixed but alterable performance score. Throughout this adaptation of Euripides's text, TPG actors produced their own selections from and elaborations on the source text, rather than reproducing it in its inherited form. (The character of Pentheus being one exception, speaking the classical text as a symptom of his adherence to restricting convention.) So, for example, choric speeches would dissolve into sonic fragments produced uniquely by each individual. Describing the opening ceremonies, Schechner explains:

> Many of the chorus lines are fragmented. Even syllables are distorted by extension, new sonic emphasis, and accent. These sounds are bounced around the room. Lines are broken, constructed, and reconstructed. Calls are given and echoed, communication started and severed. (D69 n.p.)

When the sounds collide and recombine, growing in volume as the spectators enter to fill the space, this first chorus creates a sensory impression, rather than delivering the exposition contained in the written source. The opening words might be:
now I raise the old, old hymn to Dionysus
[...] blessed are we for we shall know the mysteries of
god, blessed are you for you shall be purified
 [...] Dionysus in our god
so his mother bore him once in labor bitter
lightning struck forced by fire
consumed, she died
of light the son was born. (D69 n.p.)

But, as the transcript points out, “The first chorus starts before any spectators are let into the theater. It is fragmented, organized randomly, and therefore is different at every performance” (D69 n.p.). Sense for this new theatre was as sensual as it was rational.

Beyond improvisation around an existing play script, however, the performers further elaborated dialogue by loosely paraphrasing it in contemporary vernacular, with local references and in-jokes. So, for example, in the first conversation between the blind seer Teiresias and the king’s grandfather, Cadmus, about how to honour the new god, Teiresias might say:

Oh, no, we don’t trifle with divinity. We are the heirs of customs and traditions hallowed by age and handed down by our fathers. No quibbling American mise-en-scène can topple them, whatever subtleties this clever Group invents -- and people say they are very clever, [...] No, he wants his honor from all mankind. He wasn’t no one excluded from his worship. Not even the Performance Group. (D69 n.p.)

Peppered among the Greek names for characters and places and the elevated syntax of the Arrowsmith translation are the actors’ names, their addresses, the names of politicians and popular musicians, and direct address to individual spectators. One actor announced his birth as Dionysus with these words:

My name is Jason Bosseau. I am the son of Damar Bosseau and Jessie Bartoletti. I was born twenty-seven years ago in a small, boring, typical Midwestern town in southeastern Kansas called Pittsburgh. Now this town has 18,000 people in it and it’s just forty miles down the road from where last year’s Miss America was born. I’ve come here tonight for three very important reasons. Number one is to announce my divinity. I mean: I am a god. Number two is to
establish my rites and my rituals. As you can see, they are already in progress. And number three is to be born -- in this, my birth ritual, if you'll excuse me. (D69 n.p.)

Dionysus as played by William Finley, Joan MacIntosh, and Pat McDermott made similar announcements. (When Macintosh took the role, all Dionysus’s personal pronouns were turned to the feminine form by all speakers except Pentheus.) In great many respects, the reality of the performers’ real individuality was staged alongside the fictions from the play. Schechner describes the general mode of the dialogue’s development:

The textual montage, the arrangements and variations, developed organically during rehearsals and through the run. The performers wrote their own dialogue. I wanted as much personal expression as possible in a play that deals so effectively with the liberation of personal energy. (D69 n.p.)

These choices created two effects, which clarify the essential function of the Group in the success of Dionysus in 69. First, the individual members served as the source for independent, and idiosyncratic, readings of Euripides’s play. Their selections, elaborations, and additions to the existing text challenged the singularity of the drama’s authorial voice. Second, the play of difference between the Greek references and the contemporary names, places, and phrases worked to engender a dual reality, one aspect of which attached to the fictionalised classical world of ancient Thebes, the other to the contemporary here-and-now of downtown Manhattan. If the Group itself was one product of its labours, this double register of illusion and reality, of fiction and fact, of foreign myth and present ritual may be considered its finest fruit.

This description of a double register raises questions concerning the use of theatre’s diverse sign systems in performances of Dionysus in 69. The primary importance of the collaborative investigations of the ensemble as a self-conscious and self-reflexive Group clearly produced a distinctive semiosis. In this summary, I
will address verbal language and physical movement as two distinct and intersecting streams of communication organising Dionysus in 69's dynamism. The transcript implicitly defends the important role played by verbal language in the show. However, it is clear that the spoken word does not here achieve the sovereignty granted it by (neo-)classicism. Verbal language's relegation is most evident in the choice to show, rather than report, the slaying of Pentheus: in The Bacchae, it is the messenger who reports the deed, while in Dionysus in 69, destruction is graphically mimed with real stage blood. The slaying emerges without verbal cue from an activity, either caressing or dancing, which included spectators. The classical reporting to a passively attentive audience is transformed into a non-rational engagement which becomes destructive in the present tense of performance. What begins as the caress of Pentheus by naked women ends with the animalistic miming of the king's dismemberment, leaving a pile of naked, soiled people, from which named characters emerge for Agave's recognition of the true identity of her slain prey. The ensuing dialogue of the mother's grievous reckoning is brief, subsumed by a corporeal death ritual, performed as an inversion of the initiation rite from the Asmat tribe in New Guinea used earlier to signify the births of both god and king. The birth ritual was both mimetic (with regard to its source ritual) and iconic (in respect of birthing).

Beyond its mimetic and iconic functions used in showing reported events, physical action was activated in richly metaphoric ways in this production. Pentheus's attempts to deauthorise Dionysus and curb the excesses of his subjects was transformed into the "tag chorus" in which the children's chasing game was mapped onto the fragments of chorus sung to familiar folk tunes. In Schechner's view,

the tag chorus [was] a perfect physical expression of a psychic reality. Pentheus wants silence and the chance to stand still. The Bacchae want to dance and
stir up all the people. [...] The audience sees, and participates in, the dismantling of Pentheus's patience, authority, dignity, and stamina. (D69 n.p.)

Similarly, Dionysus's reported escape through the destruction of the palace in a cataclysmic storm is played as if the event described is the active erosion of the king's status, staged as his exclusion and mortification. It was dubbed "the Dionysus Game," and included movement and dialogue, both performer-based and character-based. The sequence changed over the run, from the encounter exercise described above, to other games that would exclude and expose Pentheus. For Schechner, since "[w]e cannot show palaces crumbling and fires burning. We have no cattle, no mysterious god, no earthquake," the choice was to "show a performance breaking down" in which the performers' "private lives fill the breach," opening a "psychic space between those performers who are free to show themselves and the man playing Pentheus, tied to the text as to a stake" (D69, n. p.). Whether through a group circle around him or a duet of ritual combat pitting the king against the god, the separation of Pentheus found corporeal form. The corporeality of the king's predicament in the face of the Dionysian threat was further elaborated by the figurative association of Pentheus's presumptuous secular power with sexual persuasiveness; he wagers that he can make love without divine intervention with any woman in the audience. In 163 performances only once did an actor playing Pentheus succeed (PT 56-57; Shephard 215-16). On the singular occasion, Joan Macintosh playing Dionysus then announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, tonight for the first time since the play is running, Pentheus, a man, has won over Dionysus, the god. The play is over" and the audience cheered (D69 n.p.).

Perhaps the boldest physicalized metaphor was to play Pentheus's transvestism as a (homo)sexual encounter between the performers playing Dionysus and Pentheus. For Williams Finley and Shephard, the threat of same-sex
eroticism embodied the latent theme of dominance and submission which the actors
discerned as "the true nature of the conflict between the two characters" (Shephard 81). Because a homosexual encounter "confronted many deep seated fears and
anxieties in both of [these actors]," Dionysus's forcing sex on Pentheus would
constitute both a private sacrifice and "an ordeal the exterior force of which would
be perceptible to the audience" (82). The prescribed effect of this on a real (as
opposed to virtual) audience depends on a mutual homophobism, the character of
which remains unexamined. Homophobism's naturalisation underlies Schechner's
reckoning of the metaphor's theatrical impact:

To many homosexuals in the audience the scene is
titillating. Sometimes, as much from anxiety as from
amusement, spectators shout encouragement to
Pentheus. Unwittingly, they mortify him as Euripides
intended: 'I want him made the laughingstock of
Thebes.'

Through the tag chorus, the Dionysus Game, the birth and death rituals, and the
explicit sexual exchanges, the repertoire of corporeal action in Dionysus in 69 was
anti-naturalistic, engaging through athleticism and eroticism in the dual register of
reality and imagination described above.

Generally, the ancillary languages of theatre were used as verbal and
physical language had been, to sustain the show's break with both naturalism and
classicism. Neither recognisable décor nor masks were used. Music from live
instruments appeared during the dancing, but they were not always played in
conventional ways, for in workshops Schechner had led the group to experiment, so

16 Similarly, the gendering of the play's value system also remains unexamined. In the
citation below, Oliver Taplin's use of unreconstructed gender terms indicates,
symptomatically if not explicitly, the sexism of the play's structural relations:
Dionysus' power over [Pentheus] is not only total, it takes a
perversely appropriate form. The masculine aggressive
persecutor of the bacchants has become a simpering nanny,
and a bacchant, par excellence, down to the last curl. The
political male with all his force has become the trivial,
helpless effeminate, obsessed over her appearance. (76)
that "[p]eople learned to play with instruments more than to play them in the usual way. The bugle became a sharp scream or sometimes a thing to pound percussively on the mat" (D69 n.p.). Also, voices were used for both speech and for song, and the singing had both instrumental and incantatory effects. Acoustically, voices were not amplified, except at the end when Dionysus's curse was sounded through a bullhorn. Lighting cued shifts in the events, but as a general principle remained at a high level, so that audiences and actors remained clearly visible to one another. Costumes were casual clothes (effectively t-shirts and jeans) and naked skins. The proxemics governing the performance were complex, because of the range of activities engaged in among the performers and in their self-conscious solicitation of the audiences. Indeed, because the latter was impossible to regulate, the intense physical interchange known as "The Total Caress" theatricalizing the Bacchic reveries of the Dionysian followers, was abandoned in December 1968. According to Schechner, one of the women performers had said, "I didn't join the Group to fuck some old man under a tower!" and Schechner concluded that "[a]s an experiment, the caress was fine. As part of a well-known play that attracted tourists and not a few skin freaks, it was dangerous and self-defeating" (D69 n.p.). A circle dance, with half of the Group dancing alone, and half with the audience, replaced it.

The kinaesthetics and proxemics of the performance score make clear the importance attached to audience participation. Their participation was structured in precise ways. First, audiences queued outside the theatre, and were admitted one by one even when they had arrived in couples or as a group. Sometimes they were

---

19 From the published photographs, it would appear that for certain nude scenes men wore jock straps, while for others their genitals were unencumbered. It's hard to reconstruct which was which (or when, in the course of the run), however, because most of the published photographs showing genitalia feature women's bodies. The women wore chitons and bikini-style panties before the rituals were performed naked.
hoisted up by Group members and carried into the space (ET 253). By entering the performance singly, audiences were assigned an active role in situating themselves in the space, deciding where to sit and with whom. Second, the illumination sustained their visibility, preventing the dimness of the seating areas from shielding spectators from the regards of one another and the Group. Third, the performers moved among the audience and addressed individual spectators directly. When spectators failed or refused to adjust their positions to permit an actor's passage, they were touched and sometimes forcibly moved.\footnote{Richard Dia explained that as Pentheus he was forced on his first entrance to demand of spectators that they move. When they do not, I call for the 'men of Thebes,' who carry the offending spectators away. If they struggle or return to block my way, I throw them in 'prison,' that is, have them put down in the pit. If the disturbance continues, I, Pentheus/Richard Dia, King of Thebes/performer, banish/kick out a citizen/audience member from Thebes/the garage. (D69 n.p.)} Fourth, audiences were included in activities like dancing and singing, where they were free to behave as the performers were. Thus, during the tag chorus, the transcript reports that

Spectators frequently add their voices to those of the performers. It is not unusual for spectators to physically try and stop Pentheus. As the scene builds, songs begin in different parts of the room. They are simple nursery rhymes or popular melodies. The songs spread infectiously. One dominates, and soon the performers and audience are singing and clapping together. Pentheus finally collapses with exhaustion and frustration. (D69 n.p.)

Fifth, audience responses cued certain events. So, for example, after Teiresias and Cadmus agree to watch the Bacchants, garbed as women, to honour Dionysus, Teiresias goes into the audience to question individuals. [...]

Sometimes the spectator does not respond. More often, he does. Tiresias [sic] is happy when someone says that he will go through the ordeal or join the revels of the god. Cadmus keeps score. When three people in the audience say they will participate or

\footnote{Richard Dia explained that as Pentheus he was forced on his first entrance to demand of spectators that they move. When they do not, I call for the 'men of Thebes,' who carry the offending spectators away. If they struggle or return to block my way, I throw them in 'prison,' that is, have them put down in the pit. If the disturbance continues, I, Pentheus/Richard Dia, King of Thebes/performer, banish/kick out a citizen/audience member from Thebes/the garage. (D69 n.p.)}
when three say they won't the interrogation game is over. (D69 n.p.)

The scene then resumes and the old men agree to bear witness to the ecstasies, which begin as a group meditation while they are still speaking. Similarly, when Pentheus counters Dionysus by claiming that he can seduce a woman in the audience without the god's intervention, audience response similarly conditions the speed of action which thrusts the sceptical king to his destruction.

For actor Pat McDermott, "Some of the best moments of Dionysus, and some of the worst, have been created by individual spectators who sought to participate tangibly. Tangible participation," McDermott notes, "spontaneous or invited, does not necessarily mean deeper audience involvement" (D69 n.p.). Nevertheless, it is through the structured participation of the audiences with the actors that Dionysus in 69 achieved its ritual character.

Participation is a challenge to the ability of both actors and audience to create symbols. Rituals can be created and the scope of symbolism expanded. Ritual involvement reveals the audience. The reciprocal privacy of stage and auditorium is not maintained. Ritual assembles; it dispels the illusions of routinization and privacy. It does not pretend to the public performance of private acts. (Pat McDermott in D69 n.p.)

The ritual character of Dionysus in 69 participated in the broader culture of alternative theatre introduced above. Julian Beck articulates the opposition between a ritual theatre and the legitimate bourgeois stage he opposed:

all primitive theatre
(theatre in its origins) rites
of and close to the people,
speaks in symbols,
parables;
the theatre of realism is the invention of the Duke of
Saxe-Meiningen
a Duke
made for the aristocracy by the
aristocracy;
realism is the language of the
aristocracy
Clearly, in order to effect a ritualized theatrical experience subverting the bourgeois/aristocratic separation from life (in Beck's terms), *Dionysus in 69* called in being a new conception of theatre space. The ushering of spectators singly, the ecstasy dance, the tag chorus, and the occasional exit of the company into the street point to an unconventional corporeality which would redraw the traditional lines separating actors and audience and their respective agencies. The vacant garage that The Performance Group occupied had the potential to condition and to contain a new theatre space, as described below. "The Performing Garage" at 33 Wooster Group is "roughly fifty feet by thirty-five feet, with a height of twenty feet" (ET 2); it is housed in a brick building "little more than a story and a half tall" and large enough that "two big garage trucks [had been] parked in the middle of it yet there was still ample room on all sides" (Shephard 62). With such "sheer volume [of ...] space" the building offered "1). extraordinary vertical possibilities for both spectators and performers enhanced by 2). a considerable amount of floor space, enabling performers to move among spectators" (62, 73). It was the challenge of the designers Michael Kirby and Jerry Rojo to conceive of ways to break up the space. "Environmental design comes from daily work on the play. The environment develops from workshops, discussions, drawings, and models," Schechner has explained (ET 11). As a consequence, neither the performance nor the environmental design pre-existed the other; they were generated in interplay.

Midway through its development Jerry Rojo redesigned the interior by constructing platforms of differing areas (four feet by eight feet, or four feet square) arranged at different heights. These platforms "could accommodate spectators and performers, above and below. The platforms were covered by pieces of carpet on top and were braced in such a way that people sitting under them could still see and
hear what was going on throughout the space (Shephard 73). The garage had very high ceilings, and two tall towers, topped by ledges three feet by eight were build "in the northwest and southeast corners of the space [...] so as to allow movement in and around the structures during performance" (73). The immediate effect of this environment is two-fold: first, the absence of a distinct stage for action separated from an auditorium for seating meant that the physical parameters governing spectators' focus varied, depending on where a spectator sat in relation to where the "on-stage" action was situated (Shephard 87). Second, the use of towers and the interspersing of spectators and playing-space meant that physical agility and stamina would be demanded of the actors. To actor William Hunter Shephard, "the environment seemed like a provocative playground for athletic exploration" (74). That the TPG corps could sustain the physical demands was due, at least in part, to the intensive training they underwent in their formative and rehearsal periods. (All of the performers were under thirty years old, and all were apparently able-bodied.)

The environment and the action made further use of the unique space of the garage. There was a long narrow grease pit built into the floor, formerly used in the repair of the trucks serviced by the previous tenants. At 35 feet by 6 feet by 8 feet, the pit was deep enough to conceal two (or more) adults, but shallow enough that actors "could descend and reemerge in the course of the action" (Shephard 62, 73). The pit was reached by two trap doors (ET 4). In addition to the hidden and half-visible spaces above and below audiences, "[t]he space is organized around a central area marked by black mats" (2). The diagonal across the mats from tower to tower was about fifteen feet (4). Finally, the "large overhead garage door" "corrugated in sections to facilitate its being raised and lowered from the inside" provided a dramatic exit of performers and participants to take the show literally into the streets of surrounding Soho (ET 4; Shephard 62, 131).
Because of its innovative use of the garage space, Theodore Shank classes The Performance Group, along with Bread and Puppet and Snake Theaters, as "environmental theatres." In their use of found or constructed spaces, environmental theatres, as described by Shank, self-consciously incorporate their surroundings into audiences' experience of the theatrical playing. Whereas realist theatres opposed an illuminated proscenium stage to the darkened auditorium of passive spectators it faces, in order to impose a fictional conception on the playing space, in the environmental theatre as Shank has defined it, "performers and audiences share the same environment even if they stay in separate parts of it" (93). The interchange among performers and audiences in an actual, shared space is associated by Shank with the Living Theatre's investigations into audience participation in Paradise Now (1968) and Prometheus (1978) (93). Similarly, the three-story metal scaffolding used in the Living Theatre's Frankenstein (1965) prefigures the wooden towers used in Dionysus. Perhaps of greater influence were the documents of and stagings by Jerzy Grotowski, in which performers acted among audiences, who were cast as witnesses to or fellow victims of the dramatic action. The associations made in Shank's historical retrospective of American alternative theatre do not fully articulate the agenda enacted in Dionysus in 69.

In its elaborations of new spatial relations among audiences and actors, however, Dionysus in 69 remains representative not only of Shank's category of environmental theatre, but also of the "new theatre" more broadly. Its paradigmatic status further derives from its collaborative origins in a theatre ensemble, its loose adaptation into contemporary vernacular of a classic dramatic scenario, its explicit (hetero)sexuality, and its assault on conventional authority as embodied by the authoritarian king Pentheus. By double-casting Agave and using the chorus as an orchestra producing sound instead of functioning solely as a commentator, explaining the significance of narrative action, Dionysus in 69 undermined a fixed
narrative populated by definite characters and clear social roles, thereby shattering
its classical basis. Equally, its non-iconic costuming and set ruptured with
naturalism, the dominant theatrical style. Not only was it a lively experiment, but
Dionysus in 69 became a popular success, running public performances for over a
calendar year. Its appeal presumably derived from its new gloss on primitivism, a
theme favoured by experimental artists throughout the twentieth century. "[B]y
invoking theories tracing the origins of drama to religious ritual, orgiastic
communion" (Lasch 162-63) performance theatres like The Performance Group and
the Living Theatre worked to reinvent community; in theatres, as in the other arts
and activities of the "New Bohemia" embodied in New York's West and East
Villages, "[e]verything from Zen to transcendental meditation to Native American
outdoor ritual was used as a model." Composer/choreographer Philip Corner
explained in interview with Sally Banes:

As a common denominator in all these activities was
something that was primordially religious -- an
aesthetic religion or quasi-religion. There was
definitely a sense of using this [art] to heighten reality,
to heighten experience, to heighten life, to connect
with the ultimate meanings of existence. That
permeated the whole scene. (qtd. in Banes 250)

Banes calls this the "ritual eclecticism of this generation" (249).

John Gruen's survey of the "Combine Generation" populating the new
Bohemia links such spiritual eclecticism to the intensive corporeality, exhibited with
such riveting effect by The Performance Group.

The importance of the physical as a reference point
here cannot be stressed too strongly. The Combine
Generation seeks and respects visceral knowledge of
life, and seems to treat the brain as simply one more
organ of the body, almost as if trying to close the
clichéd gap between the intellect and the emotions.
There is tremendous faith in the unconscious and the
uninhibited, as well as in the autonomy of the body.
(16)
The liberated body and spirit of this new generation would constitute the basis for "the formulation of a positive theory of non-alienation" (O'Neill 76-77) which had been lacking in the ready arsenal of Marxist and Freudian critiques. Such a theory or perspective would realise the utopian impulse characteristic of the sixties vanguard (Banes 8). The new theatre and its allies in other arts worked towards a conception of the "libidinal body politic [a]s a work of art" which could be recruited as "the vehicle of radical politics," to "promot[e] autonomy and creativity rather than subordination and specialization," "identifying freedom with creativity [...] as the criteria of the wealth and sanity of the body politic" (O'Neill 77). Mythology, ritual, and spiritual practices would serve in this life-affirming project.

Judith Malina called it "Ameliorative theatre. To make something useful" (qtd. in Beck 9).

To serve the audience, to instruct, to excite sensation, to initiate experience, to awaken awareness, to make the heart pound, the blood course, the tears flow, the voice shout, to circle round the altar, the muscles move in laughter, the body feel, to be released from death's ways, deterioration in comfort. To provide the useful event that can help us. Help. (9)

It promised communion, community, regeneration; and the ameliorative arts called for faith. To Sally Banes,

It seemed that the absolute had to be relocated -- not only in alternative spiritual disciplines (including alternative therapies, like the Gestalt therapy advocated by Paul Goodman and others), but in the body and the senses, at times in the drug-induced consciousness, in the awareness of the world's most often ordinary material presence, and in the bonds of community. (250)

Relocating the absolute did not provide the thorough-going critique of essence which was to emerge from contemporaneous political activism and philosophical agitation in Europe; instead, it was to take the form of what Henry Sayre calls (with reference to ethnopoetics) "another version of pastoral" (81). The reification and
mystification implicit in pastorals will prove to be features shared by Schechner’s performance project. The possibilities and limits of this late-modern pastoral are considered briefly below.

In Christopher Bigsby’s estimation, the performance theatres of Beck and Malina, Chaikin, and Schechner were theatres “of manifestation, of enactment rather than re-enactment [t]he only past is a mythical one, an archetypal one. The present is not explained by the past” (68). Instead, it is exploded in the desublimation produced by performing ritual without tradition. Artists, like activists, of the generation understood that

The basic insights of Marx and Freud sensitize us to the processes of sublimation through which the individual ‘makes out’ under the restraints of the political and economic order, which defines everyday reality. In the encounter between the individual and society, the individual learns to subordinate the pleasure principle to reality-testing, work and social commitment. (O’Neill 77)

Through the new pastoral, such enforced sublimation was, at least for a time, undone. Through the performance theatre specifically, the individual strives to unlearn this subordination, unleash the desublimated, life-affirming powers of pleasure. The result of this was another return, not simply to mythic “connectiveness” (Bigsby 69), but to childlike simplicity. As Herbert Marcuse observes,

As cognition gives way to recognition, the forbidden images and impulses of childhood begin to tell the truth that reason denies. Regression assumes a progressive function. The rediscovered past yields critical standards which are tabooed by the present. Moreover, the restoration of memory is accompanied by the restoration of the cognitive function of phantasy. (Eros 19)

But rather than aligning the regressive pleasures of desublimation with a critical advance, Christopher Bigsby emphasises its lack of sustainable critique due to its aestheticised notion of authenticity.
Performance theatre, in its emphasis on the body, on the feelings, was also, in a Freudian sense, reverting to an earlier stage of development, to the spontaneous, physical and erotic style of the self before it is conditioned by social institutions and of man before he subordinates those instincts to the constraints of rationality. It looked for and affected to find authenticity in feelings liberated from the constraining power of rationality, language and moral structure. (69-70)

For Bigsby, then, as for Henry Sayre's consideration of oral poetry and ethnopoetics, the pleasure produced by performance theatre is "positive, [...] imbued with such harmony"; these pastoral forms "suppress[...] all difference" (Sayre 182). As popular sociologist Christopher Lasch points out in his best-selling study of narcissism, such attempts "to restore a sense of collective worship cannot restore the unity of belief that once gave life to such forms" (163). Instead, they become part of the repressive ideological formation that reproduces social domination by entrapping individuals in false or inadequate conceptions of change, community, personal power, and social responsibility. At their most innocuous, pastoral pleasures are empty entertainments, and therefore the opposite of the ameliorative and efficacious theatres envisioned by Judith Malina and Richard Schechner respectively.21

As ritualized theatre cleverly updating the Dionysus myth, Dionysus in 69 participated in the visions and contradictions of performance and environmental theatres. Retrospectively, the production becomes situated in the discursive categories of subsequent historians through regard to its robust corporeality, its staging of sexual pleasure/pain, its involvement of audiences, and its 360° approach

---

21 I am activating an ideological conception of the pastoral, rather than the descriptive use of the term in Fuch's description of the theatrical landscapes created in works described by Marranca as the Theatre of Images, in her essay "Another Version of Pastoral" (Fuchs 92-107). Further I do not agree that there is a purely descriptive, non-ideological use of the term, and it is perhaps in this light that Schechner's criticisms of such formalist theatres in "The Decline and Fall of the (American) Avant-Garde" should be read.
to acting space. For its sympathetic commentators, *Dionysus in 69* embodies a generation's commitment to theatre as a place for agitation and critique of the contradictions and falsehoods of contemporary culture. To the "falsehood of [Broadway's aesthetic] ideals" (Beck 7), a generation of American theatre practitioners struggled to find new theatrical means to make meaningful exchanges with their audiences. For Schechner, those new means related to liberating actors and productions from determination by dramatic texts; to eroding the physical and psychic partitions between actor and character, between performer and spectator; and to generating an efficacy for theatre apart from its entertainment value. As Judith Malina said, "To make something useful" (Beck 9). In the subchapter below, theatre's participation in social change will be considered, with a view to establishing the specificity of Schechner's theatrical avant-gardism.
2. Participating in Social Change: Performance Theatre as Intervention

The cultural and political location for those people agitating for social change in the period of the New Theatre's emergence is the youthful counterculture. Theodore Roszak wrote about this American counterculture while it was still thriving, describing it as "the matrix in which an alternative, but still excessively fragile future is taking shape," calling it, despite its excesses and incongruencies,

all we have to hold against the final consolidation of a technocratic totalitarianism in which we find ourselves ingeniously adapted to an existence wholly estranged from everything that has ever made life of man [sic] an interesting adventure. (xiii)

The technocracy to which the counterculture is opposed is defined by Roszak as "that social form in which an industrial society reaches the peak of its organizational integration" (5). He characterises the counterculture's "garish motley, its costume borrowed from many and exotic sources" (xiii) through detailed readings of the adult writers who inspired a generation of adolescents to dissent. Those writers include Herbert Marcuse, a Marxist of the Frankfurt School; Norman O. Brown, an advocate of the sexualized politics of Wilhelm Reich; Alan Watts, Zen scholar; Beat Poet Allen Ginsburg; former Harvard professor/pschedelica proselytiser Timothy Leary; and polymath Paul Goodman (whose writings include plays produced by the Living Theatre).

One of the ironies of Roszak's definition of the counterculture's participants is its exclusion of Black radicals (xii), whose struggles for civil rights and self-determination produced among the most enduring of the era's legacies. Nor, from its position on the cusp of the new decade, does Roszak's analysis anticipate the successes of the liberal feminism of the Second Wave which unleashed the productivity of many middle-class women and the contemporaneous movement to secure rights for and recognition of gays and lesbians. Yet Roszak's account
usefully situates the 1960s counterculture within the prosperity and indulgence of America’s post-war middle classes. Marxist phenomenologist John O'Neill substantiates the link between the white, middle class counterculture and the corporate culture which bred it.

The paradox of modern corporate culture is that it panders to the libidinal body, titillating and ravishing its sensibilities, while at the same time it standardizes and packages libidinal responses to its products. In North America the libidinal body politic is the creature of the corporate culture and its celebration of its young, white, handsome heterosexual world of healthy affluence. In this sense the libidinal body politic is an unhealthy distortion of the political life of the community since it fails to cope with the poor, the sick, the aged, the ugly, and the black. (78)

For O'Neill, the distortion produced by corporate capitalism pushes countercultural body politics into “the political struggles over integration” with “the imagery of white rape, black power, and youthful protest at the jaded juvenialism of the corporate world” (79). The excesses of such forms threaten to compromise the anti-hegemonic and egalitarian values for which the protesters stand.

The problem of form is crucial for this generation’s activism. The youth’s protest against “such immediate emergencies as the Vietnam war, racial injustices, and hard-core poverty demand[ed] a deal of old-style politicking,” Roszak reports (4). Wrestling with forced conscription into a military-industrial complex waging war on impoverished Asians; with racially motivated discrimination, disenfranchisement, and violence; with the enslavement of all but the nation’s richest to wage-labour; with sexual repression through the nuclear-family structure and its associated taboos, took the nation’s dissenters beyond the reach of conventional leftist politics, if not beyond corporate America’s tentacular reach. In his struggle as an artist working to realise anarchist and pacifist principles, Julian Beck acknowledged: “You cannot separate anymore. That way is over. The plague of separation. You cannot speak of change and remain unchanged” (34). With this recognition, the
form and the content of political protest fuse. It took feminism to publicise the fusion with the banner "the personal is political."

And yet, equally, form and content rupture when the forms of protest are recuperated by the system they stand against, when personal actions however resisting seem determined to reproduce the political structures. This is the "paradox of modern corporate culture" identified by John O'Neill, which effects the accommodation and capitalisation of cultural fashions. Julian Beck diagnosed the capacity of capitalism to contain subversion, discerning that "the alternative life style of Woodstock Nation lives off the cake crumbs of Capital's table" (170). Observing that mainstream weeklies "Time, Life, & Newsweek praise dope (soft stuff), praise the life-love style, praise the music, and the beads and customs," Beck declares:

> Woodstock Nation: the Hippie Love Rock Life Style Music Revolution. The establishment encourages it: it has buying power. Abbie [Hoffman] makes that clear in his book: the establishment encourages it in order to encompass it and exploit it economically (169-70);

concluding, "The revolution of individual expression that divests itself of bourgeois attributes while continuing citizenship in the capitalist world is not sufficient for the needs of this planet" (170). "Because the forces of repression can tolerate changes in life style," Beck denounces "Woodstock Nation [as]: Superior Product of Bourgeois Culture" (171). In such a climate of accommodation, the theatre occupies what Arthur Sainer calls

the court-jester function, with the sense that one is primarily easing the souls of the ruling and middle classes, providing a decorous and momentary distraction for them. What battlewary Pentagon official or harassed corporation lobbyist can't be amused for an hour or so by the militantly leftist exhortations of Paradise Now? What profit-driven industrialist, exhausted from a week of juggling investments and human lives, can't have his heart eased through the sensory explorations of an Alec Rubin theatrical encounter session? What suburban housewife can't be delightfully scandalized by the nudity and presumed obscenities in Dionysus in 69?"
The more scandalous, the more pleasurable and if events prove too uncomfortable, the exit is always available. (275)

If the New Theatres were not serving as mere consumables for those in power, it was because they were linked with a new constituency, playing for audiences formed from within a changing political culture. Their wager was, as Brecht said, that the proof of the pudding was in its eating by audiences inclined to rethink things as they appear to be, in order to discern obscured realities and opportunities for change.

Theatre historian David Savran summarises this new political culture.

During the 1960s, the New Left developed in the United States as an almost extravagantly plural and heterogeneous venture, composed of disparate social and political groups with diverse and often contradictory tactics and goals. As most historians recognize, the New Left had its roots squarely in the civil rights movement’s crusade for racial equality and, at least until 1964, non-violent strategies: community activism, sit-ins, and demonstrations.

Savran considers the Port Huron Statement of 1962 issued by the Students for a Democratic Society as the “major document” of “the most conspicuous and important political movement of the decade”;

More than any other text, the Port Huron Statement set the agenda for the New Left, putting its emphasis, in Stanley Aronowitz’s estimation, in process and signaling ‘an almost religious return to experience and a converse retreat from the abstractions of the red politics of yesterday’ [...]. The Port Huron Statement called for ‘a participatory democracy’ based on equality, nonviolence, and community. (147-48)

---

22 Citation originally from Stanley Aronowitz, “When the New Left Was New,” in The 60s without Apology, ed. Sohnya Sayres et. al. (Minneapolis: U of MN P, 1984) 20.

Such values, of process over product and experience over abstraction, are consistent with Roszak's distinction between the ethos of the new counterculture and the orientation of the Old Left obliterated by the successes of World War II and the excesses of the purge led by Joseph McCarthy (Carroll and Noble 356-62). They are also consistent with the culture of artistic experimentation described above. In particular, process over product and experience over abstraction seem to represent the praxis of performance theatre.

Nevertheless, there is a link between the two strands of social agitation, granting priority to cultural and political change respectively. Roszak explains the link between leftist politics and countercultural lifestyles through the "dialectics of liberation" he formulates by counterposing the Marxism of Herbert Marcuse and the erotic politics of Norman O. Brown (84-120). Similarly, Savran explicitly defends the distinction and connection between the New Left politics and the countercultural social movement, "with which it enjoyed a deeply ambiguous and conflicted relationship" (150). Savran identifies the anti-establishment tendencies of modernist avant-gardism as a way of explaining their ambiguous connection.

This new adversarial culture represented a continuation and extension of the modernist avant-garde at the same time that it signaled the deterioration of the binary opposition between high and mass culture. [...] Dedicated to a rejection of political organizations (whether on the right or the left) and to the creation of a new, ostensibly free subject in a new, ostensibly loving society -- in short, to a revolution in consciousness -- the counterculture carved out alternative communal spaces and produced an art and culture that was variously derisive of bourgeois norms, deeply utopian, and solemnly mystical. Ironically, however, at least through the mid-1960s, the cultural nationalism of American youth continued to enforce the separation of art from politics that had characterized the postwar settlement. [...] Rather than working towards political change, many, impelled by a deep nostalgia for a mythologized preindustrial society, urged retirement to a self-contained, romantic, agrarian world. (150-51)
It is at this point, then, that enjoyment of the new pastoral described above substitutes for active political engagement.

If politics and pastoral pleasures seemed at odds, Savran suggests that the summer of 1967 brought a shift in the divisions marking the heterogeneous New Left: through "tentative moves toward each other, despite their fundamental dissimilarities" there emerged "an improvised, albeit uneasy, alliance of the antiwar Left and the counterculture that was pledged to revolutionary and social change" (151). It was, as it turns out, short-lived. The "loose confederation of political and social movements" (148) which arose by the mid-1980s united in opposition to the Vietnam War would splinter dramatically by the decade's close, as racial, gender, economic, and anti-state politics fractured, both from the pressures of a growing awareness of and alignment with the liberation struggles in the Third World and as a result of the implosion of the masculinist subjectivity illicitly inscribed by sixties radical politics. From the civil rights and anti-war protests would emerge the women's and gay liberation movements. Devastating urban race riots in the summer of 1967 marked the end of any widespread confidence in democratic change through constitutional means; by 1971, the project of the New Left had lost both its political direction and its popular appeal (148-49). In many respects, any agenda for radical social change has, since the 1970s, been surrendered to the Far Right. In the 1990s, an anti-establishment position is publicised by the patriot paramilitary and religious fundamentalist groups, and what was once a move into the streets in the name of freedom and equality is now enacted by the Far Right as a retreat, in order to separate from a corrupt society and remain politically and economically sovereign. Clearly, since the fragmentation and exhaustion of the New Left in the 1970s, the problem of form for radical social change has returned with a vengeance, demonstrating its dialectical relation with content.
To some degree, it was the form-content problem posed by radical social change that Richard Schechner addressed in staging *Dionysus in 69*. In a thrice-written essay called "The Politics of Ecstasy," prepared while the adaptation was being devised, Richard Schechner took a stand on the radical shifts in American culture.

There are many young people who believe that an unrepressive society, a sexualized society, is Utopia. Nudity, free expression, communal rather than family units, 'inner space,' and sensory overload are becoming political issues. The discothèques [...] are places of public assembly and direct political action. A new way of living is being demonstrated. But this same ecstasy, we know, can be unleashed in the Red Guards or horrifically channeled toward the Nuremberg rallies and Auschwitz. There, too, at the vast extermination camps, an ecstasy was acted out. The hidden fear I have about the new expression is that its forms come perilously close to ecstatic fascism. (PD 228)

This "hidden fear" was exposed and explored through the staging of *The Bacchae* as *Dionysus in 69*. There, in the words the messenger, the threat of an impending "bloodbath" was sounded (D69 n.p.). As if to dare the young liberators in his audiences to follow their revolutionary gestures to the full consummation, that "death struggle" was described as "The organism versus the law" (D69 n.p.).

Each TPG actor to play the role of Messenger would find a specific articulation for the paradox of Dionysian liberation. When Sam Blazer played the role, he would announce in the place of the messenger's report:

*What I can't tell you is the reason why anyone, god or candidate, can promise a man joy, freedom, ecstasy. And then make him settle for a bloodbath. [...] Night after night you go along with Dionysus, just as we do. And night after night you confirm the need for a Pentheus. Look, if Dionysus could lead you into the promised land, Dionysus or someone else could lead you right out again. Dig? Most of us have a pretty cheap fantasy of self-liberation. [...] So don't understand us too quickly. Dig?* (D69 n.p.)
Pat McDermott playing the Messenger characterised the ensuing events as "the pornography of death"; "What happens," he explains, "is that Dionysus, according to his convenience and popular demand, becomes another Pentheus" (D69 n.p.). Remi Barclay's Messenger speech observed the absence of restraint on Dionysian logic:

He promises a trade-in. Our rigid structure for his expanding one. But he doesn't say where his stops. Just the promise of freedom. To walk down the street the way a surfer rides a wave. To go naked before a congressional hearing. To drop acid in the water supply of New York City. To bomb Chicago and dance in the rubble. Free. We all want to believe and go with it. But you know what's it like? It's like at a convention or a football game, somebody starts a sound, then another joins, and another and another, until the sound is lost in a roar, and the roar goes on until there's nothing left. Don't understand too much here too quickly. (D69 n.p.)

Finally, Jason Bosseau as the Messenger makes the militarism of Dionysianism clear.

With the downfall of Pentheus, Dionysus will assume complete control of this space. And this theatre will be liberated. Repeat. This theatre will be liberated. The allied forces of Dionysus further declare that Dionysus, in his position as god and leader, will for the good of all people assume absolute ownership of the collective will of the people. Therefore, a state of emergency will be declared while Dionysus decides exactly what the will of the people will be. (D69 n.p.)

All these interpretations sustain Schechner's earlier exegesis of The Bacchae as an ironic portrait of a jealous god engaged in an absurd drama to punish the Thabans who had rejected him. In the view of Christopher Innes,

the ambivalence of the god was intended to represent the tendency to fascism inherent in the retreat of the 'new left' from political revolution, to the introverted sexual liberation of the drug culture (Avant-Garde 173).

It seems, then, that Schechner located "Dionysus's presence [...] in today's America" in sites linked to both the political and the cultural impulses of the New
Left/counterculture. "It seems quite clear that [Dionysus] is present in today's America -- showing himself in the hippies, in the 'carnival spirit' of black insurrectionists, on campuses; and even, in disguise, on the patios and in the living-rooms of suburbia" Schechner suggests (PD 217-18). This conception of the Dionysian energies dispersed across the social map conforms, in a certain measure, with the diagnosis impelling contemporary sociologist Richard Rubenstein to attempt a "systematic reevaluation of the role of political violence in American history" necessary after "more than five years of assassinations, ghetto uprisings, student revolts, tumultuous demonstrations and violent police action" inaugurated with the assassination of President Kennedy (4). Yet Dionysus in 69 did not perform an historical critique of the on-going role of political violence, that is, the use of "threats, coercion and physical damage to persons or property [...] resorted to by or on behalf of groups, involving collective action, and related to competition for political or economic power" (Rubenstein 24); a tradition which, perhaps unrecognised, the New Left's violence served to sustain. It appears that the violence threatened by the New Left was precisely the risk about which Schechner sought to caution his audiences, but it may also have been naturalised as the inevitable price to pay for social/political revolution. The analysis of political violence's role in social change needs to be extended and historicised, beyond the limits of Schechner's reading of contemporary change through the Euripidean lens.

24 Against the "myth of peaceful progress," Rubenstein argues for an American tradition of political violence including not simply the most dramatic of armed insurgencies, the War for Independence and the Civil War, but also the uprisings by Native Americans ("armed insurrections by domestic groups denied the privileges of citizenship as well as the perquisites of nationhood" [25]); farmers' revolts from 1740s to 1803; the pre-war southern rebellion beginning in 1820 including civil disobedience and domestic terrorism; the organised attempts by enslaved African Americans to escape; the guerrilla warfare to sabotage the Radical Reconstruction and reinstitute white supremacy; bloody labour-management disputes from the 1870s through 1919; and the urban riots and ethnic revolts of the nineteenth century involving Irish, Italian, Jewish, Chinese and Japanese immigrant populations violently agitating for fuller economic and/or political participation or subjected to violent state repression (24-35).
For instance, in emphasising the widespread “refusal to come to terms with the problem of political violence and its relationship to the American experience” (4), Rubenstein provocatively suggests that since the “characterization of America as a peacefully self-transforming system [which] leaves no room for violent protest, which by definition falls outside the system” it then follows that “Eden is not Eden unless he who rebels is an original sinner” (18). The American “myth of peaceful progress” serves then to mystify resistance. It seems Rubenstein is suggesting that a recourse to mythic imagery may have a covert ideological function, in casting as an extreme and primordial struggle something systematically ingrained, despite all appearances, into American political life, namely a series of violent struggles to secure economic and civil privileges misrepresented by the Founding Fathers as preordained rights. Certainly this description of violent protest as sanctified reverberates strongly with the projects of the Open and Living Theatres contemporaneous with Dionysus in 69. For it identifies in sociological terms the strategic imperative for their recourse to primitivism, myth, and ritualized spirituality which, according to the discussion above, characterised artistic experimentation of this period. Rubenstein’s analogy further suggests that a rehistoricisation of the role of violence in America might alleviate the need to make recourse to myth and repeat primitivist aesthetics, thereby opening the way for different imagery and new conceptions of freedom and community.

In their absence, Schechner’s critique of the changing culture of personal and social politics and the new culture of anti-establishment authorities was ambivalent. Critic Stefan Brecht describes the production in terms of its evolving

---

25 Or alternatively, if one follows Innes, characterised the twentieth century theatrical avant-gardes more broadly (see Holy).
dialectical arguments about repression and "hip" ("Dionysus"). Repression is associated with the prudish authoritarianism of the young king Pentheus, who seeks to drive out the disguised God, Dionysus; hip is embodied in the ecstatic dancing and furious, unknowing slaughter by the Bacchic followers. The excesses of Pentheus's misplaced and unduly repressive authority evokes the excessive and murderous ecstasy of Pentheus's sacrifice, at the hands of his own, divinely inspired mother. That pendulum swing, tracing the excessive over-reaction against an unduly extreme exercise of authority, seems to be what Schechner's fable wants its audience to witness: in the words of Pat McDermott as Messenger, "Dionysus, according to his convenience and popular demand, becomes another Pentheus" (D69 n.p.). Schechner has explained the social criticism underpinning this observation in the essay on "The Politics of Ecstasy":

Liberty can swiftly be transformed into its opposite, and not only by those who have a stake in reactionary government. Ritualized experience without the in-built control of a strong social system [...] can pump itself up to destructive fury. So I must end with an indelicate question. Are we ready for the liberty we have grasped? Can we cope with Dionysus' dance and not end up -- as Agave did -- with our sons' heads on our dancing sticks? (PD 228)

Exploring the risks of liberation through The Bacchae's dramatic structures is announced as the founding premise of Dionysus in 69: Brecht quotes Schechner as saying, "I wanted to warn the New Left of its leaders" ("Dionysus" 167). As played by William Finley, Dionysus himself could well succeed in warning his audiences by announcing the god's excesses:

26 Stefan Brecht's notion of dialectic is rudimentary. He described it as the claim "that everything contains in its essence an inconsistency dooming it to contention with its negative. This dialectic," Brecht suggested, "poses as alternatives: (a) suppression of internal contradictions, rejection of the negative, destruction by the negative, & (b) coping with internal contradictions, incorporation of the negative, corrupt survival in evolution" (159). These highly emotive terms inscribe too binary an approach to sustain the range of distinctions and connections I will be arguing.
Tired of Pentheuses and paper honkies. They must be eliminated! Torn limb from limb! I love the smell of riots, the orgasms of death and blood! We will tolerate no more false revolutions, no more false rituals and phoney bloodbaths! We want the real thing! (qtd. in Shephard 138)  

And yet, because of its energetic investment in libidinal activity, Stefan Brecht declares *Dionysus in 69* to be an “effectively pro-hip” warning about “hip authority” (“Dionysus” 159). As pro-hip, the production left its audiences to discern and then decide about its warning against fascism, while indulging their desires for a sensual, if not overtly sexual, encounter. In this respect, it seemed to take a page from Bertolt Brecht’s theory of epic theatre, by leading audiences to think for themselves. But perhaps, it was only a few phrases from Brecht’s book, since audiences were as likely to join Dionysus in his victory parade following the slaying of Pentheus as they were in the caress which preceded the god’s new regime. In the end, the production remains ambiguous about its critical role.

In order to understand how *Dionysus in 69* intervened in a particularly troubled cultural landscape, Schechner’s engagement with the problems and paradoxes of initiating radical social change needs to be reframed. His position was not the profoundly believed anarchism of Julian Beck and Judith Malina. Nor did Schechner’s personal experience forge the link either between economic oppression and aesthetic experimentation, as happened for Luis Valdez in leading El Teatro Campesino while functioning as the “cultural affiliate of union organizer César Chavez,” leader of California’s Mexican-American farm-workers union (van Erven 43); or between racism and artistic disenfranchisement, as did his colleagues in Free Southern Theater, including John O’Neal and Gil Moses (Dent and others 3-5 and passim). Schechner’s is “the revolution of knowledge, the disgust with

27 For an example of a similar rhetoric, including an historical explanation of its development and significance, see Cleaver.
"culture," and not the upsurge of the disenfranchised" (PD 211). While he organised theatrical protests against the Vietnam War (Schechner, "Guerrilla"), Schechner’s personal politics were more muted. While Dionysus in 69 was playing in public performance, university colleague Brooks McNamara reported that when interviewed by The Sunday Times in 1969,

Schechner was to express a rather mild social vision. "I’m not even sure I’m a leftist," he told interviewer Eleanor Lester, "but I do want some absolutely basic changes in the social structure—an end to exploitation and authoritarianism—and if that’s being a leftist, well, maybe I am" (14).

If a leftist turn could then be discerned in the volumes of The Drama Review published at this time, it derived not from Schechner but from the influence of Erika Munk, first managing editor and then, briefly, editor of The Drama Review starting in mid-1969; according to McNamara, it was she who introduced more explicitly political topics to the journal (14-16). How then did Schechner envision the necessary "basic changes in the social structure" being brought about? If an answer exists, I suggest, it is implicit in Schechner’s broader project for performance. Specifically, I suggest, Schechner’s vision attached to the central role he formulated for ritual in social life. From ritual would derive the sense of hierarchical community, which I believe describes Schechner’s social ideal. It is this, then, that must be interrogated if a new conception of Schechner’s contributions to theatre is to emerge for consideration and critique.
3. Ritual theories relating art and life

Ritual performs two key functions in Schechner's work. First, it remains the consistent theme of his ongoing investigations in theatre and theory. Second, it stands as the hallmark of the most celebrated of his theatre pieces. By proposing to read Schechner's legacy as a long-term project, I mean to suggest that the second key function of ritual cannot adequately be understood without having regard to the first. For this reason, the proposed performance project provides an alternative to the positions allotted Schechner's theatre in the existing accounts. To sustain this hypothesis, I will begin by describing Schechner's theory of ritual, explaining its commitments and its relation with avant-gardism. Then I will introduce the structure of Schechner's extensive project elaborating his ritual theory. With reference to theories of avant-gardism, I will suggest how such extensive elaboration in and beyond theatre constitutes in its entirety an avant-garde aesthetic project. Analyses in subsequent chapters will detail the modes of production which Schechner's authored project has engaged. From the standpoint of a coherent, and multiply sited performance project, the existing characterisations of Schechner's theatre by Christopher Bigsby, Christopher Innes, and Theodore Shank discussed above will be shown to be insufficiently robust and incomplete.

An account of Schechner's ritual theory begins with the roles he assumed with regard to *The Bacchae* in order to produce *Dionysus* in 69. Schechner's relation with the play began as an exegetical one, when he analysed its dramaturgy as absurd ("Jealous"). Next, Schechner made a fable for his contemporaries, by projecting upon *The Bacchae* what Stefan Brecht calls his "conservatively liberal friendly critique of the New Left" ("Dionysus" 167) to build an analogy between Dionysianism and the New Left. Schechner explains this analogy discursively in the essay "The Politics of Ecstasy" cited above. Through reading *The Bacchae* as a fable about the excesses of the New Left, the play's ironic rendering of a "jealous
god" should reflect back upon and refract the conceptions of power embodied by contemporary liberationists. If Schechner's project succeeds in its own terms, its audiences will re-examine their conception of contemporary, counter-cultural community as a result of their initiation into a current-day Dionysianism that turns murderous.

Underpinning the project, however, is a developing conception of ritual's role in social life. In time, Schechner would cite structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, claiming that

There is an asymmetry that is postulated in advance between profane and sacred, faithful and officiating, dead and living, initiated and uninitiated, etc., and the 'game' consists in making all the participants pass to the winning side by means of events.²⁸

By winning Schechner means joining the side of the initiates, the full participants in the community. This ritual conception of transition justifies what Schechner attempts theatrically. "Events are the ritual. When they are over initiates have been initiated and everyone is together. If theater could be an initiatory participatory game, it could be at once entertaining and fateful" (PT 59). Of Dionysus in 69, Schechner would subsequently reflect that "The most extraordinary participatory moments happened when people came to the theater in groups, or when individuals gave over to the performance so fully that for the duration of the performance they joined the Group as if they were members," (ET 40). The "democratic model" described participation in Dionysus: "letting people into the play to do as the performers were doing" (44), casts participation as comparable to representational voting (e.g. the choice between pre-set options), than to plural consensus (by which a resolution is reached without anticipating its alternatives). "Joining in Dionysus," Schechner further asserts, "like declaring for Christ at a revival meeting -- was an

act of the body publicly signaling one's faith" (43). Clearly, Schechner aims to create theatre as an initiatory participatory game, with participation strictly regulated by an authorised mise en scène, backed by a well-defined system of available choices. In using terms like initiation and community, with reference to tribal (that is, preliterate) societies and to organised religions, Schechner's imagery about the importance of ritual is based on a solid conception of sustainable social order. "[W]hen efficacy dominates, performances are universalistic, allegorical, ritualized, tied to a stable established order" Schechner maintains (PT 123).

Schechner's view of ritual differs fundamentally from Julian Beck and Judith Malina's investigations into ritual's potential for new theatre. They were forced to clarify their use of ritual when the Living Theatre's performance of Mysteriess in 1965 was criticised by its audience as fascist. Beck asks, "What is the difference between techniques used in Mysteriess and Third Reich ceremonies?"

'The ritual form destroys the ability to rationalize, the ritual form creates masses, it destroys the individual, it sweeps him away, he loses control, he follows, and then everything is lost, the mass becomes the subject of Fascism, and Fascism uses these rituals to enslave the masses.' That is what they said.

Certainly Brecht's reading of Hitler's theatricalised mass politics supported the Berliners' association of ritual and fascism. Biographer Frederic Ewen writes:

Hitler's theatricality was deliberate and conscious, and directed toward the streets, not the theatre, and meant to make the 'people, or better his public, say that which he was saying, or more accurately, feel that which he is feeling.' That, Brecht adds, is 'empathy on the part of the public..., that being carried along, this transformation of all spectators into a unified mass, that one demands of art.' (218)

---

Beck considers such cautions, clarifying the Living Theatre’s use of ritual. “Ritual that is nationalistic—which extends feeling and then limits it—ritual which turns inward and not outward is toxic, murderous. In Mysteries we form a circle and invite the public to join us without making it a law...We appeal to free will...We arouse it.” (109-10). Beck insists that “Ritual cannot be institutionalized. Institutions sit on top of life, crushing it” (106). Rituals for the Living Theatre are fresh, life affirming, and unfixed; they emphasize presence and activity rather than the reproduction of ordered divisions. While appearing to emphasize experience, Schechner’s conception of ritual is fundamentally structural. In several ways, Schechner will use this structural conception of ritual to promote performance as an institution.

The institutionalization of Schechnerian performance builds upon a research project which takes Schechner’s source play, The Bacchae as its emblem. The project was by a loose grouping of early twentieth century British cultural anthropologists known as the “Cambridge School.” (Numbered among the Cambridge scholars was Gilbert Murray, whose summary of the play was cited at length above.) The work by Cambridge School anthropologists informed Schechner’s turn to ritual in theory and theatre practice. He has described the Cambridge School as

> classical scholars who believed that a ‘primal ritual,’ a ‘Sacer Ludus,’ was the root of Greek theatre. They claimed to have discovered vestiges of this primal ritual in existing Greek plays, especially Euripides’ The Bacchae. (Schechner and Appel 45)

Since adapting The Bacchae, Schechner has considered the Cambridge School’s legacy in some detail; acknowledging that its central thesis is based upon “assumptions [that] have never been tested” and that as a theorized approach to tragedy’s origins, it is “self-repairing” and thereby “seems to explain everything: origins, forms, audience involvement, catharsis, and dramatic action” (PT 2, 5). Despite these flaws, Schechner appreciates its virtues: for it bears “compress[ion].
commodifi[cation] and generaliz[ation]," which make it "teachable" (5). Yet besides its pedagogical appeal, there is historical significance to the contributions of the Cambridge anthropologists. Their theories relate the question of theatre's links with ritual to the much broader question of art's relation with life, whether expressed as utility (by Julian Beck and Judith Malina) or as efficacy (in Schechner's terms). The performance theatres of Schechner and his contemporaries engaged both of these problematics.

The Cambridge School follows Friedrich Nietzsche in affirming a close link between ancient tragic theatre and religious ritual. In his celebrated monograph The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche elaborates a theory of tragedy's emergence from the blending of Apollonian and Dionysian impulses, hitherto represented respectively in the abstract perfection of sculpture and the plastic arts and the fluid frenzy of music. The two sets of impulses take their names from the ancient pantheon of gods: the Apollonian deriving from the god of light, embodied in the restraint of the dreamer who knows he is dreaming, remaining thoroughly individuated and capable of generating concepts and using abstract symbols (Nietzsche 33-36); the Dionysian from the god of intoxication, the eternal and timeless divine, bearing the gifts of wine and music capable of generating frenzy and the dissolution of abstract thought and individuation (36-38). These contrasting impulses are said by Nietzsche to work together — as "two art drives must unfold their powers in a strict proportion, according to the law of eternal justice" (143). Nietzsche's theory of these art-drives in essence explains theatre's unique synergism.

In ancient Greek tragic myth, the Apollonian and Dionysian operations were justly balanced, as the Apollonian abstraction excelled to master the "primordial joy" of the Dionysian (141) which, before the advent of tragic theatre, was producing a "dithyrambic madness" (144). In this narrative of theatre's development, the
Dionysiac is installed as the "common source of music and tragic myth" (141) and it was that origin that the Cambridge School sought to explain. It was they who first researched the relation of theatre and ritual. Since that relation is precisely the one that Schechner has explored in his theory and theatre praxes, the arguments of the Cambridge School have a particular pertinence to a critical understanding of Schechner's long-term performance project.

The Cambridge School attempted to "render the Nietzschean vision of the ritual nature of Greek tragedy 'scientific' (whatever that means) by amalgamating it with [James] Frazer's anthropology" (Friedrich, "Drama" 162). Their position on the hypothesis of a direct causal link between theatre and religious ritual was articulated by classicist Jane Harrison, in both speculative (historical) and in contemporary (functional) terms: "ritual is, we believe, a frequent and perhaps universal transition stage between actual life and that particular contemplation or emotion towards life which we call art" (113). As an intermediary between art and life, ritual was interposed between the two in such a way as its link to both were sustained. Ritual thereby comes to be defined as "an action redirected to serve for communication"; this sense of ritual is echoed by Julian Beck's definition of the "ritual form [a]s a discipline, an efficient form, a repeated action, a way to get things done" (107). On this basis, Friedrich defines ritual as "an action, when it is redirected to serve for communication and is therefore shifted from reality to a symbolic sphere, acquires as a consequence the element of as if" ("Drama" 181). If the three-way relation between ritual, art, and life could be sustained, ritual would have a great deal of explanatory power in providing accounts of the nature of art and its relation to broader cultural life. This was the horizon of understanding envisaged by the Cambridge School.

In practice, ritual models were used by Cambridge School scholars as formal models to analyse plays; according to their retrospective critic Rainer Friedrich, "the
The Cambridge School's response to the "central question [of] how the transition from ritual to drama took place" was to link the weakening of belief in magic to the enhancement of mimetic action, in order to explain how ritual participants became separated into groups of performers and spectators; and to suggest that heroic sagas served as plots by taking the place of the year god, Dionysus (Friedrich "Drama" 165). According to Friedrich, "the ritual theory never caught on" for classical studies, and yet, Friedrich has noted, "[i]n the 1960s and 1970s the Cambridge ritualist theory even made theatre history when it was translated into the avant-garde movement known under the slogan "back to ritual"" ("Everything" 260).

It is ritual's "element of as if" described by Rainer Friedrich which made it a potent form for theatrical experimentation ("Drama" 181). For therein lies its utopian, or revolutionary potential, vibrantly articulated by Julian Beck as follows:

Ritual

to heighten communication to find ecstasy to invoke
the
holy spirit to prepare us for revolutionary action to
open the mind to enliven the body to decrease fear to
exorcise demons to increase trust to dispel hesitation
to transform evil to free the heart to arouse sexual
energy to soften hardness to release dreams to free all
prisoners to untie hands to diminish death's dominion
a ritual to drive the old culture out of the head to unify
the forces to raise hope
(106; line breaks as in the original; spacing mine).
In detailing the theatre marked by a move “back to ritual,” Arthur Sainer has explained ritual as “a dynamic process that employs ceremony to heighten occasion and the sense of occasion, rather than as a series of prescribed acts handed down from an earlier time” (31). This sense of ritual confirms Beck’s use of the term as distinct from Schechner’s structurally oriented conception of ritual.

Sainer recalls that ritual “found the theatre” but the new American theatre “despite Artaud’s plea, did not find ritual” (31). By this, he means to describe the recourse to ritual as a negative choice, made first out of alienation, rather than a positive election affirming life’s vitality through a sense of occasion. For Sainer, the emptiness of psychological drama, and the “scattered devices employed [in plays like Waiting for Godot and The Brig] to combat emptiness became ritual” (31). Nietzsche’s philosophy could usefully explain ritual’s filling of the modern theatre’s emptiness. Certainly his work would have been accessible to Schechner and his contemporaries. For theatre critic Elinor Fuchs, The Birth of Tragedy “foreshadows modern and postmodern movements in theater with three simultaneous moves that might be seen as rippling out in successive waves of influence”: the attack against bourgeois drama’s notion of dramatic character, the turn to theatricalism as a philosophical strategy, and the archaeological link discerned between artistic shifts and shifts in subjectivity and “the very grounds of knowing” (28-29). Both the philosopher’s influence on American artists beginning in the 1910s and 1920s, explicitly embedded in the work of playwright Eugene O’Neill (Pfister 250n128), and the importance of Nietzsche’s work for European cultural theory from Artaud onwards, would have made his thesis, if not the Cambridge School’s elaboration, part of the discursive matrix shaping theatre in the 1960s and 1970s. Clearly, Dionysus in 69 was one such avant-garde theatre production explicitly wrestling with the Dionysian forces identified by the Cambridge School as an essential part of theatre’s constitution. Whatever intellectual reservations Schechner may have had
towards its ritual theory, the Cambridge School's investigation was advanced by his stage production. From its negative origins as a response to alienation, the recourse to ritual became a positive aesthetic instrument for Schechner's performance theatre.

Schechner's performance theatre and his theory occupy a strong position in the heritage of the Cambridge School. Through both theatre and theory Schechner pursues this theatre/ritual relation as an ontogenic one, elaborating Nietzsche's apprehension that Dionysiac ritual served as the prototype and essential source for theatre's emergence in ancient Greece. By considering contemporary hypotheses addressing theatre's developmental relation to ritual, I will situate Schechner's particular strategy within existing terrain. In these hypotheses, the tragic form serves (for better or worse) as a paradigmatic case for illustrating theatre's essential operations, on the basis that tragedy is understood as the earliest form of a specifically theatrical performance, as distinct from religious, poetic, or musical performance. Classicist Rainer Friedrich's brief essay on ritualism and tragedy addresses the developmental link between theatre's earliest form, the tragedy, and ritual performance in terms of the status of Dionysus. The fact that theatre's emergence should be addressed in relation to Dionysus places Friedrich's investigation in an enticing proximity to Schechner's performance theatre. In the remarks which follow, I aim to make that proximity productive, by using Friedrich's remarks to characterise a broader intellectual culture in which Schechner's theatre and theory now operate.

Friedrich aims to track the "wildly differing concepts of the 'Dionysiac', all redolent of the Zeitgeist of modernity (and now of postmodernity)," which he contends "often reflect the most dubious of our post-Romantic preoccupations: our obsession with the primitive, the savage, the irrational, the instinctual, the collectivist, to name only a few" ("Everything" 257). It is interesting how these
current preoccupations, "in this neo-Nietzschean age called postmodernism" (257), converge with the characteristics Bigsby identified in performance theatre, a genre formed and soon exhausted (according to Bigsby) about a quarter century ago. The most peculiar aspect of this association is not that in both postmodernist thought and performance theatre "extreme liberties with Dionysus and "the Dionysiac" have been "taken" with the license granted by Dionysus being "the elusive god who defies definition" (259); but rather that the distinct conceptions of Dionysus's relation to tragic theatre, which Friedrich is able to particularise, appear to converge in the ensemble produced by Schechner's theatre and theory. This convergence will be described as a means to clarify the conceptual content and contours of the performance project. In Friedrich's reading, the ways in which Dionysus has been taken up by contemporary discourses on tragedy involve a series of assumptions and misattributions. These assumptions and misattributions will reappear in various forms in Schechner's performance project.

Specifically, Friedrich set forth critical summaries of "Four Attempts At Reinscribing Dionysos Into Tragedy" (259). Their features pertain to Schechner's project to reaffirm the relation of theatre and ritual. The first two approaches, attributed to Nietzsche and the Cambridge School, posit the Dionysiac as the origin, essence, and effect of tragedy (259-60). "In genealogical terms, then, tragedy, having originated in the Dionysiac and its ritual, is essentially Dionysiac in vision and substance, tempered and refined by Apolline form" (260). Nietzsche's suggestion of this formula was "construed" by the Cambridge School as indicating a ritual pattern which could be sought in every tragedy and tragic hero. This approach suffers from the "genealogical fallacy" (271) and the accounts it generated was "reductionist":

It turned the history of drama into the eternal recurrence of the same ritual pattern, with the same protagonist, Dionysus, in numerous disguises [...]; it thereby distorted the plays and their meanings, and gave rise to the silly hocus-pocus of modern ritual
productions of ancient, Elizabethan, and modern plays (265).

Schechner’s production of *Dionysus in 69* would be one manifestation of such “silly hocus pocus.”

The third and fourth approaches to Dionysus’s relation to tragedy are associated by Friedrich under the rubric of “Structuralist and Post-Structuralist Correctors” to the Cambridge School’s “naïve[ly] scientist[ic] elaboration” of Nietzsche’s thesis. The first is lodged in an essay by J. -P. Vernant called “The God of Tragic Fiction,” which rejects the Cambridge ritualists’ account of Dionysianism as tragedy’s origin. Vernant enumerates its insufficiencies to defend the break between tragedy and its ritual and religious past. The break is evident according to three features; tragedy emerges as a genre, that genre is unique and distinct from choral or lyric poetry, and it stages the polis “as an object of reflection,” “by making the dramatic contest one of its new institutions” (262). These distinctions would seem to frustrate the “neo-primitivism” (262) of performance theatre’s aesthetic ritualism. Yet Vernant’s analysis did not rest with an elaboration of these historical distinctions and connections. Instead, the Nietzschean aspect of tragedy as Dionysiac ritual resurfaced through his address of the dramatic mask: “the ‘presence’ embodied by the actor in the theatre was always the sign, or mask, of an absence,” Vernant observes, and since Dionysus is the god to “confuse the boundaries between illusion and reality, who conjures up the beyond in the here, and who thus makes us lose our sense of self-assurance and identity,” theatre’s play of absence and presence, illusion and reality is fundamentally Dionysian (262). In Friedrich’s estimation, “the Dionysiac has been attenuated to a mere metaphor: the metaphor of dramatic illusion and fictionality,” which he considers “an

---

The final approach addressed by Friedrich is drawn from Simon Goldhill's essay in the volume *Nothing to Do with Dionysos?*. There Goldhill argues that the social context of civic ceremonies which preceded the tragedy contests "celebrates [the city's] power and its dignity" so that "the text of tragedy becomes part of the larger text of civic discourse of the *polis*" (Friedrich, "Everything" 263). Yet instead of undertaking an ideological critique facilitated by those claims, Goldhill situates tragedy in a transgressive role within the civic system, paradoxically subverting that social system which engenders and sustains it (263-64). This subversive role of tragedy is easily associated with and underwritten by the conception of Dionysus as, in Goldhill's words, that "divinity associated with illusion and change, paradox and ambiguity, release and transgression" (265).\(^{30}\) While Seaford's characterisation of Dionysus as the god of savage frenzy (246-54) supports Goldhill's link, Friedrich does not accept Goldhill's dramaturgical analysis in support of this thesis, mocking this "reading of Greek tragedy as a transgressive Dionysiac force, planting subversive paradoxes in the civic discourse of the *polis,*" as being "redolent of the current *Zeitgeist* and has 'postmodern construct' written all over it" (266). Still,

Goldhill's conception of transgression and subversion through theatre materialised in the performance theatre's aesthetics, and Schechner's structural approach to ritual as a means to reproduce social order partakes in the ambiguity Goldhill signals. Indeed, Goldhill's notion of domestic transgression describes not only Schechner's subject matter, in his fable about the New Left, but also his own situation with regard to the socio-political status quo. In contrast to the Living Theatre, whose anarchism led them into exile, Schechner's espousal of theatre's subversive influence remained circumscribed within the institutionality of his ongoing role as an academic, with a professorial teaching position and a prominent editorship. Because Goldhill's interpretation of the Dionysus myth foregrounds the embeddedness within society of certain disruptive influences, reading Goldhill's work descriptively rather than prescriptively makes it productive for a new reading of Richard Schechner.

Friedrich's essay addresses these different accounts as distinct attempts to answer the question of Dionysus's relation to tragedy. The accounts are not commensurate, nor even necessarily complementary (although it is possible to imagine the metaphors of Vernant and Goldhill functioning in tandem to provide an ontological and sociological account of tragedy's alterity). It seems unlikely that Nietzsche's influence in each would ever clearly resolve their divergent approaches. Yet, despite their incompatibility, somehow Schechner's conception of performance assumes and acts upon the conclusions of all these accounts. Briefly, this is how: his performance theory formulates origin stories to substantiate the analogy of theatre and ritual, like the Cambridge School. Those origin stories are often diagrammatic, rather than fully articulated narratives; but they provide the basis for Schechner's diagrams for performance as a fan, a web, and a ritual tree (PT n.p.; FR 229). By considering social role-play as performance, Schechner's performance theory promotes the theatricalising of everyday life and the view that performance
never stops, like Vernant's interpretation. While its aesthetic undermines rationalised reality, performance theory and the praxis of performance theatre resemble Goldhill's announcement of the transgression and subversion of social norms; clearly in its use of nudity (and the attendant threat of juridical sanctions), Dionysus in 69 transgressed theatrical and social convention. Regarded with the heterosexist frame it reproduces, the work's staging of homosexuality might be perceived as similarly disruptive. Through performance theory, Schechner has developed a conception of ritual's relation to both art and life that sustains the paradoxical commitments to tribal communality and to theatrical models for postmodernist identity and politics.

Yet if Friedrich's arguments are sound, these aspects of Schechenerian performance do not derive from a singular conception of Dionysus and the purported Dionysian core of theatre as ritualised performance. Instead, Friedrich's case makes clear that they emerge from (at least) three distinct, and in certain cases, contradictory conceptions. The question of how these incommensurate interpretations of the Dionysian legacy manage to function in an apparently stable performance project summons the analyses constituting my reading of Richard Schechner. It may be that their distinctions and contrasts are too great for a single project to apprehend all these competing aspects of the Dionysian heritage; and the attempt to author such a project may produce a profoundly unstable position, sustainable only by constant, if covert, recourse to existing authorities. To this degree, what appears as a singular project pursued in theatre and in theory may prove to be a complex history in which Schechner's authorly creations and his scholarly authority engage in a complicated interplay. Nevertheless, the point of convergence of Schechner's theatre and theory (and their associated activities in art and academia) lies in the underlying problematic of art's relation to life. Rainer Friedrich has produced a sophisticated analysis of this question, which builds into a
theory of ritual's significance in explaining broader trends in twentieth-century theatre.

The Cambridge School posited ritual as an intermediary between art and life. Discussions of ritual and theatre sometimes fail to clarify the relation between them; specifically, is ritual a precursor to theatre, or its general form? When ritual is used to explain the "depth structure and essence" of drama, and not merely its heritage, ritual is posited as an archetype for theatre and drama. According to Friedrich, "[i]n the archetypal conception of the ritual theory, drama ceases to be a form sui generis and is downgraded to one of the many instances of the archetypal ritual structure" ("Drama" 191). In the archetypal approach to ritual's relation to theatre, the features of drama, "based as it is on the speech and actions of individuals capable of rational thought and ethical decisions, [...] expressive of a cultural setting that is beyond such innocence," is reduced to the "pre-reflective, pre-rational, pre-individual [...] atavism" evoked by reference to ritual as "organic," "primitive," and "pristine" (203). Friedrich's analysis of the tension between ritual and drama solicits an interpretation of "the polarities marked" by Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty and Brecht's epic theatre, whose distinctive features may be understood in relation to the ritual/theatre problem (203). Friedrich thereby places ritual as conceptually central to theatrical avant-gardism, making of ritual less an aspiration, as Innes poses it in The Holy Theatre, than a problem susceptible to critical examination (cf. Bigsby 73).

In short, Artaud's position on the necessity to "revert to ritual again" derives from his understanding "the archetypal conception of the relationship between drama and ritual literally and draws from this literal understanding the most radical and ostensibly practical conclusion: that it is necessary to re-ritualize drama" ("Drama" 207). The aim of Artaud's "re-ritualized Theatre of Cruelty is to recreate a totemistic tribal culture in which subjectivity and individuality [the marks of Apollo]
are to be superseded by [Dionysian] collectivity" (209). Schechner discerns the "totalitarian implications" of this massive "regression" Artaud advocated (209), writing in his essay on "The Politics of Ecstasy" that the "hidden fear I have about the new (i.e. Artaudian) expression is that its forms come perilously close to ecstatic fascism" (PD 228); much as Julian Beck answers it when he specifies "the difference between techniques used in Mysteries and Third Reich ceremonies" as between "ritual which turns inward and not outward [which] is toxic" (110). The Living Theatre’s appeal to "free will" described by Beck depends on the authenticity of their invitation to participation. Friedrich frames the Artaudian drive for a re-ritualized theatre capable of reinstituting pre-modern collectivity in terms of the question of art’s relation to life. He uses the phrase "aesthetic difference" to describe the set of differences and separations which together mark art from life, "the difference between art and reality" understood by Nietzsche’s Apollo in terms of the "sensation that [the dream] is mere appearance" (34). "Does not theatre also cease to exist once reunited with life via re-ritualization?" Friedrich asks.

Artaud, once a member of the Surrealist movement, seems indeed to actualize the dream of the avant-garde; the union of life and art: life takes art up into itself and is thereby qualitatively changed [but] in the end, it is inverted. The theatre is the double of life; but life becomes the double of theatre. [...] The theatromaniac makes life merge with, and dissolve in, the theatre, just as the Italian Futurists make life disappear in art. This is the *hybris* of theatromania. ("Drama" 209)

It is a hubris that comes with a cost, for it sacrifices the adequate recognition of the continuing effects of the "aesthetic difference" which it pretends to dissolve. The Living Theatre worked to put theatre at the service of life; but in Beck’s diary of their "theatre of emergency," the aim that "the theatre becomes life" is balanced by a rich account of the labours through which art’s envisaged instrumentality may be
achieved (Beck 34). The “aesthetic difference” defended by Friedrich is not so easily eradicated.

The whole theory of Stanislavski was aimed at getting the performer to recreate experience so that it is almost existential. The theatre of our time, with its return to ritual and its programme of action is trying to create forms in which alienation from life is changed into integration with life. (Beck 146)

The salutary outcome of a theatre reintegrated with the everyday life of people depends, however, on maintaining a dialectical relation between art and the life it serves. Accounts of art’s making, as opposed to programmatic manifestos, serve to sustain the dialectic of art’s emergence within everyday living. In neither spirit nor in action could Artaud provide detailed insight into theatre-making.

Artaud’s aporia point to the strength of Bertolt Brecht. Those “differences and separations Artaud intended to overcome and level Brecht usually emphasized, even reinforced” (Friedrich, “Drama” 206). In so doing, Brecht’s aesthetic sustained the dialectic at play in the fundamental “aesthetic difference” discussed above. Theatre’s residual ritual features are precisely those encouraging passive spectators through the evocation of emotions rather than ideas. Theatre’s problem is not that it is too engaging, but that, because it is an “incompletely secularized ritual” with modern psychology installed in the space evacuated by the sacred, it induces empathy (210). If, as Friedrich has suggested, “conscious theatricality is the hallmark of Brechtian theatre,” surely the emphasis must be laid on the first term, since it works “to disrupt consciously the mechanism by which traditional [unconscious, semi-ritualized] theatre manipulates the emotions of its audiences” (211). Through the mediations of a conscious theatricality, theatre for Brecht was envisioned as “an active force in life [...] ‘a thought that intervenes’” (212). This yields

Brecht’s vision of the reunion of art and life. Art is not to subsume life under itself, as it does in Italian
Futurism and in Artaud; nor is it to be absorbed by, and made to dissolve into, life, as the Dadaists and Surrealists would have it. Rather it is to establish itself as a force of change within life and social reality.

(212)

Such a participatory, if not emancipatory, role for theatre specifically and art more broadly requires the sustenance of the “aesthetic difference” eschewed by ritualism. To “establish itself as a force of change within life and society [...] effectively would depend on art’s ability to assert and maintain its distinctiveness as well as its independence, and, for that matter, the ‘aesthetic difference’” (212).

Aesthetic difference is Friedrich’s designation for the distinctions and separations between art and life which constitute the “difference between art and reality” (209); in my reading of Schechner’s performance praxis, I will suggest that the status of the aesthetic difference is uncertain. Specifically, I will argue that Schechnerian performance explores the potential exploitation, even eradication, of the aesthetic difference, by three principal strategies: first, by exploring the ritual aspects of theatre in order to formulate a theatrical praxis for ritual theatre; second, by distinguishing between entertaining and efficacious theatres, and preferring the latter to the former; and third, by theatricalising social life, so that all aspects of living are rendered susceptible to descriptions as performance. To read this third strategy as a threat to aesthetic difference depends on a slippage between the terms, theatre and performance; indeed, it is a slippage which occurs in the texts comprising the performance project. The slippage occurs in the context of Schechner’s developing analogy between theatre and ritual, which in general fails to attend to the necessary distinctions which might discriminate their real, historical relation of connection and non-coincidence.

Nevertheless, in eliding an aesthetic difference through which the dialectics of art and life are variously articulated in each local instance, Schechner’s ritualist
theory participates in a broader turn to theatricalised conceptions of everyday life.

Semiotician Erika Fischer-Lichte observes that

Many studies in philosophy and psychology, in anthropology, ethnology and sociology, in political, historical and communication sciences, in cultural semiotics, in the history of art and literature employ the concept of theatre as a heuristic model to a wide extent. Foucault conceived a 'Theatrum philosophicum'; Lyotard observed 'the philosophical and political stage'; Baudrillard studied 'the stage of the body'; Clifford Geertz explored the 'theatre state Bali'; Paul Zumthor declared the performance of narrators in oral cultures to be 'theatre'; Ferdinand Mount investigated the 'Theatre of Politics'; Hayden White explained 'historical realism as tragedy'; Richard van Dülmen analysed the history of tribunal practice and penal ritual as a 'Theatre of Terror'; [...]. The list can be continued ad infinitum. ("Theatricality" 85; boldface mine)

According to Fischer-Lichte, the end-state of this expansion and dissemination is that theatre historians confront a "strange loop" since "a journey to other disciplines in search for new analytic tools" articulates "theatre" only as a metaphor, as apparently "the most widespread heuristic model in cultural studies" (85).

There is a history to theatre as a model of social life, apprehended in the Latin phrase theatrum mundi (Burns 2-21; Fuchs 155-56). For instance, Helmar Schramm's essays on the Renaissance indicate that theatre viewed primarily as an art is an historical achievement. Describing the tradition in philosophical and scientific writings which uses the word "theatrum" meaning "showplace" "to describe any grand or magnificent place where something worthy of attention occurred" (qtd. in "Surveying" 115), 32 Schramm details how in the natural sciences specifically, this habit endured through the eighteenth century. For example, the Romantic author Novalis, writing in 1799, reflected: "About theatricality in the marketplace and in experimenting -- every glass observation plate is a stage -- a laboratory -- a cabinet

32 Citation originally from Peter Rusterholz, Theatrum vitae humanae (Berlin, 1970) 15.
Of curiosities is a theatre" (qtd. in Schramm, "Open" 156). According to Schramm, "[e]tymological studies have shown that the presently accepted [if diluted] notion of theater as art is the outcome of a gradual strategy of inclusion" which followed from the Renaissance tradition. The Enlightenment's success at making theatre an aesthetic category is mirrored in the choice by an American philosopher of science Robert Crease to detail laboratory activity as theatre performance. For Crease unlike for Schechner, performance means theatre performance, and he designates his instrument for the analysis of scientific experimentation "the theatrical analogy"; through a distinction between (contextualised) theatre production and theatre performance "which reveal phenomena having a measure of independence from that context insofar as they reveal themselves as having profiles in other kinds of contexts." This "measure of independence" is embodied in the degrees of freedom implicated in the contingent staging of a pre-existent script, which script exhibits particular dramaturgical structures activated in any number of ways. According to Crease, this distinction in theatre promises "a better understanding of the interrelation of science as inquiry and science as cultural practice" (164-65).

Both the historical achievement of theatre as an aesthetic activity and domain, implied by Schramm's historical accounts, and the specifically analogical logic deployed by Crease are each elided as the use of theatre to explain the non-theatrical grows. Whether as a model for collective experience, as in Victor Turner's ethnography, for interpersonal interaction, as in Erving Goffman's social dramaturgy, for linguistic efficacy, as in J. L. Austin's speech act theory; or as a pre-social instinct, as theorised by Russian playwright Nicholas Evreinov, theatre serves as a model for social and cultural processes which extend in duration and in effect beyond theatrical activity among play makers and play partakers (see Carlson, Performance 13-75). For Alan Read, however, each of these alternative uses for theatre and its imagery, "whether it be the revelation that societies are theatrical,
retain ritual, or that personalities dramatise interaction, leaves little imprint on anything but the remotest corners of theatre’s operations, not to mention everyday life” (7). In the expansion of theatre’s conceptual dominion, theatre as labour is occluded.

Performance as a salient category in art and in the social sciences emerges in the midst of these metaphors of theatre. According to theatre critic Bonnie Marranca, performance as a practice endures “the widespread appropriation of the idea of ‘performance’ in the humanities and social sciences” to such a degree that, as detailed in the Introduction, “the performance umbrella covers everything.” Within it, distinctions have become more fluid and imprecise, even irrelevant, in the context of contemporary art and culture as the vocabulary of performance is used increasingly to interpret all kinds of human expression, artistic or otherwise. Today performance has come to designate a way of being in the world, a lifestyle or form of social activism. (“University” 68).

Against this “conflation” Marranca articulates “two crucial distinctions [...] : one, between being and acting out; the other, between social role-playing and performing a role on a stage” (68). For Marranca, then, the congregation of two basic forms, being via social role-play and acting out on-stage, constitutes performance. Herbert Blau, however, discusses the theatricalisation of everyday life in terms implicitly challenging the analytic distinctions Marranca offers. Blau recognises that the ability to distinguish between social role-playing (as a category for social “being”) and acting on stage depends on institutional frameworks which have themselves been rendered increasingly unstable. Blau observes:

The dissipation of theater into the theatricalization of everyday life, a pale shadow of what it shadows, is accompanied by the merger of art and nonart contexts. The metaphor of life (not quite the same as life) brought into the arts has confounded the arts and criticism of the arts, while life goes on being what it is, confounding. [...] It would be as obtuse to dismiss the
art/life experiments as to let them happen to you uncritically, or, as they say, experientially. (Take 12)

The "perceptual conundrums" which such experiments evoke (see also Banes 135-36, 237-248; Kirby and Schechner 55; Zurbrugg) challenge preconceptions about art's relation to the everyday, but any merger between "art and nonart contexts" must be reflexive if art's ongoing relation to institutions is to be apprehended.

Institutional forms, be they aesthetic conventions regulating semiosis or the social and political architecture organising the flow of participants from nonart into art contexts, articulate in any local instance how art emerges from and works upon everyday life. Art's distinction from the quotidian can indeed by sustained by the art/life experiments, "precipitat[ing] unanticipated forms of organic unity by juxtaposing paradoxical elements within compositions that may initially appear to be nothing more than anti-art, resisting past conventions, but which, upon more patient reflection, prove to be constituents of ante-art, generating new conventions" (Zurbrugg 48). The institutionality of either art or nonart is itself processual. By accepting uncritically a conception of ritual as repetition organised to sustain social order (at some level), Schechner's ritual theory of theatre participates in the broader theatricalisation described above without articulating how rituals reproduce and/or transform the institutions which organise everyday and extra-daily experience. It is not enough to affirm, as Schechner has, that "theater is now showing itself everywhere," (BTA 150) when the interplay of reproductive and transforming activities is described only in the present tense. By trying to unite prehistoric rites with present-day aesthetic and social configurations, Schechner's ritual theory exaggerates the conflation described by Bonnie Marranca, amplifies the methodological conundrum described by Fischer-Lichte, and abdicates the possibility of a critical ethics in relation to the institutionality of both art and other social and cultural forms perceived by Blau.
In contrast, I will defend the dialectical position announced by Alan Read, that theatre and the everyday are "incommensurable but not unrelated" (64). This dialectical principle sustains the possibility both for rigorous social histories of theatre's institutionality (as well as its resistances to institution) and for far-ranging inquiries into theatre's efficacy in its local instances, according to any number of variables, arising from the "domain of unwritten negotiation, a domain where the licences granted to theatre are implicit rather than explicit and in their apparent absence are all the stronger in their influence over what theatre can do" (9-10). The specific dialectics of theatre's emergence make the "local and particular [...] as demanding of consideration now as the cosmopolitan" (Read 7); for Janelle Reinelt, in addressing the World Congress of the International Federation for Theatre Research/Fédération International pour La Recherche Théâtrale in 1994.

One methodological challenge for theatre studies in the twenty-first century is to find and establish the means to experience, share, and analyze performance events which have their most potent incarnation in a particular venue, for a particular community of spectators. [...] It is to local performances that we must turn if we are to continue to recognize the vitality and power of theatre as a cultural and artistic resource [...] (127).

In the terms established by the present discussion, Read's dialectical apprehension of the relation between theatre and the everyday serves two functions. First, it restates Friedrich's delineation of an abstract "aesthetic difference" sacrificed in ritual theories of theatre. Second, it serves as a counterpoint to Schechner's conception of performance's extensiveness, by defending the labour by which theatre is produced out of everyday life. The labouring to make and use theatre is apprehended in my term "emergence," which describes the specific relation of distinction (e.g. incommensurability) and connection (e.g. inter-relation) of theatre and the everyday. Discussing theatre's emergence concretises the abstraction described by Friedrich as "the aesthetic difference." In acknowledging that the
quotidian is the nexus and grounds from which theatre emerges, upon which it works, and into which, as it vanishes, it returns, I will affirm that a relation of dialectical emergence and potentially efficacious interplay pertains between theatre and the everyday. This dialectical relation, as it is contingently conditioned in its local instances is, I suggest, the subject matter for theatre studies. This dialectic of theatre and the quotidian is occluded, however, by the expansive notion of performance developed by Richard Schechner and instituted in the paradigm of performance studies Schechner advances. This is evident when performance theory renders ritual and theatre as interchangeable terms: "Whether one calls a specific performance 'ritual' or 'theater' depends mostly on context and function. [...C]hanging perspectives changes classification" (PT 120).

The same confusion of the terms ritual and theatre is more complicated, however, for Schechner's theatre praxis, which he explicitly framed (in contrast to its historiographer, Christopher Bigsby) as "environmental" rather than "performance theatre." Elinor Fuchs, writing in the late 1990s, observes:

The environmental theater of the 1960s and early 1970s tried to cure the passivity of the spectator by pulling her, often to her confusion, across the abyss into the imaginative realm of the spectacle. Spectators did not understand what new behaviors were expected of them: how should they participate in a ritual enactment of a Dionysian ecstasy? The problem was compounded by the fact that, for the most part, the experimental environments were still created in theaters: the actors stand their ground, but I must capitulate and cross over. (138-39)

The material, semiotic, and conceptual location of environmental theatre praxis in conventionally recognised theatres (even if "alternative" or "experimental") poses a barrier to the goal Schechner appears to advance of (re)uniting ritual and theatre as part of everyday life. Developing Fuchs' observation, it would seem that the

33 Walter Benjamin's name for the orchestra pit separating the audience from the stage. See Benjamin, Illuminations 154.
institutional and conventional histories of theatre making and spectating frustrate the intention of using theatre as a site for ritual communion. If it is to be achieved, theatre itself must be not simply transformed, as in environmental praxis, but transcended. Using a strategy which differs from the move from theatre to paratheatrics taken by Jerzy Grotowski, Schechner too finds a way of unhinging his ritual theory of art from theatre practice itself. The answer for Schechner lies in performance theory.

In performance theory, rather than in performance practice, Schechner can work to secure the relation of ritual and art, and their integrity to everyday life. It means that his paradigms will of necessity be drawn not from modernity under capitalism, but from the traces of pre-literate cultures accessible through anthropological discourse and visits to Asia and the indigenous peoples of the Americas. These resources will support Schechner's claim that ritual and theatre are related developmentally and functionally. Yet in this shift from theatre to theory, Schechner opens up a new field of relations which he never explicitly masters, namely cultural theory. Like Schechner's work beyond theatre, in performance theory, cultural theory is a field of production which serves as a site for the address of art's relation to the everyday and is both distinct from but interrelated to the reformulation of the relation of art to life by theatre artists and artists in other media. The two most monumental discursive structures in cultural theory, namely Marxism and psychoanalysis, address themselves to art's relation to life. While psychoanalysis holds art production (and to a certain degree, its consumption) as a compensation for the compromises reality institutes on the instinctual or fantasy life, Marxism, in its many formulations, has challenged any defence of art as an autonomous, non-ideological sphere of production. Marxism, then, is particularly suited to condition both artistic and academic conceptions of the relation of art and the everyday. Since Marxism has partnered with psychoanalysis, Hal Foster has
gone so far as to call critical theory "a secret continuation of the avant-garde by other means" as well as serving as "a high-art surrogate" because, "after the decline of late-modernist painting and sculpture, it occupied the position of high-art, at least to the extent that it retained such values as difficulty and discretion after they had receded from artistic form" (xiv). Because Schechner has staked his vision of art's relation to life through visual in both artistic and intellectual domains of production, Foster's association of critical theory and elitist avant-gardism seems pertinent. Indeed, it is this tendentious art-life relation, rather than performance's common interest in primitivism shared with Surrealism, abstract expressionism, and other acknowledged avant-garde movements, which will be emphasised in my concluding judgement on the performance project in terms of avant-gardism. The key point in the current discussion is that Schechner's performance theory, not simply his alternative theatre praxis, positions his work in terms of the ongoing pursuit of ideals associated with earlier avant-gardes.

In summary, the theme of avant-gardism arises in relation to Schechner's performance project not solely because his performance theatre participated in the American new experimental theatre of the late 1960s, as portrayed by Bigsby, Innes, and Shank. It arises because avant-gardist praxis is the site of the century's prominent addresses of the question of art's relation to life. The art/life question as addressed by theatre is embedded in the research and speculation about theatre's developmental or generic relation to ritual, a concern shared by contemporary classicists, the Cambridge School, Nietzsche, and the practitioner-theorists of performance theatre. In addition, theatre's relation to ritual describes a central concern in the intercultural study of theatre anthropology, an international but arguably First World movement of scholar/practitioners investigating performance arts praxes across cultures. Through his theory and paradigm for performance studies, Richard Schechner has played a leading role in promoting intercultural
exchange and study. Through interculturalism and performance studies, the question of theatre's relation to ritual remains an open, and expanding, one.

The following critique of performance as an authored project claiming academic authority emerges in that space, in order to link intercultural approaches to ritual with the avant-gardist problematic of art and life by addressing the ethical and political risks of eliding or ignoring the "aesthetic difference" posited by Rainer Friedrich. The histories of performance and environmental theatres summarised above accessed Schechner's theatre, but they cannot fully delineate its problematic as it moves from theatre to theory, to be ratified in academia. While Bigsby, Innes, and Shank's accounts explain how Schechner's theatre was successfully "experimental" or "alternative," their very terms install a premature resolution to the problem of performance which Schechner thereby initiated. In the next chapter, I argue for a conception of Schechner's work in, for, and around theatre, which regards it in clusters of prioritised activity across productive sites like theory and academic activism in which he has engaged. These clusters give substance to and structure the distinctive performance project I will posulate as an alternative to the existing historical accounts. From these clusters, a latent chronology emerges to organise a new reading of Richard Schechner.
Chapter Two

Schechnerian Performance in Academic Institutions

Chapter One introduced Schechner's performance theatre as part of a more long-term project theorising performance between the disciplines of theatre and anthropology. The prime aim of performance theatre was to revitalise theatre using ritual. It was an experiment situated in a period of countercultural change, as described in Chapter 1.2. Yet it continued a tradition within avant-garde theatre and beyond it, in philosophy and classical studies, of actively investigating ritual's relation to theatre. This tradition was discussed in Chapter 1.3. While Chapter One adopted Christopher Bigsby's classification of Schechner's theatre as "performance theatre," it rejected Bigsby's characterisation of performance theatre as an outmoded theatrical form. This was because the consideration of Schechner's performance theory in relation to the richer intellectual and aesthetic history of ritual theories of art suggests a greater complexity to Schechnerian performance than Bigsby or the historians Christopher Innes and Theodore Shank have articulated. The aim in the present chapter is to describe Schechner's project not as simply as a theatrical style or a mode of theatrical production, but as a multidimensional and enduring project. As I will argue in the present chapter, Schechner's performance project incorporates and elaborates the work he has accomplished in theatre. Because of the symbiotic relation between Schechner's theatre and his theories about ritual and performance, however, the former cannot be assessed without ample address of the latter. Furthermore, because the very performance theories, which interact with Schechner's theatre praxis, have become the stuff of a recognised paradigm of study, Schechner's work in theatre and in theory must be located in the institutional matrix within which it has thrived. Tracing the lines of production connecting theatre, theory, and institutional activism is the task of Chapter 2.1. Chapter 2.2 examines in greater detail the specific relations between theatre and academic theory. Describing
the institutional matrix sustaining all three branches of the performance project is the task of Chapter 2.3.

By reconceiving Schechner’s theatre within the context of his theory and institutional activism, the continuing impact of Schechner’s performance theatre on contemporary theatres and their study is identified. Its impact finds its form in a specific performance project pursued in theatre, theory, and institutional activism, the key works of which are summarised in Chapter 2.1 below. Because of its breadth and duration, the performance project I describe undermines Bigsby’s attempt to seal Schechner’s experiments in the theatrical culture that changed in the 1970s. Furthermore, through considering the distinctive clusters of theatre, theory, and institutional activism, along with their inter-relations, there emerges a new reading of Richard Schechner as an avant-garde artist using multiple media to agitate for change in theatre, in theory, and in academic institutions. This new reading of Richard Schechner will be organised around the framework of the performance project proposed below.
1. The Performance Project Built by Richard Schechner

Schechner’s career has developed a body of academic writing and a theatre practice in parallel. Schechner, born in New Jersey in 1934, appears to have pursued a university career without sabbatical; he was awarded a B.A. from Cornell University in 1956, an M.A. from University of Iowa in 1958, and a Ph.D. from Tulane University in 1962. In the same year that Schechner was awarded his Ph.D. for his study, *Three Aspects of Ionesco’s Theatre* (Schechner, DAI), he was made Assistant Professor of Theatre at Tulane (Press 621). There his career in academia and in theatre began. A schematic curriculum vitae introduces the activities constituting the proposed performance project.

A. Theatre

The earliest productions I have identified were two shows Schechner directed for the East End Players in Provincetown, Massachusetts, in 1961. The shows were Euripides’s *Philoctetes* staged “in sand dunes along the Atlantic” and Ibsen’s *When We Dead Awaken* produced “in the local town hall where the audience moved about with the performers” (Aronson, *History* 167). While in New Orleans at Tulane, Schechner became affiliated as a co-producing director with the Free Southern Theater where he worked with John O’Neal, Gilbert Moses, and Denise Nicholas (Dent and others; Free Southern Theater). FST emerged as a cultural project of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a significant activist group working to secure civil and electoral rights for the disenfranchised southern Black population. In 1964, Schechner “began an association with the Free Southern Theater” (ET 66) where he directed a production of *Purlie Victorious* by Ossie Davis.

---

1 In *Environmental Theater*, Schechner credits his move to the southern United States with his having been drafted into military service in 1958. I am not clear how this resolves with his earning an M.A. degree in that year and a Ph.D. four years later. It may be that his service was part-time, in order that active duty could be combined with study. In any event, Schechner came of age in a narrow generation of men whose military service fell between US military action in Korea and Vietnam.
which toured with Moses’s production of *Waiting For Godot* throughout Mississippi and to New York City (Dent and others 51-2, 61). The tour, intended to rally support for Free Southern Theater from major foundations, was well received by critics (61-3). While the tour was successful, and financial investment from foundations emerged, the New York showcase also laid bare the conflicts in the nascent group’s development. At Schechner’s behest, FST had left Mississippi to settle in Desire, an impoverished and under-served neighbourhood in New Orleans (Dent and others 68, 10-35; Hammer, "O’Neal" 14). As the political climate shifted towards radical separatism, Schechner’s executive position and his modernist aesthetic seemed increasingly incongruent with the aims of FST. "I was becoming interested in happenings and environmental theater and I thought the FST was square" (in Dent and others 222). In Schechner’s words, "The FST became, step by step, an all-black company, and my involvement declined" (ET 66; see also Dent and others 121-23, 221-23). A series of leadership changes resulted in a reorientation for FST as a black theatre.

By 1965, while serving as chairman of the board of the theatre’s directors, Schechner’s own aesthetic focus had shifted from FST to the newly formed New Orleans Group, which he co-founded and co-directed with visual artist Franklin Adams and composer Paul Epstein. Schechner’s attention was turning from FST’s experiments in reaching isolated rural audiences with a racially integrated acting company, to developing multimedia happenings under the influence of avant-garde composer John Cage and renegade visual artist Allan Kaprow (PD 145-55; ET ix, 66). The shift manifests Schechner’s priorities: "the revolution of knowledge, the disgust with ‘culture,’ and not the upsurge of the disenfranchised" (PD 211).

---

Although Schechner would remain an advocate against racial oppression in solidarity with the African National Congress's struggle against Apartheid in South Africa (Schechner, Tale 323n1), his early turn from community-based to intermedia art would prove decisive for his career.

In its explorations of "the application of intermedia techniques to the staging of scripted drama" (Schechner, ET xvii) the New Orleans Group mounted two productions in the period 1965-67, 4/66 and Ionesco's Victims of Duty (xxxii-iii; 66-68). By the time FST's jointly authored documentation was published in 1969, Schechner had left New Orleans to assume an appointment at New York University in 1967. NOG ties were sustained, however, since Franklin Adams designed the book of Dionysus in 69 which The Performance Group published in 1970, and his photographs appear in it.

Dionysus in 69 was the inaugural production of The Performance Group that Schechner founded, produced, and directed from 1967 to 1980. TPG was an experimental theatre ensemble based in New York's Soho, a short walk from Tisch School of the Arts, his faculty within the university. Schechner's experiences in and with TPG are also described in many of his essays written during those years, in which their accounts intersect with descriptions of performances he witnessed or studied during his extensive travels. By Schechner's own report, TPG was a key innovator in radical theatrical praxis in the celebrated downtown scene of the late 1960s, early to mid 1970s Manhattan. Indeed, its centrality was reflected in Shank's and Innes's discussions of The Performance Group in terms of American alternative and Western avant-garde theatres within their respective frameworks of study, and most particularly, in Bigsby's placing of Dionysus in 69 as a paradigm of his category, performance theatre (125). Similarly, Schechner's contemporaries John Lahr and Arthur Sainer include The Performance Group in their critical coverage of the period. Yet despite its historical prominence, most of what's been written about TPG has either been written by, or been based upon writings by, Richard Schechner. As a
consequence Schechner's accounts remain the primary source of material on The Performance Group. Theatre histories of this period by Christopher Bigsby, Christopher Innes, and Theodore Shank rely primarily (if not solely) on Schechner's accounts in situating TPG in a larger historical context.


In 1980 Schechner's directorship ended and TPG metamorphosed into The Wooster Group, led by Elizabeth LeCompte (Savran, Breaking 1-5). After leaving TPG, Schechner directed theatre productions elsewhere and was a key figure in

---

3 See ET and PT for descriptions of these three earlier productions. See Sainer 127-65 on Commune.

4 See Ryan; Schechner, PC 31-54.

5 See Kirby, "Marilyn"; Schechner, Letter.

6 See Green 52-58.

7 See Schechner, "Cops".

8 See Schechner, BTA 261-93.
organising conferences to investigate theatre and ritual as performance.¹ In one of Schechner's first post-TPG productions, he reworked King Lear through texts and imagery from Richard III; Phillip Zarrilli, who played Kent and choreographed its battle scenes, documented the production in The Drama Review ("Richard"; cf. BTA 24, 284). Subsequently, Schechner directed The Cherry Orchard (1983) in New Dehli, performed in Hindi (ET xiv) and returned to occupy the Performing Garage with the devised Prometheus Project (1985) featuring porn star/performance artist Annie Sprinkle (Fuchs 116-19; Schechner "Uprooting"). In 1987 Schechner directed Don Juan at Florida State University in Tallahassee (PT 201), resuming a relation with a play TPG had workshopped with playwright Megan Terry in 1971 (ET 287-90). In 1992, he directed August Wilson's Ma Rainey's Black Bottom for the Grahamstown Festival in South Africa (ET xiv). In 1991, Schechner founded East Coast Artists as an artistic home providing "life-long training, a place where theatre art can be practiced" but not a "stepping stone to a 'better' career in theater" (xii). In 1993, East Coast Artists produced its first production, Faust/gastronome, staged at the legendary LaMama, a legacy of New Bohemia (Gruen 82-86) an East Village venue which has survived since the Combine's days.¹⁰ In 1994, it toured Britain in time to join the Centre for Performance Research's symposium on Food and Cooking (Adams; Armistead). In 1995, ECA staged Fragments from the Three Sisters at LaMama, again producing a fracturing of a classic dramatic text (Drukman; Marks).

¹ For Schechner’s own self presentation, see the note appended to "Introduction: The Fan and The Web" of the revised edition of Performance Theory. In this summary, Schechner has written: "From the age of 27 I have taught fulltime […]. My specialty is performance theory—which for me is rooted in practice and is fundamentally interdisciplinary and intercultural" (PT xv).

¹⁰ I was a student in the Graduate Acting Program at NYU during the early 1990s and I recall seeing flyers for a Faust Workshop to be conducted in another department by Richard Schechner. On this basis, I believe that developmental workshops for this production were held as intensive summer school courses incurring standard university fees and offering academic credit at New York University towards a qualifying degree.
B. Academic publishing

In the same year he was offered the assistant professorship at Tulane, Schechner was invited to edit the *Tulane Drama Review* (McNamara 6; Press 621). This opportunity arose early in his working life, proving auspicious for his burgeoning career in academic publishing. In this category, I locate not only the publications for which Schechner has exercised an authorial or editorial role, but also his teaching posts. The latter are included because teaching, through lecturing, supervision, and curricular design, performs similar ideological functions as publishing. Through teaching, an audience is moulded; successful academic programmes change both ahead of and in step with their audiences, in order to maintain their pulling power. Education trains readers, while occasionally shaping future writers.

The *Drama Review* was both the first and, arguably, the most influential of Schechner’s editorial vehicles. In his compendium of theatre theories, Marvin Carlson relies on this journal as a valuable indicator of shifts in the contemporary American experimental theatre scene, declaring that “[w]hat Theatre Arts was to the 1920s, the Drama Review was to the 1960s” (*Theories* 454). *Theatre Arts* had served from 1916 to 1948 as, in the words of historian Oscar Brockett, “the principal disseminator of new ideas in North America” (626). The significance of *The Drama Review*, established in 1955 as the *Carleton Drama Review*, is less that it exclusively addressed or articulated American avant-gardism, but rather that its periodic shifts in emphasis registered and impelled larger trends in theatre studies (McNamara 6-21). In summing up its first one hundred volumes, Schechner observed that “[t]here has been a change in the American theatre – even in the mainstream – in direction that were first discussed in TDR. The magazine has not been the cause, but an important part of a network of change” (qtd. in McNamara 21). From an interest in the “new voices in the European theatre” in the late 1950s under the direction of founder Robert W. Corrigan, and a “clear emphasis [...] on dramatic literature,” from
1964 "the attention moved to contemporary production" (Carlson, *Theories* 454-55).

This shift was one aspect of what Schechner has called an intentional strategy:

> 'When I began as editor,' Schechner recalls, 'I had no clear idea how I wanted to change TDR, except that I wanted it to be more theatrical. I knew literature pretty well and thought that the theatre should be something different. And I also thought that the magazine ought to be involved politically and socially and that it also ought to have a kind of journalistic relevance [...]. Also, being something of a strategist, I felt that if a young guy was going to take over, he had to make his own mark or be submerged. No matter how much I respected them, I couldn't allow those people who already had established reputations – Fergusson, Brustein, Bentley, and so on – to tell me what to do. The only way I could establish my own style was not to meet them on their own ground, but to shift ground.' (qtd. in McNamara 6)

By the mid-1960s Schechner and Michael Kirby were introducing readers to an American adaptation of continental structuralism as well as to abstract theatre, paratheatrics, and overtly political theatre (Carlson, *Theories* 457, 466). Schechner has developed what Carlson describes as a Wagnerian aesthetic position, regarding

> "Art in its original and proper form is communal, socially constructive, and transcendent or ecstatic; but has become individuated and commercialized [so] we must seek ritual roots accessible to all cultures" (468).  

Schechner used *The Drama Review* as a forum for this aesthetic view.

*The Drama Review* has served as a key site for elaborating Schechner's authoritative stand on the questions of theatre and ritual, art and life. In 1967 following a rift with Tulane's academic administration resulting in a number of full-time faculty walking out (McNamara 13; Schechner, ET 68), Schechner assumed an appointment at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, headed by *The Drama Review*'s founding editor Robert Corrigan. He brought the journal and

---

11 See Schechner, BTA 221: "The dream of 'total theater' envisioned in Euro-American culture by Wagner was realized by artists as diverse as Grotowski, Laurie Anderson, Richard Foreman, Robert Wilson, Mabou Mines (Lee Breuer, JoAnn Akalaitis), Elizabeth LeCompte, and others."
editorship with him, and the “Tulane” was dropped from the title. Schechner has held editorial positions on the board of The Drama Review on and off ever since.

From 1982 until 1989, Schechner served as the magazine’s chief editor, turning the reins over at times to guest editors including Michael Kirby and Ed Bullins. In the summer 1989 Schechner turned over his editorship to Erika Munk, who had been managing editor since the early 1960s, in order “to spend more time writing and directing” (McNamara 13, 15). After six issues edited by Munk, the newly Ph.D’ed Michael Kirby assumed the reins, in order to prevent the university’s administration from closing the journal and as an alternative to Munk’s search for another academic home (16). At the same time, Kirby was appointed chair of the Graduate Drama Department. Under Kirby, a new kind of formalism in structuralist theory and an emphasis on documentation became characteristic of The Drama Review. The journal became a quarterly series of special issues, edited by guests around particular themes; among those guest-edited volumes were three by Richard Schechner, on theatre and social science in 1973 (T59); Southeast Asian performance (T82) in 1979; and intercultural performance in 1982 (T94) (McNamara 19-20). The focus on performance Schechner had introduced in the 1960s was “one to which Kirby maintain[ed] increasing allegiance” (20). During Kirby’s tenure, Schechner referred to TDR as “a most valuable companion when researching specific projects” even at the point when it was failing to launch practical, contemporary debates (EH 64-65); “There are a lot of polemics in Michael’s magazine, but they are not overt,” Schechner explained (McNamara 19).

In 1986, Schechner “started [his] second stint as editor” (“I” 7). As his thoughts on theatre and performance have developed, The Drama Review has remained both a vital platform for Schechner’s approach and also an effective barometer of performance’s emergence. In a TDR Comment called “The Journal of Environmental Theatre,” published in spring, 1987, Schechner proposed that in The Drama Review’s stead “perhaps we should […] begin The Journal of Environmental
Theatre” (qtd. in McNamara 12). Finally in 1988, two years after returning to the chief editorial post, Schechner announced the subtitle “A Journal of Performance Studies” (Schechner, Sandford and Schneider 7). Then the Fall 1993 volume (T139) appeared with the subtitle “The Journal of Performance Studies.” The significance of the change in the article, from “A” to “The,” has not been explained, but the definite article has been in use ever since. Along with its periodic name changes, the journal has seen a steady decline in subscriptions; its peak of 16,669 was attained in October 1968; and by April 1994, the subscription numbers were less than a quarter, at 3,725. During the same period, its news stand price has quadrupled (Schechner, “I” 7). “I hate to admit it,” Schechner confides in a recent TDR Comment, “but TDR’s falling circulation, in the 1990s at least, is connected to the development of performance studies” (8). By this development, Schechner must mean performance studies as an institutionally recognised form; for as an interrogation, its roots stretch farther back.

In the early and mid 1960s Schechner published journal articles on modernist dramatists. His first books, however, broke with that literary orientation; in 1969, an academic press published his co-edited documentation of the Free Southern Theater, and also his essay collection Public Domain. With these works, Schechner was implicitly shifting from a literary to a sociological frame. Public Domain contained a new version of Schechner’s axioms for environmental theatre, which serve as a manifesto for his theatrical praxis, as well as essays initiating his dialogue with anthropological discourse. In 1970, The Performance Group’s record of Dionysus in 69 appeared, edited by Schechner. Its text includes transcribed dialogue and paragraphs and poems by TPG members. However, Schechner wrote most of the summary and explanation. (Interestingly, the legal corporation of TPG called The Wooster Group, Inc. holds the copyright to the book, and although Schechner cites the work, it has never been reprinted, unlike many of his other essays and books.) Schechner’s work in theatre served him as a renewable source of writing topics until
the 1980s. The one book on a theatre other than those with which he has worked was *The Living Book of the Living Theatre*, to which Schechner contributed an introductory essay.

Another source for his writing portfolio derived from his funded travels. Since his appointment at New York University, Schechner has been honoured with a number of fellowships, research appointments, and grants for international travel. In 1968, Schechner and Latin American theatre expert Joanne Pottlitzer received funding from the Ford Foundation for a six-week tour of seven Latin American countries; their differing assessments of the theatres of Latin America were summarised in *TDR Comments* published in 1970 (Pottlitzer "Conformists"; "Theatre"; Munk). The extended trip in 1971-72 to Asia Schechner took as a Fulbright Fellow with Joan Macintosh, comprised visits to Bali (PC 144-48; PT 129-31); Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea (PC 130-38; 142-44; PT 112-20; 126-29); the Philippines, Sri Lanka (PT 87-91); and Thailand (PT 148n11). With the help of a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation fellowship awarded in 1976, Schechner again travelled to India in 1976-77 (PC 1-54; BTA 71, 216-27), in 1978 (BTA 151-211), and with support from the Fulbright Commission returned in 1982-83 (BTA 72-4). These trips are reported and reflected upon in his essay volumes, including *Essays on Performance Theory* (1977, rev. 1988 under an abbreviated title), *Performative Circumstances from the Avant-Garde to Ramlila* (1983), *Between Theater and Anthropology* (1985), and *The Future of Ritual* (1993). On their basis, Schechner refers to India as his “culture of choice” (PC xi).

During the third trip in 1976, Schechner, a self-pronounced “atheist Jew,” underwent a Upanayana ceremony to “convert” to Hinduism in order to gain access to sacred sites. Sixteen years later he writes of his unease at his conversion, questioning its relation to his native Judaism — “because I want my Jewishness to remain “intact” — and describing his “hypocritical conversion” as Richard Jayaganesh
Schechner "performing himself performing his Hinduism" (FR 4-5). If a sense of personal inauthenticity could be described as performance, the latter term is applied equally to overseas travel. After the conversion trip and a subsequent stay in India, Schechner writes in 1982,

India is my second home [...] I expect that my sojourns to India will never cease. I have seen many kinds of Indian performance [...] Often India has offered herself to me as a special kind of performance. Performance, not just theatre (PC xi).

The term "performance" emerges in his travel-based writings to mark the site of an ambivalence about proximity to distal cultural forms, familiarity with the strange which has everything to do with the privileges of the insecure connoisseur, "fretting as only an atheist Jew can" (FR 4-5).

In addition to India, Schechner's writings make reference to other trips, including a visit to Poland in 1978 (BTA 102) and a return visit to Japan in 1979 (PT 255n9); 12 Arizona in 1981 (PC 293-302; BTA 12-13); and again in 1982, 1985, 1987 (FR 94-130); a research residency at Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1988 during which he studied Balinese puppetry (FR 184-227), a trip to a conference held in Leicester, England in 1988 ("Indeterminate") and a further Asian tour to Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, and South Africa in 1990 ("Tale"). In addition to those patrons mentioned above, Schechner's travel research has been supported by the John D. Rockefeller the Third Fund (later renamed the Asian Cultural Council), the Indo-American Fellowship program, the Smithsonian Institution, the Social Science Research Council, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. Certainly the means for and context of Schechner's international travels varies widely from the travels undertaken by the Living Theatre, expatriated to avoid prosecution for tax

---

12 It is not evident from the description where Schechner's "few days" of Noh study "with living national treasure Izumi Yoshio' and his younger colleague (from another Noh school/family), Takabayashi Koji" described in "Performer Training Interculturally" (BTA 242-44) took place. However, a mention of the work in the essay "Points of Contact" alludes to a three-day workshop held at Cornell University in September, 1982 (31).
evasion, self-financed through performance tours of Europe, and locally active in the
economic and racial politics in Brazil, where they were imprisoned for drug use (Tytell
195-304). These funded trips have served as the cornerstone to Schechner's
authority in the theatre and performance traditions of the world's cultures. Therefore,
their role needs to be considered critically, an aim that is taken up by the proposed
reading of Schechner's work as a performance project.

Through the performance project, Schechner has developed and exercised
his academic authority through his pioneering theorisation of "performance" theory.
His essay collections on performance theory include Public Domain (1969) which
launches both his environmental theatre and his ritual theories, Environmental
Theater (1973, rev. ed. 1994) which describes making performance theatre, and the
End of Humanism (1982) which announces theatricality across social life as the
principle object for studies of performance. In the 1980s his performance theory was
further developed in the essays of Performative Circumstances from the Avant-Garde
to Ramilla, published in India in 1983, and appearing for American and European
audiences in Between Theater and Anthropology in 1985. In addition, he has co­
edited two anthologies which articulate the expanding parameters of performance
theory, Ritual, Play and Performance (1976, with Mady Schuman) and By Means of
Performance (1990, with Willa Appel). Among the more prominent academic
publishing houses to disseminate Schechner's writings are Bobbs-Merrill, Cambridge
University Press, and Routledge. Among theatre arts specialist houses, Applause
Books and PAJ have also issued his works. Many of the essays appearing in book
form have been previously published in journals, including Canadian Theatre Review,
Educational Theater Journal, Kenyon Review, Modern Drama, Performing Arts
Journal, Salmagundi, South Asian Anthropologist, Theatre Quarterly/New Theatre
Quarterly, The Drama Review/TDR, The Psychoanalytic Review. Articles by
Schechner have also appeared in The New York Times, The Village Voice, and
American Theatre Magazine published by Theatre Communications Group. His
essays and comments also appear in a range of anthologies edited by researchers in performance studies and its allied fields. Appendix One provides a select bibliography presented by category of publication and an annotated chronology of theatre production.
C. Institutional recognition and leadership

Schechner's authority in the field(s) of theatre and performance is reflected in the affiliations, honours, and fellowships he has been awarded. These include:

**Affiliations:** Honorary Professor, Shanghai Theatre Academy; Honorary Professor, Institute of the Arts, Havana; Emmens Professor, Ball State University, 1991-1992; Whitney Halstead Visiting Scholar, Art Institute of Chicago, 1989; Hoffman Eminent Scholar, Florida State University, 1987.

**Fellowships/Honours:** American Institute of Indian Studies Senior Research Fellow, 1997; Old Dominion Fellow, Princeton University, 1993; Special Recognition Award, New England Theatre Conference, 1991; Special Award for Contribution to Theatre, Towson State University, 1991; Asian Cultural Council Fellow, 1988-1995; National Endowment for the Humanities Senior Research Fellow, 1988; Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, 1987; Mondello Prize, Italy, 1985; Social Science Research Council, 1982; Fulbright Senior Research Fellow, 1976; Guggenheim Fellow, 1976. (N.Y.U. www)

These honours differ from those accruing to Joseph Chaikin and the Open Theatre. For example, from 1959 when Chaikin joined the Living Theatre up to 1984 when he was recovering from a serious stroke, Chaikin's work as an actor, director, and collaborator was recognised with a host of critics' awards. He has won two *Village Voice* Obies for acting (1963, for Galy Gay in Brecht's *Man is Man* directed by Beck for the Living Theatre; 1965 for roles in New York productions of Brecht's *The Exception and the Rule* and Ionesco's *The Victim of Duty*) and the first Obie award given for lifetime achievement in 1977. In addition, the Open Theater received a company Obie award in 1967 "for maintaining a laboratory where a company of actors, directors, and playwrights confront the limits of contemporary theatre experience" (qtd. in Blumenthal 216) and in 1969 for *The Serpent*. Also in 1969, the Open Theater was awarded a Vernon Rice Award for "outstanding contributions" to the theatre (qtd. in 218), and Chaikin received his first of two Guggenheim Fellowships (the second was awarded in 1975). *The Mutation Show* won an Obie for
"Best Theater Piece of 1971-1972", took first prize in the Belgrade Theater Festival and in the same year, Chaikin was granted an honorary doctorate from Drake University and won a Drama Desk award for direction of The Mutation Show. Chaikin's collaboration with playwright Sam Shepard, Savage Love, won a Bay Area Theater Critics Circle Award for "New Directions in Theater" in 1979. Similar awards, though fewer in number, were earned by Squat Theatre. In 1982, Squat's devised play, Mr. Dead and Mrs. Free shared an Obie for Best New American Play, followed by an Obie award in 1983 piloting a scheme to aid companies in financial need based on their past achievements. As Squat was disbanding, individual members were awarded a BESSIE (New York Dance and Performance) award and New York Foundation of the Arts and Guggenheim fellowships (Buchmuller and Koós, 221-25). While theatrical peers earned art-based acclaim, Schechner's awards have tended to acknowledge his theatre practice only in the context of his academic position as a professor, editor, and academic leader. This difference is symptomatic of Schechner's unique positioning between theatre and academia.

Arguably the most prestigious and certainly the most lucrative of the interdisciplinary awards granted to artists and academics, the MacArthur Foundation Fellowships, have been granted to Richard Foreman (Marranca, Images 167) and Elizabeth LeCompte (Shewey 6).

In addition to his instrumental role in The Performance Group, Schechner has served in a number of administrative leadership roles within professional bodies such as A Bunch of Experimental Theatres of New York in the period 1975-78, (EH 34; 75 n12) and the Theatre Communications Group (supported by the Ford Foundation)

---

12 By contrast, Tytell only notes two Obie awards for the Living Theatre, in 1959 for two of the actors in the legendary production of Jack Gelber's play about junkies, The Connection (164); but since Chaikin's own award for the Living's production of Man is Man is omitted from Tytell's index, it seems to be a less reliable source than Blumenthal's detailed chronology of Chaikin's work.
Theatre Communications Group occupies a crucial space between professional arts and academia, publishing books on contemporary drama and theatre, as well as a monthly magazine for both readerships called *American Theatre*. While Schechner has contributed articles to the latter, none of his books has been published by TCG. Schechner has also served as an advisory editor for *Performing Arts Journal* and as co-editor with Brooks Mcnamara of PAJ's Performance Studies series. As of mid-1997, Schechner was currently the Editor of *The Drama Review*, the *Journal of Performance Studies*, the General Editor of Routledge's "Worlds of Performance" series, and Advisory Editor for *Asian Performance Journal* and *Journal of Ritual Studies* (N.Y.U. www). These editorial positions are linked; for example, "The Worlds of Performance Series is designed to mine the extraordinary riches and diversity of TDR's decades of excellence, bringing back into print important essays, interviews, artists' notes, and photographs" (Schechner, "Worlds" n.p.). This project positions Schechner as the guardian of the four-decade archive of *The Drama Review/TDR*.

In the estimation of American theatre semiotician Marvin Carlson, "[n]o theater theorist has been more instrumental in developing modern performance theory nor in exploring the relationships between practical and theoretical work in theatre research and in social science research than Richard Schechner" (*Performance* 21). Schechner's influence on the study of theatre through his unique performance theory is embodied both in his numerous publications and in achieving degree status for performance studies at his academic home base, New York University. That development began to concretise in the late 1970s, and by the late 1980s, Schechner was calling for the wide-scale reconstruction of theatre studies as performance studies. Forums for this advocacy included *Performing Arts Journal*, *The Drama Review*, his essays in the volume *The End of Humanism*, and keynote

---

14 See Schechner's summary of TCG's limitations in Schechner, PT 151-52n22.
speeches at open academic conferences. Briefly, the institutional articulation of performance is summarised below.

D. Performance as a Bermuda Triangle

"Performance" as an academic subject grew from the nexus created by Schechner's theatre, writings, and teachings in the context of his home university, New York University. Through "Performance" as an academic subject, Schechner's achievements in theatre would be recast in terms of an authority which had never been solely aesthetic but was also always academic. To think of Schechner's early theatre retrospectively, as Innes and Bigsby have done in their histories, is of necessity to rethink it as functioning as a rehearsal for the academic authority which Schechner's public persona would come to assert (which these historians haven't). Schechner's authoritative standing as an academic has developed through the concerted operations of the artistic and scholarly apparatuses which, as early as 1968, he had at his disposal. "Performance" in these terms acts like the "Bermuda Triangle" because of its ravenous appetite to appropriate all of Schechner's activities into a singular enterprise.

Performance as a title for a field of study insinuated itself into existing forums. As guest editor of The Drama Review in 1979, Schechner introduced articles on performances of Southeast Asia as serving to promote "a field theory of performance" ("Toward" n.p.). Such a theory promised "connections between the 'ritual process' and the performance process -- between what goes on in non-ordinary life experience and art" as well as the phases of any performance process in relation to its "reintegration into ordinary living" (n.p.). By 1977, the subject areas of the emergent performance studies field were articulated within N.Y.U.'s Graduate Drama Department in its promotional material; for instance, "performance theory" was the course title of one of six areas of study offered by a newly installed M.A./Ph.D. program. By 1980, the department was offering postgraduate research opportunities
as "A New Approach to Performance Studies" with course topics identical to those advertised in 1977. Thus, the late 1970s appear to mark the formal emergence of Performance Studies as a degree-granting institutional formation.

The faculty identified first in the Drama Department and later in Performance Studies includes Theodore Hoffman, Michael Kirby, Brooks McNamara, and Richard Schechner. Performance Studies as an institutional formation seemed to grow from an active network of collaboration which spanned years. For instance, Hoffman had joined Robert Corrigan in planning N.Y.U.'s Tisch School of the Arts which later housed Performance Studies (McNamara 11; PD 2) as well as serving on The Drama Review's editorial boards both at Tulane and at N.Y.U. and as Theatre Communications Group's first chair when it was established by the Ford Foundation in 1961 (PD 24-25). As a consequence of these roles, Hoffman was a leader in asking, "whether universities can sponsor innovation" in arts scholarship, training, and production (31). If Hoffman was a generation more senior than Schechner, Kirby and McNamara were colleagues of the same generation. By 1965, Kirby's book on happenings "seems to have done what Esslin had done for the Theater of the Absurd - give it a coherent and genetically deducted theory" relating them to futurism, constructivism, dadaism, and surrealism (Szilassy 64). In years to come, Kirby collaborated with Schechner on TPG productions, acted with The Wooster Group, and edited The Drama Review during the 1970s when Schechner travelled and directed theatre most continually. Brooks McNamara has written on contemporary stage design with reference to Schechner's environmental theatre, as well as on

---

15 An advertisement in The Drama Review 21.4 published in December 1977 announces "courses in six areas" under the banner "A New Development in M.A. and Ph.D. programs." The list includes "Contemporary Performance" represented by an upcoming course on Paratheatre; "Performance Theory" and "Popular Performance" which "reinforces the non-literary orientation of the department." By September 1980, however, The Drama Review is advertising "A New Approach to Performance Studies" which "offers masters and doctoral research exclusively" in precisely the six areas offered three years previously by the graduate Drama Department (TDR 24.3, n.p.).
popular entertainments like medicine shows, serving as co-editor alongside Schechner of the PAJ series established in the early 1980s and acting as the director of the Shubert family archive. Given that the formal establishment of Performance Studies incorporated existing relations of collegiality and expertise, its primacy may be considered more symbolic than material. In 1986, Phillip Zarrilli would write,

When New York University recently rechristened its Graduate Drama Program as the “Graduate Department of Performance Studies,” it signaled that something was afoot. This move from ‘drama’ to ‘performance’ gave institutional and programmatic recognition to the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of both the practice of performance and the theoretically concerned study of performance. (“Part I” 372)

The question posed for the emergent performance project embracing Schechner’s range of productions regards the grounds for and the merits of such “institutional and programmatic recognition” which a new reading of Schechner’s corpus aims to generate and guide.

Clearly performance studies has grown far beyond the domain of Schechner’s specific interests in ritual and environmental theatre. According to N.Y.U.’s current web site,

The performance studies curriculum covers a full range of performance, from theatre and dance to ritual and popular entertainment. Courses in methodology and theory are complemented by offerings in specialized areas. A wide spectrum of performance—for example, postmodern performance, circus, kathakali, Broadway, festival, ballet, shamanism—are documented using fieldwork, interviews, and archival research and are analyzed from a variety of perspectives. The program is both intercultural and interdisciplinary, drawing on the arts, humanities, and social sciences, and critical theory.

Areas of concentration include: contemporary performance, dance, movement analysis, folk and popular performance, postcolonial theory, feminist and queer theory, and performance theory. Performance studies training can lead to careers in teaching, research, theatre and performance reviewing and scholarship, writing, editing, arts administration, and management of performing arts collections.
Students may serve on the editorial staffs of *TDR: the journal of performance studies*, *Women & Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory*, which are produced within the Department of Performance Studies. The department also operates the Shubert Archive. (N.Y.U. www)

Northwestern University followed N.Y.U.'s adoption of Performance Studies as a legitimate formation, and by 1995 Joseph Roach was referring to Tulane, NYU, and Northwestern as "the Bermuda Triangle of Performance Studies" (Worthen, "Texts" 35). Since its institution in universities, the phrase "performance studies" now describes both the content of an international academic journal, *TDR*, and the content of the "Worlds of Performance" series produced by the publishing house, Routledge. In Britain, it appears to have been adopted to describe modules within theatre studies and courses of theatre and performance studies. Whereas Schechner proposed performance studies in the interstice of theatre and anthropology, its diffusion tends towards a less disciplined conception of cultural studies no longer rooted to anthropological discourse per se and functioning without the integrated Marxist basis associated with British cultural studies. The performance project I propose aims to restore to the increasing diffusion of performance in all its interpretations a particular history as regards the contributions of Richard Schechner to its conception.

Of particular import for the institutionalisation by Schechner among others of a distinctive paradigm for performance studies is its critique of the adequacy of theatre studies. Prior to the late 1980s, the arguments for a renovated study of theatres were secreted within performance theory itself. Since its legitimation on the institutional level -- as distinct from, although contingent upon, the practice of performance studies housed in various academic departments -- the institutionality of performance studies introduces an important and amplifying "third" term. That third, institutional term, and Schechner's bold advocacy of it, imposes its own possibilities and preferences on publishing and teaching practices. It looms over and conditions
the theatre practice/writing interplay already embedded in Schechner’s work in theory and in theatre. In light of the institutionality now achieved by Schechnerian performance, it becomes impossible to sustain readings of Schechner’s theatre without attending both to the content of his performance theory and its new institutional context.

The effects of the advocated paradigm may thereby extend beyond the influence exercised earlier through the notable forum, The Drama Review. The problem of the performance project centres on theatre’s ambiguous standing within it. Theatre is a clearly visible priority in the earliest phase of Schechner’s career, documented from mid 1960s through the 1970s, when Schechner worked with the Free Southern Theater, the New Orleans and Performance Groups. When Schechner left TPG in 1980, his writings focused on performance theory and expanding his working definition of the key term. Substituting theatricality for theatre was a first step. From its designation as a “node” on a broad spectrum of performance activities, theatre’s characteristics and its terms are diffused across fields of social activity and enterprise. Theatre becomes eclipsed by “performance” as the latter is theorised by Schechner’s exploration of the ritual theory of art’s efficacious relation to life.

The bundle of performance genres and instances is very different than ‘as’ performance. ‘As’ performance is a way of studying the world. Everything and anything can be studied ‘as’ performance. Just as everything, absolutely everything, can be studied ‘as’ physics, chemistry, law, medicine—or any other discipline of study whatsoever. For what the ‘as’ says is that the object of study will be regarded ‘from the perspective of, in terms of the discipline of study. (Schechner Draft, n.p.)

When performance is regarded not as an event but as a mode of analysis, however, theatre as a conventionally structured occasion, as crafted art, is occluded.

Yet Schechner’s own relation to his theatre remains central to the performance project. Even when it is minimised in his performance theory, theatre
endures as Schechner's privileged focus. In a most recent, millennial-minded comment, Schechner writes in TDR:

I know TDR is a performance journal, that performance is a lot more than theatre, and so on. Still, if the truth be known, my heart pumps theatre blood. There is nothing (yes, I know about food, sleep, and sex) that engages me more totally, more intensely, than rehearsing. And nothing thrills me more than a performance I have helped bring to life. ("Theatre" 5)

Sensing performance's success (at least locally, in his domains of production) at subsuming something specifically theatrical into its overarching umbrella, Schechner has recently stressed his own first and final commitment. But what of the other theatres that have been swamped within this newly broadened discursive matrix? What forums exist for their reclamation and specific defence or celebration? Since Schechner concluded a racially and ethnically diverse keynote panel at the 1992 ATHE convention with his call to turn theatre into performance studies, there has been a sense that marginal theatres, struggling for financial and symbolic recognition of their achievements as artists and theatre labourers, are undermined by Schechner's discourse on performance (see Dolan "Geographies"). Understanding how Richard Schechner has pioneered performance may help artists and academics respond to the sense of unease produced by an institutionally privileged discourse like Schechnerian performance.

If the intercultural and interdisciplinary performance Schechner now promulgates both as a substantive (e.g. as genre) and as a mode (e.g. as a perspective) troubles theatre's discursive positioning, and yet Schechner seems to remain as an acknowledged "man of theatre," a certain paradox begs for resolution. I suggest that tracing the interplay between Schechner's creative authorship and academic authority explains the paradoxical eclipse and enduring centrality of theatre in the work of Richard Schechner. The terms, theatre, theory, and paradigm serve to identify the clusters of privileged activity, which in turn emerge for a time as the dominant pursuit within the performance project. Yet the project remains what, in
computer jargon, might be called a "multitasking environment." This feature of the performance project explains in part why Schechner's work in its totality has not been critiqued; because its more diffuse endeavours are not associated with a single undertaking. By reframing his work in theatre, theory, and paradigm production as a coherent project, I aim to render his productions across domains susceptible to new readings which interconnect them. The new readings I offer here presuppose that each cluster's productivity is authorised to some extent by the cultural and symbolic capital accruing from the other activities. In other words, in the functioning of the performance project, success in one domain has enhanced access or prospective success in other domains.

Success has this effect because it produces capital which can circulate; "[t]he kinds of capital," according to sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's description, "are powers which define the chances of profit in a given field" (Language 230). Symbolic capital is the accumulation and deployment of "a certain claim to symbolic authority as the socially recognized power to impose a certain vision of the social world" (106), and cultural capital consists of, in John B. Thompson's words, "knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions" (14). Schechner himself acknowledges the capital involved in his work when he describes as "properties" — the name, the Garage, the material copyrighted by the Group, the reputation of the work — which he risked losing if he had left The Performance Group in 1970 when a serious schism caused him to consider leaving (ET 207). The performance project deals in symbolic and cultural capital, generating, circulating, and deploying capital in order to sustain a productive mode working across media and attached to Schechner as its "author." In its cultural and intellectual economy, the exchanges within and on behalf of this performance project deal with a capital associated with academic authority. I suggest that this academic authority, and consequently its ratification on the institutional level as a study paradigm, can be assessed for its merit and values through the reconception of
Schechner's performance project as constituted by a series of authored activities clustered in a complex ecology of meaning, value, and benefit.

Schechner's writing provokes a number of questions which may be explained through applying a conception of authority's circulation in a complex ecology in which symbolic and material wealth intersect. For instance, why is it that, in setting out to learn about Schechner's discoveries as a theatre director, his reader is so often diverted to an ethnological description of a distant sacred ritual? Similarly, why when reading about an initiation ritual Schechner has observed in another cultural setting is the reader directed to consider his strategies for staging an avant-gardist American play situated thousands of miles away? The observation that Schechner holds to a ritual theory of art as described in Chapter 1.3 above does not explain this complex rhetorical interplay; because the interplay emerges not from a general doctrinal commitment but from a functional exchange between his creative authorial position and his academically authorised position. If the legitimacy of any one mode of production derives to some, hitherto unanalysed, extent from the authority transferred or borrowed from another mode, then a principle of the transfer of cultural and/or symbolic capital would seem to structure the possibilities apprehended through and exploited by the performance project. If the transfer of such capital does organise Schechner's work, it no longer makes sense to read his writings as if theatre, theory, and their institutional production and reproduction individually and in tandem are not all always at stake. It also may explain why Schechner's efforts have shifted. For example, during a period of crisis in late 1969, Schechner wrote in his diary, "When I left TDR, I wanted to devote myself to theater and writing. I have not done so. I am devoting myself to caretaking and some patchwork thinking. I have failed" (ET 207). Failure was tantamount to his feeling that running a theatre without an internal infrastructure was "like running a grocery store. Always something to do – very often this something is not creative" (208). Clearly, writing and theatre directing promised creative rewards that producing could not match. Nevertheless, it took a further two
years before "the Group was restructured and five Group members elected to the board of directors" (207). There must have been some benefit accruing from the responsibilities Schechner shouldered, and I will suggest that the benefits related to power and control. Authority is the gain Schechner has sought to secure in all his activities.

I believe that this principle of the transfer of capital is a feature of Schechner's career that has already been discerned by observers reflecting on Schechner's productivity from three different perspectives. One observer is a very partial one, actor/author William Hunter Shephard, who appeared in Dionysus in 69; the other is an esteemed and prolific theatre and cultural critic, who wrote a number of essays on performance theatre projects (which he referred to within the broader category of the New Theatre). The third is an academic colleague. In theorising the mechanisms by which Dionysus in 69 was staged in his recent documentary account, Shephard recalls how Schechner's directorial status was underpinned in the eyes of his actor(s) by his academic status:

Faced with exposing our performance strategy to outside observers, Schechner's role as Director became increasingly important as a mediating factor between the young, untried talents of the Group and the critical eye of sophisticated New York theatre audiences. We couldn't escape the realization that we were newcomers to the New York theatrical avant-garde; we were upstarts in an artistic community whose more well-known practitioners, such as Joseph Chaikin and the Open Theatre, were firmly established in the cultural milieu. However, Schechner was our ace in the hole. (133)

Why would such esteem be laid to Schechner, who at that time was still a relatively inexperienced theatre director newly testing methods of rehearsal and devising which he had just gleaned from a three week workshop the previous autumn with Jerzy Grotowski (ET 256)? The answer addresses Schechner's institutional position; in Shephard's estimation,

[Schechner's] credibility as editor of TDR lent an air of respectability and promise to our undertaking, but more
importantly we relied upon him to effect the transition of our fledgling efforts into the mature world of artistic enterprise. In a very real sense we needed Schechner’s reputation and promotional ability to give initial validity to our efforts in the context of what we referred to as ‘the real world,’ or the social and cultural establishment of the day. (133)

Shephard’s aspirations were not disappointed and the production “catapulted [The Performance Group] into a position of national and international notoriety in a very brief space of time” (186). The notoriety brought audiences, the audiences made bookings, and the bookings generated much-needed revenue for the fledgling company. Shephard was sure that Richard was largely responsible for the widespread visibility of our work; [he] remembered thinking [...] that if anyone could successfully promote experimental theatre Richard could. He had just the right amount of guts, audacity, showmanship, and shrewdness to succeed where more conservative, cautious producers would have failed;

“and,” Shephard added, “he was also editor of TDR” (186). We know that during his years leading TPG, Schechner’s role in the journal fluctuated from chief to guest editor, to reader. Yet we also know in retrospect that through his periodic editorship of The Drama Review, Schechner’s access to, if not control over, a significant (but diminishing) forum of theatre research has been guaranteed.16 In addition, if TPG’s own successes over Schechner’s twelve years of leadership are germane to the founding argument by Hoffman and Corrigan that the Tisch School should set a new standard for the integration of scholarship and arts practice, Schechner’s double-edged achievements prove very valuable indeed.

Furthermore, the prestige attaching to a research-active academic was not the sole cultural or symbolic capital to serve The Performance Group. Schechner was aware from early in his career of the broader social system from which his work grew

16 Subscriptions to TDR were at their peak in 1968, and by 1994 reached an all-time low at one quarter the peak level (Schechner, “I”).
and against which it (re)acted. Contemporary theatre critic John Lahr situates Schechner's early expertise at capitalising on *Dionysus in 69* in terms of the institutionality of neo-avant-gardism. Writing in 1970, Lahr contrasted the New York neo-avant-garde with pre-war movements, observing:

> Where once the revolutionary experiment was disdained by the Establishment, in a 'liberalized' America it has become the only thing worth supporting. The National Council for the Arts gives over $100,000 a year for experimental theatre; the Rockefeller Foundation awards grants to 'new playwrights', most of whom necessarily emerge from the Underground. The avant-garde, far from being the anathema which gives danger (and integrity) to its enterprise, has become important cultural *bric-à-brac*. [...] The Underground life-style, once intended to be a shocking fist in the face of the Establishment, is now predictable because of publicity. [...] For a decade, the Underground life-style was measured against the Establishment. But the Underground battle for artistic liberation has been won, in part, by the Establishment. (78-79)

By deeming as "shrewd" Schechner's strategy with regard to profit, Lahr equivocates on the question of such institutionalisation of experimental art. According to Peter Bürger, the Establishment's ratification of Underground experiments would constitute "a false sublation of autonomous art" into the praxis of life, testifying that while the "intentions of the historical avant-garde are being realized [in late capitalist society] the result has been a disvalue" (54). For Lahr, however, the benefits of the partnership between dominant and minority cultures seem readily apparent. A bank loan based on Schechner's professorial salary funded the lease on the Performing Garage until box office revenue could repay the loan (ET 257), and the branding of TPG and *Dionysus* promised to give the Group a profile beyond its immediate audiences.

Richard Schechner's Performance Group [...] is not only raising an alternative Underground theatre, but is capitalizing on the system to establish an economic structure which will allow the experiment to continue without the blessings of the Establishment. Schechner is marketing *Dionysus in 69* like Wheaties -- a book is to be published [which Schechner edited], a film has already been made. The difference is that the profit is
not to be taken out of the theatre, but returned to it, not only ensuring salaries, but sustaining the potential to continue experimental work without financial pressure. (82-83)

Such self-sufficiency was not, in the end, sustainable; but Lahr aptly praised Schechner for an intelligent, if cynical, strategy; for truly, "[t]hose who deny the system only hamper their ability to function effectively against it" (83). This ability to turn symbolic and financial gain into sustainable growth may as aptly describe Schechner's success in launching with Hoffman, Kirby, and McNamara, Performance Studies in the place of N.Y.U.'s Graduate Drama Program.

Then associate Theodore Hoffman praises Schechner's savoir-faire in theatre. Perhaps with a measure of irony, Hoffman identifies the reflexive institutional strategies organising Schechner's career. Indeed, the following statement by Hoffman risks reducing Schechner's authorial position as a theatre maker solely to their terms, but what the above outline of Schechner's domains of production makes clear is their enduring relevance. Hoffman observes:

[w]hat is most significant about [Schechner's] early career is his mastery of the economic resources of art without formal submission to its Establishment. He has commandeered university resources, elicited foundation and government support, provoked media attention that makes box office, even used a small-businessman's loan to build his theatre, while advertising his aim to destroy his benefactors (qtd. in Shephard 187).

If anything, the cultural formations Schechner has aimed to annihilate have been the commercial stage (and its pale reproduction in the literary-based American repertory and regional theatres) and, more recently, their site of study in academic Drama and Theatre Studies departments. At the same time that Schechner has promoted these oppositional stands, he has succeeded in producing theatre and theory which have contributed to discourses in and around the performing arts in their own, less

17 Citation originally from Theodore Hoffman, "Grotowski and Schechner: The Servitudes of Freedom," Art in America (March-April 1871) 81.
negative, terms. It is Schechner's complex institutional positioning both within and against dominant forms that the present study seeks to interrogate.

The observations cited above, by a collaborating artist, a popular contemporary theatre critic, and an esteemed colleague, all suggest the ways in which Schechner's work has used cultural assets (like prestige and professional position) to fuel experiments. One outcome of those experiments has been that in each, Schechner's position as author or authority has been confirmed; such confirmation sustains Schechner's position in a heterogeneous field of production so that the experiments can continue. The breaks in his career -- at the end of TPG in 1980, the resumption of general editorship of TDR in 1986 -- are subsumed within a narrative that sees Schechner moving from theatre, to theory, to institutional activism. In the course of these movements, each privileged focus seems to build upon the successes in the prior phase and capitalises upon them. As a mode of development, it suggests the image of the currency speculator who encashes currency from one nation in an advantageous exchange so as to import his gains into a domain where a different currency is sovereign. The analogy conjures an image of a cunning tourist, one who knows the exchange rates, and how to profit by them. Such a tourist realises that any exchange of currency is not barter, but a matter of buying or a selling. In those transactions, one party always profits at the expense of the other.

Tracking an itinerary can develop the image of a voyager across distinct domains of symbolic currency. Every itinerary depends on a calendar and it is possible to propose loose dates for the privileged phases. For example, if we read the growing democracy within TPG negotiated in 1972 after Schechner's return from his first Fulbright year in India as the beginning of the Wooster Group, which led to Elizabeth LeCompte directing Spalding Gray's early self-explorations in the trilogy Three Places in Rhode Island (1975-78), the theatre phase of the performance project lasts for the first half of TPG's lifespan, through the production of The Tooth of Crime in 1973. Although Schechner remained active as a theatre director, few of his
productions since *Tooth* have occupied him as a theatre writer. (The exception is *The Balcony* (1979), the account of which serves as Schechner's obituary for the Group.) Between Schechner's committed aesthetic orientation favouring participation, ritual, and the blending of imaginative and everyday realities and his paternal temperament (ET 157, 205, 208, 257, 299), TPG participants grew dissatisfied. They sought opportunities to work "consciously and collaboratively" first with Schechner (267) and later, without him, within The Performance Group (PC 42; Savran, *Breaking* 3-4). The erosion of Schechner's role as a leader within TPG occurred in two stages. First, he lost sole control of the company's directorship with a corporate restructuring in 1972 which enfranchised other Group members. Subsequently, the work generated under the directorship of Elizabeth LeCompte beginning in 1974 gained momentum. Schechner finally left the company in LeCompte's control in 1980. "People want 'autonomy' and their own 'artistic identities,'" he wrote in 1976 while TPG was touring India with *Mother Courage.* "They don't want to be known as 'members of Richard Schechner's Performance Group.' At the same time I want my leadership acknowledged within the Group" (PC 42). Incoming artistic director Elizabeth LeCompte described this transition as a slow appropriation: "I slowly ate away from within, until Richard was left with just the shell. And I had all the core working for me, invisibly, in the middle" (qtd. in Savran, *Breaking* 157).

Schechner's gradual deposition from The Performing Group offers at least part of the explanation for his return to academia in full-time pursuit of his aesthetic/intellectual agenda, since his effective redundancy at The Garage coincided with his announcement to "turn" his "attention [...] from actually making performances to the writing of 'performance theory'" (PC 120; BTA 149). Clearly, Schechner's brand of theatre and of theorising were at odds, since he "remember[s] from The Performance Group a fiery resistance to performance theory" ("Ways" 8). However, I do not think we should underestimate the implications that would flow
from Schechner's blunt declaration in the Foreword to the first edition of Environmenta l Theatre: "I reject aesthetics" (vii). I suggest that the earliest, theatre-oriented phase of the performance project draws to a close with the publishing of this statement. The theory phase, which depended on the first of Schechner's extended visits to India for its fuel, can then be judged to run from 1973 through the publication of Between Theater and Anthropology in 1985. After its publication, Schechner's theoretical production slows and he begins a more concentrated advocacy of performance studies as the necessary form for Theatre Studies at the millennium. TDR, which he again edits beginning in 1986, becomes one of several forums for this advocacy. This institutional phase continues to the present. As Schechner has signalled his achievements for Performance Studies in an institutional frame, he has enjoyed the patron's privilege of handing over some of his authority to other, younger leaders. This functions less as a relinquishing of power than its confirmation. As his power through "performance" has been confirmed, Schechner has publicly reaffirmed his passion for theatre, as defined in more conventional terms. "I know TDR is a performance journal, that performance is a lot more than theatre, and so on. Still, if the truth be known, my heart pumps theatre blood. There is nothing (yes, I know about food, sleep, and sex) that engages me more totally, more intensely, than rehearsing" ("Theatre" 5). It's difficult to know how to assess this realisation in light of Schechner's early persistent refusal of aesthetics.

Performance Studies now hosts annual academic conferences which TDR documents. To encourage students of performance beyond the "Bermuda triangle" of its three key university sites, the journal's student essay competition now offers both publication of the winning essay and a profile of the department where the winner studies. It's a friendly form of patronage, but no less persuasive in an academic climate where publishing is the one alternative to professional perishing. Yet his recent TDR Comment reaffirming theatre's centrality and his recent production with Lisa Wolford of the Grotowski Sourcebook for Routledge's Worlds of
Performance series suggest that more and more theatre occupies Schechner’s attention. If theatre is re-emerging as a privileged focus for Schechner, it does so in the context of a broad-based and internationally recognised career spanning theatre and academia, performance, and publishing. However that project comes to be valued, it should be clear that Christopher Bigsby’s narrow and closed conception of countercultural performance theatre is insufficient to apprehend the depth and the breadth of Schechner’s research. In its place, a three-term performance project, unfolding over decades of work moving from theatre into performance theory and institutional activism, is better equipped to apprehend the full scope of Schechner’s work.

Ultimately, however, this developmental narrative based on three phases is less important to me than its contemporary effects. In my conclusion, I will suggest that insofar as the circulation of cultural and symbolic capital among the project’s clusters includes institutions, it is also a transfer of authority that bears directly on a central concern of theories of avant-gardism. After considering key moments in Schechner’s theory and institutional advocacy, I will ask: Is this avant-gardist theatre director, who self-consciously worked both within and against esteemed institutions, acting as an neo-avant-gardist artist, even in his broader-based enterprise, the performance project? To address the question, I will rely on the theory of neo-avant-gardism recently published by visual art critic Hal Foster. My final question wagers that the authority accruing around Schechner’s status as an acknowledged, esteemed, and often cited (and invited) expert on intercultural performance, can be resituated as authorial production within a creative neo-avant-garde. Attempting to reframe academic production in theory and at the institutional level as authored production tests the boundaries separating literary and non-fictional writing. The position I will defend is that creative and scholarly productions differ in epistemological and in ethical terms; and that, furthermore, the avant-gardism of Schechner’s performance project derives from its failure to produce reliable
knowledge. In the next chapter, the relation and distinction between authorship and authority will be examined in relation to the problematic of institutionality as it is raised by Schechnerian performance.

The present goal is more moderate. In the next subchapter, I consider production cases in which Schechner’s theatre praxis and his interest in anthropological theory intersect. I am interested in the way in which anthropological discourse comes to play a central role in how Schechner conceives of the theatre he makes. I will argue that Schechner’s creative authorship of theatre is intimately connected with his growing authority as an anthropological academic. As a result, the interplay between his performance theory and his theatre work should emerge with some salience. Thereby, I enact the dialectical commitment to “the art of thinking the coincidence of distinctions and connections” (Bhaskar, Dialectic 180).
2. Thinking Through Theory in the Theatre

I have hypothesised that Schechner's theatre and theory are united in a singular performance project realising itself through ratification in an institutional dimension, in degrees for performance studies. This understanding depends upon a view of Schechner's theatre and theory that relates them dialectically, as distinct and as connected. In the descriptions below I will critically consider several illustrations when theatre and theory inform and condition each other. I will be talking about the *mise en scène* for two of Schechner's stage productions, one of which falls within and the other just beyond the theatre phase of the performance project. In each case, I will be relying on Patrice Pavis's conception of the *mise en scène* as "the confrontation of all signifying systems." Pavis regards the *mise en scène* as "an object of knowledge, a network of associations or relationships uniting the different stage materials into signifying systems, created both by production (the actors, the director, the stage in general) and reception (the spectators)." Its value as an object of knowledge lies in its ability to generate an "understanding, as a spectator, of the system elaborated by those responsible for the production" (Crossroads 25). While certain experiences of reception are available through published accounts, I will be building into my descriptions of the *mise en scène* my own reception of the existing artefacts of performance. My reception occurs in the context of an institutionalised performance studies now bidding, at least according to Richard Schechner, for the ground currently occupied by an interdisciplinary theatre studies. My own agenda, which seeks to understand Schechner's peculiar authority on the status of theatre and its study, informs what Pavis would call my reconstruction.

Through these interpretative descriptions, I am tracking the development of the relative value accorded to theatre and to anthropological theory as Schechner's project emerges. "I can't draw all this material into a neat bundle because I don't have a theory that can handle it" was his exasperated or enthusiastic observation in
the early 1970s (ET 17), but by the mid 1980s, Schechner was anticipating that the “theory explaining all this will come from theatre specialists or from social scientists learned in theatre” (PC 211). Clearly, Schechner’s confidence in the viability of the performance project he pioneered was growing. What is less evident, but implied, is Schechner’s conviction that practitioners from theatre and the social sciences would indeed subscribe to the framework for performance studies he was proposing. This would be essential if their work were to apply itself to generating explanations for “all this,” as Schechner affirms.

Theatre’s place in Schechner’s theory is rewritten by the performance project: from the arena where Schechner sought to develop, exercise, and confirm his artistic authority, theatre becomes the place he rehearses his academic authority. Early in his theatre, theory is a prop supporting his aesthetic experimentation. Anthropological discourse functions as a repository for ideas about how to organise interactions in rehearsal and performance. Subsequently, theory becomes a domain in which the frustrations of collaboration can be resolved in favour of a sovereign authorial voice. At this point, Schechner succeeds in his writing where the variability of theatre semiosis defies his authorial control. Finally, theory becomes a substitute for theatre. At this point, Schechner becomes an author of the broader performance project, accredited by his theatre credentials, but competing for advantage within different symbolic economies.
A. Authority in *Dionysus in 69*

The simplest relation of anthropological theory and theatre in the work of Richard Schechner is apprehended in his use of the Asmat rebirthing ritual in rehearsing with the nascent Performance Group and devising the performance score for *Dionysus in 69*. In an improvised session organised to address the violence William Hunter Shephard had unleashed in a prior rehearsal, in which an actress was injured, Schechner invited the group of actors to “sacrifice” Shephard and his improvisation partner (see also Shephard 38-39). “You must sacrifice your best couple, the finest people in your village,” Schechner recounts saying. “You must sacrifice them if you are to live. You must sing and dance them to death” (PD 223). A circle of chairs served to enclose the sacrificial victims, and “a bongo drum, flute, bugle, some bells, and a tambourine” were used to make a sound underpinning the chants of the other actors (223-24). Four of the thirteen people “stood side to side, arms locked and in a tight circle, doing a mimetic dance of death, suffering symbolically the death Bill and Margaret were to experience.” “Although we had not heard Schechner’s instructions to the rest of the group,” Shephard reports that he “knew that [Margaret] was dying a symbolic death, surrendering to the will of the others” (40). After nearly an hour, both actors had mimetically died. “A certain justice had been done for the night before. Georgie [who had been injured and was sitting on the side] was in tears” (PD 224). Schechner then asked his actors to revive the sacrificed couple, “so that they can dance the triumph ceremony” (224); when Margaret was roused and Shephard remained unmoving, Schechner took his pulse before allowing the exercise to continue. In all, it lasted over two hours. At the end, the injured actress embraced Shephard, “and [he] truly felt as though [he] had undergone a process of transformation which had reunited [him] with the rest of the workshop” (Shephard 41).
Schechner interprets this experience in relation to avant-garde theatre and to primitive ritual. "The 'double' that Artaud speaks of so knowingly in relation to the theatre was there; the 'confrontation' that Grotowski insists is at the heart of performing was there" (PD 224). He measures its ritual force in terms of "its intensity, its communal nature, its reality" (225). "It was real and unreal, authentic and acted out" (224); "[i]t was the beginning of research into a theatre art for our culture and time; something which at its very base is simply different from the theatre of plays" (225). He then describes a "similar rebirth ritual" of the Asmat tribe in Papua New Guinea. His knowledge of the rebirthing ritual was based on the description and photographs contained in a book called *The Headhunters of Papua* published in 1963 by Tony Saulnier (PD 225 fn5). The human birth canal through which an adult is passed (225) was adopted in *Dionysus in 69* to announce Dionysus's arrival in Thebes and, inversely, to signal Pentheus's slaying. Saulnier was not an ethnographer present at the ritual for purposes of study, but rather a photographer for the popular French magazine, *Paris-Match*. When his team failed to get clean photographs of the ceremony they had witnessed, the Asmats restaged the ceremony with the same intensity. It is this "ability to repeat sacred ceremonies, consciously to re-enact them" which starts Schechner thinking about the analogy between theatre and ritual. "[i]s there any difference between ritual ceremonies and fine acting?" he asks (226). Already, however, Schechner is advancing "a tentative conclusion [...] that the structure of performance is universal; that the differences between 'ritual' and 'theatre' are of social function, not of performance credibility or repeatability" (227). The desire to switch focus from the interpersonal and aesthetic dynamics of the rehearsal room to the scholarly questions about the structural relations of theatre to ritual is a unique and persistent feature of Schechner's work in and on theatre.

Before Schechner had founded The Performance Group, he had authored six axioms which provided the basis for his experiments in environmental theatre. These
axioms collate his understandings and influences as well as providing a programme for his own artistic actions. The axioms are:

1. The theatrical event is a set of related transactions;
2. All the space is used for the performance;
3. The theatrical event can take place either in a totally transformed space or in 'found space';
4. Focus is flexible and variable;
5. All production elements speak their own language;
6. The text need be neither the starting point nor the goal of a production. There may be no verbal text at all. (ET xix-li)

Schechner has published these axioms four times: in The Drama Review in 1967; in his essay collection Public Domain in 1969, and in both the 1973 and the 1994 editions of Environmental Theater. They are important because they give the grounds for Schechner's "principle of whole design" which Schechner discerns in the "theatricalism" of Grotowski and Artaud, who according to Schechner "strive for means to penetrate or surpass the masks of daily life in order to reveal the essential man" (ET 126). According to Brooks McNamara, Schechner's environmental theatre theory aimed to rework theatre authorship through consolidating changes in scenography and actor training (9). While the emphasis on found spaces, flexible focus, and the de-emphasis on verbal text all pertain to the traits Schechner has observed in ritual performances, these axioms for environmental theatre do not clearly delineate a role for participating, rather than passive, audiences. In practice, when Schechner combined these commitments with his mission to invoke and provoke audience participation in staging an updated version of The Bacchae, certain contradictions arose. Schechner wanted to push theatrical conventions to the point that theatre "breaks down and becomes a social event" (ET 40) but the pressure to create inclusive transactions involving audiences actively undermined the ability of Dionysus in 69 to fulfil its intention as a fable and "to warn the New Left of its leaders" (qtd. in Brecht, Dionysus 167). Briefly, I will consider these tensions.

The principle of whole design, the framework articulated as environmental theatre theory, and the psychophysical regime adapted from Jerzy Grotowski
combined to create the context and the grounds for making Dionysus in 69. The matrix they formed had set the parameters, not so much for what was possible to say or do, but for how whatever was said or done was used in the theatre process. The particular compaction of art and life produced in the process generated a ravenous appetite for revelation, of intimate details as much as of genitals. Aiming to stage a "primary reality" consisting of dramatic character and actor in confrontation and converging, Schechner describes as "spiritual nakedness" the psychological quality he sought to engender in mixing theatricalist and naturalist impulses (ET 126). Using actors' personal histories and encouraging genuine interpersonal exchanges was one way to make the theatre/ritual analogy into a practical methodology. Schechner's ideal of participatory/initiatory theatre was realised each time "something 'real'" happened in the course of a performance.

Yet, in practice, the specific content or direction of these real events and revelations was systematically neutralised within the parameters which Schechner, ultimately, adjusted. What was revealed was unlikely to make much difference either to the play's outcome or the audience's understanding. Part of this was due to Schechner's desire for actors and audiences to pursue engagement for its own sake. Whereas before rehearsals, Schechner had asked "Can we cope with Dionysus' dance and not end up --as Agave did -- with our sons' heads on our dancing sticks?" (PD 228), in performances he was indifferent as to whether spectators joined to assist or obstruct the Dionysian destruction. Although the transformation of Dionysus into another Pentheus is the argument Schechner first sought to stage, affirming indiscriminate participation reproduces the transformation rather than frames it for critical consideration. Such participation can undo the modern day fable Schechner first envisioned.

In conceiving of the audience's involvement, what Schechner had in mind was a conception of initiation he borrowed from the structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, who observed:
There is an asymmetry which is postulated in advance between profane and sacred, faithful and officiating, dead and living, initiated and uninitiated, etc., and the ‘game’ consists in making all the participants pass to the winning side by means of events. (qtd. in PT 59)

In order to make his theatre a game, Schechner maintained that the “themes” of the prepared performance structure could be “set aside so that something else could happen. And just about everything did happen at one time or another -- from a young male model dancing in his jockstrap around the Birth Ritual distributing business cards with his name and phone number, to passionate denunciations of the Vietnam war” (ET 43). Even an actor playing Pentheus leaving with an audience member to make love was recuperated by Schechner: he asked for a volunteer from the audience to play Pentheus and the structured action carried on once a familiar audience member substituted for the actor who had departed. When several Queen’s College students planned and kidnapped Pentheus to save him from the slaying, Schachner was “elated” (PT 57) without realising that the conspiracy and Schechner’s subsequent decision to nominate a spectator to substitute for the missing actor would hurt and anger some performers, who felt manipulated (ET 41).

Schechner was envisioning an “initiatory, participatory game, at once entertaining and fateful” (PT 59). In Dionysus in 69, however, the game was “stacked” since foreknowledge and control remain vested in those who had co-created and knew the predetermined performance structure. For example, during the ecstasy dance, the “audience may participate clothed outside the mats; but they must not come onto the mats unless they are as we are,” that is, naked (ET 116-17). Brecht declared that such rules “destroyed the illusion of participation” and reconfigured it as “fake co-managerial status” (“Dionysus” 164). In the presence of the performers, the audience was subject to “embarrassing challenges” and the mise

---

18 Citation originally from Claude Lévi-Strauss, The Savage Mind (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1966) 32.
en scène "expose[d] the spectators to the physical aggression of the performers" (162). *East Village Other* columnist Lita Eliscu attended an open rehearsal in the spring, 1968, and found herself the object of Pentheus/Shephard's attention during the sequence when he would attempt to meet Dionysus's challenge by seducing a woman from the audience; Eliscu reported that Schechner "gleefully telling [her] how uptight she was" disturbed her interest in the intriguing performance dynamic in which dramatic persona and performer remained equally salient. Her response identifies precisely the patriarchal authority at work in the *mise en scène*.

Uptight? Because I didn't feel like taking on some boy in the middle of the room for no money...? Uptight? Because I knew -- and they all knew -- that they knew what line came next and I didn't? Oh well. What was the play out to prove, then; that audiences still don't want the poor dry bone handed out on the end of a string which remains firmly tied to the director; that people can be ashamed into the correct response of embarrassment...? (qtd. in Shephard 118)

Eliscu has discerned that the asymmetry enacted in the intention of ritually humiliating at least some of the spectators simply reinforces the classical division of theatrical agency between producers/performers and spectators. *New York Times* critic Walter Kerr concurred:

It is only the actors who are liberated in this sort of meeting, and there is something arrogant, condescending, and self-indulgent in that. Clearly they enjoy the unleashing of their own inhibitions. [...] They are free to do what they wish to do. We are only free to do what they wish us to do or invite us to do. That is not engagement. It is surrender. (qtd. in Shephard 156)

---

19 Citation originally from Lita Eliscu, Rev. of *Dionysus in 69* by the Performance Group, *The East Village Other* (28 June 1968) 5, col. 1.

Ethan Mordlen reported that the "title, Dionysus in 69, was not a hope, but a threat. It meant not 'Sexual Liberty Next Year' but 'Destruction Next Year'." It was less, for Mordlen, that TPG had succeeded in communicating Schechner's critique, but rather that TPG "represented the worst aspect of the 'alternative' stage" (259).

With greater affinity to the theatrical project Schechner and The Performance Group were undertaking, Stefan Brecht too refers to the "authoritarian element" of Schechner's mise en scène. Spectators, it seems, were discovering that participation was regulated by an authorised mise en scène, manifest in a defined array of available choices. Stefan Brecht concluded that "the only free reaction and thus the only genuine participation possible is a gesture of refusal to participate" ("Dionysus" 64). In Brecht's estimation, Schechner "directed the Group with a view to controlling the audience [...T]he audience can only be responsive and that only feebly and making a fool of itself" and since the result is the "expression of the objective self-contained experience, prearranged by the producers. It renders spontaneity and authenticity impossible" (162).

Nevertheless, some audience members did accept the participatory roles allotted them, relishing in the opportunities to fraternise with the actors. "With increasing frequency, audiences gawked, talked, or wanted to make out with the performers. Sometimes this was pleasant, but on more than one occasion a nasty situation unfolded in the darkened room" (Schechner qtd. in Shephard 177). "In essence," Shephard summarised, "we [had] extended an open invitation for the audience to use the performance as we used them in our roles as actors. To put it bluntly, we got more than we bargained for" (184). As "audiences became accustomed to moments when they could freely interact with the performers," the performance sequence was altered so as to return control to the Group. For example, the Total Caress, which "depended on an innocence that a long-run play cannot have. And a willingness to participate within the terms of the production that the audiences do not have" (qtd. Schechner in Shephard 178), was replaced by
dance in which half of TPG danced alone while the other half invited audience members to join. In Shephard's estimation this "seemed to serve the performance structure better, maintaining an atmosphere of continuity and suspense" (178).

In Brecht's view, "[t]he choreography of these anonymous couplings" which the moiety dance replaced, "suggests the impersonality of street prostitution. Their intensity, duration, realism (from brief foreplay to orgasm) makes the play a sex show: a play of unsentimental enthusiasm" ("Dionysus" 163) not the risky and provocative social critique Schechner's starting analogy proposed. This alone would have been grounds for reworking the group grope. But it was not the grounds Schechner gave. The changes were made because the Group demanded them, and Schechner "did not enjoy Dionysus in 69 because images I had in my head were not being played out in the theater. Every time a performer would make a suggestion either about the mise-en-scène or about Group structure I read it as an attack on me" (ET 261).

Author of the synthesising theatre theory organising and authorising the production process, Schechner had led the devising and was facilitating the performances. But if Schechner could effectively orchestrate queasy uncertainties during performance, it seems less likely that he was consistently achieving his critical aim of staging The Bacchae as an allegory. Participation, when evoked, was random. What made this tangle of priorities function was the commitment to stimulated authenticity, so that theatre and life would be blurred. For example, the actor playing Dionysus is quoted as saying, "I am acting out my disease, the disease that plagues me. I do not act in Dionysus. Dionysus is my ritual" (in Innes, Avant 180). Over time, the "principle of whole design" enumerated according to environmental theatre theory could not withstand the challenges of diverse audiences and responses they provoked as the performers reconsidered their work. This failure is not of great consequence aesthetically, where visions are often confounded or altered by the challenges of their material manifestation and variable reception. It is,
however, a failure for Schechner's authority as author. "All during the spring of 1969 I felt my authority slipping away, and I did not want to let it go. [...] The arguments for sharing power, gracefully abdicating my omnipotence, were clear and well taken. [...] Somewhere I felt that if I let go, I would go down" (ET 259). The backlash he experienced was linked directly to the performers' growing rejection of audience participation. It seems that for Schechner, theatrical authorship is "a question of agenda" which nevertheless is contaminated by the unintended consequences of an artist's actions. Schechner self-consciously organised his company as a "group" and then resented when group dynamics overtook his own aims. Over the course of Dionysus in 69, Schechner as an author moved from being an inquisitive experimenter in his manifestos into the defensive position of a scorneed authority in regard to his company and its audiences. This movement mirrors the installation of Dionysus as the leader of a social order as repressive and compelling as the polis he destroyed. Actor Pat McDermott sums up the movement in The Bacchae: "What happens is that Dionysus, according to his convenience and popular demand, becomes another Pentheus" (D69 n.p.). I see Schechner as an author in precisely those terms.

Stefan Brecht observed performances periodically through its 13 months of public performance. Brecht's final conclusion about the work was that although the show represented an "exemplary" "breakthrough," Dionysus in 69 remained, "a desperate thrashing about in search of an authenticity that the Group has so far denied itself" (168). Brecht framed the search for authenticity in a way which links to the problem of authorship and the question of agenda. He described the search in terms of "[t]he libertarian liberal" for whom "[f]ear is the authentic content of his idealist action and ambiguity its authentic form" (168). This image of the libertarian liberal appears to attach itself to Richard Schechner, no longer as a sovereign authorial subject, but as subjected to a textual process he could not control which produces him as an imaginary object. The image of the author emerges through the
process Schechner had unleashed. That process laminated onto his aesthetic manifesto the ambivalent anti-authoritarianism read in The Bacchae along with Schechner's implicit libertarian presumptions about a human essence which can be freed from constraint (Audi 628). It produced the image of an artist who seeks to authorise people's freedom, rehearsing politics through theatre. But the fear and ambiguity with which he is tinged run counter to the spirit of experimentation he proposes. Indeed, fear and ambiguity of the sort Brecht has identified are the motors of intolerance, just as the libertarian liberal is, perversely, a coward; bucking the system in the safe knowledge of its enduring regulation, s/he parodies the self-surpassing predicated by Schechner's estimable model, Jerzy Grotowski. As the author of the synthesising theatre theory which authorised the production process, Schechner wound up implicitly positioned by Dionysus in 69 as its narrated object, fearful, ambiguous, and authoritarian.

---

21 In the discourse of political philosophy, libertarianism is the "form of liberalism [which] interprets constraints on liberty as positive acts, (i.e., acts of commission) that prevent people from doing what they otherwise could do" (Audi 628). Implicitly, then, libertarianism installs a reified conception of "human nature" as its ideal. The idealised human nature libertarianism secretes is one which a state apparatus or cultural order might act to constrain. This philosophical conception cements over the cracks between Schechner's pre-production exegesis and his ritualistic theatre praxis.
B. Establishing Authority by Recourse to Anthropology

In Dionysus in 69, the allegorical message of warning the New Left of its leaders was subordinated to Schechner’s strong desires to stage what he called environmental theatre as participatory ritual. The axioms he relied upon created a set of demands for theatre praxis, which in turn created a dilemma: “Playwrights are writing scripts that I for one want to direct,” Schechner observed. “But how can one do ‘finished scripts’ in an environmental theater?” (ET 226). The reason “finished scripts” posed such a problem was that the axioms for Schechner’s environmental theatre depended on creating a theatrical score operating independently from the written text (see axiom six above). Adaptation of existing scripts, confronting them and using them as allegories was one way to make dramas function in the environmental theatre; this was the approach which produced Dionysus in 69 in the tradition of Grotowski’s Akropolis (Grotowski 61-69; Kumiega 59-65). Alternatively, literary and cultural texts could be organised into a pastiche, as Schechner and TPG demonstrated in Commune (Sainer 127-65; ET 300-7 and passim). In the case of a single play by a living writer, Schechner tested two solutions: one was to choose plays like The Marilyn Project by David Gaard and Cops by Terry Fox Curtis in which the theatricality of the performance was firmly inscribed within the dramatic text (Kirby, “Marilyn”; Schechner, “Cops”); the other was to choose plays which allowed for but did not demand theatricalism. In the cases of The Tooth of Crime (1973) and The Balcony (1979), Schechner used directorial and design leverage to extend the sense of role-play and social performance within these dramas. Rehearsals functioned to reinscribe (rather than reproduce) the plays’ preordained areas of certainty. This is typical of the revisionism Amy Green details in concept-driven productions in contemporary American theatre. For example, in “playing with Genet’s Balcony,” as Schechner titled his post-production account, Schechner’s team adjusted existing translations from the French, cross-cast genders, rearranged the
order of the scenes, cut lines, and added a new beginning featuring a live song (BTA 265-66, 270-73). The exercise of such directorial powers assumes the distinction Schechner argued for, between “the craftsmen of words and the craftsmen of action” and that playwrights’ writings “do not inherently carry with them intractable associations of actions” (ET 248). This underlying assumption strips writing of its own performativity, its ability not only to signify but also to enact.

The writer’s words were used, but his authority -- his claim on the intentions of those staging the production - ceased to be regarded as absolute. [...] Productions thus were no longer interpretations. They were recreations, original versions “after” or “based upon” or “using the words/themes of.” Often productions were collages of several texts. Grotowski worked this way; so did the Living, the Open, the Performance Group, and dozens of other groups. In this work of collage -- what Lévi-Strauss calls “bricolage” -- the director was the center, the transmitter, of theatrical creativity: he was the new source. (EH 32)

This theatrical auteurism collided with the aims of a living dramatic author when Schechner staged The Tooth of Crime by Sam Shepard in the early 1970s. The case provides rich grounds for discerning the interplay between Schechner’s theatre and theory. In the discussions which follow, I track how Schechner’s creative authorship and his desire for authority intersect in his practice and theory of theatre.

Despite a legal contract with Shepard which “did not allow us to restructure his text,” Schechner enumerates a number of “definite changes” made by TPG in The Tooth of Crime: four roles were condensed into two making for a cast of six not eight; a song written in the text as sung by one character became a theme song and was sung four times, but never by that character; a decisive entry into the mise en scène by one character was moved from the start of one act to the end of the previous, and the backup rock music described by the script was replaced by integrated rock music played by characters within the mise en scène (PT 74). Changing the music is arguably the most contentious of these choices. It will be considered as indicative of the degree to which Schechner has stretched a playwright’s concept.
According to critical commentary by Lynda Hart,

In addition to the obvious use of rock-and-roll to create an atmosphere of highly charged passion, violence, and driving force, the music is intimately connected to the structure of Shepard's play as point and counterpoint. Shepard uses music in at least seven of his plays, and each time the music serves an intricate, integrated function. As Toby Zinman points out, 'it is not that there is music in the plays, or that it is added as some decorative device, but music seems to inform every aspect of this theatrical environment.' (Sam 50-51)

Schechner granted the intimate relation of music to Shepard's writing, describing the rehearsal process in an essay called "The Writer and The Performance Group" anthologised by Bonnie Marranca in the collection American Dreams: The Imagination of Sam Shepard: "The more we work the more we find that Shepard's words are bound to music, specifically rock music." Nevertheless he did not accept the score prescribed by the playwright. Schechner rejected it on the basis that electric rock music was inappropriate for TPG because "We do not play electrified instruments and do not import outsiders into our productions." Instead of playing rock music, Schechner treated it as a symptom, writing to Shepard "I think we can make the necessary music because I don't think rock is a function of mechanics but of some movement within the human spirit. [...] The problem isn't how to play rock but how to find the cause from which rock springs. Then to play that cause" (162-68). Shepard's response rejected this poetic interpretation, insisting upon the integrity of electrified sounds, "rock progressions from Velvet Underground to The Who" (in Marranca, American 164). By attaching proper names to the envisioned music, Shepard was refusing the metonymic associations Schechner would derive from his symptomatic reading, by describing what the music he imagined would sound like. Schechner was not interested in the sound qualities; he preferred to search for a predicated core he believed the rock music prefigured. Would audiences recognise and similarly respond to the sounds that PG members would
make when they contacted that core? Or would they miss out because the density and appeal of the Velvet Underground and The Who had, in themselves, distinctive and affecting qualities?

Lynda Hart makes the case for attributing a primary efficacy to rock music, rather than regarding it as a symptom subject to substitution. In Hart's estimation, the music in *The Tooth of Crime* has much in common with Bertolt Brecht's conception of the *Verfremdungseffeckt* -- the music is meant to interrupt and comment upon the action of the play. [...] Shepard wanted his music in *The Tooth of Crime* to function as momentary recesses during which the audience could affectively respond to the play's action. (51)

By concentrating on the "cause from which rock springs" Schechner was organising his attention on the performers. What Hart is pointing out is that the music's alienating effect is actually a matter most directed at the audiences. It is their affective responses, not the performers' relation to the roots of rock, which matter most, in Hart's view. In an interview with Kenneth Chubb, Shepard himself explained, "I wanted the music in *The Tooth of Crime* so that you could step out of the play for a minute, every time a song comes, and be brought to an emotional comment on what's taking place in the play" (in Marranca, *American* 201). Hart further explains why Schechner might miss this: "Clearly the effect of such a technique is opposed to Schechner's attempt to annihilate the boundaries between the play and the audience" (51). In this interview, Shepard in effect conceded that the musical score was not as simple as he had represented to Schechner, by commenting on the difficulty for a pre-formed band to relinquish its own style and play so that "the music [could] be used as a kind of sounding-board for the play" (201). Yet, the centrality of music to the dramaturgical aims of the play remains. Rather than standing as symptomatic of a condition attained by the acting company, the music Shepard envisioned was directed at the audience, acting to shape its reception of the play's events. Its effects would have little to do with the actors'
search for the roots of rock because for the audience, it was the phenomenon of live rock music itself that would impact. In searching for the source of rock, Schechner's company risked looking down the wrong end of the telescope, towards their navels, rather than to their audiences.

The trajectories of attention which turn a company from its audience to its own collective and individual interiors appears to structure The Performance Group's approach to Shepard's play. The contest between an established figure and his junior challenger, ranging over gangster, rock, and automobile imagery, is interpreted as "a conflict of idioms" which Schechner likened to ethnographic reports of Eskimo men's song duels (PT 239, 242). One aspect of the song duel Schechner read in The Tooth of Crime is discussed in terms of the prominence of Hindu vocables. Citing Birdwhistell on the interdependency of somatic and linguistic languages, Schechner concluded that The Tooth of Crime is "about performing, and about techniques which TPG has helped to develop" (PT 164). This conclusion derives from a pre-production reading based in and reproducing Schechner's own vested interests. As critical exegesis, it is not wholly persuasive. An alternative reading of Shepard's project is offered by contemporary Ren Frutkin, who stated that "Shepard is engaged in a project of theatrically rescuing the imagination from total theatricalization" (23). Published in 1969, Frutkin's interpretation effectively anticipates Schechner's co-optation of the significance of role-playing in Shepard in order to aggrandise the status of TPG's investigations. Indeed, Frutkin links the process of total theatricalization to Schechner's adoption of Goffman's dramaturgical sociology, several years before Schechner applied himself to Tooth (23). Reading Frutkin's analysis back into and against Schechner's claim of TPG's stake in the theatricalization which Tooth stages does not endorse the claim for co-ownership over the drama, which Schechner sought to inscribe. Instead it helps define a definite clash of interests because it clarifies that in The Performance Group's production, Shepard's critique in dramatic form confronts some of the agents and
processes it implicitly takes as its object. The substitution of folk for electrified rock music becomes a metaphor for the repositioning of investigations into theatricality from the critical tenor of Shepard's work into the affirmative playing practised by The Performance Group.

Ironically, when writing several years later about TPG's *Mother Courage*, Schechner would emphasise the disjunction between a playtext's legible dialogue and its written score when he suggested that "if a play is new I think the author's words should be respected -- he has a right to see his play reach the public first as he wrote it" (PC 48). At the same time, however, he was joking "tongue in cheek, coming off Tooth," when asked "Why *Mother Courage* and why still the Manheim translation over the Bentley? 'Because Brecht was dead and Manheim was in Paris'" (qtd. in Ryan 78). In *Tooth* Schechner had treated scene breaks, casting, and music as less binding features within the settled script than the dialogue which TPG used apparently without change. What's interesting about Schechner's approach to *Tooth* is the way in which academic theory is used to justify the aesthetic impact generated by directorial changes to a written script. In the exchange between Shepard and Schechner, each suggests the incommensurable authorial warrant of either playwright or director. Sam Shepard never saw the production, but wrote to Schechner based on an understanding of TPG's changes he gleaned “from the reviews, eyewitness accounts from some of [his] friends and [Schechner's] public writings.” In his letter, the playwright stated that

> the production is far from what I had in mind. [...] It seems to me that the reason someone wants to put [a] play together in a production is because they are pulled to its vision. If that's true then it seems to me they should respect the form that vision takes place in and not merely extrapolate its language and invent another form which isn't the play. (qtd. in PT 76)

In this letter, the young playwright frankly staked a claim for authorship which he believed TPG's work had dismissed or overridden. In Shepard's statement, Schechner's alleged failure to "respect the form that vision takes" is understood by
the playwright as an illicit, and implicitly allegorical, extrapolation. The implication is that Schechner used Shepard's play as fuel for his own authorial production, at the expense of Shepard's standing as author. Schechner himself admits as much:

I am more interested in patterns of movement, arrangements of bodies, 'iconography,' sonics, and the flow of the audience throughout the environment. The criteria I use for evoking, guiding, and selecting patterns are complicated; but the 'demands' of the drama are of low priority. (PT 74; boldface mine)

Furthermore, Schechner seems to have maintained both artistic control over the production process and an authoritative relation to its documentation: Schechner published Shepard's comments in the essay "Drama, Script, Theater and Performance" (PT 68-105).

In this essay, Richard Schechner produced a model to account for the possibilities and limits of authority in structuring and determining live performance. On the face of it, the model endows different roles with the power to shape aspects of performance; and the latitude of powers and limits for each locus of control shifts depending on what performance modality is being examined. This flexibility accommodates a range of performance modes across cultures. Specifically, Schechner's model for the relations and distinctions among theatre's constituent elements is expressed in four terms: the drama, the script, the theater, and the performance. According to Schechner's definitions:

The drama is the domain of author, the composer, scenarist, shaman; the script is the domain of the

22 In the earlier Environmental Theater, Schechner distinguishes performers from shamans, on the basis of self-interest. "[I]t is self-consciousness which sets the performer off from the shaman. Something happens to the shaman; he is called. But the performer tries very hard to exist sequentially in two different states of being. During training, preparation, and rehearsal the performer wants to be aware of what is happening to him -- he wants to choose to let it happen. He wants to compose it himself, make the performance himself: be entirely conscious of his participation in an event that, beyond its emotional components, has political, personal, and social 'statements' to make. The performer wants to have effects and to know the effects he has. And then, at the decisive hour of performance, he wants to be able to let everything go, to perform 'without anticipation,' to fall entirely into the spell of the performance, to 'give up' his consciousness to the 'action'" (ET 191-92). This reading contrasts with Cole's analogy of the shamanic aspect of the transforming actor (Mythos).
teacher, guru, master; the theater is the domain of the
performers; the performance is the domain of the
audience. (PT 71)

In his model, Schechner conditions the definitions above with the caveat that the
boundaries between their domains are culturally specific. Nevertheless, the sites and
the agents assigned to each under this rubric constitute the areas of contest over
authority faced by Schechner as a theatre director. So, for example, Schechner's
waning enthusiasm as producing director of Dionysus (dominating the script) arose
because he was frustrated with the interventions of performers (in the theater) and
their rejection of the interactive participation of audiences (in performance): "images I
had in my head were not being played out in the theater. Every time a performer
would make a suggestion either about the mise-en-scène or about Group structure I
read it as an attack on me" (ET 261). Implicitly, this model provides the grounds for
forming a notion of the theatrical auteur, in whom several of the enumerated
functions are effectively linked. Schechner points to peers to define the role of the
auteur: "figures like [Lee] Breuer, Robert Wilson, [Richard] Foreman. An auteur is as
responsible for creating a performance text as for making a dramatic text" (EH 31).
The concept of the auteur makes explicit the contest over authority in the relation
between playwriting and staging.

In Schechner's conception, the drama designates the mental map, score, or
scenario which can include but does not require a written playtext. In the drama
resides the sense. The script, which is the "basic code of the events," is "all that can
be transmitted from time to time and place to place"; as it is coded, the script can
only be transmitted by someone who "must know the script and be able to teach it to
others." Perhaps, then, the script is the mode or means to the sense. The script
may encompass the drama, but the drama as "written text" alone does not constitute
the script, because alone the drama lacks the "conscious," "empathetic" and/or
"empathic" knowledge which must exist to transmit the latter (PT 72). The distinction between drama and script captures the gap Schechner admitted when he named that category of "images [...] not being played out in the theater." Yet by so naming the gap, Schechner implicitly locates himself as the author of the drama of Dionysus in 69, out of control of its performed script. It would seem that, by his own admission, Schechner was not the auteur of those theatrical occasions, capable of organising not only the dramatic vision and its scripted enactment, but also the activities of both actors and audiences. The position of auteur was one Schechner strove to occupy but ultimately failed to secure.

As if to compensate for such a failure, the theory Schechner subsequently generates privileges the director as a mediator between the drama and the actors. This redefinition of script is broad enough to allow for a tradition (as in Noh, or commedia dell'arte) to authorise a script rather than conceiving solely of the individual auteur or playwright as the source of enacted vision; and it is the authority of convention that seemed to serve as grounds on which Schechner's environmental theatre axioms were implicated in the author(is)ing of Dionysus in 69. However, to attribute such authority to a theatrical tradition means to acknowledge (rightfully so) the important function of the teacher of tradition, a pedagogical role which sustains conservative regulation of productive systems. Through the teacher, master, or guru, the (sovereign) individual may re-emerge as the dominant figure without dispensing with the authority of convention.

Both Schechner and Shepard are forced to acknowledge the role of a visionary individual working in a collaborative art, and the consequent fragility of visions. The fragility of visions and the desire of individuals to act as shepherds for the imagination provokes a notion of guardianship not unlike the exegetical maintenance of meaning established by successive interpretations of enduring texts in sacred traditions. Such guardianship is expressed in Christian traditions by the phrase, "The Gospel according to Saint" so-and-so, where the sainted scribe
accounts for the individuality of the enactment while its standing as Gospel guarantees it as the word of God. Needless to say, in secular traditions marked by stylistic borrowing, innovation, and recapitulation, guardianship is far less clearly organised. Schechner's model offers a framework for thinking through guardianship. The "mental map" or "vision" of a drama is dependent upon the guardianship of the script-keeper. What Shepard anticipates when he envisions the director "who wants to put that play together in a production" is a script-keeper "pulled to [the] vision" of the play's author. By separating the functions of drama and script, Schechner's model correctly injects scope for interpretation of a playwright's vision, but he fails to address the ethical imperative Shepard raises. Schechner's model, like Shepard's contrasting assumptions, remains faithful to notions of artistic control which favour a linear conception of artistic production, emanating from a singular core of authority, the dramatic vision. The only difference concerns the location of the inaugural vision: in the play (for Shepard) or in its first reading (for Schechner). "A mise-en-scène is everything that comprises what the audience experiences. To create a mise is to create something whole. Developing the mise is the director's main job" (ET 290). Shepard accuses Schechner of "extrapolat[ing] its language and invent[ing] another form which isn't the play" (qtd. in PT 76). For Schechner, the play itself functions as a pre-existing resource, from which a legitimate vision can be extracted. Like a miner more than a fisherman, such a director acts without necessarily considering the semiotic ecology in which his raw materials participate.

Yet Schechner, because he simultaneously works as a published theorist, makes another error. He misconstrues the rawness of his own materials by failing to realise how quickly their conceptual "cooking" begins. Writing in Bonnie Marranca's anthology about Sam Shepard during rehearsals for The Tooth of Crime, Schechner introduced TPG's work on the play by citing the letter he wrote to Shepard first proposing the project, in which he claimed,
Most directors and actors start with a 'guiding idea,' an 'image to be realized,' a 'preexistent action.' I don't, the Group doesn't. We start with only what is there, the barest facts; seven performers and a collection of words organized under role headings. (In Marranca, *American* 163)

This statement to the playwright is, in my estimation, misleading. First, it diminishes the efficacious structuring of the production process by Schechner's pre-authored and already authoritative environmental theatre theory. In particular, it denies the centrality to the process of staging *Tooth* played by the participation of the integral, invited, and open audiences inhabiting a space organised to conform with environmental expectations about proxemics and focus (ET 59-60, 269-70; PT 73-83). Second, if this rehearsal process was inaugurated with a reading of the script, then this representation of the absence of preconceptions is disingenuous. First readings, regardless of their revision or abandonment in the course of rehearsal, have already taken form, and while they can be reworked, they cannot be unmade. The claim made for innocence masks an already-achieved position of "having read" the play. Schechner only admits to his own early reading of Shepard's play in the context framing aspects of the play with ethnographic accounts. Why does ethnography function as the frame in which Schechner can discuss himself as a reader?

Schechner's interest in ethnography and his access to its discourses functions in the anthologised essay as the grounds for his entitlement to "play with" Shepard's play. Schechner presents examples from ethnographic studies to corroborate the images he associates with Shepard's play, using them in essence to justify his reading. In this way, anthropological discourse underwrites Schechner's claims over the meaning of the script. I believe that the guardianship posited by Schechner's model suggests a kind of entitlement that is associated with liberal notions of property ownership and access. Specifically, the model does not credit those situations in which the visionary *drama* and transmissible *script* might both be
shepherded by the same set of collaborating people. This omission of the real efficacy of a collectivity obscures the praxis of many feminist and community-based projects. Instead, the model specifies, and thereby privileges, individuals, in the roles of shaman, scenarist, author, guru, master, or teacher. Furthermore these individuals are atomised, since the negotiation of reception within the work is not explored by Schechner's structural model. This obscures the complexity of staging when understood as produced, in the first instance, through reading (see Cole, Acting).

For example, while actor William Hunter Shephard recalled, "[t]he script was secondary to the creative process of the actor" (74), this does not mean that in reality the script was relegated to a subordinate position. Because "[t]he Group under Schechner's direction focussed on the actor's response to thematic elements or motifs suggested by the play" (74), insofar as the actors' creative processes were indeed oriented in relation to the play's themes, motifs, or evocations, the actors would have been staging their reception of *The Bacchae*. The script, therefore, remained a primary document, a key resource to which all the collaborators had access. Furthermore, reception's variability according to context and purpose, is an aspect of theatre which Schechner's theory fails to embrace. To view the script as an index to the ineffable drama obscures the ways in which received and newly formed readings renegotiate the drama's terms and concerns. In the Dionysus process, for example, *The Bacchae* was confronted and transformed (as described in Chapter 1.1) but in the process, Schechner's preconceived moral message was effectively annulled by two competing sets of pressures. The aesthetic impulse in environmental theatre theory must be recruited to the participatory mission, by which theatre serves (like ritual) as a form of initiation. The participatory mission has an

---

23 It also challenges William Hunter Shephard's accreditation of TPG's emergent "Group Mind" as author of *Dionysus in 68*. 
actual and a discursive component. Spectators must be made to be active, such that "[j]oining in Dionysus -- like declaring for Christ at a revival meeting -- w[ould be] an act of the body publicly signaling one's faith" (ET 43). Equally, participation had to be recorded so that in the absence of the social structures benefiting from such initiation, theatre's own ritual efficacy would be sustained in theory. "If theater could be an initiatory participatory game, it could be at once entertaining and fateful" (PT 59). The problem in Dionysus was that Schechner's affirmation of audience participation did not differentiate the affirmative and critical positions with regard to the dangers of Dionysian frenzy. Throughout the plans for and documentation of Dionysus, there is a kind of double-talk on the question of active audience participation in Dionysus performances.

The clearly articulated message attributed to The Bacchae, by Schechner's exegesis prior to production, is effectively abandoned insofar as Schechner's account of Dionysus fails to differentiate between those "who intervened to prevent Pentheus from being sacrificed, or [those who] joined in sacrificing him" (ET 117). If the production is intended as a "warning" to the New Left about its leaders, then joining to sacrifice or to save Pentheus, liberation's victim, could not be commensurate. Against this, the latitude for audience members "joining the story" by "letting people into the play to do as the performers were doing" meant in practice the imitation of either the bacchic (e.g. fascist) followers or the established (e.g. liberal) order embodied in Pentheus. Schechner described this choice as a "democratic model" of participation (44). Yet the observation that "in both cases spectators stripped and died/killed with the performers" (117) threatens to equate two antithetical actions which, in the play The Bacchae and in the fable (The Bacchae as anti-fascist warning), should be utterly at odds. In this way, Schechner's authoritative commentary evacuates the content of the public signal of faith Schechner attributes to audience participation (ET 43). Participation's only value is its quantity or intensity: "The most extraordinary participatory moments happened when people came to the
theatre in groups, or when individuals gave over to the performance so fully that for
the duration of the performance they joined the Group as if they were members" (40).

Clearly, Schechner's trenchant question written early in the devising process,
"Can we cope with Dionysus' dance and not end up -- as Agave did -- with our sons' heads
on our dancing sticks?" has receded dramatically (PD 228) from the retrospective accounts. The
poignancy of the cautionary message which impelled production of The Bacchae is subsumed by
the empty symptomatology encouraged by the rhetoric of participatory theatre theory. The
politics of the initial critique about the absurdity of Dionysiac activities were swamped by the
amplification of environmental theatre's impulse to promote participation into an "initiatory
participatory game" (PT 59), the mark of which seems to be that the spectator is provoked, rather
than transformed in specific, preconceived terms. The inability to determine the content
of the provocation, that which it publicly "signals" represents the abdication of the moral
message of the fable. Because he lacked a more complex conception of reading as an ethically
charged activity, the practical negotiations of staging were less well-adjudged, and Schechner in effect undermined
his own secure status by introducing competing aims into Dionysus's structure.

If participation was not used to drive home the pitfalls of the ecstatic politics of
his contemporaries on the New Left, its role in Dionysus in 69 and subsequent TPG productions remains uncertain. Schechner
recalls: "I used the workshops with The Performance Group as a way of transforming individuals into a group and then used
The Group as transporters [performers who temporarily transform] in an attempt to make a collective out of the individuals who constitute an audience, a temporary collective -- a community for the time being" (BTA 148).24 Schechner graphically

24 See Huizinga 37 for an early use of the term transport. "I do not think we are falling into that error when we characterize ritual as play. The ritual act has all the formal and essential characteristics of play which we enumerated above, particularly in so far as it transports the participants to another world."
sketched this process by representing human individuals as small circles (like this °), corpuscles which disappear into the "group" or "community." This atomistic conception of personhood as individuated outside social collectivity is misleading. It assumes that community, however valued, is less the grounds of or the emergent, open totality articulated by theatre, but rather its product. This attitude denies the entanglements, commitments, and dispositions of the historical subjects interpellated within the theatrical process as performers or spectators. In sum, by taking "the sovereign individual [e.g. himself] as the fundamental social unit," and implicitly defending as "private property" dramatic visions, Schechner is relying on a classical liberal ontology.

There exists a theatrical critique of Schechner's approach to theatre and culture in the work of The Wooster Group. As a counter example, The Wooster Group's work reveals the extent of Schechner's liberal individualism. The Wooster Group, under the direction of Elizabeth LeCompte, carried on the legal enterprise established first by Schechner; in the Performing Garage at 33 Wooster Street, the Wooster Group performs its own brand of experimental theatre. According to their "authorized" chronicler David Savran (Breaking 7), Elizabeth LeCompte "developed her own methods [in part] from observation of Schechner -- and then often doing the opposite" (4). According to Savran, The Wooster Group's work "does not so much reject the theatrical apparatus -- and Schechner's working methods -- as undermine them from within, by exposing their particular mode of operation and the way they transform non-theatrical material" (62). Characteristically, The Wooster Group juxtaposes and transposes found and devised texts as a means to stage their recurrent attempt at "making art and failing at making art [...] know[ing] that you have to stand up there and do the wrong thing" (qtd. in Cole, Directors 96).25 In contrast to

25 Quote by Peyton Smith, while rehearsing Frank Dell's The Temptation of Saint Anthony but perhaps applicable to The Wooster Group's other work as well.
Schechner, who resented that "images I had in my head were not being played out in the theater" (ET 261), LeCompte describes the failure to see images bodying forth in the theatre as integral to the rehearsal process: "I can't make it not work in my head. I have to come in here [The Performing Garage] and see it not work in rehearsal" (qtd. in Cole, Directors 122). Unlike Schechner's promotion of The Performance Group -- as Lahr remarked, "Schechner is marketing Dionysus in 69 like Wheaties" (82-83) -- Don Shewey describes the world famous Wooster Group as "the best kept secret in New York theater" (6). Similarly, LeCompte has been named by rehearsal observer Susan Letzler Cole as "the invisible director" (91). LeCompte has consistently refused to reproduce singular interpretations, and sought more fully to stage multiple perspectives: "I don't want one meaning. I want always at least two and, hopefully, many, many more meanings to coalesce at the same point" LeCompte has contended (Savran, "Wooster" 108). This aim is achievable in part because The Wooster Group's work implicitly acknowledges the cultural valuing which invests texts with meanings as artefacts and icons, not simply as "synchronic bundles" of performative units, as Schechner has argued.

The power of this approach is evident in the way in which The Wooster Group confronted, adopted, and adapted Arthur Miller's classic play of individualist resistance, The Crucible. The Wooster Group rehearsed selected scenes of The Crucible, in order to juxtapose his classic play written in protest at McCarthyism, against the historical debris collecting around hippy-icon Timothy Leary. They called the work L.S.D. (...Just the High Points...) and organised its structure around taped recollections of a woman who had babysat for Leary's kids in Cambridge in the early 1960s. The parallels and disjunctures between the two themes are striking. Miller and his fictive hero John Proctor were called to testify in political witch-hunts, while Leary was criminally tried several times for his drug use. Leary, like Miller and Proctor, was asked to name names, to give testimony about his role as an articulate mouth piece for the counter culture. The counter culture for which Leary served as a
figurehead emerged in the sedate 1950s during which Miller took his stand against McCarthyism (Savran Breaking 169-220; Cowboys 20-29); yet while Miller and Proctor stood their ground by refusing to inform, L.S.D. articulates Leary's "more questionable" "honor" by exploring how he would have been inclined or did in fact name names in order to bargain over jail sentences (Savran, Breaking 180). The production "us[ed] The Crucible as a lens through which to focus Leary's would be heroism and Leary himself as a lens through which to focus The Crucible and the values it promotes" (180). Such work does not fit Schechner's conception of synchronic "confrontation" (PD 189-91) based on a reductive opposition between "the associations of the performers [and] the dictates of the authors" (ET 238) which excludes the broader sedimentation of meaning and associations in society. To exemplify this alternative mode of production, The Wooster Group endorsed a more holistic relation in its approach to The Crucible, by treating it no longer as a disembodied, dehistoricised score, as Schechner might have defined it, but as an historical entity. "[T]his is a play that most people see in high school productions, with people wearing cornstarch in their hair" LeCompte contends (qtd. in Savran, Breaking 191) and its interpolation into L.S.D. was "calculated to distance the spectator, to transform him into a 'witness' before whom the play becomes an 'exhibit,' a historical and theatrical document" (194).

When Miller, who only saw an early version of the work-in-progress, stated his concerns for the fidelity of his vision, he substantiated his authorial claims with "cease and desist" attorney's letters. The Wooster Group was forced to abandon even a reworked version in order to avoid the threat of a lawsuit capable of bankrupting the company ("Miller" Editorial in American Theatre; Dimmick; Savran "Wooster"; Breaking). Miller then put his case in print through interviews in the Village Voice, in which he denied that his refusal was based on the need to ensure that any possible Broadway production would not be undermined by The Wooster Group's use of his material (Savran "Wooster" 102; Breaking 193). The playwright
who in another context had written that "[t]here is no limit to the expansion of the audience's imagination so long as the play's internal logic is kept inviolate," (Miller 14) was defending the integrity of the dramatic vision he had scripted. In his defence, he was using the juridical category of private intellectual property. The threat of legal action was such that Elizabeth LeCompte chose not to risk further entanglements. Although Michael Kirby had rewritten the section which contained Crucible material as "The Hearing" 'which followed the shape of the Crucible excerpts and simultaneously dramatized the enforced suppression of Miller's script" (Savran, Breaking 193), and a copyright lawyer had reviewed these changes; the company was still at risk. Legal action could be taken against The Wooster Group's prior infringements of Miller's copyright, and any subsequent adaptation or variation might provoke it (Savran "Wooster" 102; Breaking 193). In the protracted communications among the theatre company, the playwright, and their representatives, Miller was not convinced that his play was not being parodied; he refused to accept LeCompte's stated commitment to the stature and significance of The Crucible as an emblem of humanist resistance to authoritarianism (Savran "Wooster" 102). The use of the juridical apparatus to defend an author's rights over a published work in this instance are intriguing and unsettling.

Miller's success at suppressing a staging of his play which he did not choose to authorise is extreme in comparison to the exchange of divergent views by Shepard and Schechner a decade earlier. Yet the story of L.S.D. (...Just the High Points...) exaggerates the competing authorial claims infusing the exchange between Schechner and Shepard and the former's formal theory about authorship in the theatre. Furthermore, it gives grounds for a useful contrast between Schechner's operations as a theorising director and the alternative approach of Elizabeth LeCompte. First, there is the matter of the text as a historical phenomenon situated in culture rather than as a structural system. The accounts of Savran, Dimmick, Aronson, and Auslander together suggest that L.S.D. (...Just The High Points...) was
a theatrical investigation of "The Crucible Phenomenon" at that same time as, and in part because, it staged the underbelly of the legacy of the counter-cultural tradition. A somewhat analogous investigation of the New Left as bacchic had earlier been effectively abandoned when Schechner privileged environmental theatre theory and a participatory agenda over the critical allegorical message he had read from The Bacchae. Second, there is the conception of authorial status as a locus for control. LeCompte rejects that mode, while Schechner seeks to secure it. For this reason, as an author Schechner resembles Arthur Miller as a liberal individualist (Savran, Cowboys 24), despite the former's libertarianism as contrasted with the latter's high-ground moralism and despite the evident differences in their theatre roles and theatre styles. "He wants to control totally, of course, any production of it because he wants to try to revamp its rep," LeCompte contends of Miller's concern for The Crucible (qtd. in Savran, Breaking 190). Schechner too has remained conscious of reputations. He calls for experimental theatre culture to refuse the commercial theatre's measure of success versus failure, asking "why can't a work be neither a success nor a failure but a step along the way, an event that yields some interesting data" (BTA 261), but only at point when his artistic control of The Performance Group was all but gone. At its height, Schechner was happy to assess his own performance in terms of success with audiences, artistic peers, and critics.

As both examples of Schechner and Miller make clear, the regulatory role of "the master" raises political implications. It is important, therefore, that the activity of mediation (in rehearsal or in teaching) be geohistorically situated, in order that transmission is adequately acknowledged as including reflexively those cultural, even iconographic, associations which, in the case of The Crucible, LeCompte sought unsuccessfully to articulate to Arthur Miller. Costuming in L.S.D. aimed to "expose" The Crucible's "archeological status, for both Miller [writing in the 1950s] and the Wooster Group" who would perform it "as a reading, in the mid-eighties, of a 1950s drama set in the seventeenth century" (Savran, Breaking 175). By contrast, when he
theorises the script-keeper as a timeless transmitter of a drama's vision, Schechner fails to articulate the ways in which this necessarily geo-historically contextualised activity is situated. His critic Stratos E. Constantinidis refers to Schechner's position as the "director-guru." In exploring the role of Leary in the burgeoning drug culture, Ron Vawter affirms that for TPG veterans, "Certainly in L.S.D. we were addressing our origins in the Performance Group. [...] Schechner always thought of himself as a guru. Theatre was just part of it" (qtd. in Savran, Breaking 183). Certainly, it is interesting that Schechner's eminence in performance has for thirty years been based on his stature as a respected avant-garde theatrical director/professor and that LeCompte's critique of his praxis was similarly predicated on his former role as group guru (Savran, Breaking 3). Just as The Wooster Group under LeCompte's direction uses pastiche and deconstruction to rethink theatre's production of illusions in and of history, Constantinidis uses deconstruction to rethink Schechner's authorial position.

Constantinidis takes up Derridean concerns to suggest that were it not for the authorial power invested in the guru figure, anti-logocentrism might well have been served in the turn away from theatre ordinated to the playwright and the received understanding of the playwright's meaning signalled by Schechner's four-term model. According to Constantinidis,

> In order to avoid any notions of 'text', Schechner proceeded to locate the source of authentic thought in the moment of awareness (enactment) which precedes articulate discourse. (55)

However, the shift from meaning or vision inscribed in writing to directed somatic-psychic enactments did not unhinge the "image into action" flow, but merely relocated its prime source from playwright's text to director's vision. This transfer of the locus of meaning resembles that enacted by textual interpretation. For such exegesis, the veiled meaning, seen as residing "in" the text, is relocated within the significance revealed by and perceptible to others through the commentary the exegete produces. This transfer from the dramatic text to the director's vision marks the shift whereby...
the ostensible "speaking of the Other" performed by exegesis attains authoritative status in its own right, not simply as reception but as an authored text itself. "For Schechner, the genuine art of theatre depends on carefully scripted enactments, not on written texts" (Constantinidis 55). In the case of The Tooth of Crime, the director Schechner scripted those enactments. The actors were, presumably, still "playing a script" only it was a script differently sourced. "By giving enactment priority, Schechner relegated the [drama] to an inferior place, while he raised and 'restored' the [script] to a superior position" (55). It would seem, therefore, that all notions of text are not eschewed under this formulation, but rather only the limited definition of text as a written, self-contained, intentional, and already-authored entity. Rather than eliminating the text as a possession, it merely contests its ownership by dissolving its material, but not its ontological, form.

Under Schechner's model, the writer may still be responsible for producing the drama as code, but the director bears the responsibility for making the code animate and theatrical. The model creates what Constantinidis has described as a "double order of texts" characteristic of Platonism; "the theatre artists and critics who worked in the Platonic tradition promoted the belief that the spiritual text should be protected from the material text" (52). Even if for this performance model the drama as vision or sense is regarded as "the most intense (heated up) circle" (PT 72), its power does not bridge the gap between the double order. As a consequence, the logocentric privileging of vision as the origin of meaning may be resituated but is not ruptured. Because of its failure to negotiate a more sophisticated and sensitive relation to the source of meaning as plural rather than singular, this model positions the director as a dominating force, usurping the drama from its author/owner. Any director who, in animating the inert code of the drama, wishes to secure his entitlement to claim authorial status over the staging must dominate the source of vision. To act as an author who dominates is to be an auteur. Implicitly, this model objectifies meaning as if it were susceptible to private ownership, rather than arising out of a process of
interaction and confrontation among producers and receivers/spectators. The privatisation of the general category of authorial vision is indicated explicitly in Schechner's reference to "the playwright, when not present during all phases of making a work: constructing the text, participating in workshops and rehearsals, [...] is an absentee landlord" (EH 32). It seems that notions of mutuality or simultaneous co-presence are ignored by Schechner's model in favour of a competitive and hierarchical conception of authorial power and privilege. The recourse to juridical powers by Miller reaffirms the political context for the privatised conception of meaning and the competitive conception of authorship. In his model, then, Schechner reproduces rather than ruptures the prevailing economic order.28

As if to make it a proper contest, the playwright's standing is aggrandised. In the theory, Schechner characterises (and Constantinidis has not challenged) the playwright as a kind of shaman, in whose domain there is "little improvisation" (Constantinidis 38). In the place of labour, error, and revision as aspects of a temporally intensive writing process, Schechner proposes as the emblem of playwrights' productivity the conventionally determined artifice of the shamanic visionary. However the vulnerability of both Sam Shepard and Arthur Miller's works to stagings which they as writers were not prepared to fully authorise contests this positioning of the playwright as shaman. What their predicaments make clear is that no matter how immediate a dramatist's relation is to a vision, without an attendant

28 Similarly when in early 1970 Schechner fired an actor with whom working relations had broken down, his actions drew upon his legal powers.

Firing B. precipitated the blow-up. The question was whether or not I had the right to fire someone. The debate was not about legalities - as TPG was then structured I had the legal right. It was a question of good faith. I acted in bad faith: By using my legal powers I made it impossible for the Group to survive. My alternative was to quit the Group, abandoning its 'properties' - the name, the Garage, the material copyrighted by the Group, the reputation of the work. As things happened, those who sided with me did not use the Garage again for some months. But we kept the legal entity, 'The Performance Group.' Or rather I kept it. (ET 207)
staging apparatus, the playwright lacks the resources to reach the audiences for whom the vision is entertained. The problem of a vision finding an appropriate apparatus for its manifestation is one that implicitly Schechner’s theory addresses. Schechner does not wholly associate the *drama* with the person of the shaman. Instead, Schechner treats it either as possessing a shamanic function, which, like the drug ayahuasca, is inert until activated by the animating *scripting* which swallows it and experiences the visions and altered consciousness which ayahuasca induces. Alternatively, Schechner regards the *drama* as contained within a shamanic vision, which like a capacity or a predisposition, remains inaccessible or dormant until ingesting the ayahuasca activates or engenders the altered awareness, and the vision (as an object) which bodies forth during the altered state. On either interpretation, then, in both the playwright-privileging and the drama-decentring theatrical theories, the *drama* is animated from beyond itself and in neither theory is the code, scenario, or score in and of itself sufficiently vital. The only significant difference in the two theories is the temporal sequence: whether the vision is imparted prior to or during the writing of the *drama* (by the playwright) or after it is en- or de-“coded” by the transmitting teacher. In sum, the issue is one of function; by reconceiving the *drama* as a function or power to envision, this model may be amended so that the actual disputes between the producing companies, their directors, and these playwrights can be interpolated into the practice of this nascent performance theory. At the same time, this recalibration of the *drama* as a visionary function rather than solely as an inanimate object (“the vision” posited in Schechner’s definition) brings into play a polysemy which even Schechner’s theories of an

---

27 For an account of contemporary drug-induced shamanic experiences, see Wolf, *Eagle*. Wolf’s interest in shamanism is very different from that expressed by Schechner who has described it as “the branch of doctoring that is religious and the kind of religion, full of tricks, that is theatrical” (PT 122). See E. T. Kirby for an article that anecdotally traces the similarities between shamanic activities and modern popular entertainments in order to posit shamanic trance as the origin of theatre and drama. For a different use of shamanism in theatre studies, see Cole *Mythos*. 
audience’s autonomy (e.g. his theory of “selective inattention”, PT 197-206) fails to address.

The recalibration of theory I have argued for above is executed in practice by Schechner as director. Locating the vitality of the dramatic vision in the animate scripting rather than in the inert or inaccessible drama is the mechanism by which Schechner’s theory secures what he achieved in practice with The Tooth of Crime. In that project, Schechner and The Performance Group ingested the drama, as a script in the conventional sense: a bounded and pre-set order of words to be spoken aloud. Then, through the process of rehearsal, they “dissociated” (see PT 73) the printed script from what the playwright called his “vision” while creating the scripting’s enactments as a performance score. This process of “dissociation” Schechner likens to “the process of defiguration and abstraction that happened earlier in painting” (73). This process was “orchestrated” (73) by Schechner as director, a “master” of the script. TPG’s ingestion of Shepard’s play was an active digestion rather than passive consumption, and it impinged on the sanctity of the dramatic author as a final cause of a text’s meaning. Shepard’s theory of the play’s genesis vindicates the echoes of “wring” and “wrought” emanating from the word “playwright,” Shepard also implied a concealed core which stage production is bound ethically to uncover:

For me, the reason a play is written is because a writer receives a vision which can’t be translated in any other way but a play. It’s not a novel or a short story or a movie but a play. [...] they should respect the form that vision takes place in and not merely extrapolate its language and invent another form which isn’t the play. (qtd. in PT 76; boldface mine)

---

28 This impressionistic etymology is not confirmed by John Arden’s more exacting excavation in “Playwrights and Play-writers” which, in emphasising that the “Playwright works drama just as the Millwright works mill-gear” so that “working or making a play includes what are now thought to be the activities of the Director as well as those of the Script-writer,” (210) approaches Schechner’s view of the productive locus of theatrical control as being if not solely than at least finally a matter of stagecraft.
Evidently, this view was not binding for Schechner and The Performance Group.

Having established Schechner’s method as a theatre director and defined his unique terminology, Constantinidis argues that the process Schechner describes remains logocentric because it still privileges one of four terms over the others: the *script*. But, amending Constantinidis, I contend that what is actually privileged is the scripting function exercised by the director acting as a guru. It is his visions — “patterns of movement, arrangements of bodies, ‘iconography,’ sonics, and the flow of the audience throughout the environment” which he “evokes,” “guides,” and “selects” (PT 74) — which replace the playwright’s vision (manifest in “the ‘demands’ of the *drama*”) as that which theatrical rehearsal strives to embody. In construing the privileged activity as the scripting function (which, metaphorically, swallows the vision-inducing ayahuasca), I am shying away from the second alternative given above, namely that the privileged object is instead the ayahuasca-induced and otherwise inaccessible visions themselves. I am emphasising the former over the latter because it favours process and does not accord an object-like status to phenomena. If, however, the director-guru’s visions are instead taken as the source of stage activity, then the theory makes no break at all with a sense of theatre as a reflective expression rather than as an incommensurable production.

However, even if such a processual interpretation is favoured, Constantinidis suggests that in shifting the emphasis from one traditionally privileged term to

---

29 Here I am deciding the old question, raised in order to dismiss it by J.L. Austin (179), of whether a flame is a thing or an event, in favour of the latter. This, I contend, is the properly stratified conception; empirically the thing-like flame may appear so to us, because it is all that is available in that restricted realm of the combustion event. Unlike smoke, there can be no flame without a fire, but what is fire, but a burning...?

30 The key reference for this contention is Eagleton’s description of “dramatic production” in *Criticism and Ideology* (64-65). Schechner’s own commitment, in the aftermath of Brecht and in the tradition articulated by Grotowski (PD 190-91), to regard theatre as a site of confrontation between inherited texts, inscribed roles, and actors, disputes the reflective aesthetic.
another, Schechner and other avant-garde theatre makers merely distributed the playwriting function to other domains, thereby “expanding” it without undermining its authority (43-44). In other words, an interest in shamanic-like scripting rather than in shamanic visions themselves does not adequately dissolve the logocentric import of authorship. The duty of the secular allegorist, charged with reworking inherited texts into creations newly authorised and authoritative, is revealed in the centre of Schechner’s ostensibly plural model for performance production.

For this reason, then, the promised liberation from the privilege traditionally accorded to the dramatist (and delimited by Schechner under the term drama) produces not the elimination but an extension of its visionary function. In practical terms, all participants from writer, director, designer to actor and spectator, may function to constitute the meaning of the theatrical event. Constantinidis contends that “meaning skids in all directions, simultaneously [...] during play production” which he views as a “continuum” (43) and he applauds such dispersal because it relieves the logocentric sense of meaning as uniquely originating in any site, body, or function. The interesting feature about the expansion already achieved by avant-garde experimentation is less that Schechner’s theory has failed to be properly anti-logocentric and that consequently his apparent conflict with Shepard was in fact “a coalition -- with each party fighting for independence (i.e., control) and validity in interpretation (i.e. supremacy)” (Constantinidis 48); but rather that Schechner’s theory achieves its authentication of an originary presence through unique means. The securing of authentication is the epistemological aim of Schechner’s performance project.

Many theatre directors-teachers more or less revived the mystique of origin and authority in performance groups, laboratory theatres, theatre ensembles, theatre workshops, experimental companies, or research institutes during the era of the 1960s. [...] The potent theatrical experiences (attested or alleged) that they offered to themselves, their actor-disciples, and their select spectators-participants demonstrated the
Socratic equation among truth, presence, and the primal authority of speech. (53-54)

To concede the "skid of meaning" would undermine the authority of Schechner's "complicated" criteria for staging a play. Thus, strengthening the status and authority of the director-guru became the implicit mission of his performance theory. Bolstering the authority of Schechner's directorial position is at the centre of the performance project, in which anthropological discourse is deployed to authorise dramaturgical commitments made by him as a stage director. Constantinidis has sketched how the mission to fortify the status and authority of the director as guru was achieved through the coalition of theatre and anthropology characterising the emerging performance studies paradigm.

Schechner's authorial position in theatre comes to depend on his academic explorations.

To strengthen this perception [in the superiority of the script], Schechner took a mental trip into the stone age, describing the hunting rituals (performances) of nonliterate cultures. Despite the lack of evidence, Schechner asserted that the [mental scripts] contained and contributed to the efficacy of the enacted hunting or fertility rituals. "It is not until much later that power is associated with the written word," Schechner argued. "To conceive of these very ancient performances -- some as far back as 25,000 years ago -- one has to imagine absolutely non-literate cultures." As I will show, Schechner boldly and imaginatively taxed ethological and anthropological findings to usher into the theatre Plato's ideas in a Darwinian guise. (55-56)

"Here is the Darwinian foundation of Schechner's performance theory,"

Constantinidis announced:

Animals instinctively stage encounter rituals as an alternative to violent behavior [...]. Their fight-flight rituals (or performances) rather than direct combat (which could deplete the males of many species) decide territory claims, status challenges, and mating

---

31 Citation originally from Schechner, "Drama, Script, Theatre, Performance," The Drama Review 17.3 (1973) 7.
priorities. Their effective 'performances' are selected and developed (in an evolutionary sense) because the members of a species which used them have survived. These selected and developed series of programmed behavioral patterns (or, performances) are based on instincts (i.e., genetically stored and transmitted information) which elude learning (i.e., information stored and transmitted through written texts and/or the 'texts' of the oral tradition). (57)

The Darwinism of the performance model suggests that the human organism is not only the source or target of ritual, play, or theatrical performance but also its bearer, in much the same way as chromosomal sequences of DNA are understood to "bear" gene-linked traits.® Constantinidis regarded this as a defensive move: the need is "to establish a residence (e.g. the chamber of human consciousness, Plato's cave, or Darwin's genes) which will protect this intangible [script] from external contamination" (80). As a strategy to buttress the director's authority, this is similar to but more penetrating than the tactic of underwriting the conflict in Tooth by reference to the Eskimo song duels. It characterises a trajectory in Schechner's work that endures despite his express rejection of origin theories (Schechner and Appel 46, n. 3). The Darwinism that Constantinidis discerned is a concrete example of the singularity Schechner sought to impose, a progressive historical narrative that can be read in inverse temporal order as a return to a common source.

Constantinidis's analysis illustrates how Schechner's investigations into anthropology and primatology substantiate an a priori position rather than methodically assessing the proposed position and its alternatives in the light of evidence. Constantinidis's reading of Schechner's theory asked, "Did the observations about the behavior of higher primates add any validity to Schechner's theory that the performances of human beings offer an aesthetic experience which

52 See Lewontin for a modulation of the commonly held geneticism which forecloses the co-causality of non-genetic forces.
has a vital, educational, 'survival value' for them?' and answers: 'I am afraid not.'

Constantinidis explained his rejection on the following grounds:

Schechner selected what suited his argument mainly from the work of ethologists, anthropologists, and historians. He thought he could 'weld' together play, ritual, and theatre by pinning on the same skewer observations obtained by different methodological procedures from different disciplines with different objects of study—without screening their findings [see PT 15]. Schechner's skewer held together several different pieces of information—especially about encounter rituals among higher primates and about rituals among human beings in Western avant-garde workshops, in Oriental folkloric performances, in ancient Greek temple-theatres, and in prehistoric decorated caves. Ironically, Schechner's argument was held together not by the 'scientific' evidence that he selected but by an etymological tale told by Johan Huizinga, a Dutch historian. (58; boldface mine)

Huizinga's book Homo Ludens argued that "play was anterior to, superior to, and separate from culture" (qtd. in Constantinidis 59) and discussed play "as a cultural phenomenon from a historical approach, not as a biological phenomenon from a scientific approach" (58). Huizinga's work attracted Schechner because his "goal," ostensibly "was to prove (1) that the [script] is anterior, superior, and separate from the [drama] and (2) that hunting, play, and ritual are related to the genesis of [dramas], [scripts], and [theater], respectively" (73). If Schechner could succeed, his purchase over Shepard's prior claim to authorship would be sustained.

[Schechner's] theory of origin connected animal and human performances even though animal simulation (e.g., camouflage) is genetically programmed whereas human simulation (e.g., impersonation) is willful both on stage and in life. Misguided by Huizinga, he blended play, ritual, contest, and hunting. He took for granted that these 'performances' overlap in some higher primates, but he failed to prove that they merge in

---

human activity in both archaic and modern communities. (76)

The relations he has sought to examine among these many activities are explicitly “horizontal,” identifying “what each autonomous genre shares with the others; methods of analysis that can be used intergenerically” (PT 6), apparently (although not in practice) abandoning diachronic vertical analysis about origins (28).

Instilling an authenticated originary presence is not accomplished openly, by commission, as it were, but instead by logical omission. The logical omission takes the form of the “two basic flaws from the methodology” borrowed from the Cambridge School of Anthropology which according to Constantinidis, Schechner “replicated” (77). These errors can be summarised as ungrounded universalising and figuration in the absence of evidence. “First, Schechner took for granted that the development of cultural phenomena—such as theatre—follow profound universal patterns of development even though surface details may vary from place to place and time to time” (77). The search for deep patterns, mobilising the ability to think through and beyond “surface details” might signal a salutary anti-empiricism. On the other hand, the possibility of “profound universal patterns of development” suggests a falsi at odds with an adequate appreciation for the causal efficacy of unintended consequences, of the past mediated by the present, and of the multiplicity of causal interactions in open systems. These features of the real historical world make it difficult to ratify the probability of reliable universal patterns. Instead, the evolutionary perspective embedded in performance theory suggests a unitary and unidirectional growth (e.g. “progress”) and its attendant nostalgia, for the purity attributed to “primitivism” and its ostensible communality, manifest in the aesthetic commitment to initiatory, participatory theatre. Pure communality contrasts with the complexity of real, stratified, geo-temporally located systems. The most recent sketch of the performance spectrum as “the ritual tree” (FR 229) depicts this unitary growth as proliferation from a shared source. Schechner’s explicit attempt to “return” set forth
in his letter to Shepard about TPG's rehearsal mode serves equally as an emblem for
the performance project's theatre and theory: to "start" with "only what is there" is to
embark in medias res, with history, memory, ideology, and fantasy all conditioning
the present complexity. There is no pure place to begin.

The second error of figuration calls attention to the literary form in which
Schechner's cognition unfolds.

Schechner used analogy to compensate for lack of
evidence. What the records show that happened at
one place and time could have happened at another
place and time about which the record shows nothing.
So, he straddled over continents, centuries, and
species, forcing disparate anthropological, historical,
and ethological observations together in order to make
up for the lack of assumed intermediate developmental
steps which would allow him to link hunting, play, ritual,
contest, and theatre. Since he was working within the
frame of a Platonic-Darwinian model, he could not
entertain the possibility that theatre has not evolved
from a singular source or in the same way in all
cultures at all times. (Constantinidis 77)

So described, this error, of figuration as a substitute for evidence, seems to be a
particular kind of the ungrounded universal statement, and so perhaps is best
considered a prominent subset of the first error. Ungrounded universals are
incapable of specifying why they might be correct. By a leap of faith, the ungrounded
universal statement attempts to secure its uncertain validity by appearing to bridge
an irreducible difference.

Despite Constantinidis's reading of Schechner's authorial justification in
anthropological terms, the broadly evolutionist approach uniting Schechner and
Cambridge anthropologists is not wholly binding. Schechner's strategic need for a
theory of ancient art and communal culture distinguishes his theory from the
antecedent Cambridge School. The fusion, which Schechner effectively argues by
his strategic use of Darwinist thinking, is directly implicated in the authorial formation
he occupies in negotiating the relation of art to life, as a neo-avant-gardist artist
working across theatre and theory. For example, by organising his rehearsals
around a conception of primitive initiation rituals, Schechner as a theatre director was eliding the contrasts between the terms of his tenuous analogy; from the rules about silence and lateness imposed by this patriarchal authority on his collaborators (ET 256-64), to the proposed search for the "sources of rock" in The Tooth of Crime. Schechner's reading of his directorial tasks was surprisingly literal and unreflexive. "Often I would communicate to the whole Group by writing out my notes and distributing them," Schechner recalls of the early days. "I discouraged any kind of discussion during workshops. In fact, we followed strict procedures of silence" (ET 257). The hierarchical communality Schechner attributed to premodern cultures was imposed, not negotiated, by him through his address of the artists, materials, and audiences with whom he worked. By contrast, the Cambridge School premised its investigations into ancient civilisations on the notion of an already achieved emergence from such structured collectivity, for which the fractured relation between contemporary scholarship and the inherited traces of premodern communality provided them with their study brief. There remains a search for origins, but it is conditioned by a sense of history.

Jane Harrison, for example, posited that prior perceptions and emotions are reproduced through ritualized action (10), which are by definition "done publicly by a collective authorized body" (14). The transformation of such "things done" (the Greek dromenon meaning "rite") into drama, (which also means in ancient Greek "things done") is wrought, according to Harrison, through the dissolution of the collectivity. Collectivity is written into Harrison's definition of ritual action. It dissolves to produce spectators as witnesses rather than as participants, precisely a shift which Schechner's theatre praxis seeks to reverse through its commitment to audience participation. The conversion of dromenon into drama also, however, points to the distancing of people from the practicality of the ritual activities; such a distance engenders the aesthetic distance which her contemporary, Edward Bullough, was theorising as a necessary component for art (69-70). The psychical price of art, for
Harrison, was the loss of ritual's practical relation to and its productivity in everyday life, arising from the collapse in confidence in rite as being authentically efficacious. In very broad strokes, Harrison established an historical progression for the emergence of theatre from ritual, while also maintaining a strong art/life distinction allied with the Aestheticism of the early twentieth century. Through her attempt to explain theatre's emergence historically and to sustain a distinction between art and life, Harrison was implicitly defending a specific social purpose for theatre, as in some measure both entertaining and efficacious.

Although entertainment and efficacy are precisely the terms by which Schechner locates the particular value he attributes to theatre, ritual, and other performance modalities, Schechner has not subscribed to Harrison's method of articulating both connections and distinctions. This refusal is concretised in his rejection of the division of participants into performer and spectator. Nor does Schechner's theory seek to understand theatre's emergence, either historically or contemporaneously, in relation to everyday life and practical needs. Instead, it aggregates the multiple relations conceivable among ritual activity, practicality, aesthetic pleasure, and degrees of participation. This aggregate forms the performance spectrum. Within it, there is no consistent articulation of the epistemic status of origins or the symbolic or practical significance of their genuine status as an integral part of a local culture. (Indeed, Schechner's view of play as nonproductive

---

34 The art/life distinction Harrison upheld underwrote her classification of certain temperaments as legitimately artistic and therefore acceptably non-conformist, as against those more practical personalities (112-38). This classification was an effort to bring her history of art up to date.

35 It is unlikely, however, that the separation from ritual by the division in participation was the sole constitutive force for drama, as Harrison's account suggested. Rather, the prescribed ritual actions (dromenon) were linked to "a restricted body of cult-myths (legomena)" and it was that fusion "that rendered [the Dionysiac ritual] a fully fledged [...] 'representation of an action'. In other words, it had attained a narrative plot whose complexity came close to that of drama" (Friedrich, "Everything" 275, 269). Legomena is elided in the dromenon-drama account above.
stated in the early "Approaches" essay, which follows Huizinga (32), is abandoned in
the second phase, where increasingly Schechner seeks a purchase for
performance's legitimacy through establishing its efficacious and instrumental
character [see PT 120-24].) This refusal to analyse how the aura of authenticity (to
recall Benjamin's analysis on the matter of repetitive production) is produced and
reproduced for the differing perspectives of participants and observers seems, in my
view, to compromise the kind of aesthetic appreciation of ritual activity which
elsewhere the performance project appears to promote. In practice, it actually
undermines cultural literacy by creating the false impression that people are
universally susceptible to the same belief- or transformation-generating experiences,
irrespective of their cultural formations. In short, it is falsifying universals through "the
illicit presentation" by performance theory "of section as universal or universal as
section interest, [as well as] the screening of contradiction and conflict" (Bhaskar,
Dialectic 275). Victor Turner's proposal to "turn the more interesting portions of
ethnographies into playscripts, then to act them out in class" (Ritual 90) tests
precisely the possibilities and limits of this dubious pluralism which Schechner's
performance theory produces. The failure to establish at the level of theory any clear
relation between the origin of ritual activity and its symbolic or practical efficacy
generates a strange levelling of significance, which paradoxically makes the practical
effects of symbolic efficacy very difficult to appreciate. Yet to question the relevance
of performed ethnography, on the basis, for example, that it may be theatre but it is
not research or knowledge, is to approach the centre of the crisis in epistemology
which marks post-1945 western thought.

The fusion of past and present, ritual and theatre, executed under the banner
of "performance" by Schechner's performance project is premature; it is secured in
practise only by an artistic style that is associative and uses collage. It is efficacious
insofar as it obstructs questions such as, what possible relation or relevance could
Eskimo song duels provide to staging the conflict of Hoss and Crow? When the
question is raised, the relevance is impressionistic, not explanatory; when impressions and associations pass as knowledge, ignorances are explicitly being produced. In another context, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick argues that “[i]gnorances, far from being pieces of originary dark, are produced by and correspond to particular knowledges and circulate as part of particular regimes of truth. [...] Ignorance and opacity collude in mobilizing the flows of energy, desire, goods, meanings, persons” (8, 4). Despite the ignorances which Schechner’s claims to knowledge produce, Schechner convincingly develops his interests in intercultural and ancient performances by framing himself as the director-as-explorer. In the words of theatre sociologist Maria Shevtsova:

Schechner proposes, for instance, that ["Western theatre"] adopt and/or intensify the ‘warm-up’ and ‘cool-down’ procedures undertaken by both actors and actor-participants in non-Western performances, whether they are stylized like Noh or spontaneous, as happens when individuals or entire masses of people reach semi-conscious, mystical states of being during the Ramlila.

This, in other words, describes the agenda organising Schechner’s “regime of truth” (Sedgwick 8). “But the main purpose, it seems, of taking over the practices, theatrical or otherwise, of other cultures, is,” according to Shevtsova,

to improve western theatre, which suggests a new version of old imperialism and a fundamental disregard for differences that either version brings in its wake. ("Part Two" 192)

Schechner’s desire for a particular kind of “rugged” aesthetics reveals itself as the libido driving his desire for scholarly mastery. In other words, the Darwinism of the emergent performance theory is strategic. In making claims for the truth of certain kinds of knowledge, it produces ignorances. These ignorances relate to the very processes it claims to understand. In this light, the collapse of entertainment into efficacy appears as an a priori commitment, not an earned and defensible scholarly discovery. Constantinidis defends this reading, stating:
In short, Schechner called upon the 'authority' of ethology and anthropology to defend and expand his directorial turf and the tradition of theatre workshops which had mushroomed in the 1960s. [...] 'I associate the workshop environment,' wrote Schechner, 'with those ancient, decorated caves that still give evidence of the singing and dancing, people celebrating fertility in risky, sexy, violent, collective, playful ways.' (75-76)

And having accomplished the innovation for theatre in theatre (by rescuing the mental map from debased written text owned by the living dramatist), Schechner seemed ready in subsequent phases of the performance project to marginalise the form which might serve others as provocation, invitation, and occasion to innovate. From its position in a continuum Schechner articulated around theatre and ritual, which included play, games, and sports (PD 72 and passim), Schechner would absorb theatre's specific features into a wide ranging spectrum of performance. Once he theorised the spectrum, he worked to install it as a recognised kind of academic study. The institutionalised study of performance is described below.

---

35 Citation originally from the first version of "Drama, script, theater, performance" 36.
3. Performance Studies in and for Institutions

As a broad-based matrix for the study of theatre and other performances, Schechner's project promises to bring within a single framework both the tools and the topics which have emerged in those areas across the humanities, arts, and social sciences where heretofore aesthetic and social performances have been studied. The reach is established by the continuum across which theatre and ritual are related. This continuum included games, play, and sports when it was first enunciated in the late 1960s. In time, the continuum is redescribed as a spectrum of performance activities, and to the terms above are added prehistoric and shamanic rites, therapeutic practice, mass political activities (e.g. protests, debates, campaigns), and personal comportment in interpersonal relations and/or in the (trans)formation of personal identity. "The broad spectrum" Schechner proposes "includes performative behavior, not just the performing arts, as subject for seriously scholarly study" (FR 21). To this array of topics, Schechner applies the questions: "How is performance used in politics, medicine, religion, popular entertainments, and ordinary face-to-face interactions. What are the similarities between live and mediated performances?" (21) For performance studies to find its secure purchase over the application of these questions to real domains,

The underlying question became whether or not the same methodological tools and approaches could be used to understand a noh drama, a football game, a Yaqui deer dance, a Broadway musical, a Roman Catholic Mass, an Umbanda curing ritual, a Yoruba masked dance, and a postmodern experimental performance? (Schechner and Appel 3)

In its address of this fundamental question, the "problem was divided into six specific areas of interest" whose delineation, I would suggest, exemplifies the structured complexity of the performance project, which my new reading of Schechner’s work promises to unpack. These areas, designated in Schechner and Appel’s words (4-6) are:
i. Transformation of being and/or consciousness;
ii. Intensity of performance;
iii. Audience-performer interactions;
iv. the whole performance sequence;
v. transmission of performance knowledge;
vi. how are performances evaluated?

These are vital and structuring questions for theatre studies. Along with these problems, Schechner posits a range of performance magnitudes – from brain events, microbits, bits, signs, through to scenes, dramas, and macrodramas (PT 282, Schechner and Appel 44). Together these structures indicate the advance Schechner's theory makes from its inaugural association or analogy of theatre and ritual introduced in Chapter 1.3 above. For here it announces a united spectrum of activities which can be described in terms of magnitudes and in terms of features, some of which are temporally ordered, others of which are perspectival. Reconsidering the suppositions and significance of the proposed remapping of the problem of studying the cultural and aesthetic productions included in the spectrum is the aim of the present study.

I believe that when such a performance theory as I've described above comes to be recognised by institutions as a legitimate, if not autonomous guide to the study of performative and cultural modes, a new reading of the work of Richard Schechner is needed. This is because the institutional position of performance has a different significance than its local inscription in Schechner's writing, research, and theatre. On the institutional level, performance executes an expansion of the particular aesthetic values articulated in Schechner's theatre and articulated in his theory of ritual's relation to art. The latter serves to authorise the institutionalisation of performance, which through its institutional ratification as a study paradigm, obtains a broader efficacy in structuring the production of knowledge. This expansion is
signalled by Schechner's postulating performance as both a subject matter and as a perspective:

"As" performance is a way of studying the world. Everything and anything can be studied "as" performance. Just as everything, absolutely everything, can be studied "as" physics, chemistry, law, medicine—or any other discipline of study whatsoever. For what the "as" says is that the object of study will be regarded "from the perspective of, in terms of" the discipline of study. (Schechner, "Draft" n.p.)

In short, the preferences Schechner expresses as his aesthetics, in environmental theatre praxis, are projected through an institutionally-recognised performance studies paradigm onto a broader field of production which includes performance practice, theories of performance, and field studies. The question arises, by what authority does this expansion of aesthetics into epistemics occur? An answer lies in a consideration of the internal structures guiding the production of authorial positions, authoritative and authorised texts. By considering that character of its institutional presence and efficacy, the performance project's current operations can be better understood. I suggest that the institutional character of Schechnarian performance coheres around two related terms: discipline and paradigm. After discussing these terms in relation to performance as a project, I will contrast the performance project with another far-reaching study programme, semiotics.

For the institution, Schechner has promoted performance studies as "the core of a 'well-rounded education'." Its status depends on its expansiveness.

That is because performed acts, whether actual or virtual, more than the written word, connect and negotiate the many cultural, personal, group, regional, and world systems comprising today's realities ("New" 9).

Where it is institutionally recognised as a department rather than simply a trajectory of study, performance studies is said to function in an ambiguous space as a degree-granting entity promoting itself as an "anti-discipline." The term "anti-discipline" seems to suggest that multi-disciplinarity is marked by radical intellectual anarchism
at the level of method, rather than interpreting multi-disciplinarity as a function of open exchange. To think of performance studies as an “anti-discipline” obscures the ways in which performance studies actively, if implicitly, structures which subjects get studied and how.

The notion of an “anti-discipline” raises the dialectical distinction and connection between the terms “discipline” and “field.” The use of the latter term, “field,” is eclipsed in performance precisely at the point at which institutional ratification becomes the primary goal of Schechner’s performance project (cf. the 1979 Southeast Asian volume of The Drama Review, guest edited by Schechner and introduced by his proposal of “a field theory of performance” [“Towards” 2]). Both Joseph Roach, then director of New York University’s graduate programme, and Dwight Conquergood, head of Northwestern University’s programme, have said that performance studies was neither discipline nor field. For Roach, it is “of course an antidiscipline”; at the first international conference of Performance Studies held at N. Y. U. in 1995, Conquergood announced “the trickster [as] the ‘guru’ of this new antidiscipline” (Carlson, Performance 189). Taking the trickster as the emblem of an institutionalised performance practice recalls Simon Goldhill’s “reading of Greek tragedy as a transgressive Dionysiac force, planting subversive paradoxes in the civic discourse of the polis.” Friedrich described this interpretation “[a]s redolent of the current Zeitgeist [with] ‘postmodern construct’ written all over it” (“Everything” 266). Certainly, in announcing the declining of the American neo-avant-garde and the “end of humanism” Schechner’s work participates in the postmodern Zeitgeist. It seems that in expanding, Schechner’s performance project has not broken with the neo-Nietzschean project of the Cambridge School, but rather pursued it with more unbridled enthusiasm (see Chapter 1.3 above).

The difficulty with the language in which performance studies currently identifies itself is its imprecision. Surely the breadth of contemporary cultural studies, women’s studies, and area studies, or the inter-disciplinarity of gay, lesbian, and
queer studies, ethnic studies, or, now even English studies, is not indicative of an absence of standards. Rather, their growth manifests a recognition that inherited rubrics of study topics and methods of research and dissemination are no longer adequate to contemporary configurations and current concerns. Allowing the trickster to undo disciplines rather than simply to "play the field" underlines the sense in which the new performance trickster can, like the alternative theatre before, play "court jester" to the status quo (Sainer 275). Yet any broader role depends on a theory of emancipatory social change which performance as an institutional project lacks. All Schechner offers is a diagnosis of the "crash of performative circumstances" (EH 109-28, PC 306-28) which the institutional efficacy of the performance project itself contradicts.

When discussed by Conquergood, Roach, or Schechner, performance tends to appear as a sectarian practice and a minority discourse. However, in the same way that publishing was expanded to include teaching, writing, and speaking about theatre and performance in the summary of Schechner's work presented in Chapter 2.1, the category of the institution is similarly treated in an expanded way. The institution designates less a geographically specific site than a discursive location, a matrix for scholarly and aesthetic production. From the perspective of discursive matrices introduced in Chapter 1.1 above, the performance project is institutionalised in any domain of study in which its paradigm is actively (if implicitly) structuring knowledge production. Such paradigmatic status is defined by Thomas Kuhn as "the source of methods, problem-fields, and standards of solution accepted by any mature scientific [or scholarly] community at any given time" (103). As an institutional paradigm, performance is authorised to enforce methods of study and problem selection, as well as controlling the standards by which knowledge is ratified. Through journals, curricula, book lists, and conferences, performance as a paradigm can structure the circulation of texts, as a means to organise ideas, thereby affecting a broader field beyond its formal university bases. The functions of a healthy
paradigm help explain the spectrum of Schechner’s own productions in theatre and in theory, as a producer, director, performer trainer, teacher, editor, author, and public advocate.

Kuhn’s widely used definition of paradigm, introduced in his groundbreaking study, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, first published in 1962, seems at odds with Roach’s characterisation of performance studies as an anti-discipline. Within its paradigm, does performance as “anti-discipline” function to dissolve objects, negating through corrosive methods of critique, the object hitherto constituted by an academic discipline? Or does “anti-” modify “discipline” in order to distinguish performance’s characteristic sociability with a “panoply” of performative modes from a more traditional discipline’s fastidious discretion in its choice of objects? If it were the latter, then the paradigmatic standing sought by Schechner for performance would be characterised by an under-determination of its “problem-field” which would be seen as always expanding, unlimited, all-inclusive, or total. Yet Schechner has sought “a theory-determined place in [his] field of vision” for all the performative phenomena he has encountered (Kuhn 97). He construes performance either as a mode of production, as in Ramilia, the Yaqui deer dances, and the experimental theatre by TPG, or as a perspective, evident in his descriptions of mass demonstrations (FR 45-93) and theatricality (EH 70-73). In addition, he has explicitly advocated performance as a paradigm for the reconstruction of theatre studies (“New”; “Transforming”). In his advocacy, Schechner has expressed an urgency which distinguishes him from other aligned practitioners. For example, Philip Auslander observes “the territorial imperative Schechner seems to think performance must obey: Performance Studies can be born only from the ashes of theatre studies” (“Evangelical” 178). Indeed, Schechner has striven to control the dialogue between a necessarily interdisciplinary theatre studies and the advances in performance modalities, multimedia, and the growing body of material generated by theatre anthropology and intercultural collaboration and conflict. The image of an “anti-discipline” with its emblematic
trickster as a guru mystifies the real relation of authorship and authority, which I argue, underpins Schechner's performance project.

The nexus of authorship and authority for the institutionally mature performance project returns to the ground opened by Schechner's ritual theory of art's relation to life. In Chapter 1.3 above, I considered how Schechner drew upon the research of the Cambridge School on Nietzsche's thesis of the origins of tragic theatre, in his conception of an efficacious theatre capable of participating in social change. The thrust of such a ritual theory is to dissolve the "aesthetic difference" by which art's distance from everyday life might be measured. In unpacking his ritual theory, Schechner's writings have agitated inherited, art-historical conceptions of the specificity of theatre as an art form. TPG's theatre praxis represented the practical branch of this investigation. As performance has developed, however, a similar pursuit emerges in terms of scholarly methodology and pedagogy. Whereas the ritual theory of art leads to the occlusion of theatre's specific emergence from the everyday, performance as a substantive and as a perspective occludes inherited academic conceptions of the discretion between disciplines and between object of study and method for study. As a paradigm guiding degree studies, the performance project is pursuing the wide-ranging study of "performed acts" in traditionally accredited academic institutions. It is doing so by circumventing or transcending conventional conceptions of the discrete divisions between and exchanges among academic disciplines; and yet in this effort, performance studies is by no means unique.

What is ironic about performance is that it makes these challenges to structures as it inhabits them. Unlike gender, race, or sexuality studies in universities, which have activist counterparts in the world beyond academia, performance as a form of study (not as a form of production) can make no similar claim. Its entire profile depends upon its position within an institutional apparatus whose claims to order knowledge it defies. Paradoxically, the performance project
aims both to obliterate theatre's specificity as an object of study through the theatre/ritual analogy and to legitimate itself as explicitly interdisciplinary "anti-discipline" awarded resources, dealing in and accruing the symbolic and cultural capital of a successful scholarly enterprise. Schechner has pursued it by making and debating theatre. This is a paradox with no apparent resolution. The contradictions that appear undermine Schechner's authority. For example, Philip Auslander discerns in Schechner's "evangelical" promotion of performance an "idea that performance studies somehow is (or will be) a counterhegemonic guerrilla operation within the academy" ("Evangelical" 180). At the same time as he critiques this notion, Auslander affirms that "despite any claims to taking up an oppositional position, the future of the field depends on its becoming institutionalized" (180). Schechner has never wavered in his commitment to the profession he has chosen as an academic: "I was trained as a critic and editor; my N.Y.U. job was as a professor. [...] For all the reputation about being 'dionysian,' I taught about dionysian patterns - I did not live those patterns. [...] I was afraid of what would happen to me, to my reputation, to the work I wanted to do" (ET 264). When measured against the privileges and the security of his position, Schechner's "evangelical fervor" about performance makes his ostensibly radical stance into something of a joke.

There is, however, one resource which is germane to Schechner's enterprise, and which can be brought to bear on the tension between Schechner's drive to organise social change using art and his aspirations for institutional ratification, namely theories of neo-avant-gardist art. Both Henry Sayre and Hal Foster have addressed the question of art institutions in terms which reject Peter Bürger's undialectical assumption about them as anathema to critical (as opposed to affirmative) art. In the American neo-avant-garde, Foster sees a "concentration on the institutional" (17) as a productive focus for cultural production seeking to rupture our inherited ways of regarding modernity. Foster argues that "the neo-avant-garde at its best addresses this institution with creative analysis at once specific and
deconstructive (not a nihilistic attack at once abstract and anarchistic, as often with the historical avant-garde)” (20). By reading this feature of neo-avant-gardism in relation to Schechner’s performance project, the positioning of the performance studies, within the (now multiply-sited) institution(s) of art, as itself creative production may explain the paradox of the project’s aims. Indeed, I go so far as to suggest that the institutionalisation of Schechnerian performance is an expansion, rather than a domestication, of its original (e.g. radical) impulse to fuse art and life so as to expand the realm of the pleasure principle. The evident irony of performance’s legitimation as an explicitly interdisciplinary “anti-discipline” awarded resources, dealing in and accruing the prizes and privileges of a successful scholarly enterprise, can then be seen as a facet of its productive style.

The story of semiotics’ emergence provides a useful site for comparative study. While semiotics set out to study how meaning is generated and exchanged in culture, performance aims to study a wide range of human activities.

Performance, of course, includes ‘the arts’ but goes beyond them. Performance is a broad spectrum of entertainments, arts, rituals, politics, economics, and person-to-person interactions. (Schechner, “New” 9).

This broad spectrum expresses an affinity with British-bred cultural studies and with attempts by earlier twentieth century avant-gardists to subject potentially any aspect of daily living to aesthetic inscription, so as to fuse art and life. But surely performance’s institutional politics suggest most strongly a comparison with semiotics. In respect of institutional (ac)creditability the expansiveness of performance as predicated by Schechner, exemplified in the claim that "performed acts connect/negotiate the many systems comprising realities" resembles the status attributed to semiotics by John Deely, who cites semiotician James Peters:

Semiotic inquiry cannot, and should not, be reduced to a mathematics, nor can it be easily made to conform to the quasi-rigour of linguistics.... semiotics is as much a perspective for critical inquiry as it is a methodology. In this sense semiotics does indeed serve as a framework for examining our universe and the way we understand
it. By approaching our investigations from a common point of departure, by examining our world from a shared perspective, we should find that we are after all much closer to one another than we had thought (qtd. in Deely, *Introducing* 87).^37

The advocates of semiotics emphasise the unifying and diplomatic functions of their broad field, as has Schechner in performance studies. For the semiotics programme as well, the goals envisaged include the institutional ratification of the paradigm. Attests Deely,

> The inherently philosophical and interdisciplinary ramifications of the development of a unified doctrine of signs—the practically unlimited range of implications and applications—is in my view probably the single most important feature of the semiotics movement, the surest guarantee of its continued growth and eventual acceptance within the formal curricula of schools. From this point of view—that of its inherently interdisciplinary structure or 'nature'—semiotics is 'the only game in town' (xiv; boldface mine).

It would seem that both semiotics and performance studies link their epistemological claims for paradigmatic status to an educational project which has ethical implications; what differentiates them as projects concerns not their aspirations as regards the institution of academia, but rather their different authorly formations.

Semiotics does not exhibit a singular developmental narrative, for a number of reasons. First, it has been proliferated by practitioners from within their disciplinary bases (anthropology, cognitive science, linguistics, literature, medicine, psychoanalysis, sociology) through productions aimed at crossing, rather than obliterating, disciplinary boundaries.^38 The emergence of an "institutional existence"

---


^38 Between its founding in 1976 and 1991, six of the sixteen presidents of the Semiotic Society of America were linguists (Sebeok 23), five were literary scholars (31), and one was a physician (45).
for semiotics in America derives from a conference on paralinguistics and kinesics organised in Bloomington, Indiana, in 1962, attended by Ray Birdwhistell, Paul Ekman, Erving Goffman, Edward T. Hall, Margaret Mead, and Thomas Sebeok among others (20-21). In describing its emergence, Sebeok observes the "tentacle-like embrace of the American academic community" because its attendees included two future presidents of the Semiotic Society of America, four future presidents of the Linguistic Society of America, and two future presidents of the Modern Language Association (Sebeok 22-23). Second, its research has the benefit of a richly complex genealogy, providing its guiding tenets with centuries of philosophical projects standing as antecedent to or pioneers of the contemporary semiotics perspective (11-12, 88). Third, semiotics in America has constantly intersected with conceptual traditions and innovations in other cultural contexts, revising itself in relation to a diaspora of semiotic researchers with a range of disciplinary and cultural allegiances (88-94). These features of semiotics' institutionality bear upon its "organizational aspects," those "external expressions that have molded its development in teaching and research in the United States."

Semiotics is taught in separate departments (e.g. Rice University) and in separate programmes (e.g. Brown University). It "has pervaded certain important American liberal arts curricular movements" (96). Semiotic journals include American Journal of Semiotics, Semiotic Scene, the now defunct Bulletin of Literary Semiotics and Ars Semiotica: International Journal of American Semiotic (97-99). In addition, the Advances in Semiotics series of Indiana University Press has published over thirty titles, Plenum Press runs a series, Topics in Contemporary Semiotics, and in 1986 published a substantial anthology on semiotic praxis internationally. Also, Mouton de Gruyter produces semiotic yearbooks (99). Finally, regional associations at state and national level link North American researchers to international networks (97). In contrast to semiotics, performance as a project seems at this stage of development to rest rather squarely on the shoulders of Richard Schechner. Theatre
scholar Bert O. States contends, “Richard Schechner has made the most concerted effort of any theorist to understand the ramifications of performance by pushing it into practices that seem to offer the slightest analogical attraction” (“Performance” 13). States echoes Carlson’s view that “[n]o theater theorist has been more instrumental in developing modern performance theory [...] than Richard Schechner” (Performance 21). Other scholars and study programmes subscribe to the name, but 1998 sees its first conference publication, The Ends of Performance. The dissemination of performance has not generated the same kinds of institutional apparatuses as work on a semiotics programme. In America, at least, the oppositional stand Schechner has taken against other disciplinary configurations could make it difficult for scholars to practice performance studies and another, more traditional discipline, by foreclosing the kinds of coalitions which have made semiotics successful.

Arguably, Schechnarian performance diverges from the history of semiotics in America most markedly in its rhythm for academic change. In the main, this comes down to Schechner’s impatience. Like performance, semiotics proposes a totalising perspective for the study of all features of human existence (indeed, semiotics transcends the human/animal barrier by considering all forms of organic matter and organisation). Meetings in the mid-1950s among scholars including Gregory Bateson, Margaret Mead, I.A. Richards, mathematicians John von Neumann and Norbert Weiner, proposed the audacious aim “in the study of mankind [to] find eventual unification of all the sciences” (qtd. in Sebeok, Semiotics 71). This proposal emerged in the era of when Ludwig von Bertalanffy’s General Systems Theory was attracting widespread attention in the natural and social scientific communities (72-73), and for this reason, Sebeok’s history places

---

the ecumenical strivings of a weighty segment of the American semiotics community [...] as [...] having coincided and interlocked with the membership of the several and various 'unified science' and/or 'general systems' movements, which were led and promoted by the cream of the American academic establishment. (73)

The crucial limit on this "crusade for unification" (73) was articulated by Richard Parmentier in 1989: "any effort to construct semiotics as a universal metalanguage must confront the fact that semiotics is itself a semiotic system," which Sebeok translates as the observation that "semiotics carries its own pragmatics" (74). With the recognition that the science of signs is conditioned by the pragmatic conditions of its own (re)production, Parmentier concludes "Semiotics thus abandons its hegemonic pursuit of metascientific status only to occupy the more secure position of well-disciplined exemplar" (qtd. in 74). While Schechner's performance project intersects with the work of key contributors to the semiotic field, including Ray Birdwhitsell, Paul Ekman, Erving Goffman, Margaret Mead, and Victor Turner; it has not reconfigured its unifying aims in light of its own pragmatics.

To reconceive performance studies as an authored project is to interrogate its own performativity in a new way. Apprehending the performativity of Schechnerian performance depends on recognising two key strategies: first, deploying a robust conception of authorship which links it not simply to creative production but to authority and the benefits authority accrues; second, understanding the importance of institutionality for contemporary avant-gardes. The question of authorship, as it relates to privilege and authority, is addressed and accessed in Chapter Three. The question of institutionality is further developed through an analysis of the redefinition of theatre into performance across the developmental phases of the performance project, lodged in Chapter Four.

40 Citation originally from Richard Parmentier, "Disciplining Semiotics," Semiotics 74 (1989) 118f.
Chapter Three
Authorship & Authority for Performance

In Chapter Two, I described Richard Schechner’s performance project as an intermedia undertaking which works across theatre, theory, and academic institutional activities to inscribe his ritual theory of theatre as an approach to a broad range of cultural and social phenomena. This view of Schechner’s performance project contrasts with the placement by historians like Christopher Bigsby and Christopher Innes of Schechner’s performance theatre in an experimental moment which by the mid 1980s had been eclipsed. Instead, the longer view of the performance project regards Schechner’s elaboration of a neo-Nietzschean ritual theory as central to a more enduring undertaking. The goal of the present chapter is to make sense of that undertaking by considering how creative authorship and academic authority converge in Schechner’s work.

In the first subchapter below, I consider historical conceptions of authorship and its relation to authority in order to perform two textual analyses on Schechner’s work. Those analyses concern his strategic use of authenticity in his theory of restored behavior and his rhetoric of appropriation in his proposed “Figure for all Genres.” These discussions address the tenor and significance of Schechner’s fieldwork for the performance project as scholarship. The second subchapter links the questions of authorship and authority to the rhetorical figure of allegory and the theatrical category of the auteur. Allegory serves as an effective prism, attracting and refracting central concerns emerging through my critical analysis of Schechnerian performance. In the final subchapter, I argue that performance as Schechner conceives of it and proposes it as a paradigm is a literary, rather than a scientific, formulation. In describing its literary features, I draw upon the characteristics of allegory, metaphor, and metonymy as they are deployed in its cognitive advances.
1. Authorship and Authority

By authorship, I mean the process or accomplishment by which a proper name, as in a signature, becomes attached to an undertaking or a produced object. Donald E. Pease observes that

[depending on the activity and the application, the term ['author'] can connote initiative, autonomy, inventiveness, creativity, authority, or originality. A common procedure whereby an anonymous agent turns into an individual binds the term to these different activities. (105)]

The signature is the emblem of this distinction between anonymous production and individual, authorial creation; the implicit valuing of the individualised over the anonymous is signalled by the relative preference for creation over production.¹ (In construing the performance project as authored, I will expand the sense by which it is conceived as “creative” when I come to link it to neo-avant-gardism.) In the case of performance studies, Schechner’s signature is, I believe, undisputed; certainly Marvin Carlson and Bert O. States, writing from positions squarely in Theatre Studies, ratify Schechner’s prime position. Yet such evidence of Schechner’s apparent authorship does not secure the category as a useful, and usefully denaturalised, term.

As a category, authorship has been submitted to a useful critique by Michel Foucault. In negotiating a conception of “authorship” in this thesis, I dialogue with Foucault’s theory, in order to address authorship as a historically elaborated category described by an “author function,” while retaining its materiality and its occupation as a position in a field by individuals. This reorientation aims to resist the “indifference” which Foucault attributed to the nouvelle écriture, which he announced with Beckett’s

¹ On this basis, for the purposes of this thesis, I am not addressing the possibility of anonymous authorship. At the same time, however, I do not suggest that authorship is solely an individual affair; for social structures and historical processes both contribute to the grounds from which authorship, as I have defined it, emerges.
wry question, “What does it matter who is speaking,’ someone said, ‘what does it matter who is speaking’” (qtd. in “What” 101). It resists such indifference by linking authorial production with symbolic capital and its compensations. To do so, it introduces the pragmatic dimension of authored production, its social reception.

The author’s name serves to characterise a certain mode of being of discourse [which] shows that the discourse is not ordinary everyday speech that merely comes and goes, not something that is immediately consumable. On the contrary, it is speech that must be received in a certain mode and that, in a given culture, must receive a certain status (Foucault, “What” 107).

The institutionality of this feature of authored discourse indicates that “in a civilization like our own there are a certain number of discourses that are endowed with the ‘author function,’ while others are deprived of it” (107). Authored discourses are “different from other discourses” because they are “objects of appropriation,” subjected to forms of ownership (108); their ownership is signified in the author’s signature and is “the result of a complex operation which constructs a certain rational being we call ‘author’” (110). As Pease remarks in his summary of Foucault’s position:

The name of the author turns discourse into legal property, and the notion of legal property in turn supports and is supported by related discourses concerning entitlements, liberties, duties, rights, constraints, impediments, obligations, and punishment. The name of the author saturates the entire network of legal relations, thereby empowering the attribution of discourses to the procedures that result from them. (113)

Arthur Miller’s successful quashing of The Wooster Group’s deconstructive staging of The Crucible illustrated the efficacy of this network of relations. This was because The Crucible bore Miller’s signature and because Miller had the cultural capital to pursue his authorial rights through the juridical apparatus. Thus, the author’s signature facilitates but does not determine the privatisation of intellectual property.

In his essay “What is an Author?” which sets forth this juridical conception of authorship, Foucault addresses two critical attempts to destabilise the presumed
naturalness of the category of the author, focusing on the nature of a “work” and on writing as an activity. Of the former, Foucault observed that a “theory of the work does not exist, and the empirical task of those who naively undertake the editing of works often suffers in the absence of such a theory” (104). A work’s “curious unity” is difficult to explain and the “elements [of which] it [is] composed” is uncertain (103). I capitalise on this uncertainty about the nature or limits of an authored work in my proposal to read the entire scope of Schechner’s published texts as a singular performance project. More broadly, the problem of what constitutes a work is played upon by avant-gardist subversions of institutionally sanctioned categories for cultural production. The blurring of categories is evident in contemporary American theatre. For example, André Gregory’s Vanya on 42nd Street only played sporadically to invited guests, producing an interpenetration of rehearsal and public performance and of social occasion and stage performance. In forum and performance theatres, spectating and performing interpenetrate. In live art using video, as exemplified by the Wooster Group, execution and documentation interpenetrate. Similarly, interpretation and documentation interpenetrate in the interview-based solo performances of Anna Deavere Smith. These forms/processes test our presumptions about the nature of and boundaries to “the work” of art. What the avant-gardist assaults on the nature of “the art work” highlight is the pure conventionality of the latter’s definition. Foucault’s historiography adds to the recognition of the changing forces of artistic convention an historical awareness of the embeddedness of conventions within a social history which sustains them through institutional apparatuses for production and reception. Such apparatuses operate against the centrifugal force of aesthetic change. In the absence of a binding theory of the work, Foucault points to the myriad points for its ongoing renegotiation. My reading of Richard Schechner articulates Schechner’s innovative renegotiation of the limits of theatre and theory by describing how he uses each as the licence to work in the other.
As with the indeterminate “work,” so too with the notion of “writing” (écriture), which according to Foucault “keeps alive, in the gray light of neutralization, the interplay of those representations that formed a particular image of the author” (105). It is only “a particular image of the author” which the essay seeks to question, one whose obituary was written by Roland Barthes in his essay “The Death of the Author.” In that essay, Barthes argues that the figure of an individual sovereign author credited with the ingenious creation of a text was a “tyrannical” image of a “modern figure” generated by positivism’s “transparent allegory of the fiction, the voice of a single person, the author ‘confiding’ in us” (142-43). In the place of an autonomous and unified subjectivity as the source of writing, Barthes shifts the locus of meaning to the active reader, summoned into existence by the written structures s/he interprets. In this scriptural economy (to borrow de Certeau’s phrase to apply to a more delimited context) Barthes describes, the critic stands as a sovereign, if provisional, subject. It “is the critic,” concludes Pease, “rather than the author or reader who can render an authoritative account of the structure of the work, the internal relationships among the various textual strands and levels” (112). Foucault’s response to this proposal is to interpret it “as a literal ethical imperative” (Pease 113) in order to demonstrate its limits. The demonstration is achieved when the world in which authors, critics, and readers alike reside, is recalled into the theory of reading. For Barthes’s predicated sacrifice of the category of the author fails to secure the relation of credited authors to socio-political institutions located in geo-history. The recollection and relocation of writing and reading as situated social activities begins with a description of their pragmatics. Foucault’s term “the author function” denaturalises the unmediated link between an individual and an authorial voice, without foreclosing, as has Barthes, the actual occupation of the authorial position by individuals who symbolically and economically stand to benefit from their signatures. By allowing that the author function “does not refer purely and simply to an individual, since it can give rise simultaneously to several selves, to several subjects” (113),
Foucault’s theory preserves the historical occupation by individuals of authorial positions.

The robustness of the conception of the author function appears when it serves to ground two group of authors designated in terms not of texts or works but in terms of discourses. These are the transdiscursive authors and the occasional founders of discursivity. The “transdiscursive” position is that in which “one can be the author of much more than a book — one can be the author of a theory, tradition, or discipline in which other books and authors will in turn find a place” (113). The transdiscursive author signs (for) a paradigm. More momentous are the “founders of discursivity” who have produced not only “their own works [but also] the possibilities and rules for the formation of other texts” (114). Marx and Freud are the obvious examples of this position; for “[t]hey have created a possibility for something other than their discourse, yet something belonging to what they found” which “made possible not only a certain number of analogies, but also (and equally important) a certain number of differences” (114). The transdiscursive producer or the pioneering founder of discursivity describes the authorial function sought by the performance project. In these terms, Foucault’s theory can be used to read Schechner as an author with big aspirations. Both authorial functions produce and sustain an authoritative position in relation to a broader field. In these realms of discourse, within which texts are situated and repositioned, creative or visionary authorship and authority meet. The convergence of authorship and authority in contemporary theories of discourse has interesting historical antecedents.

In medieval scholarship, a body of work was taught across seven subject areas: arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, music, dialectic, grammar, and rhetoric (Minnis 14). The body of work comprised texts by prescribed writers called auctores. Their status was undisputed, even as the means for studying their texts were continually re-evaluated: “the prescribed writers, in whatever discipline, were authorities to whom the reader had to defer” (36). Thus, in the “literary context” of
the Middle Ages, "the term auctor denoted someone who was at once a writer and an authority, someone not merely to be read but also to be respected and believed" (10). "The study of authoritative texts in the classroom formed the basis of the medieval educational system" (13). Prologues to their written texts served as a primary teaching tool, alerting students to the work's source, its place in its literary pantheon, and "the doctrinal and literary principles and criteria supposed to be appropriate to it" (14). In those prologues, a singular and relatively stable theory of authorship is secreted, marked, despite changes in elaborate classificatory schemes, by a "high degree of consistency with which medieval scholars treated the subject [of authorship] and employed its characteristic vocabulary" (2). Implicit in the theory of authorship is a hierarchy of writers and of readers: God is the source of sacred writing, and the human auctores who penned the books of the Bible exercised "the intentions [...] determined by the Holy Spirit" (21). In an age when ancients' legacies were valued far above innovations, "the only good auctor was a dead one" (12) and the valuation of the authenticity of works was often bound in with their appraisal as ancient (11-12). Secular works in the liberal arts provided a necessary training ground for less experienced readers "before [they] could begin to understand the infinitely more complex 'sacred page'"(33). Among secular works, William of Conches discerned in the 12th century a distinction between "mere writers (actores) and writers who were authorities (auctores)" (25-26). In an ecumenical age organised by a diffuse philosophical relativism, something of William's distinction remains today in the implicit hierarchy of scholars who follow or lead intellectual change, who reproduce paradigms or transform them. The legitimacy of scholastic rigour has, in some respects, been superseded by the attractions of startling vision.

Three Latin verbs provided the grammatical sources for the term auctor, and they help explain how new visions might come to occupy the place of studied authority. Agere means "to act or perform," augere means "to grow," and auieo means "to tie." In addition, auctor draws upon the Greek noun autentim meaning
"authority." Medievalist A. J. Minnis summarises: "An auctor 'performed' the act of writing. He brought something into being, caused it to 'grow.' [...] To the ideas of achievement and growth was easily assimilated the idea of authenticity or 'authoritativeness'" (10). Thus the term "auctor" was an "accolade" bestowed on writers whose works demonstrated both "intrinsic worth" and "authenticity" (10). For the former, the Christian faith served as the barometer of merit, and "The Bible was the authoritative book par excellence" (11). From the 12th to the 15th centuries, a shift occurred in the role of divinity in textual production. When God "was believed to have inspired the human writers of Scripture in a way that defied literary description" the auctor was regarded by exegetes "mainly as a source of authority." When the focus shifted in the 13th century from God as the divine auctor to the human auctor of Scripture, the literal sense of the Bible took on a new importance in exegesis (5). In terms of literary culture, the shift brought a new convergence: for if "[s]criptural auctores were being read literally, with close attention being paid to those poetic methods believed to be part of the literal sense; pagan poets were being read allegorically or 'moralised' — and thus the twain could meet" (6). Through common instruments of exegesis, contemporary scholars used the terms and frameworks of auctores to "interpret, explain, and in most cases resolve historical problems" (Pease 106). The productivity in turn sustained the authority attributed to the auctores. Such "auctorial sanction" organised the symbolic economy much the same way as divinely inspired monarchical rule organised the political economy of the period (107).

In time, the authority of the auctores was challenged by the burgeoning of new knowledge derived from the technological apparatuses and overseas travel characteristic of the Renaissance. The birth of mercantilism and of a nascent middle class created new categories of cultural agency.

Among these new cultural agents were 'authors,' writers whose claim to cultural authority did not depend on their adherence to cultural precedents but on a faculty of verbal inventiveness. Unlike the medieval auctor who based his authority on divine revelation, an
author himself claimed authority for his words and based his individuality on the stories he composed. (Pease 107)

Hand-in-hand with the repositioning of creative inspiration from the divine to the secular was the growing publishing trade which made books available to collectors and readers at an accelerating rate (Jardine, *Worldly* 133-80). The availability of books and other printed matter made literacy possible on an unprecedented scale. In the place of typological explanation within the frameworks of the classical and medieval *auctores*, new works were "acknowledging the inadequacy of allegory as a source of cultural knowledge" (Pease 107), substituting in its place observation and the prototypes for the human and social sciences.

If the Age of Literacy has proceeded without retrenchment since the Renaissance, it is not the case that the autonomous author has remained enshrined. For the new author's autonomy reached an excessive point in Romanticism's conception of the literary genius as a solitary figure, separate from society. The Romantic genius "established a cultural realm utterly dissociated from either the political or the economic realms"; only from that sequestered position could such literary authors be "elevated into exemplars and sources of value for the entire culture" (110). The function of the literary critic emerged to bridge the distinct realms, to interpret genius for less gifted readers. In the twentieth century, the role of the literary critic would grow, at least in its own estimation, to be not only an arbiter of the boundaries separating literature from other forms of writing, but also a privileged decipherer of texts. With the critics singularly capable of disclosing the hidden meanings of texts, the critics seemed to produce, as a result of their interpretations, authors as the "effect of the critic's interpretation" (111). This move to enshrining the new literary critic mimics the authority once exercised in the name of the *auctores*, and reaches its apotheosis in Barthes's declaration of the death of the author (112-13).
The need to slay a once-persuasive conception of the author as autonomous genius may be seen to derive from a faulty conception of modern symbolic economies. If,

[]like the autonomous human subject, the author was an emergent political and cultural category, which was initially differentiated from the culturally residual category of the auctor as an example of self-determination (108),

then the ostensible autonomy of the author could have been reconditioned by placing the human subjects within the field of their historical production, rather than simply exploding the category to empower a different, critical agency. Barthes's strategy manufactures a rupture where one may not have occurred. Michel de Certeau, for example, takes a different view of writing as "a practice" – "the multiform and murmuring activity of producing a text and producing society as a text" – which "has acquired a mythical value over the past four centuries" in the form de Certeau names the "scriptural economy" (131-34). It is only now in the modern age being "progressively overturned" by the scientific will-to-do (vouloir-faire) which sees truth emergent only through "historical, critical, economic work" rather than imparted as a divine meaning (un "vouloir-dire") to a willing listener (un "vouloir-entendre") (137).

The measure of discourse has become its authority to "make [people] act." Discourse "produces practitioners" (148), and it is "normative" to the degree that "it becomes a story, a text articulated on something real and speaking in its name, i.e., a law made into a story and historicized [...], recounted by bodies" (149).

Within a scriptural economy, reading is "fundamental" (167):

In a society that is increasingly written, organized by the power of modifying things and of reforming structures on the basis of scriptural models (whether scientific, economic, or political), transformed little by little into combined 'texts' (be they administrative, urban, industrial, etc.), the binomial set production-consumption can often be replaced by its general equivalent and indicator, the binomial set writing-reading. (168)
Reading's distinction from writing is sustained by de Certeau against Barthes's scriptor function. The latter's freedom is made conditional on symbolic and cultural positioning; and the "social hierarchization" of reading is regarded by de Certeau as both real and as concealed by freewheeling interpretative theory. "Reading is thus situated at the point where social stratification (class relationships) and poetic operations (the practitioner's construction of the text) intersect." Reading is therefore "an unknown out of which emerge, on the one hand, only the experience of literate readers (theatricalized and dominating), and on the other, rare and partial, like bubbles rising from the depths of the water, the indices of a common poetics" (172). Discerning the common poetics depends on a certain stability in the texts on which they operate and by which they are inspired, if only as a measure of their divergence from the "dominating" readings of cultural elites.

Clearly Foucault has influenced De Certeau's work (De Certeau 43-49). Foucault too apprehends the social field in which writing, reading, and discourse emerge, by which they are sustained, and on which they perform their own ideological functions. In assessing the merits of his analysis of a variable author function, Foucault suggested that his analysis should facilitate "the historical analysis of discourse [...] according to their modes of existence," that is, the "modes of circulation, valorization, attribution and appropriation of discourses" which vary and are susceptible to modification (117). The "intellectual and social 'commerce'" situates the author within a "collective inquiry in which he is inscribed"; for de Certeau to dignify the position of the individual producer within a shared field is an abstraction that generates an illusion of 'authorship'. It removes the traces of belonging to a network — traces that always compromise the author's rights. It camouflages the conditions of the production of discourse and its object. [...] A discourse can maintain a certain scientific character, however, by making explicit the rules and conditions of its production, and first of all the relations out of which it arises. [...] Every particular study is a many-faceted mirror (others reappear everywhere in this space) reflecting the exchanges, readings, and confrontations that form the
conditions of its possibility, but it is a broken and anamorphic mirror (others are fragmented and altered by it). (44)

So historical analysis, following Foucault, and discursive analysis, following de Certeau, may describe a productive position within a network; but it remains the fact that an individual occupies any such position. Such occupation by an individual of a productive position has both institutional and ethical consequences, and those consequences elude Foucault’s predicated (if merely strategic) disappearance of the author. The institutionality and ethics of authorial positioning is signalled most effectively, if emphatically by the French psychoanalyst and political theorist Cornelius Castoriadis, who insists:

The evil commences when Heraclitus dared to state: Listening not to me but to the logos, it is wise to agree that.... To be sure, one must struggle against personal authority as well as against mere opinion, incoherent arbitrariness, the refusal to give others an account of an explanation for what one says—logon didonai. But do not listen to Heraclitus. His humility is but the height of arrogance. It is never the logos that you are listening to but always someone, such as he is, speaking from the place where he is at his own risk, but at yours too. And that which in the ‘pure theorist’ can be posited as a necessary postulate of responsibility and of the control over his words has become, necessarily, in political thinkers the philosophical cover behind which they speak—they speak. [...] But no one ever speaks in the name of someone else—unless he has been explicitly delegated to do so. (Imaginary 4)

To be sure, no author or orator can claim full authorship for her articulations, anymore than an author could earn the credit for the full constitution of the discursive field(s) in which her products partake. De Certeau articulates this forcefully when he considers “the status of [his] analysis and its relation to its object” in the following terms:

As in a workshop or laboratory, the objects produced by an inquiry result from its (more or less original) contribution to the field that has made it possible. They thus refer to a ‘state of the question’—that is, to a network of professional and textual exchanges, to the ‘dialectic’ of an inquiry in progress (if one takes ‘dialectic’ in the sixteenth century sense of the
movement of relations among different procedures on the same stage, and not in the sense of the power assigned to a particular place to totalize or 'surmount' these differences). From this point of view, the 'objects' of our research cannot be detached from the intellectual and social 'commerce' that organize their definition and their displacements. (43-44)

But nor should the necessarily intertextual and historical character of any speech act grant amnesty on the ethical level for the consequences of the positions taken. "It is never the logos" alone that we hear "but always someone, such as he is, speaking from the place where he is at his own risk, but at yours too." Castoriadis's sharp words have guided me in this risky and awkward business of estranging the pursuits, projects, and productions of a living person in order to critique them as a project the aims and means of which are chronically, and perhaps fatally, unstable. Indeed, Castoriadis, de Certeau, and Foucault have each found interesting ways of linking the individual functioning to the fields in which production and consumption are sited. Each theorist calls attention to some part of the problematic of "recognition" according to which the fundamental sociality of authorship asserts itself in ethical terms. Because authorship is for modernity an affair of the individual producer in society, it cannot resist descriptions in social terms. For the present study, Bourdieu's reflexive sociology supplies the necessary terms.

In Chapter 2.3 above, I compared and contrasted the institutional formations of performance and semiotic study. The category of symbolic capital theorised by

---

In my adoption of Castoriadis's counsel, I have wittingly confused the verb pairs "to speak/to hear" and "to write/to read." This slippage reveals (and I willingly confess to) my practice of an active reading process which construes the encounter with a written text as a spatio-temporally located event, or as a punctuated series of events in those instances when I return and re-read. To do so is not to mistake what is written for the audible, or at least not simply to do so. Joseph Roach ridiculed William Worthen's alignment of texts and events by characterising Worthen's citation of Jerome McGann (Worthen, "Texts" 17) as evidence that Worthen has made "an intimate revelation [...] that he, like the ancients, reads aloud" (35). Worthen responded by characterising Roach's image as both "funny [and] gratuitous" and also "baffling [and] disappointing" (44), understanding it as symptomatic of the territorial disposition Worthen has actively sought to destabilise. I would like to take this image of reading as eventful in another direction, towards the if not full-bodied then fully embodied potential described by David Cole in *Acting As Reading*. 
sociologist Pierre Bourdieu can help explain the emergent institutionality described by Schechner and Deely. Bourdieu calls symbolic capital a "recognized power" because, for example, in order for "the philosopher's language to be granted the importance it claims, there has to be a convergence of the social conditions which enable it to secure from others a recognition of the importance it attributes to itself" (Language 72). Thus, to J. L. Austin's theory of speech acts, Bourdieu adds an essential social dimension to Austin's conception of the performative; while for the rhetoric of legitimated discourse, Bourdieu signals the active presence of an audience contained by and conditioning discursive production. For both scholarly and artistic production, the significance of institutionality is precisely the institution's ability to create and sustain the conditions of production, consumption, and reception whereby the goods are recognized as legitimately (that is, as legitimated) scholarship or art. Part of the critical purchase in constructing of Schechner's theatre praxis, theory, and academic activism a unified performance "project" consists in its denaturalising of performance studies' achieved status, through an analytical and critical history of its emergence. Describing the conceptual operations by which performance as a study object is constituted through the project is one aspect of delineating the institutionally achieved and maintained conditions of Schechner's production and their reception and consumption by others. As a strategy, this approach broadens the horizons of the social and aesthetic histories for Schechner's performance theatre produced by Christopher Bigsby, Christopher Innes, Theodore Shank, and Zoltán Szilassy and discussed in Chapter 1.1 above. By authority, I mean that recognized power differentially distributed across a field of production/consumption, by which certain enunciations are granted truth-force by a particular "convergence of [...] social conditions." As deployed in the present study, authority is measured not only by the adequacy of a description to the object that it seeks to apprehend, but also by the adequacy of a response that a pronouncement seeks to generate.
By conceiving of performance as an institutionally recognised study object, the performance project is seen to exercise a certain authority. That authority arises from its privileged position in relation to the circulation of symbolic and cultural capital. In the formation of such recognized sites of symbolic capital, since adequacy is not the sole determinant of authority, there is latitude in what is proposed as authoritative. Creative authorship emerges in that latitude, to shape Schechner's discourse on performance in ways that will secure his position as its author. For someone of his breadth of talents, creative authorship has been explored in theatre practice, in essay writing, in pedagogy. The historical merits to a convergence of authority and authorly production are manifest in the performance project produced by Richard Schechner. As the architect of performance as a study project, Schechner stands as beneficiary to its profitable accrual of symbolic/cultural capital.

The consolidation of legitimate performance studies accomplished in large part by Richard Schechner has been discussed insightfully by feminist theatre theorist Jill Dolan. Dolan has recognised that the problems and the possibilities of the performance studies paradigm return to the question of power; she has

> read the exhortations to 'join' the 'new paradigm' as a gathering of power -- institutional and intellectual -- rather than a gesture to affiliate, to work with, to stretch together the boundaries of theory and practice, performance and culture, in ways that are already happening. ("Geographies" 32)

She discerns the authoritative aspirations of performance studies from a certain privileged proximity:

> I graduated from the Department of Performance Studies at NYU in 1988, and feel very much empowered by the field's ability, as a method, to stretch the envelope of critical and theoretical practice. I also agree with its claims against more conservative traditions of historiography and literariness, which are still fundamental to many theatre departments in the academy. But I'm dismayed by what I see as disingenuousness about performance studies' power. (in Worthen, "Texts" 32)
Dolan perceives the symbolic and capital economy in which performance's capital assets circulate; yet British researchers do not necessarily share that perception. Julian Hilton succinctly characterised the current accessibility of the notion of “performance” in his introduction to a recent essay anthology.

This book offers no consensus as to what are the principal concerns for the future [of theatre], or about how best to deal with them. The common thread is the conviction that performance is a central concern in all contemporary cultural experience and speculation, whether at the personal level (how we 'perform' ourselves -- that is, consciously make the most of our abilities and opportunities) -- or at the level of social interaction (understanding social processes in which we are engaged as akin to performance acts). (4)

Jools Gilson-Ellis’s defence against performance studies’ restructuring of the field(s) of theatre’s research, namely "that similar work will not necessarily be called the same thing" (177), acknowledges the power of the performance project to resituate research. Yet it is a response which does not fully consider performance studies’ ability to (re)structure it. Any ambivalence towards Schechner’s performance project by British-based researchers is met by Schechner’s own “evangelical fervor” (Auslander, “Evangelical”), with which Schechner aims to reinvent theatre studies as performance studies. It’s difficult, however, to address Schechner’s proposals since in its diffuse forms, neither the structure nor the effects of Schechnerian performance appears with great salience.

How might its diffuse forms appear? Is performance, as it is propagated through the performance studies paradigm, destined to become the generalised image for a new wave of (more) enlightened humanism? To represent the performance studies project purely as harmonising, inclusive, or politically progressive, as Schechner attempts to do, would be misleading according to Dolan’s account. Like Dolan’s remarks, Gilson-Ellis’s pragmatic re-placing of performance studies in its place of origin responds to its aggressive incursion, but not its epistemics. As regards Hilton’s pluralism, by placing Schechner’s performance
theory in relation to other, clearly imperialist appropriations of southeast Asian art forms, Rustom Bharucha makes clear that pluralism within performance studies often ignores the geopolitics of performative modes and of their studies. Bharucha indicts Schechner’s presumption that a laissez-faire ethics adequately governs intercultural exchange and knowledge production even in such cases where researcher/researched relations unfold only across a power/privilege gradient (13-53). The power/privilege gradient has both practical and rhetorical consequences for Schechnerian performance. Each of these will be discussed in turn.
A. A strategic use of "the authentic"

In the case of Schechnerian performance as a study, the specific constellations of power and knowledge have great significance in determining the project's real possibilities. Here power and knowledge designate not Foucaultian abstractions, but instead manifest themselves in material resources to travel, participate and observe social rituals, produce performance events, publish, lecture, and so forth — in other words, do the things that performance studies practitioners do.

The power-knowledge network within which performance grows determines that the borrowings across cultures tend to flow from underrepresented margins to symbolically invested centres. Their value depends on these cultural goods being perceived as genuinely exotic, authentically "other"; but the use performance as anthropology makes of this cultural alterity is suspect. Indeed, in respect of the organised mobility of performance studies, Schechner's performance project functions as an allegory for the on-going privilege of the metropolitan Western "cultural centres" in relation to the praxically rich but economically and politically threatened postcolonial periphery. At the same time, there is no universally binding opposition between metropolitan and margin, since power gradients operate within and not simply between "First" and "Third Worlds." This means that alliance with local powers is not a guarantee of non-exploitative relations. It also means that its exploitations are not always apparent. Performance studies as formulated and practised by Richard Schechner (as a representative but not isolated figure) assumes a geographical and intellectual mobility that is the fruit and the emblem of class privilege exercised in any number of geohistoric contexts. My view is that by using its privileged position to access and report on indigenous cultural events,

---

Schechner's performance project has manipulated a conception of genuine traditional art to serve its own interests.

This strategy plays out most clearly in the central theory of restored behaviour, through which Schechner considers how performed activities are taken up and promulgated by productive apparatuses. Arguably Schechner's theory of restored behaviour functions as the centre of performance theory, even though other researchers cite it less often than his efficacy-entertainment braid. Its importance is clearly announced: "the use of restored behaviour is the main characteristic of performance" (PC 164; BTA 35) and is elaborated in a twice written essay with the title, "Restoration of Behavior" (PC 164-237; BTA 35-116). According to that essay, a "synchronic bundle" (PC 194; BTA 79) of performance elements irrespective of their historical formation or sedimentation can be reiterated in any context. As an example of a behaviour restoration, Schechner describes the interventions of Calcutta University Professor, Asutosh Bhattacharyya to establish a living practice of the declining mask dance called Chhau in a climate of diminishing patronage in the Purulia district. His efforts resulted in a regional competition and international tours of "restored" dancing. In Schechner's description, authorship and academic authority converge in the figure of Bhattacharyya, a new style of impresario:

Chhau 1961 and after is a creation of the mixture of what Bhattacharyya found and what he invented. [...] Reflecting on the tours, Bhattacharyya believes that they saved a form otherwise doomed, but at the expense of stirring jealousies and rivalries and generating irreversible changes. Chhau is a masked dance, and one side effect of its popularity abroad has been the demand by tourists for masks. Many masks are shipped that have never been worn by a dancer. These changes can be traced back to Bhattacharyya. He is the big Chhau man, and his authority is rarely questioned. When he writes about Chhau he emphasizes its village base and ancient origins; [...]. But he hardly mentions his own role in restoring the dance. Rather, he speaks of himself as 'discovering' it (BTA 71-73).
Schechner's account suggests that Bhattacharyya's authorial role is concealed behind his academic authority. Clearly his performance theory acknowledges the contributions of creative authorship rather than privileging only authority derived from academic knowledge. However, Schechner not only fails to locate the seams for critiquing Bhattacharyya's positionality in terms of his own culture's distribution of power and privilege. In addition, he accepts without question the ethical legitimacy of Bhattacharyya's position as an insider. The Chhau story appears in the earlier version of the essay in a section beginning with the words "Restorations needn't be exploitations" (PC 184). Schechner assumes that being Indian himself ensures that Bhattacharyya would be incapable of any unjust exercise of authority.

The complexities of Bhattacharyya's relation to the emerging Chhau dancing raise issues not only of authorship and authority, but also authorisation. It would seem, in Schechner's account, that Bhattacharyya's own Indianness underwrites his position as an academic authority who is not an exploiter. Of course, to assume that exploitation reduces down simply to national identity is untenable; being a citizen or subject of a nation is not a role which, even temporarily, supersedes all other identity categories, whose influence would somehow be suspended under the sign of shared citizenship. There must be procedures, both scholarly and socially, which affirm Bhattacharyya's assumption of a specific role in relation to the dancing tradition, processes of authorisation and accommodation that Schechner does not consider. Circulating around all these issues, however, is the vexatious question of "authenticity" as a value in any discourse about cultural production.

Conceptions of authenticity can easily degrade into assertions about originary presence, which are hardly credible in the wake of structuralist and post structuralist critiques of plenitude, originality, and meaning. However, it should be possible to maintain a less metaphysical, more pragmatic notion of authenticity, in order to describe that quality, which is far from universal or uniform, by which phenomena and processes are seen to be themselves precisely because of their situation within a
broader ecology of meaning. Such a conception of authenticity does not mistake the latter as a quality inhering in the artwork itself, but instead locates authenticity in the relation within which the art is produced. In other words, it's not simply, as Walter Benjamin argues, that an examination of a work's "commitment" calls for the "insert[ion of a work] into the context of living social relations ("Author" 87); but that in the case of performance, where production and reception are contemporaneous (de Marinis, *Semiotics* 50), the context of such "living social relations" is in fact constitutive of the work itself. Understandably, then, mindless reproduction (as through technological means of indiscriminate dissemination) will rupture the authentic aura, as Benjamin predicated, precisely because the ecology of production is blasted apart. Observing this rupture does not entail that new ecologies cannot be generated, which hybridise forms, functions, and participants; but it does mean that they are formed despite, not through, the adaptation/adoption of older, borrowed performance forms. The archaic status of the borrowed performance elements does not underwrite the legitimacy of the new. Each performance mode must constitute its unique character through the occasions when it is produced. This limited notion of authenticity apprehends that processes and phenomena are not comprised simply of internal components but that intrinsically they take their form within specific situations which condition them in ways too profound to be regarded as mere externals. By its very form this assertion, rather than risking essentialism, refuses reduction of complex wholes to their most visible parts. Such a notion suggests that there may be thresholds, which mark the latitudes beyond which changes in degree may turn into changes in kind. These thresholds are situated within the dialectic of reproduction (morphostasis) and transformation (morphogenesis) (Archer 163-344). Under such a geographically specific notion of authenticity, it should be possible to describe not only the sustaining and transforming of "folk traditions" but also the flourishing of adopted practices which have taken root. As playwright Badal Sircar said to Richard Schechner in Calcutta in 1976: "We were brought up on the 'modern theatre' -- that
theatre has been ours for nearly 200 years! We do not think of it as foreign" (PC 25).
Consistently, however, Schechner's work fails to engage with the hybridity of colonialism and modernity have engendered, preferring instead to sustain local and transnational circuits which bring tribal forms into commodified settings.

To explain why India's modernity holds little interest for Schechner, it is necessary to appreciate how fully his theory of restored behaviour privileges the archaic. Tradition, and all its implied attributes of age, genuineness, and authenticity, is the substrate for behaviour restoration. Through tradition, the contemporary theatre can be remade in ritual's image, as a place of transformation and communion. In theory, "[i]t is precisely when changes feed back into traditional forms, actually becoming these forms, that a restoration of behavior occurs" (BTA 114), Schechner declares. If we accept the definition of restoration given by ecologist Paul Hawken, however, Schechner's key phrase must intend to emphasise "behavior" rather than restoration. Hawken defines restoration as follows:

"Restore has many definitions, all with one theme. The act of restoration involves recognising that something has been lost, used up, or removed. To restore is to bring back or return something to its original state. This can involve rebuilding, repairing, removing, corruptions and mistakes; it allows for the idea of bringing a person or place or group back to health and equilibrium; it can mean returning something that originally belonged to someone else, whether it is returning lands taken from other cultures, or dignity stolen by bureaucratic regulations and officialdom; it encompasses the idea of reviving and rejuvenating connections, relationships, and responsibilities." (58)

If the integrity of living social contexts does not inform restored behavior, it is hard to affirm the process as restorative. If restored behavior is not culturally restorative, what is its purpose?

It would be tempting to follow the theatre/ritual analogy described in Chapter 1.3 through to Schechner's restoration theory. But to do so is to ignore that underneath his ritual theory of art's relation to life is a desire for mastery, which defies ritual's communitarianism. Instead, I suggest that the term "behavior" attests
to Schechner's key philosophical commitments, not to the spiritualised blending of an "everyday aesthete" like John Cage, but to the social control associated with the technocratic culture performance theatre seemed to oppose. The concept of behavior parses activity as a process into a representational sequence. In this way, it executes the reduction of complexity into linear forms. For example, B. F. Skinner's behaviorist psychology is a semiotics praxis "in which only the indexical meaning of things is recognized" (Ransdell 243). Indexical meaning apprehends the "indicative properties" which may not be all that is intrinsic to them; indexical fluency is associated with technological and technocratic control. Technocratic control is facilitated by a rubric of causal explanations for which activity is rendered discrete, quantifiable, and linear. Such discrete behaviors could be approached with great interpretative confidence by Skinner's semiotics. Opposed to such an indexical semiotics is the iconic semiotics of mythopoetic traditions (243). Based on their juxtaposition, semiotician Joseph Ransdell associates Skinnerian technocracy with an "abandonment of the moral perspective altogether" (241). Similarly, Schechner's behaviorism appropriates activities, empties them of iconic meaning, and functionalises them as behavior strips manipulable in the subjunctive liminality of rehearsal and performance processes.

When Schechner claims then that restoration occurs when change feeds back into traditional forms, Schechner seems to be making one of two claims. Either he means that the restoration of behavior is always occurring, because reproduction and transformation/adaptation are ongoing as changes are conditionally being fed back into structured practice even in ecologies of activity apparently secure from the extraneous presence of the anthropologist. Or he is claiming that the only change that has the power to so react back on traditional forms is the change introduced by the presence of the performance theorist, or contact with the structures and institutions that enable performance studies. Under the first interpretation, restored behaviour, the object of performance studies, is all that exists; this is supported by
his statement, "I do think that performances in all cultures share the particular quality of twiceness that the model [of restored behavior] depicts, that performances everywhere are restored behavior" (BTA 51). But under the expansive spectrum of performance, what is not performance? Alternatively, under the second reading, the power of performance studies practices to condition the world is expanded. Both readings aggrandise the performance project.

The error of performance theory, however, lies in its assumption that the failure of essentialism – the "crash of performative circumstances" (PC 306-38; EH 109-28) -- is in itself a sufficient annulment of authenticity. In my view, this assumption mirrors the error that understands authenticity in terms of the exotic, the aged, and the primitive. The first error takes the contemporary era as an irremediable perversion of humanity's prior condition, while the second mystifies its ostensible purity. Each gives a rendition of a cultural Eden and both are equally misguided. The ostensibly originary communality both impute is a fiction. Just because performance traditions change, sometimes very quickly as a result of specific forces and conditions converging, that does not mean that questions about authenticity suddenly become otiose. The pragmatic connotation of authenticity can register cultural plasticity, without surrendering its ability to critique cultural appropriation. When it fails in the latter, Schechner's approach abandons a "moral perspective altogether" much as behavioural psychology did. For example, it could make the ethical judgements necessary to distinguish between the intact local performance ecologies (e.g. as authentic) and their expropriations. It might then assess the kinds of authorial formations that might in any given instance attach to each, as when an interpretation is regarded rather as an adaptation or a deconstruction. Instead, the performance project appears to display an equanimity, which equally values the authorship arising from cultural appropriation and the understanding arising from authentic knowledge. Beneath this lies a deep-rooted indifference to the distinctions between the two categories of production. Thus, authentic origins seem to produce
only the impulse for restoration, disseminated through their vestiges, without exercising final or privileged authority over restoration's production.\(^4\) This is at best a strategic use of the category of authenticity: Schechner's commitment to origins is a purely formal and ultimately an indifferent one; they must exist for structural reasons, but what they were in any given case is not his concern. This ethical indifference obstructs investigation into the analytic histories by which interpretation, situated within the bounds of reproduction, might develop adaptations that produce new creations exceeding the tolerance of morphostasis. In effect, then, the refusal in principle to distinguish between licit reproduction of performances within a tradition and their transformation through appropriation renders historiography powerless because it denies historical discourse its analytic brief. In this way, the performance project merits the caution sounded by Herbert Marcuse, that "[e]pistemology is in itself ethics, and ethics is epistemology" (One 125).

In some respects, Marcuse's argument is implied in the article on the Chhau dances published by playwright John Arden in The Drama Review in 1971 (but not cited by Schechner's subsequent discussions). Arden's article begins with what he later qualifies as "an immediate and subjective view of the Chhau dances as seen, more or less unprepared, by a European visitor" (70). Pragmatically, the bulk of the brief article proposes to "eschew prose-poetry and [...] put forward a few facts"; among which is a description of how the Chhau dances "were discovered only a few years ago by Professor Bhattacharyya of the West Bengal Institute of Folk-Culture." Arden explains that these dances were hunting dances "modified so that they came to illustrate the traditional mythology of the Hindus." The reason for Bhattacharyya's

\(^4\) When theatre theorist Marvin Carlson distinguishes between sociologist Erving Goffman's behaviour strips and Schechner's on the basis that Goffman's work emphasised transformation while the latter "emphasizes the process of repetition and the continued awareness of some 'original' behavior, however distant or corrupted by myth or memory, which serves as a kind of grounding for restoration" (Performance 51), the critical weight must be placed on the repetition rather than on the allegedly founding origins.
resuscitation of them was that the dances "were becoming neglected" "because of poverty in the area"; the masks and costumes are very expensive to make and because of the physicality of the events, must be replaced regularly.

It can be easily seen, then, that the equipment of a first-rate troupe will rapidly make a huge hole in the community exchequer. Dr. Bhattacharyya told us of families who had gone bankrupt in order to make their troupe the best in competition, and of one troupe-leader who had committed suicide as a result of the economic pressure (70-71).

Arden nails the central question of research funding; Bhattacharyya gets none, and therefore can offer no subsidy to the troupes he encourages to compete in festivals (71). Nor, however, did the subsidised visitors from the West contribute to the costs of the performances they observed, recorded, and photographed. Although Arden affirms that those who "wish to understand the Chhau -- in its entirety -- can only do so by witnessing it (as we were fortunate enough to do) in the center of a populated village, among the people for whom it was intended and for whom the annual visit of the gods is an urgent necessity" (73), he reports that after a strenuous session dancing all night, the Chhau performers walked back to villages as far away as fifty miles without having been fed (72-73). This is a poignant and infuriating example of the "daily grind" conditioning participation in indigenous performance traditions (Bharucha, Theatre 29). Arden has written with the aim of identifying "even if only tentatively -- some of the many contradictions inherent in the whole business of reviving and studying folk drama in the backward cultural areas of the Third World" (74-75). His are observations that could have instructed Schechner's theoretical evaluation of the patronage structures that support or revive performance traditions.

In the story of the Chhau dances, Schechner's indifference to any authenticity which might contradict the scholar's authority in reconstruction is directly linked to his failure to consider India's complex internal politics and how they might structure patronage and academic authorisation.
Restorations needn't be exploitations. Sometimes they are arranged with such care that after a while the restored behavior heals into its presumptive past and its present cultural context like a well-set bone. In these cases a 'tradition' is rapidly established and judgements about its authenticity hard to make. (PC 184)

I object to this dismissal of the category of authenticity. The distinction between authentic and appropriated practices, newly authored, need not be articulated as absolute, but neither should it simply be erased. Very early in his career Schechner wrote, "negotiations are the very stuff" of art and of allegoresis (PD 198). In the performance project, however, the trend has been to pass over the necessary negotiations. The productivity of accommodation, adaptation, and transmission, are thereby privileged without attending in sufficient detail to the costs of such procedures. Thus, just as "here" and "there" are merged in Schechner's accounts through an unreflective mobility, the prize of the well-patronised field worker, so too are creation and discovery and study, participation and observation.

For these reasons, it seems that Schechner's performance project begs for a reinscription of Foucault's forceful announcements about sexuality, to the effect that

If [performance] was constituted as an area of investigation, this was only because relations of power had established it as a possible object; and conversely, if power was able to take it as a target, this was because the techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse were capable of investing it. (History 98; substitution mine)

---

5 This paragraph does not appear in the later version. However, I do not think its absence indicates a change of position, but rather arises from the rhetorical needs of a reorganised essay. Also, it may be that during the drafting of the version published in 1983, Schechner did not yet know that the dance competitions, which Bhattacharyya had so successfully established, and which seemed to seal the continuance of the revived practice, had been stopped in 1981. In the later version he writes, "Since 1981 the festival at Matha has been discontinued. Some say that rivalries among villages heated up to such intensity that the festival became dangerous; others say that villagers rebelled against Bhattacharyya" (BTA 73).
Part of the battery of techniques includes geographical mobility, as Read observes in relation to Peter Brook's noteworthy postulation of the enduring dialectic of the everyday and the imaginary. According to Read,

Brook’s examples of this coexistence, in the child’s play and African society are preoccupations of his later work and travels. But the coexistence of these polarities, and specifically that of the imagination and the everyday, are left on the air with his theatre practices themselves showing why coexistence is in the end a practical affair. But for others without resources and time, people to collaborate with from various cultures, the possibility to experiment with the confidence of continuity, in other words almost all those actively working in theatres today, the coexistence is a fraught one. (14; boldface mine)

In contradistinction to the global mobility of Schechner or Brook -- for whom ostensibly "empty space" may be more easily traversed than populated places -- Alan Read advocates a reinvestment in the local, suggesting that "in the case of an anthropology of theatre the critical task might not be to domesticate the exotic but to exoticise the domestic" (7). With this as an alternative for regional study, and the just attention due to the practicalities of co-existence, hybridity, and cultural exchange shaping international/intercultural study, Schechner’s project emerges from its criticism as a symptom indexing ongoing imperialism, the theft of riches by privileged metropolitan visitors. As Joseph Ransdell advised with regard to Skinner’s psychology, so too for Schechner’s performance theory:

Take what he says not as metaphysical/political doctrine, but as a description of the dominating tendencies in our life and thought, and Skinner’s [and Schechner’s] confused and amateurish philosophizing reveals a valuable insight about our current situation. (242)

In the case of Schechner’s work, that current situation is one where a post-colonial world with an increasingly centralised supranational capitalist economic network still struggles with systematic and ingrained gradients of power, privilege, and oppression. It is a world which neither Schechner’s celebration of the exotic alterity
nor his abandonment of the authenticity of non-western performance forms is sufficiently ethical to address adequately.
B. The Rhetoric of Appropriation

The necessity of considering the structuring role of power and privilege, as both pre-existing and (re)produced through study programmes, has been variously articulated by Schechner’s critics. Mobility proves to be both geographic and conceptual when it comes to positioning Schechner in a complex field of production. What is salient in each is the keen attention to rhetoric, through which Schechner’s authorial style is characterised, as a means to questioning his authority. For instance, the now British-based theatre sociologist Maria Shevtsova observes

In Schechner [boundaries] merge completely under the rubric of ‘performance’ -- where in addition, not only do hierarchical and qualitative distinctions cease to matter, but so do ethnic, cultural, ontological, and sociological distinctions. Thus victims of catastrophes, who narrate their experiences on television, belong as much to ‘performance’ as Noh, the Ramila of Ramnagar, Bharatanatyam, and Kathakali (his salient examples of classical Indian dance), varieties of shamanism, and initiation rites in Papua New Guinea. (“Part Two” 191)

Such assemblage aims, in Shevtsova’s view, to form a “great (and magic) circle” the purpose of which “is to close the gaps between North and South, and East and West to allow us finally to let go of our Eurocentrism” (191-92). In Schechner’s own words, “Performance studies builds on the emergence of a postcolonial world where cultures are colliding, interfering with, and fertilizing each other” (FR 21). But what instruments remain to describe the necessary distinctions among the many performance forms? And in Schechner’s “vision of the ‘global village’” (Shevtsova, “Part Two” 192), why should the geopolitical gaps be closed if it only serves the interests of scholarly projects based in the West? According to Rustom Bharucha, an Indian theatre worker/theorist with extensive experience working in North America and the Indian sub-continent,

Today, the most critical metaphors relating to the problematics of exchange in interculturalism are not to be found in the theatre, but in the very vital debates surrounding ‘intellectual property rights’ with reference to biodiversity. [...] As Indian eco-feminist Vandana Shiva has pointed out trenchantly, the ‘Third World’s’
biodiversity is no longer being viewed as the 'common property of local communities', nor the 'national property of sovereign states', but the 'common heritage of mankind' — another universal, up for grabs as it were, easily assimilated, transported, recycled, manufactured, marketed, and then sold back to the 'third world' as 'priced and patented seeds and drugs'.

("Somebody's" 207-8)®

The question of "theatrical property rights" which Bharucha subsequently raises is one which he would hope to see addressed "in the immediacies of our time" rather than through nostalgic and well-worn images of theft (208). But to do so means that an intercultural theorist must be grounded in those sited "immediacies" — which in Bharucha's case means to apprehend a modernity in which cultural forms have been hybridised through creative education and election.

The kind of interculturalism Schechner pioneers under the banner of performance is an unlikely candidate, for in its emphasis on "folk" and "traditional" forms of ritual theatre, Schechner's project aggravates the Eurocentrism which claims for itself modernity while fuelling its own preoccupation with pre-modern theatrical legacies. "No one gives a damn about our modernity," Bharucha has observed (Unpub. paper). If the "global village" vision Shevtsova diagnosed brings a sense of unity to the West where it originates, the emphasis on the archaic simply endorses the old prejudice that progress is measured in Occidental terms. The sensitivity to local and current "immediacies" which Bharucha advocates is swamped in the mobile associations Schechner articulates: "Schechner's reflections on Indian theatre cannot be studied in isolation from his comments on the Balinese and Japanese theatres, the rites of Aborigines and the Mudmen of Asaro, the Yaqui Passion play, the American avant-garde theatre and Disneyland" (Bharucha, Theatre 28). For both, it is Schechner's way of writing about performance that informs their negative judgements. In my view, as his ideas develop in essays that are regularly

reworked and republished, Schechner's performance theory increasingly rearticulates examples from his own fieldwork in rhetoric which often fails to account fully for the necessarily situated and partial ethnographic process which produced them. It's not just that Schechner's understanding of Ramilila refers to Native American Yaqui plays (PC 289-305; FR 94-183) but that the conception of performance he has generated and now promulgates respects neither temporal nor geographic boundaries. It risks becoming something of a fiction which floats unmoored from the real contexts which produced the performance practises he cites. The only "real" context for the spectrum of performances Schechner cites is the discourse he has authored. In his writings, Schechner has projected a voice amplifying his "experience [as one of the privileged] literate readers (theatricalized and dominating)," thereby obscuring "the indices of a common poetics" to which dominant readings are opposed (172).

Schechner's evident enthusiasms and uncertainties are not sufficient to disrupt the monologic form of his work. However, instead of simply dismissing his form of performance studies as touristic fictions or travel diaries, I would suggest that the role of subsidised travel in launching the performance project be interrogated further. I have two principle reasons for suggesting a more thorough consideration of this feature: first, because placedness is an on-going concern for studies of theatre; and second, because access is a corollary of institutionally based privilege. If we dismiss Schechner's writings on performance based on a rhetorical placement of them in a certain genre, we miss the opportunity to examine their institutionality, as the products of systematically organised privilege, and as the fuel for an institutionalised structure, a legitimated paradigm of study. In Schechner's case, extensive travelling has fed directly into his writing and theatre productions; his essays and addresses document and reflect upon his travel experiences. But often, the distant voyages have been funded by foundations, government, and/or university bodies, presumably with the expectation that the travels contribute to the production
and/or dissemination of knowledge. A brief summary below clarifies how authorship and authority converge in the performance project.

In general, Schechner's own experiences function not only rhetorically, but also methodologically; indeed, it is the significant overlap between the rhetoric and the method of his performance project which underscores the intimate relation between authorship and authority within it. One instance when experience plays a role both rhetorical and methodological is the predicated "Figure for all Genres" organising performative events "limited [...] as much as possible to events that [he] ha[s] either seen or studied" (PT 251). In charting performance as "a figure for all genres" Schechner linked his discretion to the anthropological discourse accessed in the production of performance theory, stating,

I wanted to fight the tendency to seek 'origins' or 'sources' in performances below the horizons of field work or reliable historical research. I took my cue from anthropological field work: the evidence I sought was in vivo, ready at hand. I know that another person could make another time/space/event chart populated by different items. But I believe the outcome would be a similar riot of apparently disparate particulars. (PT 251)

What is striking about this statement of approach is that it circumvents the need to interrogate the variability within ethnographic (or historical) discourse, instead describing difference only in terms of access to performance events. Nor does it critically assess the means for describing or inscribing them, and the interests at play in their approach. Finally, it fails to identify reliable protocol for either the preparation or the aftermath of participation as an observer. This would suggest that mere access is the key determinate of the inclusion of items of data. Epistemologically, however, such an emphasis is untenable, because it suggests that the performance project is sustained by the absence of critical attention to the problems of ethnography. Moreover, the privileging of access threatens to install as the methodology of performance studies a naive empiricism, empowered illegitimately to read knowledge of the world directly from experiences within it. It makes learning like
shopping, satisfying less for paid-up acquisitions than for the opportunity to browse and finger a spectrum of goods.

Theatre researchers have not always consciously addressed the pitfalls of empiricism. In a recent book review of *The Future of Ritual*, Schechner's most recent new (non-revised) book, Barry Edwards uses Schechner's basis in his personal experience as reason to endorse his work. Edwards writes: "He is careful as ever to say exactly what he is doing, and thus the chapters in this book 'examine various cultural and artistic performances as Jayanganesh Richard Schechner experienced them, thought about them, and was able to put his thoughts into words.' Such precision," Edwards remarks, "about the process of writing about performances is enough to make this book compulsory reading for anyone working in the field" (96). Edwards's characterisation of Schechner's production as sufficiently self-reflexive simply on the basis of its rhetorical situation of a narrative voice aligned with the author is not sufficiently critical. Specifically it fails to consider how access as an epistemic principle can function rhetorically to seal off observations from debate and critical scrutiny. If access remains all-important, then any query seeking clarity, nuance, or reframing can be shrugged off with a "not in my experience" or "you weren't there." The problem of realities escaping one's attention was precisely what Auguste Boal signalled in his letter of objection following Schechner's Ford Foundation-funded visit to Latin America in 1969. Nor does Edwards's endorsement consider the power gradients within which the production and dissemination of ethnographically derived knowledge occurs. This too was a feature of Boal's objection. Briefly, that exchange and its aftermath will be discussed.

The trip to Latin America in the summer of 1969 was one of Schechner's earliest funded research trips. His findings were published in *The Drama Review*, where subsequently letters to the editor by American and Latin American theatre workers critiqued the undertaking. San Francisco Mime Workshop founder R. G. Davis roundly criticised the Latin American expedition, on the grounds that
Schechner lacked the knowledge to adequately report on theatres in Latin America. The denouncement was published by *The Drama Review* as a letter to the editor (Davis), along with a longer denunciation by a Brazilian theatre worker named Augusto Boal, whose article on the "Joker System" appeared in the volume. The terms and the consequences of these criticisms are instructive about the general authority Schechner has accrued as he has travelled and published his findings. By studying the published responses to Schechner's Latin American trip, I suggest that a different narrative of co-optation and coalition emerges, which contributes both to an understanding of Schechner's performance project and to TDR's editorial praxis.

Such a narrative unfolds from the publication of Boal's letter addressing in particular Schechner's dismissive attitude regarding the state of what Schechner took to be "Latin American theatre." The letter denounced the journal's "imperialistic thinking" which was insidious coming from "people like [Schechner and Munk] who present yourselves as friends trying to help us take our first steps in theatre arts."

No one has the right to do what Mr. Schechner did. No South American would have the right to come to New York, see just a few plays, like *Dionysus* in 69, for instance (which had its impact in U.S. theatre, but would have little importance in Brazil), and go back to his country saying that there is no theatre in the U.S. ("Letter" 152)

Boal's letter concludes by detailing the aggression directed against named Brazilian theatre artists, closing with the request that the letter be published unedited.

Schechner's published response was one of chagrin, but it attempted to excuse his evident failure on the grounds that he lacked "the languages" (153) and was forced by official protocol to see so many events "well beyond [his] mental and emotional saturation point" (154). Schechner's reply closes with an announcement of solidarity phrased in terms of a citation from a book by ethnopoetics advocate Jerome Rothenberg called *The Technicians of the Sacred*. By citing Rothenberg, Schechner was implicitly making recourse to the discourse of the oral poetry movement, its affinity for the vernacular and its pastoral orientation. Thus, rather
than answering Boal’s charges, Schechner deflected them through references to (his) human limits and ("our") human bonds.

The confrontation in print is curiously unresolved, and if Schechner became more masterful at managing funded research trips, he made neither linguistic fluency nor acculturation pre-requisites for his future experiences. Nevertheless, something in the episode’s aftermath produced a satisfactory enough exchange for Schechner and The Drama Review to succeed in aligning themselves with Augusto Boal’s theatrical project, and become by the 1980s a key instrument in the dissemination of Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed. No doubt Schechner learned more about a place he had fleetingly visited and its people; but what did not arise from this exchange was any significant rethinking of the power gradient on which both men of expertise were positioned. That power gradient is organised in part through institutionalised apparatuses of production. The limits of individuals’ viewpoints are something that those apparatuses work to overcome, through a periodic reframing of expertise in and therefore authority about theatre. The Drama Review’s role in promulgating forum theatre praxis raises the problem of reframing theatre authorities. For there existed an thriving forum theatre movement in the African state of Burkina Faso which had arisen independently of Boal’s work in Latin America, “modelled after a traditional form of community problem solving, the Koteba” (Morrison 5). The indigenous form was conditioned by Boal and Freire’s work in Brazil (5). Nevertheless, it has developed a significant portfolio of urban and rural projects, and a body of theoretical and empirical writings from a university-base in Ouagadougou (53-63, 108). Although Boal’s prominence in the pages of TDR was in time secured, despite a fractious first meeting in its editorial pages, there was no comparable coverage of the Burkina Faso forum theatres and their discourse. The lapse in attention endured for years.

There have been noted appearances by Atelier de Théâtre Burkinabé at international theatre of the oppressed festivals (Heritage 29; Paterson 39; Schutzman
and Cohen-Cruz 4, 225). Furthermore, the current Director of the International Festival for Theatre Development in Burkina Faso, Prosper Kompaoré appeared alongside Boal in a debate on "Theatre and Citizenship" hosted by the Royal Shakespeare Company and Queen Mary and Westfield College (University of London) in London in 1997. Nevertheless, when compared with the sizeable reputation of Boalian forum theatre, the body of theatre and scholarly work developed in relative autonomy by an African centre of excellence remains unfamiliar to the same institutionalised apparatuses which have advanced the multinational work of Augusto Boal. So far as I know, the manuscripts written in French by Jean-Pierre Guigane, Jean-Claude Ki, Prosper Kompaore, K. Lamko and N. Sade remain untranslated (see Morrison 108). Boal is canonised as the forum theatre founder, while Kompaoré and his colleagues remain relatively unknown and their writings unpublished. The result for the English-language discourse of forum theatre is that it is both geographically top-sided and historically incomplete. Certainly, the uptake by TDR of Boal’s aesthetic praxis, in its political and therapeutic dimensions, performs a corrective to the exclusion wrought by Schechner’s initial conclusions on Latin American theatre. Yet by privileging Boal’s uniqueness, the corrective performs another exclusion. The case of forum theatre’s disparate roots and branches and the disparity in their representation in a U.S.-based academic journal serves as a model illustrating the authorisation procedures by which a field of theatrical praxis is both represented and misrepresented in discourse. Because the resources both to travel and to publish converge to produce the authorial position which as writer, and as editor, Schechner has occupied, some of the authority so exercised is vested in him.

Once the institutional apparatus for the production and dissemination of theatre discourses is introduced into consideration, the acclaim for Schechner’s rhetoric expressed by Barry Edwards needs to be reconfigured. In their light, I suggest that Edwards’s praise for Schechner’s authorial voice elides Schechner’s authoritative position. I am confident that Schechner’s position can be characterised
as a privileged and empowered one. His authority functions within the international field of (inter)cultural discourses on theatre and performance, and more locally, in terms of his role as a general editor of TDR and the series editor for Routledge, the publishing house which issued *Future of Ritual*. In opposition to Edwards's warm praise for this work, I suggest that Edwards's progressive positioning of the authorial voice in *Future* be reconsidered in relation to the totality of the performance project, and not merely Schechner's available texts. The grounds for doing so are implied by *Future* itself; for that text itself is signalling the discursive project in which it participates, but which Edwards's evaluation has failed to consider. The citation Edwards uses appears in the introductory essay on the same page which positions the book's contents within the "big project" of studying "the broad spectrum of performance" (FR 21). Reading *Future of Ritual* in these terms could legitimate the authoritative claim staked by the performance project for its paradigm of study. Edwards's alternative grounds, for reading *Future* as exemplary spectatorial documentation, does not address the work's broader aspirations to paradigmatic status.

In addition to an empirical reading of reality based on experience, a further challenge to Schechner's methodology for the study of performance is provoked by the aim Schechner articulated in his proposal of this "figure for all genres." It risked a premature, if not false, universalising. Specifically, Schechner has envisioned that this "figure" might be unified by finding "processual models explaining how one set of genres [...] becomes other sets," how a genre like ritual "evolve[s] into dance, theater, and sports" (PT 251). This model signals that the evolutionary supposition of the Cambridge School, to see in Dionysian festivals the roots of dramatic theatre, has come unhinged from its location in ancient history, and moves freely across epochs and performance forms to signal any number of ritual transmutations. It suggests that the quarry of the emergent performance project is a totalising description uniting any "riot of apparently disparate particulars" even when those disparate particulars
span vast geographic and chronological distances. It has been proposed as salutary because it is so inclusive, but this is not necessarily the case in practice. Several reasons for approaching the universalising figure with caution are set forth below.

First, the pluralism this mode of study admits applies only to the selection of events it addresses as "disparate particulars" precisely because it is shaped in practice by access; "the evidence [...] sought was in vivo" (PT 251). This requirement limits which events are eligible for any researcher following the letter of this approach; the broadest class of events excluded are those events which have concluded prior to initiating study. Thus, the proposal of in vivo study severely limits theatre history to events in the most recent past, and dispensing with the performances and performance traditions which ceased before the commencement of our experiences. Schechner has made much of his desire to slaughter Broadway, but this seems an odd way to marginalise once-hegemonic forms. Furthermore, because the singular unifying figure has been presupposed by performance theory, the study approach in practice is not free to assess how the given universal terms mediate the particulars accessed through personal experience. The presupposed universal figure will always mediate a person's experience of accessible performance events apprehended through the performance paradigm. This casts in a medieval tone the authority Schechner claims for performance, for it was "medieval allegory [which] subsumed a culture's persons and their actions - no matter how various or qualified - within its unchanging typologies" and through such Christian typologies

the relationship between these authoritative books [by auctores] and the everyday world was primarily an allegorical one. Worldly events took place in terms sanctioned by an authoritative book or were not acknowledged as having taken place at all. To experience an event in allegorical terms was to transpose the event out of the realm of one's personal life into the realm of the applicable authority. (Pease 108-7)

In the case of Schechnerian performance, the "applicable authority" is one which continually rearticulates one man's personal experiences, but as de Certeau pointed
out, the readings which dominate theatrically are those by privileged readers, and they obscure the bubbling up of a lay poetics. In his influential theory of art, Bürger defined a relation of mediation as pertaining to allegory; "in the nonorganic (allegorical) work to which the works of the avant-garde belong, the unity [of the universal and the particular] is a mediated one" (56). The mediation executed by allegory links the performance project both to avant-gardist art and to the archaic authority of the prescribed authors of the Middle Ages. This circuit of connections relating a nexus of authorship and authority both to medieval scholarship and avant-gardist art is the only explanation I can provide for Schechner's enigmatic comment in the essay "Jayaganesh and the avant-garde" that a "long neomedieval period has begun" (FR 19). Modernity for Schechner has ended in "a global hothouse, a closed environment" (19). To function in a closed environment is, according to Schechner, "to ritualize": to "recycle, reuse, archive and recall, to perform in order to be included in an archive (as a lot of performance artists do), to seek roots, explore and maybe even plunder religious experiences, expressions, practices, and liturgies to make art (as Grotowski and others are doing)" (19-20). Medievalism for Schechner seems to be more of a pejorative evaluation than an historical reality; for neither the sacred character of exegesis nor its rigidly enforced hierarchies enter into his predication of the contemporary ritualization of cultural production. Nevertheless, by a metonymic substitution, "performance" becomes the name of an ostensibly unified field of all genres. For the proposed neomedievalism, performance executes a sacralising function.

Even before performance is installed as the overarching term, the teleological commitment to a "figure for all genres" refracts the literal terms of Schechner's descriptions and concepts, by subordinating them to the task of delivering the promised universal figure. The compaction of different topics into a single discursive stream observed by Bharucha, and cited above, is symptomatic of this subordination. Oddly, this too is susceptible to description as allegory, since one of allegory's modes
describes the projection of a privileged register of signification onto the literal terms of a text. (Such an allegorical project was undertaken in recasting *The Bacchae* as a cautionary fable about the fascism inherent in the New Left (see Chapter 1.2 above). If allegory worked without check, one might imagine a textbook of Schechner’s fables.) Instead, Schechnerian performance treats literal terms reductively, using the most basic structuralist vocabulary. This approach lacks sufficient self-reflexivity as regards the inter-relation, or divergence, among the component discursive fields it incorporates. Yet it thereby passes over the most compelling aspect of any emergent paradigm. Following Kuhn, one might expect any paradigm to “provide all phenomena except anomalies with a theory-determined place in the scientist’s field of vision” (97) since a paradigm functions as “the source of the methods, problem-field, and standards of solution accepted” by a community of researchers (103). If performance is to function at the institutional level as a paradigm, its relative silence on the epistemological and methodological significance of its different discourses and discursive registers must be addressed more actively.

“Phenomena” in Kuhn’s definition means not the pre-constituted world, as it seems to present itself to the researcher or visitor, but how the research process acts upon that pre-constituted world in order to elicit appreciable aspects of it legible in the terms of the research perspective. The phenomena organised by a paradigm are not pre-existent (although their real grounds in actual events may well be), but rather are produced by the study programme. This crucial function of the study programme as a paradigm, namely the production of the phenomena to be studied, explains why the place of phenomena within the researcher’s purview is said to be “theory-determined.” The uncritical acceptance of *in vivo* experience in Schechner’s statement of method obscures precisely the ways in which he as researcher “works upon” the events he witnesses in order to subject them, as phenomena, to his “theory-determined [...] field of vision.” Schechner himself states that the subterranean fields “below the horizons of field work or reliable historical research”
are not to be trusted, but he fails to account for the effects produced on a researcher's experience by the analogous psychic terrain which inevitably conditions it. It seems that in proposing a particular method for researching performance, Schechner has enshrined personal, direct, in vivo experience over academic research, without sufficiently explaining why the former is preferable, nor how the former is monitored for the comparable reliability Schechner affirms for "historical research." The omission of evaluative standards suggests that whereas "reliable historical research" carries with it a disciplinary authority, personal experience and "field work" need no similar authorisation.

The problem of the authority by which Schechner's fieldwork secures its status as knowledge is related to the question of authorship. Indeed, there is something of a tautology implicit in the structure of his performance studies project: in vivo experience is authoritative much the same way as "reliable historical research" is authoritative, and in vivo experience relies on a first-person narrative form to relay it. If the first-person narrative form is authoritative, it would appear to be endowed with two surprising characteristics. First, to be authoritative, the text would have to exhibit a kind of transparency, in order to present rather than represent the world it describes. Second, it would need an uncharacteristic omnipotence, in order to capture adequately, if not entirely, a field of activity from the singular viewpoint attached the first-person pronoun "I." But neither transparency nor omnipotence is a feature generally attributed to modern first-person narratives. In the history of writing, transparent and omnipotent narratives were considered as revelations by a divine source through its human instruments, the authors. In such cases, the authority (auctoritas) of the writing came from God, attaching neither to the human author nor to his perspective. For instance, in a prologue to a biblical commentary, Albert the Great (teacher of St. Thomas Aquinas) discussed a Psalm from the Book of Baruch in such a way as to distinguish between the human auctor and the divine auctoritas:
'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.' In this statement the author and the cause of the following work is demonstrated and the authority of this Scripture. The author, because the 'blessed' man may be interpreted as Baruch ... The authority of the Scripture is noted in that it is said, 'in the name of the Lord'. For a name is applied from knowledge, and knowledge of God, who is truth alone, supplies the authority of the words. For the authority [of the Book of Baruch] is revelation, and revelation is the most firm foundation which is to be had. (Minnis 82)

In the discourse of authoritative revelation there is no appeal to personal experience, for divine intervention, not human experience, guaranteed the authenticity, veracity, and sagacity of revelation. For the authoritative texts exegetically reproduced in the Middle Ages, human experience of revelation is a by-product not a source of its authority (Minnis 10, 82).

In the absence of a sustainable hierarchy of ordained knowledge, such as characterises modernity, the merits of recounting experiences cannot appeal to either the transparency or to the omnipotence which may have attached to revelatory writings in a different age. This does not mean they have no value, but rather that they do not necessarily have the value accorded them in Schechner's statement of method. His method is consistent, insofar as his writings never let his readers forget the subjective presence of Schechner as author. The problem is that Schechner's subjective presence, as narrator/participant, has not self-reflexively critiqued the conditions of possibility determining his authorial status, achieved both rhetorically and socially in unexamined ways. As a consequence the authorial position appears as that of a sovereign, somewhat self-consciously liberal individual. Liberal individualism is, in the words of Anthony Arblaster, "both ontological and ethical." David Savran explains that liberal individualism "grant[s] primacy to an ostensibly independent and integral subject who is seen as the repository of free will, moral responsibility, sovereign desires, and the power 'to follow the dictates of his or her
own conscience” (qtd. in Communists 24). In this way, liberal individualism ordains as natural the privileges accorded to the beneficiaries of the political status quo. The elision between privilege attainment and natural fact means that for liberal individualism as an ideology, empiricism as a methodology holds no apparent threat, for there is everything to be gained (or sustained) by leaving the world as it appears to present itself. In terms of Pierre Bourdieu’s sociological theory, empiricism

by avoiding self-conscious construction, [...] leaves the crucial operations of scientific construction – the choice of the problem, the elaboration of concepts and analytical categories – to the social world as it is, to the established order. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 248)

The politics of epistemology signalled by Bourdieu is emphasised by Marxist philosopher Herbert Marcuse who maintains that “[e]pistemology is in itself ethics, and ethics is epistemology” (One 125). So if Arblaster reads liberal individualism as both a theory of being (ontology) and an ethics, Marcuse encourages the link between liberal individualism as a political and ethical position and empiricism as a theory of knowledge. These associations are borne out by Schechner’s work in the performance project, which exhibits both a naive empiricism, in its emphasis on the researcher’s own experiences, and the absence of self-reflexivity (both about the conditions of his own research and the alleged neutrality of different itineraries).

As an ideology, liberal individualism was summoned into service during the Cold War as a weapon against the totalitarianism attributed to the communist Soviet Union. It was a different totalitarianism that Schechner critiqued in using The Bacchae as a fable, but in Chapter 2.2 I argued that his authorial stance as director was located within liberal individualism. The liberal individual acts ideologically under the illusion of neutrality. This illusion conditions the methodology of the performance

---


8 See Savran on Arthur Miller in Communists 20-75.
project. The sovereign liberal individual acts as an author by valuing certain experiences and accounts of events, based on suppositions about the world's transparency and the individual's power to understand it without negotiating the parameters for critical judgement. There are, without doubt, profound and complex relations between the world as it is structured and active, and the experiences of individual people in it, but the latter does not simply reflect the former, and no account of experience will correspond without adjustment to the structured, active world. In a world of differences more complexly arranged than reductive binarisms, acting as if the world is transparent to individual experience is a risky wager. Thus, underneath the confidence of Schechner's liberal humanist rhetoric about in vivo experience is concealed an epistemic speculation about truth, knowledge, and understanding and their communicability.

Paradoxically, the speculative aspect of Schechner's undertaking is concealed by his travel accounts. The travel accounts conceal speculation by recruiting descriptions of particular events to ostensibly universal models. This is achieved by linking the details of inscribed events to instrumental models, which are advanced as components of performance theory. Arguably the most notable of these models is the "efficacy-entertainment braid" derived from Schechner's consideration of a pig-kill in Papua New Guinea as theatre/ritual, because of its "conflation of symbolic and actual events" (PT 118). The relation between efficacy and entertainment was first posed as a "dyad" (PC 124) before Schechner conceived of the braid as a less binary structure. The significance for Schechner of the distinction between efficacy and entertainment is that it allows him to provide a functional definition for each of his key terms, ritual and theatre. Postulating the efficacy-entertainment braid directly transforms the inaugural analogy Schechner made between theatre and ritual, actively inscribing their interplay in its hypothetical
structure. The conceptual import of this construction is its purported capability to “show how theater history can be given an overall shape as a development of a braided structure continuously interrelating efficacy (ritual) and entertainment (theater)” (123). Its value as a hypothesis is that the efficacy-entertainment braid brings into a single framework of study both Occidental forms of theatre and ritual performances associated with the social and religious systems of non-Western peoples. Do the grounds exist for such a totalising framework, or is the unification Schechner installs based on false divisions?

Writing on the Igbo mask theatre in Nigeria, however, Osmond Onuora Enekwe argues that “the supernatural emotions generated by masks are their main attraction as theatre.” His title signals the union Enekwe proposes, for his study is called Igbo Masks: The Oneness of Theatre and Ritual. Enekwe “rejects the widely held view (of Anthony Graham-White, Richard Schechner and others) that a performance is ritual when efficacy predominates and theatre when entertainment is dominant, since efficacious and entertainment values are neither separable nor quantifiable” (3029). Certainly Schechner’s cursory categorisation of historical forms of theatre in the West in the last four and a half centuries, placed as generic structures on the curves of the braid, indicates the conjectural status of this proposition; but what Enekwe demonstrates is the contingency of the fundamental terms “theatre” and “ritual” themselves. Because of their own historical and cultural specificity, they cannot serve as uncontested cornerstones for performance theory. Enekwe’s position undermines the applicability of the Cambridge School thesis to contemporary forms. Specifically, Enekwe contests Jane Harrison’s contention that “ritual is, we believe, a frequent and perhaps universal transition stage between actual life and that particular contemplation of or emotion towards life which we call art” (113), by positing “the oneness of ritual and theatre” in Igbo masked performance. This example indicates the evaluative priority which eyewitness accounts provide to Schechner’s performance project. If in fact, theatre and ritual are
locally constituted and contested terms, they cannot in practice serve as the "constants" by which a world of "disparate particulars" is mapped in a coherent fashion. The subjective perspective of the eyewitness (in this case, Schechner) stands in as the more stable feature through which the map can be produced.

The importance of perspective does not escape Schechner's explicit theory. As the dyad between efficacy and entertainment develops into the braid, the inaugural analogy between theatre and ritual changes into a function of perspective.

Whether one calls a specific performance 'ritual' or 'theater' depends mostly on context and function. [...] The matter is complicated because one can look at specific performances from several vantages; changing perspectives changes classification. For example, a Broadway musical is entertainment if one concentrates on what happens onstage and in the house. But if one expands the point of view to include rehearsals, backstage life before, during, and after the show, the function of the roles in the lives of each performer, the money invested by the backers, the arrival of the audience, the reason spectators are attending, how they paid for their tickets (as individuals, on expense accounts, as members of a theater party, etc.), and how all this information indicates the use they're making of the performance (as entertainment, as means to advance careers, as charity, etc.) -- then even the Broadway musical is more than entertainment, it's also ritual, economics, and a microcosm of social structure. (PT 120-21)

But instead of exploding this proposal into a polyphonic sociology of theatre performance, Schechner's project keeps a singular, roving eye on a panoply of performances produced in cultures. He views the "performative actions" themselves as susceptible to choice "the way many of us now choose what foods to eat" (EH 126).

I don't think that the performance project reduces down to a supermarket of performative modes. But part of what prevents such a reduction is its ambition to unify heterogeneous performances within a single framework of study, such as the predicated "figure for all genres." To this end, Schechner's theory depends on the eye-witness accounts of a single viewer moving across performance cultures to
sustain the impression that performance theory moves from disparate particulars into credible universal categories. The single and unique viewer crosses cultural boundaries more intact than do the ostensibly universal categories, theatre and ritual. Those categories are unstable not because of perspective (the reason Schechner gives) but because they are historically formed and culturally located terms, not taxonomic containers. Only a single authorial voice can hold the fluctuating terminology in place long enough to make a comparative categorisation of the "riot" of performances. For these reasons, Schechner's particular travel experiences assume an inordinate explanatory burden in the formation of the performance project. Symptomatic of their central role is his writing style which interweaves field references so that, as Bharucha observed, "Schechner's reflections on Indian theatre cannot be studied in isolation from his comments on" scattered performance traditions in Bali, Japan, Australia, Arizona, off-off-Broadway or Disneyland (Theatre 28).

If the travel writings prop up poorly conceived universal categories on the epistemological level, they also have an important pragmatic function to fulfill. Only by linking the epistemics to the pragmatics of performance can Schechner's success at launching and legitimating his performance project be explained. Travel has enabled Schechner to witness a range of performances which occur in cultures very different from and places very distant from the country where he was born and has always lived, and it is this access which authorises Schechner's enunciations on diverse performance traditions, procedures, and processes. To this extent, travel has functioned as the ground for the performance project. That he could and did travel seems more significant than where and how he travelled; performance theory's broad claims appear indifferent to the latitude for different itineraries, which might have yielded alternative findings. Schechner's observation that "I know that another person could make another time/space/event chart populated by different items. But I believe the outcome would be a similar riot of apparently disparate particulars" (PT
251) actually refuses to address the conditioning of itineraries and modes of travel on research findings. This refusal is engraved on the chart assembling his "riot of [...] disparate particulars" under the sign of a unified performance, a "figure for all genres." In other words, whatever variance Schechner predicts, it would not disrupt the performance figure as suiting all "genres." Anthropologist Clifford Geertz (whose study Negara has contributed to the polyphony of performance conceptions) wittily tempered the success of Turner's notion of social drama by naming it "a form for all seasons" which risks attending only to "the general movement of things" (quoted in Turner, "Universals" 16).\footnote{Citation originally from Clifford Geertz, "Blurred Genres: The Refiguration of Social Thought" published in 1980 and anthologized in Geertz's collection Local Knowledge: Further essays in interpretive anthropology (NY: Basic Books, 1983).}

In attending at most to that "general movement," Schechner avoids addressing the conditionality of his own attendance, its reliance on institutionalised provision, and privileged access, which have economic, political, and symbolic aspects. Signalling the conditionality of his scheme, as if anyone might be that "person [who] could make another time/space/event chart populated by different items" (PT 251) obscures the relative ease with which Schechner has travelled. Here I aim for a more finely tuned distinction than that between elitism and populism by which academic knowledge can be contrasted with lay knowledge; because Schechner has opened up the terrain of so-called "First" and "Third World" relations marked by centuries of conquest and imperialism (Worsley 296-344). The circulatory patterns of goods, knowledge, and human beings between the "East and West" Schechner has set out to bridge cannot be conceived outside of colonialism's history. The evaluations he makes about authenticity and ritual value seem to simplify the cultural forces of neo-colonialism. The strategy Schechner uses to ground the conditional nature of his performance chart denies the geo-political terms which
would establish the historicity of his own appearance at a "riot" of performed "particulars." In other words, Schechner's rhetoric on performance as a unifying figure depends on a concealment of the historical and political forces producing his unique position of enunciation.

That position of enunciation functions as the ground on which Schechner situates his authority, but it only exists within the on-going renegotiation of a colonial past characteristic of modernity. To conceal those negotiations, by locating personal authority solely in the dimension of experience, is a political act. It works to sustain the status quo by obstructing the real histories of difference from informing performance's conceptions of cultural exchange. The denial of historicity uses structuralist and post-structuralist thought to sustain the concealment: if writing is regarded by Roland Barthes as a contemporaneous and explicitly performative act, "in which the enunciation has no other content (contains no other proposition) than the act by which it is uttered" (145-46), then it becomes easier to obscure the linguistic and social structures which sustain any enunciative act. The character of language is thereby mystified, although language nevertheless remains as a system within a world, rather than distinct from it (Bourdieu, Language 43-65, 105-59; Faick 9-10). Even if funded international travel has neither necessarily, nor fully, determined either the specific content or aspiration of Schechner's performance theory, it has served nevertheless as a crucial means of assembling observations about performance modes in different cultures. The task of performance studies, as a rubric organising Schechner's own production, is to articulate potentially authoritative views on those performance modes. Funding legitimates the performance theory that issues forth as authorised (by funding boards) and authoritative (because, according to Schechner, they were based on in vivo experience). Through rhetoric reminding us frequently of our roving eyewitness Richard Schechner, we forget the system that produced his enunciative position. As Edwards claimed in his review of Future of Ritual, Schechner may indeed be "careful
as ever to say exactly what he is doing, and thus the chapters in this book 'examine various cultural and artistic performances as Jayanganesh Richard Schechner experienced them, thought about them, and was able to put his thoughts into words'" (96), but despite this "precision," the reader remains at a loss to figure out how Schechner got there.

The position of traveller produces a certain kind of authority upon which Schechner's authorial perspective is premised, and from which emerges the authorial voice Edwards admires. It is no longer the presence of God but rather of the distant, the familiar, the exotic, which discloses authoritative knowledge to this new breed of scholar. Yet Schechner's authority is articulated not only with regard to foreign performances he has seen but also on a much wider range of topics. Also, its articulation is both direct, through his writings, speeches, and stagings, and indirect, through his leadership in the institutionalisation of performance studies as a scholarly and pedagogical practice. To a degree, no doubt, Schechner's authoritative standing is earned through his expertise at negotiating the range of structures and modes included in the intermedia performance project; his ability to produce and direct theatre, to write and edit publications, to lead people, and to teach. But if experience is challenged as a pure source for scholarly insight, on the basis that empiricism is an insufficiently robust and critical formulator of objects of research and knowledge, then the common-sensical link between experience and expertise is undermined. This is where the economism of Bourdieu's theory of symbolic and cultural capital takes on an important explanatory function. By conceiving of symbolic and cultural resources and powers as "capital" it becomes conceivable that within a capitalist system of exchange, those endowed with capital will usually succeed in profiting by it. Within the performance project, there are those aspects of his authority, which are, structurally speaking, borrowed, through the project's internal cross-fertilisation among its theatre, theory, and academic undertakings. Such an inter-media undertaking calls for a holistic approach. The nature of the holism I advance (and it
is by no means the only way in which to re-read Richard Schechner's work is predominately rhetorical, because it concerns the ways in which discourses are produced strategically. The proposed figure for all genres discussed above serves as a case study in which the tacit shift from descriptive experience to judgmental authority can be exposed. The tacit shift vests with authority a newly produced text at some distance from the anterior "texts" of the performance events it (re)interprets. This newly produced text bears the signature, both materially and metaphorically, of Richard Schechner as its author.

What Schechner's rhetoric lacks is a robust self-reflexivity so that his presence and its effects can be read through the texts he writes. It's not simply the transparency, which Barry Edwards praises, that makes the crucial difference. Rather, it is a philosophical commitment to critically examine the relation between the authority of historical testimony and sedimented presence. French Marxist Cornelius Castoriadis describes this relation in terms of the possibilities and limits of vision:

> We know nothing of Greece, if we do not know what the Greeks knew, thought, and felt with respect to themselves. But obviously, there were things just as important concerning Greece that the Greeks did not know and could not have known. We can see things, but from our place and through our present perspective. And seeing is just that. I shall never see anything from all possible places at once; each time I see from a determined place, I see an 'aspect', and I see through a 'perspective'. And I see signifies that I see because I am myself, and I do not see only with my eyes. When I see something my whole life is there, incarnate in my vision, in this act of seeing. All this is not some 'fault' in our vision, it is vision. The rest is the eternal phantasy of theology and of philosophy. (Imaginary 39-40).

The geohistorical constitution of the seeing subject is correlated with the constitution as authentic of an artistic text or process according to Walter Benjamin's description. In his seminal essay of 1936, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin explains:

> The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its
substantive duration to its testimony to the history that it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. (Illuminations 221)

The arriving by a performance researcher at the threshold of a performance occasion is constitutive of the duration of the performance process under study. When that arriving, and its inverse, departure, are naturalised by a description that fails to consider reflexively the material conditions of its own possibility; the testimony ascribes a false transparency to the act of witnessing. The construction of the vantage occupied by any researcher is as culturally and corporeally dense and complex as the performance processes s/he regards. Performative writing as Peggy Phelan theorises it, is one approach to this problem of the rhetoric of subject constitution, because it “enact[s] the affective force of the performance event again, as it plays itself out in an ongoing temporality made vivid by the psychic process of distortion (repression, fantasy, and the general hubbub of the individual and collective unconscious)” (Mourning 12). It may remain the case, as Paul Celan wrote in a poem that Phelan, following Derrida, contemplates: “Nobody/bears witness for the/witness” (qtd. in Phelan 9).10 Still, Reading Richard Schechner propels a rethinking of the performance pioneer as a participant-observer of cultural exchange. So it’s not always the case that nobody does testify, but rather that it requires hard work.

10 Citation originally from Paul Celan, Breathturn, trans. Pierre Joris (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon P, 1995) 177.
2. Allegory and Auteurism

Authorship and authority are linked in the rhetorical category of allegory, which "names in a variety of ways a trope, an interpretative method and a narrative genre" (Madsen 29).¹ Their convergence marks allegory as a concern in questions of cultural ownership. For example, later apologists, working in epochs in which the belief systems that had produced the pagan texts had already collapsed, approached the pagan texts of Homer and Hesiod as allegories (Madsen 30-35). In the example of the Stoic Heraclitus's allegorical interpretation of Homer's Iliad, Debra Madsen explains that

The authority to legislate textual meaning is conferred upon the allegorical exegete, the one who claims the power to identify the philosophical tenors of the metaphorical figures. The loss of an original authorial intention is a prerequisite condition for questioning the meaning of the text and for establishing a new standard of truth. (136-37; boldface mine)

Such exegesis is relieved of finding what Barthes calls "a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' from the Author-God)" and facilitates the treatment of texts as "multi-dimensional space[s...] to be traversed, not pierced" (146-47). For Barthes, the prize

¹ The word "allegory" and its cognates derive from the ancient Greek word allegoria formed by composite from the words allos and agoreuein; "allos" meaning "other" and "agoreuein" meaning "to speak in the assembly" (from "agora" as the term for the marketplace given in Whitman 263). Jon Whitman accounts for the double association of allegoria with a rhetorical manner of production (writing) and an exegetical manner of consumption (reading, interpretation) by delineating those uses of the composite term which emphasise the connotation of "to 'speak otherwise'" understood as "saying other than what is meant" as opposed to those which accentuated the alterity implicated by "allos" in terms of "meaning other that what is said" (263-64). But even this etymologically-based bifurcation is not stable, since other commentators approach the root-words of the composite differently; "allegory" from "allos agoreuein" is often considered straightforwardly to mean "speaking otherwise" so that allegory "says one thing and means another" without registering the saying/meaning distinction and interconnection (Copeland and Melville 178-79; Madsen 3). But as Madsen points out, this assumption places too quickly beyond the ambiguity in allos agoreuein which translates only as and is rendered "according to tradition [as] speaking (of the) other" with the bivalency signalled through the placement of the parentheses (29). This second bivalency is not identical to the saying/meaning emphases distinguished by Whitman, but it too is productive in accounting for the history of allegory in which this "confusion" plays between the implicit distinction of 'speaking other' in a figurative language and 'speaking of the Other' in a spiritualizing interpretation" (Madsen 29).
unleashed by this deconstruction of any authoritative authorial role is to make literature “revolutionary” insofar as it is now recognised as an “anti-theological activity” (147) engaging citational scribes and active, productive readers. This is why Barthes’s essay closes by announcing that “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author” (148). What Barthes does not acknowledge, however, is that such active reading-as-writing is neither new nor conclusive of the category of authorship. This is because his theory of an anti-theological mode of productive consumption fails to address the problems and possibilities inherent in the ownership of cultural goods. The history of allegory, on the other hand, does.

The author who signs for and benefits from a work is participating in an economy that is both symbolic and material. An understanding of this can be teased from descriptions of allegory’s operations. Preceding Roland Barthes to a conception of an active reader, Edwin Honig writes of such reading as (re)writing, and the new kinds of authorship he conceives in light of such active interpretation are ones which apprehend, if only implicitly, the importance of possessive claims.

An allegory succeeds when the writer’s recreation of an antecedent story, subject, or reference is masterful enough to provide his work with a wholly new authority. [...] When the subject is taken over by the writer — particularly the allegorical writer, the writer of a twice-told tale — it bears a certain general but muted authority, mythical, religious, historical or philosophical, depending on the range of its acceptance. To come alive, the subject must be recreated, completely remade, by the writer. To remake the subject the author creates a new structure and, inevitably a new meaning. To the extent that the subject is thus remade, it exists for the first time and has an authority independent of that of the antecedent subject. (13)

In this movement, allegory re-presents the interpenetration of hermeneutics and rhetoric. Rhetoric’s persuasive tools, originating in speech, are taken up by hermeneutics in its search to achieve a compelling understanding of an alien text, which according to Hans-Georg Gadamer, “takes on something of the character of an independent productive act, one that resembles more the act of the orator than the process of mere listening” (Gadamer 24, cf. 21-25) To someone like me whose reading is event-like (see footnote 2) this description resonates.
Here, the mark of authorship is the newly forged authority of the second text. If that
text succeeds (for a time) as authoritative, it is because the “subject taken over by
the writer” is one which can be mastered, possessed, dominated like an object or
consumed so that its native resistance disappears.

In fact, it has become commonplace in studies of twentieth-century theatre to
regard many stage directors as “like the auteur filmmaker [...]”, to borrow Meyerhold’s
phrase, the author of an original theatrical event” with just the independent authority
Honig predicates (Green 11). In theatre, Amy S. Green links those contemporary
practitioners generating revisionist mise-en-scenes for classic dramatic texts to the
reading-as-writing economy described by Barthes: “Directors who reinvent classic
texts on stage are theatrical cousins to those critic-theorists whose ‘readings’ of
literature are considered literary works in their own rights” (10). Not only is
Schechner one of Green’s examples (42-58), but he is also a director whose
authorial process is clearly of the sort described by Honig. When Sam Shepard
objected to The Performance Group’s production, as being, by all reports, “far from
what I had in mind” because it did not “respect the form [the playwright’s] vision takes
place in and not merely extrapolate its language and invent another form which isn’t
the play” (qtd. in PT 76), Shepard was describing the allegorical operations Honig
has characterised. The description of Dionysus in 69 in Chapters 1.1 and 1.2 above
exemplifies the allegorical nature of Schechner’s theatrical authorship of “a new
structure” and “a new meaning [...] which has an authority independent of that of the
antecedent subject,” Euripides’ The Bacchae. Like Foucault’s criticism of Barthes’s
death of the author, allegory restores to reading/writing its social and historical
dimensions, as well as calling to mind their pragmatic conditions. Rather than
punctuating them like Barthes has into the discontinuous duration produced by

---

13 In the programme for his 1926 production of The Inspector General, Green reports that
Meyerhold “identified himself [...] with the notorious label ‘author of the spectacle’ which
Green describes as a ‘revolutionary stance’ (21-22).
sporadic reading, allegory thereby apprehends the historicity of texts and authorial formations, and points to their material consequences. The author who signs the new text achieved by reading-as-rewriting an inherited work is s/he who collects any royalties. At that point, the issue of cultural ownership can become both epistemologically and ethically, not to mention economically, interesting.

In terms of capitalised production, the intriguing issue about Schechner's performance project is its inherent diversity. His is a portfolio which crosses theatre and theory; this is a far more substantial claim than the general one which Herbert Blau correctly makes, namely that "[t]heater is theory, or a shadow of it" (Take 1). For as Chapter 2.1 forcefully illustrates, Schechner's project moves among a theatrical stage, a conference podium, and a printing press. Furthermore, it does so with a commitment and a confidence exceeding the "general tendency towards textuality" which Graham Ley identifies in the theatre culture of the 1980s, shaped by the wide circulation of praxical writings by Artaud, Brecht, Brook, and Grotowski ("Rhetoric" 254). Thus, it becomes clear that Schechner's authorial impulse manifests in both aesthetic (e.g. creative) and scholarly (authoritative) texts and secures a legitimated standing in both arenas. With this realisation, the discursive matrix provided by accounts of Schechner's theatre as described in Chapter 1.1 appears insufficient. By reading the portfolio of works in relation to allegory, the diversity of Schechner's undertakings meets head-on a rhetorical figure which similarly resists containment solely in an aesthetic sphere. So, for example, in his claims to read performance under a unified study programme, Schechner exercises in his discursive production the authority of the anti-theological reader described by Madsen, and as Honig predicts, he signs the ensuing work as its author. But for Edwin Honig the relation of allegory to such speculative projects is not surprising, since "[i]n addition to serving the expression of ideological aims, allegory is a fundamental device of hypothetical construction" (179). This is because allegory produces more robust and extensive structures than metaphor or metonymy while
drawing upon their ability to establish links between distinct objects and processes. The fact that Schechner pushes his performance theory from an aesthetic discursive matrix into social scientific discourse does not therefore discount allegory's pertinence. Rather, it attracts it.

The relevance of allegory to Schechner's performance project can be further developed. For example, as a way of rendering susceptible to description features which are strange, foreign, or unfamiliar, Schechner's method resembles patristic (Early Christian) and medieval Scriptural exegesis. Here the model is not the one amplified by Roland Barthes as anti-theological reading-as-writing, but rather the more devout practice which viewed textual interpretative labour as redeeming a concealed access to the divine.

In the Gospels and in later patristic writings allegory was used to name not a way of interpreting the text but to name an aspect of the text itself. For these early Christians, allegory named those passages of Scripture which represent Christ's fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. (Madsen 3)

It is this relation to Scripture which theatre critic and artistic director Robert Brustein signalled when he reminded theatre makers in his essay "No More Masterpieces" that "[o]nly recently has literature taken on the inviolability of scripture" thereby impeding inventive direction of dramas (qtd. in Green 12).\(^\text{14}\) Ironically, the history of allegorical writing and allegoretic reading obliterates any sense of Scripture as, historically, inviolable. A great deal of work has been expended in each age to make inherited texts sustainable for contemporary readers. Such labour is better comprehended by a notion of literary agency understanding what both the will and the resources of writers as readers are. The defence of such literary agency is made by Lizbeth Goodman when she argues against Barthes's reputed death of the author on the grounds that it confounds an analysis of real women working in theatre (20

Schechner himself has observed how much of literary and theatrical production relies on thieving. When praising Megan Terry as a “playwrighter” he inflects the Renaissance sense of “a wrighter” with an allegorical tinge, by speaking first of Shakespeare’s imagination as “that of the metamorphosing collage, the great transformer. His gifts and tools included that of theft” (PD 122). The operations of allegory cannot be prised from the problematics of ownership and its contestation, any more than allegory ignores the readings implied within, summoned forth by, and projected onto written texts. Medievalists Melville and Copeland declare “we would rather see in the play of allegory and allegoresis together an acknowledgment of writing as inherently impure, unable to make itself impervious to the invasiveness of the voice” (181). So if Derrida undermined the presence of speech by arguing that writing is primary and presupposed by speech, they are suggesting that (at least by the Middle Ages, and certainly since) writing too is interpenetrated by its supposed opposite. In this respect, allegory, having raised the question of meaning’s residence, also refuses to settle it.

When meaning remains possible but uncertain, the manner of its making takes on a great importance. While the pagan texts were treated as fables by later apologists, for the devout interpreters, the key activity is figuration. Scholar of mimesis Erich Auerbach has, in the words of A. J Minnis,

> discovered in ‘figural’ mimesis a means whereby the concrete particulars of Old Testament history could be preserved, even while the spiritual significance which it carried was manifest. In the process of foreshadowing and fulfilment, the historical reality of both the foreshadowing type (the Old Testament character or event) and the fulfilling type (its New Testament counterpart) were accommodated. (88-89)

Auerbach explains that “Figura is something real and historical which announces something else that is also real and historical […] a carnal, hence historical, fulfilment
Schechner's unique authorial strategy shares aspects of both allegorical modes. As a theatre director, he treated The Bacchae as a fable incarnating a double meaning; as a theorist he sees the "riot of apparently disparate particulars" being fulfilled in a single "figure for all genres" (PT 251). It is my aim to interrupt the allegorical procedures which mediate performance events and "their" commentary in order to assess how in Schechner's work the inscribed meaning is made, at what cost, and for whose symbolic gain. In this way, I hope to reorient future readings of Richard Schechner so as to connect his creative production (figuration, in the broad sense) and his rhetoric with the problematic of cultural ownership. My questions arise from the historical fact that authority in the modern age is not disclosed to humans by divine revelation, but is, as Kuhn describes, made in the context of changing paradigms. Each paradigm adopted generates a particular "regime of truth," as Sedgwick observes, and is capable of producing ignorance as well as knowledge (8).

The procedure by which information about intercultural and distant culturespecific performance processes is assembled in the name of this new paradigm of performance is allegorical. When Schechner advocates restored behaviour as the building blocks for performances across cultures, he charges performance studies as a scholarly enterprise with the task of archiving behaviour strips (BTA 78).

We have strong ways of getting, keeping, transmitting, and recalling behavior. From the 1920s onward less and less behavior has been irretrievably lost. Waves of styles return regularly because of the relatively easy access to this behavior information. We live in a time when traditions can die in life, be preserved archivally as behaviors, and later be restored. (78)

The epistemological and ethical significance of such an archive can be read from Terry Eagleton's summary of Walter Benjamin's essay on "The Story-teller": "this

---

15 Citation originally from Erich Auerbach, "Figura," Scenes from the Drama of European Literature, trans. R. Manheim and C. Garvin (New York, 1959) 29, 39.
preservation is also a form of destruction, for to redeem objects means to dig them loose from this historical strata in which they are embedded, purging them of the accreted cultural meanings with which they are encrusted" (Walter 61). By "releasing" things [...] into the free space of sheer contiguity" such a collector does not, however, "rescue" performed sequences from their "fate [as a] commodity" but rather removes them from the marketplace within which they would have been produced for integral spectators (see PT 193-96). This "release" only serves to propel objectified performance sequences into a larger-scale marketplace in which geopolitical gradients of power and privilege shape values. "Markets," like theatres, "are the place at which production becomes consumption" (Hawken 79), and nothing about the ephemeral nature of theatrical occasions will change that structural homology. By treating activity like portable behavioural strips, performance theory apprehends only that allegorical object [which] has undergone a kind of haemorrhage of spirit: drained of all immanent meaning, it lies as a pure facticity under the manipulative hand of the allegorist, awaiting such meaning [or, in Schechner's hands, merely deployment] as he or she may imbue it with (Eagleton, Walter 61).

Without melancholy, Schechner recuperates the loss or degradation instituted by time's passing in a proactive theory of restoration which is always, at its limit, creative elaboration, producing sovereign authorship. The quality of that sovereign authorship is deceptive insofar as it takes its licence from the appearance that restored behaviours have an historic or cultural legitimacy underwriting them as something more than artifice or invention, which makes them seem like objects for and products of knowledge. It seems that their geohistorical integrity is undermined
because, as literary philosopher Bernard Harrison observes, “it is in the nature of allegory that it devastates its own subjects” (qtd. in Wheale 182).16

Finally, in the place of an open set of hypotheses for performance, Schechner announced a unified field of study the brief of which I set forth in the first paragraph of Chapter 2.3 above. As the closing allegorical image attaching to Schechner’s project, I will re-describe the study brief in terms of allegory. At the start of Chapter 3.1, I described Schechner’s proposal to measure what is basically a newly outlined field. It consisted of two axes of measurement. Diachronically, its terms were set forth in the six questions about the genesis, unfolding, and ending of performances. They were mapped synchronically in the seven magnitudes from the macroscopic sociology of Turner’s social dramas to the microbiology of brain states. The diachronic axis is described by structural linguistics as the order of syntagm, because syntax is the stringing together horizontally of language units. The synchronic axis is described by structural linguistics as the order of the paradigm, because its verticality apprehends the order of magnitudes in an ordered system as a representative set. The bold advance made in the 1950s by Roman Jakobson was to link the paradigm and syntagm to the figurative manoeuvres effected by metaphor and metonymy respectively (116-33). The key actions by metaphor are selection and substitution; the key actions by metonymy are combination and association. Consequently, the literary functions describe the activities of paradigm and syntagm respectively. So, to apply this discovery to the current case, the paradigmatic axis signalled by the magnitudes of performance is metaphoric, insofar as a single study would most likely address one or only several proximate magnitudes (choosing brain states, or microbits or macro dramas). In one or several magnitudes, each study would strive to describe a pattern in terms particular to the magnitude(s), by applying

16 Citation originally from Bernard Harrison, Inconvenient Fictions (London: Yale UP, 1991) 168.
appropriately calibrated instruments to cases in the field. Similarly, the syntagmatic axis signalled by the forms or media placed on the proposed spectrum in relations of structural contiguity or proximity, are precisely those metonymy articulates. When it comes to doing anything of value with these structures, however, the metaphorising and metonymising activities mix. Metaphor amplifies metonymy (as when the magnitudes of a certain level are studied in two different performance forms) and the metonymy extends the metaphor (as when the study of performance magnitudes exhibited in one performance medium are read in relation to a different performance form). As a body of performance studies literature grows, one would expect these kinds of cross-references to occur. Cognitively, however, the cross references could produce the metaphorising of metonymy and the metonymising of metaphor. Literary critic Joel Fineman observes that this intermixing of the metaphor and metonymy is a characteristic of "literary" constructions and "poetic functions" generally, and most particularly true of allegory.

In his essay, "The Structure of Allegorical Desire," Fineman correlates the "coherently polysemic significance" in the "notion of structure" with two features of allegory: its "system of multiply articulated levels" and its ostensible origin, according to psychoanalysis, in the desire for lost origins (26). Surely each feature applies to the performance project, with its ordered field spawned from the inaugural turn to ritual as theatre's primordial source. According to Fineman, the quest by allegory for normative meaning is enacted through its desire to produce those enterprising interpretations capable of accruing authority. The posited meaning produced by allegory's confidence is attributed to that mystical core from which, in theory, the normalised meaning emanates. Yet in practice, that ostensibly mystical core is accessible only to (authorised) initiates. This double aspect of quest as an activity (questing) and the substantive quest being the aim of the journey, is articulated in the essay's title, where the genitive "of" directs attention both to the structure of allegory
and to the structure of a desire which is specifically a desire for allegory.\textsuperscript{17} Knowledge figures as the object of Schechner's desire. According to Debra Madsen, "[k]nowledge as the object of desire is a mechanism exploited by all narratives but exaggerated by allegory. [...] Allegory is motivated, like the work of the Rabbinic sages, by the dictum: 'Interpret and receive reward!'" (73).\textsuperscript{18}

That there are material and symbolic rewards to Schechner's undertaking is signalled in the account of his eminence given in Chapter 2.1. To that portrait of a symbolically and materially lucrative enterprise, this reading of Schechner produces three distinctive and overlapping applications of allegory to his performance project, which refract back on its findings. First, in seeking to dispense with original authorial intention in order to author and authorise his own speculative interpretations about performance(s), Schechner acts the role of the allegorist. In his theatre and his theory, he has made use of both fable and figuration; and, finally, in the structuring he articulates for the hypothesised performance field, Schechner has organised its dimensions using an allegorical operation. In these ways, Schechner's work exhibits a surprisingly literary character, even as it aims to secure its authority as academic production in the social sciences, not as aesthetics ("Foreword" vii).

One final feature of allegory is that, according to Jon Whitman, allegory "never produces a 'definitive,' much less a 'perfected' text" but "rather achieves various states of equilibrium, adjusting to uneven and overlapping pressures" (10). By reorganising Schechner's texts in such a way as to discern from them a

\textsuperscript{17} Fineman described his project as "concerned with the ways allegories begin and with the ends towards which they tend" [e.g. allegory’s structure] and "[o]n the other hand [...] with a specifically allegorical desire, a desire for allegory that is implicit in the ideal of structure itself" (26). Fineman’s locating a desire for allegory in structuring tends to push past my mark, towards the kind of expansive application Frye licenced in his remark that all interpretative commentary is allegorical. I have striven to restrain this expansion by linking the desire for meaning to the issues of authority and authorisation, not just authorship. Otherwise, if unchecked, such extensiveness risks evacuating any specific content from the suggestion that Schechner’s performance project is allegorical.

\textsuperscript{18} Citation originally from Joseph Heinemann, "Nature of the Aggadah," in Midrash and Literature, eds. Geoffrey Hartmann and Sanford Budick (London: Yale UP, 1986) 48.
consolidated performance project, I aim to paradoxically open up his work to the “disequilibrium” to which its allegorical aspects remain susceptible. Thus, by subtitling this new reading of Richard Schechner as comprising “allegories of performance” I exercise two aims. First, I aim to re-authorise his writings, by attaching them to a particular enunciative position in a set of discursive fields (in art and academia). At the same time, this reading de-authorises them by recasting their epistemic ambitions in less secure terms so as to regard them as more dubious, less credible, less authoritative. While, like meaningful art, they may succeed in provoking reaction, contemplation, and revelation, I regard Schechner’s writings as insufficiently robust epistemologically and inadequately anchored ethically to assume the scholarly responsibility they set out to shoulder. That responsibility is most evident in two domains: their role in promoting and guiding intercultural exchange and their activism in restructuring how theatre is studied in universities in (and perhaps beyond) the United States. In the place of legitimate authority, Schechner’s reconception of theatre in terms of “performance” imposes a set of values about the circulation of cultural goods which reinforces, rather than ruptures, existing symbolic and material economies. In so doing, performance sustains privilege rather than extending emancipation. The move from art and academic praxis to an institutional plane where the project is consolidated represents, in this view, a consolidation of power with real effects. In the subchapter below, I will suggest its real-world consequences by considering the ecology of meaning within which performance is presented as a paradigm for scholarship and pedagogy.
3. The Performance Paradigm as a Literary Function

In the discussion above, I suggested that if we follow Jakobson in reading the linguistic terms of paradigm and syntagm in relation to literary functions like metaphor and metonymy, we arrive at a description of Schechner's particular paradigm of and for performance as an allegorical structure. By expanding the relations between the linguistic and literary terms in this description, I aim to secure the philosophical purchase of this new description. Because paradigm is the key term for performance as it legitimates itself in academic institutions, it will occupy the principle focus of the present discussion.

The premise of Jakobson's observation is that within a paradigm, like in the construction of a metaphor, the central operation is one of substitution. By considering how substitutions forge metaphors, then, we may come to understand the operations by which a paradigm is launched. In making a metaphor, features of the tenor are selected for their similarity with some aspect of the vehicle; on the basis of that selection, the vehicle can be substituted for the tenor, in order to make a metaphor. Philosopher John Searle uses as an example the phrase “Richard is a gorilla” as a way of designating something of the character or activity of a human boy or man. As a metaphor, it uses a substitution based on the selection of some common features (e.g. vocality, posture, appearance, appetite, etc.) (see States, "Performance" 2). For the metaphor “Richard is a gorilla” to communicate as a metaphor (as distinct from a literal declaration), its interpreters must have enough access to discern which of Richard's aspects is gorilla-like, while sustaining a belief in its antithesis, that Richard is in fact not a gorilla, but a human. The way substitution works within a paradigm is similar; I will briefly explain it below.

---

In a study paradigm, metaphoric substitution binds together apparently non-identical or dissimilar things/events/phenomena as legitimately subject to a common procedure. So, for example, no one would disagree that as either experiences or as social problems, funerals differ from juvenile delinquency and from housing provision, and yet not dispute that there is merit to studying them all within a common sociological paradigm. That is because, at the level of method, the tools that access each so as to produce adequate knowledge of or understandings about each can be applied across these cases. The sociological methods are mobile enough to move from juvenile delinquency to funerals to housing provision as sites to interrogate, by selecting the aspects of each which any given method can access. In the case of sociology, which is a discipline comprised of competing paradigms, the accepted methods might ignore psychological or spiritual dimensions of the questions and sites addressed, because those dimensions may not be susceptible in their totality to redescription in sociological terms. The sociological methods, then, do not exhaust their sites of interrogation, even if they maintain a robust mobility that allows them to be applied across sites differing in experiential or common sense terms. What such methods manage, however, is the credible selection of aspects of each site that are amenable to sociological (re)description.

In the case of performance studies, a single study situated within its paradigm would most likely address one or only several of the contiguous magnitudes Schechner posits, from brain states and microbits through to macro dramas. Studies directed within such a paradigm must be selective of the stratum or strata that they address. But that selectivity is not moderated the same way as in the discipline of sociology discussed above. First, because to describe the selection of a stratum or strata of analysis as being one made within the performance paradigm is to imply that the latter is really supra-paradigmatic, or a field. Second, because the purported connections performance as a project makes among the distinctive strata from which the selection of a more delimited focus for study is metaphorically in its common usage,
without recourse to Jakobson's identification of linguistic and literary terms. This is because the totality of the ostensible paradigm Schechner proposes, and not the parity among its study methods, underwrites the substitution of patterns at one stratum of knowledge for patterns attributed to another, unselected stratum. For performance to make such an assumption is to introduce into the so-called paradigm an a priori ontology. Marxist sociology offers such an ontological frame, in which the study of the organisations and institutions which structure and benefit from how funerals are constructed, how delinquency is produced, defined, and managed, and how housing provision is sustained and/or changed, do indeed allow interconnections to be made within the different sites of study. But as a discipline, sociology does not necessarily assume what Marxism does, namely that the horizons of all such studies are constituted by the horizons of capitalism. As an alternative to ordering a field, such as Marxism might provide, it may be the tools by which one sociologically studies funerals, juvenile delinquency, and housing which are common to all three studies. This is the case with positivist quantitative methods, in which ontological commitments are eschewed in favour of an ostensibly sovereign empiricism. There, by using quantitative methods in one area, one is implicitly testing and refining them for use in other studies.

The lie of empiricism, as suggested in the discussion of Schechner's "figure for all genres" above, is that method and metaphysics are not fully independent of one another. Methods presume and secrete ontologies, and ontologies direct and limit methods. Paradigmatic identity does not always institute an ontology at the outset, in quite the way in which performance studies has done. For performance, what metaphor accomplishes is the positing of homologies across strata identified through comparing differently oriented studies of a singular performative event. It would be the correspondence of patterns at each magnitude that would secure the paradigmatic unity attributed to a set of studies. That paradigmatic unity would, it may be supposed, body forth into the "figure for all genres" predicated by Schechner.
That the latter was announced as an aspiration (in an essay first published in 1987) at the point at which performance theory was moving towards its prominent institutionality is a mark of its strategic significance. Based on the alleged coherence achievable by the predicated unifying figure, an endless series of substitutions could be expected to unfold. The paradigm would produce a range of studies which, as an aggregate, would move from the vocabulary of neurology to those of anthropology, sociology, or diplomacy and political science, and back again, as the magnitude of study shifted. In a well-lubricated discursive system, those vocabularies could be expected to become interchangeable; and performance studies would come to occupy the centre of a liberal arts education.

This is Schechner's dream. At the point when it is realised, however, the substitution designated metaphoric ceases, and the metaphor "dies." Only as "long as the tension exists between tenor and vehicle – so long as there is an element of the negative in our awareness that it is not what it literally claims to be – the metaphor remains metaphoric" (qtd. in States, Great 12).20 The boldest of semiotic programmes demonstrates this possibility; when its strata collapse, semiotics as a paradigm disperses into the diffused and inescapable field of understanding posited by John Locke's division within knowledge of semiotics as "the means whereby speculative and practical knowledge alike are acquired, elaborated, and shared" (qtd. in Deely, Williams, and Kruse 22). According to John Deely, in Lockean semiotics, "we are given a distinction which unites" by which "a standpoint is achieved" producing

the basic realization [...] that 'what is' is circumscribed not by a fixed but by a shifting line whose shifts are determined precisely by the interaction between the two orders of being [e.g. being and non-being] through the function of signs, through semiosis. (23)

20 Citation originally from James L. Calderwood, Metadrama in Shakespeare's Henriad: Richard II to Henry V (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of CA P, 1979) 14.
The dynamism of semiotic dispersal fatally weakens metaphor as a regulated and structured function. And yet, what Deely describes is precisely the perspectival shift that Schechner predicates for performance when he defines it in the draft of an introductory textbook:

You needs [sic] to understand the difference and relationship between 'is' and 'as' performance. Up till now, I have been talking about 'is' performance, recognizably marked behaviors, no matter how varied and different genre to genre, culture to culture. This bundle of performance genres and instances is very different than 'as' performance. 'As' performance is a way of studying the world. Everything and anything can be studied 'as' performance. Just as everything, absolutely everything, can be studied 'as' physics, chemistry, law, medicine—or any other discipline of study whatsoever. For what the 'as' says is that the object of study will be regarded from the perspective of, in terms of, the discipline of study. [...] The 'as' is a most powerful tool, because it opens up long avenues of possibilities, different models of reality, whole 'worlds' of potential arrangements. [...] 'Is' is quite another thing. Something 'is a performance' when context, convention, common usage, and tradition assert that it is. The enactment of a drama 'is' a theatrical performance because context, convention, usage, and tradition say so. (Draft n.p.)

Schechner asserts the value of taking aspects of the world "as performance" without fully addressing that certain sites of study provoke certain kinds of studies by virtue of their constitutive features and the ethical imperatives which drive a researcher to study them. His silence on how ontological and ethical commitments structure studies leaves a curious vacuum in the rationale driving the performance project.

Any event, action, item, or behavior may be examined 'as' performance. Anything at all may be studied 'as' performance. Approaching phenomena as performance has certain advantages. One can consider things as provisional, in-process, existing and changing over time, being rehearsed; one sees that there usually are many players, different and even opposing individuals or groups, in every kind of social event or human product. (Draft n.p.)

To call these features "advantages" is to assume that they are somehow absent from existing paradigms for social and cultural studies; but no case examples of such
insufficiencies are given. Nor does Schechner inspire confidence in his project's ability to apprehend change, temporality, and dialectical contradiction and connection.

These weaknesses of performance as a study project are evident in the inscription of the diachronic axis, associated with syntagm in linguistics and metonymic combination in literary theory. For performance, that axis consists of the multiple forms, media, or "nodes" constituting the broad spectrum. Those nodes can be identified by the general clusters Schechner identifies: "entertainments, arts, rituals, politics, economics, and person-to-person interactions" ("New" 9.) Within these clusters, each term designates a category of sequenced events. The temporal registers of the events each cluster names are distinctive; they develop along individual, if interacting, timelines. They cohere in Schechner's "performance web" the "nodes" of which are named:

1. Prehistoric rites and shamanism;
2. Historic rites and shamanism;
3. Origins of theatre in Eurasia, Africa, the Pacific, Asia;
4. Origins of European theatre;
5. Contemporary environmental theatre;
6. Dialogic and body-oriented psychotherapies;
7. Ethological studies of ritual;
8. Performance in everyday life; and
9. Play and crisis behaviour (PT, n.p.)

Nodes one through four are historical, while nodes five through nine name both historical and contemporary processes. It is on this broad level that the structure of the performance web apprehends diachrony. Needless to say, in The Performance Group's work, Schechner has documented within environmental theatre (node five) aspects relating to nodes six through nine (see Chapter 1 above) which puts environmental theatre in a privileged position as a performance practice.
The performance web Schechner draws connects the nodes with an interlacing of lines. But what relations such lines denote, whether causal, functional, or structural, is not defined in Schechner's description of the performance web. These nodes thus appear to be inscribed in relations of some kind of contiguity or proximity that remains unexplained. Together, however, they form a body of potential performance modalities, equivalent to the syntagmatic dimension from which, within the linguistic domain, terms are selected according to certain limiting rules (e.g. of grammar) in order to generate syntactic chains (like sentences). Following the sort of rule-governing selection which linguistic study prepares us for, the key operation is combination. Combination in linguistics describes a regulated system by which units are strung together according to rules, which do not determine the content of terms, but rather organise their appropriate (e.g. meaningful) association. Like the chain of words appropriately linked to form a meaningful sentence, the syntagmatic axis more generally is diachronic; its diachrony derives from the combination in sequence rather than simultaneously. In the paradigm, by contrast, the strata (e.g. macrodramas and microbits) are co-present, albeit unfolding according to stratum-specific rhythms. I have already described above how the combinatory function apprehended by the linguistic term syntagm is associated, for these reasons, with the literary function metonymy.

Performance, as it has been redescribed in subchapter 3.2 and here, is both metaphorically and metonymically constituted by Schechner's project. Metaphor is a rhetorical function by which the a priori paradigm is posited, through the unified figure for all performative genres, which was dismantled in subchapter 3.1 above. Metonymy is the rhetorical function by which performative modes are designated along a web with a remarkable historical and contemporary span. The metonymic relations of the performance spectrum's nodes reflect and refract the metaphoric selections of performative magnitudes, and vice versa. These create necessary gaps in the possible knowledges performance studies might produce. How, for
instance, will the brain-state dimension of prehistoric rites be analysed? Or
environmental theatre described without recourse to both social performance and its
macrodramatic dimension, and play behaviour and its effect on brain states? We
have seen that allegory, according to Joel Fineman, is the poetic function that
apprehends the metaphorising of metonymy and metonymic extension of metaphor
which the performance project unleashes. It works upon the founding analogy of
ritual and theatre, transforming, transposing, deforming, and elaborating its terms. In
short, as allegory, the performance project's paradigm/syntagm structure condenses
the work of that inaugural, and historically avant-gardist, analogy relating — and then
conflating — theatre and ritual, as a means to revive art's function for everyday life. In
doing so, the performance project creates a projection which, like a fable, can be
treated by critics as a site for interpretative excavation and reinscription. What
emerges from my exegesis of Schechner's work is an image of performance as itself
an art-like, not scholarly, production. This image does not dispense with the avant-
gardist position associated with the inaugural analogy of theatre and ritual; rather it
extends it. Schechnerian performance seems to develop its earlier avant-gardist
impulse to reorganise the boundaries of art and life precisely by turning from theatre
to other means. Those "other means" are the modes of scholarship and the forums
for academic authority which constitute Schechner as a tenured theatre theorist-
practitioner.

To suggest this interpretation of the performance project is not to dismiss
Schechner's commitment to anthropology, but rather to reframe it. Schechner is
convinced, with the best of intentions, that the "greatest enemy of preconception is a
knowledge of cultures and periods other than one's own" (ET 25). Furthermore, he
proposes to articulate a space "between theater and anthropology" which he will
achieve by producing a discourse arising out of privileged travel. In so doing, he
enters the discursive field of anthropology at approximately the time when not only is
it rethinking its own praxis, but other artists are investigating its potential. Declaring
the 1980s and 1990s in visual art as "the age of anthropological studies," Hal Foster asks "What misrecognition have passed between anthropology and art and other discourses?" He marks two convergences. "First some critics of anthropology developed a kind of artist envy [in which] the artist became a paragon of formal reflexivity, a self-aware reader of culture understood as text." Here Foster discerns "a projection of an ideal ego of the anthropologist: the anthropologist as collagist, semiologist, avant-gardist" (180). More recently, Foster observes that "the old artist envy among anthropologists has turned the other way: a new ethnographer envy consumes many artists and critics. [...] These artists and critics aspire to field work in which theory and practice seem to be reconciled" (181). For such artists and critics, "rogue investigations of anthropology, like queer critiques of psychoanalysis, possess vanguard status" (182).

The use of anthropology by artists and critics, as opposed to its appeal, derives from anthropology's own compromise. Because anthropology itself is a discourse split by commitments to symbolic logic on the one hand and the practical reason embodied by material culture on the other (182), anthropology can function for artists and critics as "the compromise discourse of choice":

With a turn to this split discourse of anthropology, artists and critics can resolve these contradictory models magically: they can take up the guises of cultural semiologist and contextual fieldworker, they can continue and condemn critical theory, they can relativize and recenter the subject, all at the same time. (183)

Perhaps most importantly for a former activist in large-scale social change, according to Foster, this "role of ethnographer also allows the critic to recoup an ambivalent position between academic and other subcultures as critical, especially when the alternatives seem limited to academic irrelevance or subcultural affirmation" (280, fn 32). Through embrace of this role of ethnographer, an academic artist like Schechner can continue to aspire to act on a worldly, if not world-wide, stage. His relation to
anthropological discourse and praxis, therefore, does not refute my claim to position Schechner as an artist of theatre and of theory.

In a very different context, Allan Kaprow writes "if any action of an artist meant as a renunciation of art can itself be considered art, then in those circumstances non art is impossible" (76). By expanding performance to include all aspects of social life and cultural production, in "politics, medicine, religion, popular entertainments, and ordinary face-to-face interactions" (FR 21), Schechner has made "non art [...] impossible." To understand Schechner's work in its totality, I suggest that we read Kaprow's observation in reverse, and consider that when "non art is impossible" "any action of an artist meant as a renunciation of art can itself be considered art," including Schechner's claim to "reject aesthetics" ("Foreword" vii). In sum, my reading of Schechner's project rejects his rejection of aesthetics, and calls the performance project art, not social science. Under this description, the performance project is an instance of "one of those tendencies destined to become art in spite of itself" which Renato Poggioli believes is characteristic of the avant-garde (231). Furthermore, because Schechner has consistently worked to blur the relations of art and life, I consider his work in theatre, theory, and academic organisation to be art in the avant-gardist tradition. More specifically, because the performance project infiltrates the institutions producing knowledge about art, I read it as an example of the neo-avant-gardist art discussed by Hal Foster.

To suggest that performance develops not as a credible scholarly paradigm but as an artful academic enterprise according to an avant-gardist agenda is to reframe the importance of Schechner as its creative author. This reading de-authorises performance (as authoritative knowledge) and re-authorises it by pointing to the individual creative figure whose signature the performance project bears. The first thing to say about the authorial formation producing the performance project is that its orientation is metaphorical. From The Performing Group's inaugural production, Schechner looked at theatre for its metaphors to life; in The Bacchae, for
example, he saw a metaphor for critiquing the New Left's ecstatic politics. Furthermore, in inscribing theatre as ritual (since simile is a subset of metaphor in which the operant “as” or “like” appears), the selective substitution of theatre’s ritual-like features for the totality of theatres in his performance theory is not literal cognition. Theatre and ritual are dialectically connected, which means that they are related and distinct, comparable and contrasting. But within the performance project’s redefinition of theatre, they appear not only as overlapping but also as inseparable. The selective substitution of ritual for theatre is functionally equivalent to the suppression, in Searle’s example cited above, of all of Richard’s human features that are not gorilla-like. As a cognitive strategy organising these examples, metaphor describes the interpretative activity whereby Richard (for Searle) is rendered (like) a gorilla and theatre (for Schechner) is rendered (like) ritual. If simile signals the rendering by specifying the connectors “like” and “as,” allegory abandons or conceals such clues, thereby soliciting interpretation by its readers and (re)creators. Theatre’s incommensurability with the quotidian, expressed as Friedrich’s aesthetic difference, undermines the metaphorising of theatre as purely ritual. Yet within the expansive spectrum constituted by Schechner’s performance project, the metonymic contiguities among performative forms are “constantly folded back into an enormous immobile metaphor” (Eagleton, Walter 29); and that metaphor is the collapsing analogy between theatre and ritual.

The activity Eagleton so summarises is commodity-exchange, as described by Walter Benjamin in allegorical terms. Eagleton follows Benjamin in positing that this “steady inversion of metonymy into metaphor [...] has its roots” in the concealment (in commodity production) of “the causal, metonymic relation between that process and its products” as if the process of commodity production were “one of mere substitution” (e.g. raw materials for marketable object) rather than one of transformation through human labour (29-30). The concealment of transformation is the suppression of change. By tying theatre to its most archaic origins, both in the
mocked up evolutionary sequence suggested by the "ritual tree" and in the diminution of theatre's heterogeneity by the efficacy-entertainment braid, the performance project works to restrain anomalous change. Similarly, if in an opposed direction, by heralding the "crash of performative circumstances" and the "decline and fall" of the American neo-avant-garde, change is distorted by exaggerated descriptions. The cycle of performance Schechner draws linking warm-up to cool-down is a closed circle; his theory of the restoration of behaviours is explicitly about repetitions which, according to Schechner's definition, never happen for the first time. "Performance means: never for the first time. It means: for the second to the nth time. Performance is 'twice-behaved behavior'" (BTA 36). In each of these examples, temporal complexity and the dialectical relation of change and stasis, transformation and reproduction is denied. In the case from Benjamin that Eagleton takes up with such eloquence, commodity-exchange is associated with the metonymising dissemination of metaphoric (e.g. monetary) commerce, at the expense of the truly metonymic (e.g. causal) relation of labour in commodity production. If we follow Schechner in allowing performance studies a "core" role in "a 'well-rounded education'" we run a certain risk, namely of subscribing to its implicit view of geopolitics. It may be that to "connect and negotiate" late modernity's evident plurality among "the many cultural, personal, group, regional, and world systems comprising today's realities" (Schechner, "New" 9) rehearses the same manoeuvre with regard to modern capitalism's systematic exploitations: it announces metaphoric associations rather than analysing causal networks. The ethical role for any such knowledge produced in an ecology of study that reproduces capitalism's ideology will be as difficult to defend as the economic world system which relies on that ideology.

It is not sufficient however to define Schechner as an author inclined towards metaphor and to summarise his position as symptomatic of late capitalism operating on global scale. Both are insufficiently imprecise, however much merit each classification contains. Schechner's more individual authorial identity must be
located within the works which constitute the performance project. As an author to be studied, Schechner's principal interest does not reside in his personality or personal psychology; it derives from his strategic occupation of productive positions within a dynamic constellation of fields. Some understanding of his position within fields of production was elaborated through the accounts contained in Chapters One and Two, where Schechner's public profile was assembled. In particular, by reinserting an active authorial figure into the performance project, a man appears as the beneficiary of the symbolic and cultural capital produced by the institutionally accredited performance studies paradigm, which I have reconfigured above as a literary construction in the avant-gardist tradition. This new reading of Schechner's work deprives it of the objectivity achieved by those transdiscursive projects launched by but set free from the earlier founders of discursivity like Darwin, Freud, and Marx. Instead of being "the only game in town" as James Peters and John Deely predicated would be the case for semiotics (Deely xiv), performance studies will come to be seen quite saliently as Schechner's "game." Schechner's performance project serves his particular interests, derives from his own anxieties, and defies the broader interests of the performing arts and artists, in all their multiplicity. The interests embedded within and served by Schechner's performance project emerge through a reading of its rhetoric, in particular its allegorical features. They consolidate around Schechner's redefinition of theatre as part of a performance spectrum, a process critically examined in the next chapter.
Chapter Four

An Authoritative Repositioning of Theatre and Its Study

The authoritative position performance theory strives to articulate, through its predication of the unifying figure of performance, is associated with disciplinary exchange as much as with intercultural exchange. The geographical mobility Schechner has enjoyed throughout his career is projected upon the routes of access and lines of production within the academy; indeed, academic terms form the framework within which Maria Shevtsova identified Schechner's primary task: the "drawing together [of] 'anthropological and theatrical thought' so as to show that 'performance' is the point of intersection where anthropology and theatre, in Africa, Asia, South America, or New York meet and blend" ("Part Two" 191). If in geopolitical terms, "[t]he purpose of this great (and magic) circle" is, according to Shevtsova, to close the gaps between North and South, and East and West" (191); one might also ask what intellectually is the aim of the performance project as regards the hitherto more autonomous, if fundamentally inter-disciplinary, theatre studies?

Chapters 2.2, 2.3, and 3 above argued that the performance project exhibits a complex relation to authority. Authority is a condition for production because it brings access to funding and channels of publication; and it is also a product of activity, born in the author's signature, with its symbolic power. The address of such authority is not negotiated with sufficient rigour by the British pluralism articulated by Gilson-Ellis and Hilton (see p. 195 above). Certainly as a purported paradigm for the study of all performed acts, the performance project actively solicits normative standing with regard to the production, consumption, and regulation of the significance attaching to and arising from cultural processes. If one seeks to contest the normative standing Schechnerian performance seeks, the key to a robust critique is to identify how the performance project struggles to acquire access to and ownership over cultural
goods. The struggle is not simply one across geopolitical boundaries and the gradients setting off the industrialised from the developing lands; it is also about aesthetic categories and the work of artists and scholars whose projects strive to render salient the specificity of theatre, the ways in which theatre articulates its emergence from and negotiates its disappearance into everyday lives in the localities where it is made. In other words, the struggle by which the performance project articulates itself is a matter for post-colonial theories of interculturalism (as Bharucha advances, and as I have discussed in Chapter 3.1 above) and equally an issue for arguments about theatre’s status within cultures and in ritual theories of art’s relation to life (as raised in Chapter 1.3). It is the latter notion — of performance’s re-articulation of theatre’s epistemological and ethical significance — which I will develop here.

The project’s geopolitical pretensions of consolidating “disparate particulars” into a “magic circle [of the predicated] global village” appear structurally homologous to performance’s embrace of theatre. There may be a symmetry in the way the performance studies project Schechner has articulated is internally organised and the way in which it has striven for further legitimation. Until this is assessed, the epistemic relativism of the pluralist position (which marks certain orientations and practices further afield from Schechner’s performance studies paradigm) seems akin to a laissez-faire ethics of the liberal marketplace. With such ethics comes the empiricism that settles for the categories given by the world as it appears; theatre’s characteristic disappearance suggests, however, that empiricism cannot secure theatre’s standing as an object of study. As Birringer evocatively writes,

> the temporal structure of performance [...] divides the theatre from itself. It cannot hold on to the reality it imagines and produces, and the lived body of work becomes a fiction the moment it vanishes. What remains is the ‘hidden scene of production’ (Marx), not so much the functional normality of the conceptual and technical processes of rehearsal (beginning again) as rather the unconsciously produced image the theatre has of itself and conveys to its culture (3–4).
Because "[t]heatre's self-image permutes under the pressures of experience, the changing focus of cultural and art critical discourse, and the exigencies of the political economy of which the theatre is a part," theatre theorists cannot read the most readily available facets of theatre's changing "self-image" directly from what Bourdieu called "the social world as it is, [...] the established order" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 246). At some level, our views about theatre will be, in the blunt words of Thomas Kuhn, "theory-determined" (97). The choice of which theories underpin our views on theatre will be, following Marcuse, both epistemological and ethical.

Chapter Three aimed to defend the links between certain forms of authorship and cultural and symbolic authority. As an author, Schechner's interest lies not in his personality or personal psychology, but in his strategic occupation of productive positions within a dynamic constellation of fields. An understanding of his position within fields of production is necessary for an adequate evaluation of the project's contributions to thinking theatre. I have suggested that among his characteristic modes of production there are allegorical features, the use of fables and of figuration. Edwin Honig's study on allegory, provocatively entitled The Dark Conceit (1959), summarises that "[i]n one of its aspects allegory is a rhetorical instrument used by strategists of all sorts in their struggle to gain power or to maintain a system of beliefs" (179). By raising the pragmatic dimensions of the discursive matrices in which Schechner's project operates, I have signalled the importance of rhetoric for this new reading of Schechner's work. By proposing that Schechner's statements about the standing of theatre and its study aim at normativity, I am indicating that I read the performance project as engaged in precisely the kinds of symbolic struggles for real power which Honig identifies with allegory. I will consider their normative aspirations by identifying three key moments in Schechner's theorisation of theatre which bear upon the emergence of and conquest by performance studies of the terrain studied with departments of Drama and Theatre Studies. These three
moments in which Schechner redefines theatre mark the transitions observed in Chapter 2.1 from theatre, to theory, to institutionality. In this general movement, Schechner reconceives his position as a creative author in terms of his own institutional authority. In the final sub-chapter, the concept of avant-gardism as it relates to art institutions is reintroduced in order to make some sense of this shift.

The first moment is early in Schechner’s career when he is investigating basic structuralist anthropology with a view to strengthening his association of theatre with ritual. In an early essay published in Public Domain called “Approaches: A Work-in-Progress 1965-1966, 1968” Schechner introduced a unique terminology to describe theatre, as a “node.” While the uses of the term in this essay are themselves incommensurable and therefore confusing, the sense of theatre as a point on a continuum, a spectrum, a “performance web,” and the “ritual tree” describe theatre’s shifting orientation with performance theory over the last three decades. The second moment of theatre’s reinscription in the performance project occurs shortly after Schechner’s theatre work with TPG terminated, and he was turning his attention more fully to his theoretical production. At that point, Schechner announced a decisive turn from theatre to theatricality, in his obituary for the neo-avant-garde American theatre (EH 11-76). With theatricality, theatre leaves its consecrated setting and enters social life, as both Goffmanesque social performance and Turnerian social drama. This leaving-taking marks an expansion of theatricality’s domain, but also an evasion of theatre’s material difficulties facing both its practitioners (in an anti-subsidy culture specifically) and its researchers (writing about theatre as it disappears). The third moment begins in the late 1980s and addresses theatre studies as a site for reconstruction as performance, using as its grounds the reasoning that the theatre “as we know it” is a shrinking practice of no greater import than “chamber music” (“New” 8). The change in theatre’s standing within Schechner’s discourse encapsulates the drift from theatre practice into theory and into institutional activism which the performance project as a study object details. It
also situates Schechner's most recent reclamation of theatre's personal importance to him ("Theatre in"), as if to redeem theatre itself against its diminishing status in his theory. By considering the articulations of theatre at these moments, the trajectory of the performance project is described. In that trajectory, theatre functions as a boomerang: theatre is distanced from Schechner’s priorities only to return as performance studies launches itself on the strength of its repudiation. The movement I’m describing is akin to the return of the repressed associated with trauma in psychoanalytic discourse; theatre emerges into salience as Schechner’s privileged preoccupation only after his public erasure of its value and standing.
1. Theatre as a Node

If a correspondence or mutuality between theatre and ritual launched the performance project, which then pursued the promise of a single figure unifying all genres of performed acts, to what degree will "theatre" withstand its transformation by performance, which subsumes it as a mere node in a vast spectrum? In describing the nodalization of theatre, as the first key moment of theatre's new inscription within Schechner's nascent performance project, the key text is an early essay "Approaches." Schechner was writing and rewriting this essay during the period he worked with The New Orleans Group and in the early days of The Performance Group, for publication in Tulane Drama Review and in his first essay collection, Public Domain. In "Approaches," Schechner used the term "node" in at least three distinctive ways. First, he described performance analysis of text-based theatre as "yield[ing] anchor points and recurrent actions and relationships that are nodes of meaning and action" (PD 66). "Node" here seems to describe a point of conjunction, but it is not clear whether some of the posited nodes are "nodes of meaning" and others are "nodes of action" or whether the very intersection Schechner seeks to designate is precisely that of "meaning and action"; I favour the latter reading since a subsequent phrase describes nodes as "where decisions are made within conflict situations" (66). At this point, Schechner is discussing structuralist ways of approaching play texts. But the anticipation of Turner's social dramaturgy, using the characteristic narrative flow from conflict to resolution as a means to describe social exchange (FR 61-87), is legible in retrospect.

Schechner's notion of theatrical structure as "an uneven series of gathering tensions" is then linked, in the second deployment of the term, to the notion of synchronic "bundles of relations" which Schechner has borrowed from Lévi-Strauss's structural anthropology (PD 56-66). In his essay "The Structural Study of Myth," Lévi-Strauss posits such bundles as the "constituent units of a myth" (qtd. 66). By
identifying both this feature of myth and the above characteristic of drama through the single term “node,” Schechner is aligning the tempo of dramatic performance to the structure of myth. This alignment implicitly shifts the emergent theory from description into prescription, because of the strong ontology that Lévi-Straussian structuralism entails. Furthermore, there is an epistemology attached to the latter, which also impacts upon Schechner’s theory. In short, the emergent conception of theatre as nodal is made vulnerable to the fundamental philosophical misconception of rudimentary structuralism, namely its failure to address the pragmatic dimensions of production and reception. This failure produces its inability to theorise “the necessarily situated or embodied nature of language” which “make[s] it easy for us to ignore our actual language-using activity” riddled, as it is, with contingency and produced within a dialectic of innovation and tradition (Falck 9-10). Ironically, Schechner’s growing interest in the intersection of and the interstice between theatre and anthropology will be marked by a failure to think of the contingent pragmatics of performance in sufficiently dialectical terms. Consequently, when he comes to think about the relation of innovation and tradition, it is in the reductive and reifying terms of his theory of restored behaviour and its interest in archiving activity as strips of reproducible gestures isolated from their social and semiotic contexts.

In the “Approaches” essay itself, there is a third use of the term “node” which further complicates a clear conception of theatre or its attributes. It points the reader to electro-dynamic circuitry as the source for images. The value of electro-dynamics seems to derive from its distinctive conception of process which contrasts to the organic, particularly botanical, metaphors which have traditionally been used to describe creativity (PD 78). In this sense, “node” is associated with energy exchange. By using physical rather than organic imagery, the theory is moving from an inherently spiritualising discourse into one which, by virtue of its apparent physical basis, strives for spiritual or moral neutrality and greater scientificity. If we pursue the scientific meanings associated with “node,” however, more confusion ensues. First,
contrary to Schechner's implication, in physics a node is a point of quietude, produced either as a point of minimum disturbance or of zero voltage, and therefore a point not of exchange but of stasis or isolation. However, while Schechner does not refer to it, the energetic connotation of "node" he seeks to deploy evokes the lexicon of neurology, which came into public prominence around the time "Approaches" was written, through the popular dissemination of systems thinking and cybernetic imagery. It would seem that Schechner is seeking to place his approach to theatre in the general context of the intellectual move described by Thomas Sebeok as the "crusade for unification" of science or general systems theory which was particularly prominent in American academia in the 1950s and 1960s (73).

Designating theatre as a node is a pre-requisite for Schechner's positing a continuum or spectrum of performance to which theatre's specificity is subsumed.

The node of theatre is reworked within the performance spectrum Schechner posits by the relation Schechner elaborates between efficacy and entertainment as two inter-related aspects of performances in culture. Performances, including theatre, are described by Schechner as "a continuous process of transformation" comprised by a diverse range of "impulses" from which performance is said to originate (PT 142). These impulses include both instrumental (social) and ritual (aesthetic) sources, but it is Schechner's goal to blend, rather than disentangle, them. Through the association of instrumental and ritual dimensions, ritual becomes associated with the quotidian, because Schechner regards ritual as exemplifying the instrumentality associated with everyday, rather than aesthetic, affairs. As a consequence a specifically aesthetic dimension is suppressed. This suppression marks a change. The founding analogy between ritual and theatre first posed them in a properly dialectical relation of distinction and connection. Theatre and ritual were distinct in terms of their efficacy, since ritual was efficacious whereas theatre was not. Theatre and ritual were connected, by virtue of their common forms, tools, and constituent elements. However, the subsequent braid of efficacy and entertainment
does away with this dialectical sensibility. It suppresses the aesthetic difference (Rainer Friedrich’s term) deriving from theatre’s specific emergence (my term) from its grounds in the everyday (Read’s term) to which it is related, but with which it is not commensurable (according to Read).

This is the logic against which the terms of efficacy and entertainment, which were first theorised as a dyad, come to form a braid blending social and aesthetic impulses, social and aesthetic performances. This has two consequences, one for critical vocabulary, the other for metaphysics. First, good theatre comes to be equated with ritual theatre; and opposition to ritual theories, as for example David Cole’s mythos published in 1975, is read by adherents as an aesthetic, not a philosophical, divergence (“New Books” 141). Second, the blending of social and aesthetic performances, of efficacy and entertainment, leads to ritual’s subsumption of theatre. Any difference between the two is said by Schechner to derive from perspective (PT 120-21), and ritual is sustained as the privileged term of the founding analogy. The interplay of efficacy and entertainment, social ritual and aesthetic theatre, expands performance so as to conflate art and life. In view of that conflation, however, any concrete specificity to theatre defined as a node dissolves.

Rather than contract theatre’s variability (both synchronically and diachronically) into a node only to disperse its specificity across the braid of efficacy and entertainment, I offer a counter-proposal. As an alternative, the term “theatre” itself should be stratified, so as to designate, in different contexts, theatre action at the level of activity, theatre organisation at the level of codified practice, and theatre institution at the level of society and its structures as collectively organised, macroscopically scaled, and relatively enduring. In this delineation of “theatre” as necessarily stratified, it is thoughtful practice (praxis) which bridges the strata. At one end, theatre action may be defined as both distinct from, but connected to, organisation and institution, simply in the terms Eric Bentley provided, as A playing X
in the presence of S who watches on (150). It is this aspect alone of theatre which, as Brook contends, "always asserts itself in the present" (Empty 111). At the other end of the scale, changing in a different temporal rhythmic, "institution" refers not so much to the well-established theatres but to the systemic structuring of ways of theatre-making. Examples of theatre's institutional features include entrance fees charged to spectators or the use of a written script or set of codified movements. Within such theatre institutions, there remains latitude for aesthetic and economic (and other) alternatives that are codified at the level of organisation. These strata of theatre are related both discursively and materially. In discourse, matrices of justification, explanation, and interpretation accrue around each, intersecting with one another and with other cultural discourses. In material terms, as practice animates theatre institutions and organisations through theatre action; so too may theatre action be organised and instituted so as to sediment at the other levels. Distinct powers and properties pertain to these identifiable theatre strata. Since so much confusion arises when the word "theatre" is applied without caveat to each stratum, the nodalization of theatre seems to obfuscate rather than elucidate theatre's operations in culture. Indeed, the elusive nature of the term "node" is directly linked to the failure to elucidate theatre's strata.

---

1 I've changed the verb from "impersonate" to "play" so as to avoid the installation of the dramatic character as primary to theatre (see Fuchs) and the further implication that in plays comprised of characters, those characters are in any necessary way modelled on pre-existent forms which they mimic.

2 This is the epistemic significance of the distinction Baz Kershaw raises in "Framing the Audience" between theatre at the social level and live performance at the subjective level. In his essay, "From the Universal to the Particular," Nicholas Wright finds a different way of lodging necessary distinctions between theatre at the level of society and in terms of activity in his reconsideration of the alignments emergent in the late 1970s between theatre workers and drama educators. The institutionality of the role of the drama teacher and its material and symbolic constraints distinguish them from theatre workers, for whom artistic responsibility is distributed and renegotiated in less determined way. Wright is concerned to return to drama teachers the structuring powers implicit in theatre-making, so that while a theatrical investment in plays is reclaimed for drama teaching, the "argument of the play" is seen as objective insofar as it is manifest (e.g. through staging activity), but also as "relative" and "refutable"; as "particular [...] not universal" (104), and therefore, to use my terms, not institutionalised.
These distinct strata explain the insight Tobin Nellhaus derives from rethinking theatre historiography along critical realist lines. "Men make their own history' wrote Marx, though he could have substituted 'theatre' or 'science,' 'but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past" (527). The constraints and also enablesments flowing from history and society into theatre structure all three levels of action, organisation, and institution; none is pure or free. But neither is any fully and finally determined; change institutionalises organisational arrangements and degrades institutions by dissolving their authority thereby reducing them to organisational patterns. Clearly, a theatre apparatus is the designation given to the concrete form in which organisation and institution intersect; in a theatre apparatus, organisation and institution are, insofar as they are capable of being, instantiated in action through practice. Thus theatre action only exists in relation to an apparatus from which it emerges; that apparatus is both organised and situated in relation to social institutions, but it is not visible to the senses as such; knowledge of the theatre apparatus must be extracted from the organisation of experiences and its indices.

Theatre action is the stratum of theatre which provokes the indeterminacies and liminality cited by Baz Kershaw as resistant to theatre's commodification as an organised service industry ("Framing" 183-84); but it is also, contradictorily, precisely the feature which Miranda Joseph identifies as live performance's perfection of late capitalism's desire for the inexhaustible (because always disappearing) object for commodified consumption (Roach 164-65). Regardless of how they are valued, Kershaw implicitly sustains the stratification of the term "theatre" when he distinguishes "theatre" as "the institutions, buildings, modes of production that are required to stage a performance" from "performance" meaning "the event itself" ("Framing" 165-76). The benefit of relying on a stratified conception of theatre as action, organisation, and institution is that it allows the useful theatre/live
performance distinction to function in practice while distancing itself from Schechner's key term. Nonetheless, to talk about theatre action without regard to the other strata is analytically to bracket the apparatus. Such bracketing is useful in order to recognise theatre action as a \textit{sui generis} stratum of activity which in reality exists in ongoing interplay through emergence from and subsumption into organisation and institution.\(^3\) But to address any particular instance of theatre action is to refer equally to embodied theatre practice and implicitly to an apparatus. The epistemological significance of theatrical apparatuses is obscured by Schechner's unconditional generalisation that "theatre=action=transportation/transformation" on which basis he observes "theatre is now showing itself everywhere: in social dramas, personal experience, public displays, political and economic interaction, art. So now: on with the show" (PC 121). The shift from abstraction to apparatus is unmediated by a concrete description of theatre's action through which to understand how practice through an apparatus like "public displays" might be identified. If theatre is simply to be action then the word is emptied of import. The reduction of theatre, which the early theory executes, serves, then as a key stage in the development of theatre's subsumption within Schechner's performance theory.

This is particularly clear if we consider the further connotation to the key term "node" which develops Schechner's new conception of theatre within the performance project. For the botanical meaning of the term, which at least in British English is the word's primary definition, describes "the part of a plant stem from which one or more leaves emerge" (Concise 804). It is this sense which communicates the image of theatre as one branch or leaf of the performance "tree"; when it is first given, this broad conception of performance is stated as a continuum connecting theatre to play, games, sports and ritual. "Theatre is special. But it isn't

\(^{3}\) See Archer, \textit{Realist} 132-34 and 165-94 for a critical realist-informed argument for such analytic parsing.
unique. The external structure of theatre is in many ways homologous to play, games and sports, and ritual" (PD 71). This kind of association between theatre and other transformational and symbolic forms of social activity and exchange is the core of the performance project. It is sustained in Schechner's most recent book of essays, *The Future of Ritual*, where the closing essay of the same title diagrams the "ritual tree" (FR 229). The ritual tree, like the continuum which preceded it, illustrates Schechner's axiom that "[p]erformance is an inclusive term" (PT xiii). What is only apparent by analysing the second phase of theatre's reconstruction is that performance as presented by Schechner only achieves its inclusiveness at the level of theory by the expansion of theatre's features under the abstract banner of theatricality. It is to the second moment, then, that the discussion now turns.
2. The dispersion of theatre into theatricality

It is in the mid-career essay "The Decline and Fall of the (American) Avant-Garde" that Schechner's thoughts turn from theatre as practice to theatricality as an abstract, delocalised quality. Schechner wrote this essay first in 1981, for publication in two parts in Performing Arts Journal (for which he served as an advisory editor), where it evoked passionate response. Shortly after its publication, PAJ editors Bonnie Marranca and Gautam Dasgupta published an editorial statement entitled "American Theatre: Fission/Fusion" which argued explicitly against the systemisation of theatre's study as performance which Schechner was proposing. Schechner's essay then appeared in a revised version in his collection The End of Humanism published by PAJ in 1982, as one volume in the series he co-edited with Brooks McNamara. This revised edition serves as the source text for the discussion which follows. In this essay, the commitment characteristic of the earlier phase discussed in Chapter 4.1 above, namely to investigate the relation between theatre and ritual through staging praxis enhanced and guided by academic study, collapses into a commitment to study not "theatre" as practice, institution, or praxis, but instead to study "theatricality" as it is manifest in a range of social forms. By necessity, this expanded category of the theatrical as contrasted with theatre will take Schechner's studies "out of the theatre" as a consecrated place/time and thereby undermine the occasional nature of the activity of "going to the theatre" by casting theatricality as something manifest in all aspects of "our" lives. This proposal has two general consequences, which ironically can be apprehended in the terms Marranca and Dasgupta introduced, fission and fusion. First, the ubiquitous theatricality, by dispensing with theatre as occasion, executes a fission in the theatrical field, by refusing to recognise the means by which any particular situated theatre constitutes
itself by attracting participants as artists and audiences; and second, such ubiquity threatens to fuse a selective perspective into a universal which is false, as diagnosed by Indian critic Rustom Bharucha (Theatre 27-41) and by sociologist Maria Shevtsova (“Part Two” 191-92). Both this fission and this fusion have consequences for the adequacy by which theatre studies might apprehend the specifics by which any given theatre occasion emerges from and returns to the everyday lives of the community in which it is located. Yet such apprehension is imperative if theatre studies is to sustain Rainer Friedrich’s claim for “an aesthetic difference” or the incommensurability of theatre and the everyday which Alan Read argues. To occlude what I have called theatre’s specific emergence is to comprise such understanding. Ironically, in light of Schechner’s evident commitment to theatre praxis, what suffers in the occlusion is the grounds of and means for understanding the specificity of theatre labouring in its local unfolding. I will describe the reasoning by which this compromise is effected, and subsequently relate it to the preceding developments of the theatre-ritual analogy and its derivatives.

In “Decline and Fall,” Schechner described the dissolution of the theatrical experimental scene in New York from the late 1950s through the 1970s. In other words, the emergence of theatricality has everything to do with the problems of historiographic representation and the discursive matrices which situated it, such as were addressed in Chapter One above. For Schechner, this experimental scene constituted the American avant-garde. In describing the changes in which he

---

4 The account given of Dionysus in 69 in Chapter One above identifies some of the ways in which both performers and audiences were constituted as participants in the staging.

5 In the introduction to his most recent collection, The Future of Ritual, Schechner sets out five conceptions of “avant-garde” but the New York scene in which he occupied a central position remains prominent, even as he has grown more critical of its transnational arts festival stars whose experiments have been consolidated and commodified. That there is nearly a continent of theatrical turf between the two coasts he discusses escapes his attention. The need to remap American theatre derives not only from the limits of the old regional theatre’s cartography (Washington, DC; Chicago; Houston; Louisville; San Francisco; Minneapolis) but also from those of the urban-based neo-avant-garde. Visual arts discourse
participated in association with The Performance Group, Schechner accounted for
the expiration of group theatres and their eclipse by solo performances characterised
by "personalism" rather than social conscience (EH 52 and passim).® Schechner
addressed issues of funding; practical transmission; and popular and academic
criticism, in order to identify the ways in which the limits imposed by each of them
strangled his American avant-garde. While acknowledging that activity beyond the
New York or West Coast scenes were not then well-documented, Schechner fails to
consider that his steering question (69) -- "four generations [...] after Cage, three
after Malina and Beck, two after Chaikin, Breuer, Akalaitis, Foreman, and Wilson,
one after LeCompte, Sherman, and Gray there is -- who?" -- may be a fatally flawed
question. For it is one deeply embedded in a notion of artistic filiation which is
vertical rather than horizontal, and which, in its privileging of proper names, may be
construed as patriarchal. In raising it, he immediately acknowledges that "[t]here are
young people working, but they don't cohere as a group, or a movement" but
subsequently fails to question whether his notions of group and movements are
necessary, apt, or appropriately attuned to register the field of praxis as it was then

° Similarly, a shift is described by Alisa Solomon, who in contextualising Squat Theatre's work
in the USA beginning in the late 1970s, states:

when Squat came to America, there was no longer an alternative theater movement here, largely because there
was no longer a sweeping social movement for it to be part of. With few stunning exceptions -- such as Mabou Mine's
Dead End Kids and Richard Foreman's Egyptology -- America's avant-garde was becoming more and more
formalistic. Often beautiful or even mind-blowing, such works severed themselves from social significance,
encouraging an associative, non-discursive response from spectators. Younger artists, reeling from rising rents and
production costs---and especially in the '80s, from the cultural exaltation of the individual--turned largely to the insular form
of solo performance art. (In Buchmuller and Koos v-vi)

Does Solomon's statement corroborate Schechner's account, or repeat its terms?
then constituted or has subsequently developed. My work in investigating community-centred theatre praxis in the USA in the 1990s, much of which had a history stretching into and before the early 1980s so dismally described by Schechner, suggests that there are good empirical grounds to question the validity of Schechner's pessimistic conclusions. In the place of "companies" which institute organisational praxis (with varying degrees of success and longevity), there exist in the American field coalitions and partnerships of different degrees, intensities, and aims. Their contemporary presence in the 1990s and their histories question the legitimacy of Schechner's portrait, and the metropolitan, if not elitist, conception of avant-gardism underwriting it.

It remains the case that when Schechner regarded contemporary practice in the early 1980s, he saw only apoliticism; "What's missing," Schechner wrote of the work which still moved him, "is a heart for the City as such. The work does not weep for, or be in a rage for/against, the life of the people" (67). In this, he has subtly substituted the selectivity of the producing trends of theatre institutions for the heterogeneity of theatre practice. There's no question of New York theatre, even at its margins, being shaped by market concerns; but Schechner's account substitutes rhetoric for research. According to Schechner, this absence of passion for the polis undermined "not only what theatre is about but its chief glory" (53). Failing to address the metropolitanism of his own argument, Schechner sought "to investigate the entropy: to look it straight in its foggy face" (21) without adequately assessing the

---

7 Other models for artistic constellations exist. By contrast to Schechner's notion of "group," the British women's theatre company, Scarlet Theatre (which employs full-time artistic director and general manager, and hires performers and production teams by the season for one touring production) describes the shape of its organisational structure as a "web": Scarlet is a touring company that makes innovative theatre through dynamic collaborations between artists. Each show is a subtle synthesis of specialist talents by director, designer, writer and performers. Scarlet draws its performers from an ever widening web of artists that connects all over the world.

Eight women sit on Scarlet's Board of Directors; eighteen women are named as "associate company members" (Programme notes, Princess Sharan).
acuity of his vision. The presumption of the essay is that within his developing performance project, Schechner will perform the necessary analysis of the socio-political shifts engendering the change in theatre culture he described. Even on its own rhetorical terms, from a selectively accessed empirical field, the “Decline and Fall” essay articulates epistemic commitments about theatre and theatricality and their ontological secretions which occlude the dialectic of theatre and everyday life as a relation of emergence. For this reason, I argue below for a shift from an empirically oriented account which Schechner appears to provide (however problematically) to an argument about epistemology. (The implication of this is that when a map of the new “neo-avant-garde” comes to be drawn, it will be laid out in substantially different terms.)

The central point of Schechner’s historiographic narrative concerns his “bleak prognosis” of the state of his art, which articulates his presumption about authority and its link with auteurism in practical terms, much as they were related historically and theoretically in Chapter 3.2 above. In the early 1980s, Schechner envisioned:

A theatre without a new generation of young people. A set of stars – Chalkin, Foreman, Wilson, Breuer, et al. – who have been fixed as Polaris for more than ten years. No leaders defining what theatre is, arguing for what it should be. Big talents being drawn down into the black holes of formalism and nihilism [aesthetic modes which betray the avant-garde’s commitment to social change]. Subsidy so inadequate that it forces good people out of theatre and discourages young people from entering. Those who do enter are hopeless before they begin: they want to make it on soaps, get a few commercials, find a snug harbor in some regional theatre. (EH 69)

Ironically, when Nick Kaye asked Schechner in October 1988 about his pessimistic prognosis in the “Decline” essay of the “formalist deep freeze,” Schechner admitted to the distance (“This is seven or eight years ago...”) and said in his ensuing discussion of The Wooster Group, Philip Glass, Robert Wilson, Lee Breuer, and Karen Finley that he was “still of two minds” (“Indeterminate” 355). The enduring indeterminacy of his opinion about transgression and resistance in the avant-garde, however, oscillates only around New York-based theatre artists. The metropolitan focus is sustained when Phillip Auslander turns his attention to the problem of “presence and resistance” in 1980s performance (Presence).
With this as its pivotal content, structurally, Schechner's critical narrative about the ostensible "Decline and Fall" of American experimental theatre turns from the historic scene it seeks to document and refracts back on the performance project. The latter is implicitly posed as a compromise with, if not a solution for the crisis of American neo-avant-gardist theatre. It is a profoundly allegorical move, for the reasons given in the following two paragraphs.

Its allegorical strategy plays out a substitutive projection. I have already described how Schechner's essay concludes with a condemnation, but that is attached to a study question. The uncompromising character of the condemnation, written as the "bleak" prognosis on theatre's future cited in the paragraph above, directs the reader to the study question and the study question props up the essay, keeping it from collapsing in despair. Because its bleak prognosis was so attractive of critical attention when the essay was first published in Performing Arts Journal, Schechner's critics have not amply addressed the importance of the study question. It circulates around the term "theatricality" of which Schechner contended that

One of the truly fine things to come from the high-energy experimental period now ended is the recognition that theatricality is among the primary human activities. It is not a mirror, but something basic in itself. Theatricality doesn't imitate or derive from other human social behavior, but exists side-by-side with them in a weave. [...] Theatricality is a process braided into these other processes [e.g. politics, ordinary behavior]. It is our job--and here I am being polemical on behalf of the future I want to bring into being--to investigate the multiplex weaves we can obtain by braiding these basic human social behaviors. The same event can be political, ordinary, ritualized and theatrical. (72-73; boldface mine)

Through this statement, which is part diagnosis, part prescription, an elegant transposition which I would describe as allegorical occurs: the mission once pursued by the then defunct New York experimental scene is transposed by Schechner to a different register and field, namely an academic/scholarly one. From the outline of
Schechner's career in Chapter 2.1 above, it is clear that this proposal to "investigate the multiplex weaves" of a primordial and plastic theatricality grows through his performance theory into the paradigm of performance studies he pioneers, which achieves a certain institutionality as a degree-granting academic subject.

In the shift from "avant-garde theater" to the study of theatricality detailed in the "Decline and Fall" essay, Schechner conceptualised his new (if only metaphorical) refusal to value "going to the theatre" during a generation lacking avant-garde luminaries. Such luminaries Schechner conceived as "leaders" capable of directing and articulating how such occasions are to be valued. The direction and articulation of the value of theatre occasions for their participants was precisely the task Schechner had set in the earlier period when theatre praxis dominated his attention. It was then that he predicated that theatre might be an "initiatory participatory game" if the analogy of theatre and ritual could be activated. This analogy, and its associated continuum is here transposed into an abstract theatricality which promises to function in the place of the pantheon of now-absent avant-garde "stars" he projected, as a repository for experiments testing the relations of art and life. Implicitly, Schechner recognises that this historically has been the primary occupation of the century's avant-gardes. The mark he makes with "Decline and Fall" is to discount theatre practice as a site for its future elaboration. What is less immediately apparent is that this function still recruits theatre and sustains it as central to, if distorted by, the performance project as it shifts into its second phase. Such doubleness, of subsumption and sustenance, is a mark of allegories in which source texts are both transformed and maintained through creative readings by which they are effectively rewritten. That is to say, it is the doubleness exhibited by Dionysus in 69, which functions simultaneously as an adaptation and an invention.

That said, there is little question that the enduring centrality of theatre as a target for theoretical evaluation is obscured in the expansion of the abstract quality, theatricality. "Chased from Plato's republic as nonrational and subversive but
existing always, sometimes marginally, theater is now showing itself everywhere," Schechner proclaims in 1985, "in social dramas, personal experience, public displays, political and economic interaction, art" (150); but, in fact, it is the abstraction of theatricality, not theatre, which attracts those myriad sites into a certain coherence.

For Schechner, as for British theatre researcher Elizabeth Burns writing a decade earlier, the category "theatricality" embodies a decision to embed any apparently efficacious set of conventional behaviours within everyday life without marking the emergence of the activity as a distinctive occasion. In Theatricality: A Study of Convention in Theatre and in Social Life, Burns defines theatricality as an indeterminate mode of behaviour, dependent upon the recognition of pre-existing social conventions. Shevtsova signals its relevance for reading Schechner's performance theory ("Part Two" 191) and indeed Burns and Schechner share interests in convention as a prominent explanatory element and in behaviour as the salient observational object. According to Burns,

Behaviour can be described as 'theatrical' only by those who know what drama is, even if their knowledge is limited to the theatre in their own country and period. [...] Theatricality is not therefore a mode of behaviour or expression, but attaches to any kind of behaviour perceived and interpreted by others and described (mentally or explicitly) in theatrical terms. These others are more aware of the symbolic than of the instrumental aspect of any behaviour which they feel that they can describe as theatrical. [...] Theatricality itself is determined by a particular viewpoint, a mode of perception. (12-13; boldface mine).

Theatricality, then, emerges "in the eye of the beholder" in much the same was as Schechner posits the distinction between theatre and ritual as one of perspective (PT 120-21). The problem is not that the theatrical is posited as existing only in relation to the expectations produced by and sustained through cultural conventions, for such is the case for any social form which is elaborated culturally. Rather, the difficulty lies in the apparent failure (more in Schechner than in Burns) to specify at the start how the "viewpoint, mode of perception" in Burns or the "perspective" for Schechner is
also constrained by social and cultural conventions. There is neither a point beyond culture nor a perfect point within it to regard performance. If the aim is to understand amply and to communicate effectively the value of theatrical performances, then their conventional basis is at best a truism, capable of generating in itself few explanations. Below I will track some of the traps implicit in the conventionalised view of theatricality.

Based on the definition given by Burns, presumably the mode of behaviour deemed cannot be determined in advance of its unfolding in any unspecified social encounter because it is determined by the perspective of another and not by the expressiveness or "degrees of demonstrativeness" (2) of the "performer." As a quality arising from an observer's attribution (a "subject-effect") rather than by a performer's actions, theatricality according to Burns is not bounded within any specific social site. Only a recontextualising of the viewer whose mode of perception is said to determine the theatrical could relocate it. While her detailed historical descriptions of theatre modalities does succeed in resituating theatre's perceivers, at the level of theory this delocalised potentiality for theatre remains intact, where it is described like a language. For this reason, Burns's theory of theatricality, like Schechner's early thoughts, must be located conceptually -- as it is chronologically -- in the context of structuralism's attempts to map social and cultural features in self-contained systems. It is at odds with the necessarily open and partial character of social life defended by the dialectical conception of theatre's emergence from and return to everyday life. Burns's structural axes are given below:

rhetorical and authenticating conventions [...] constitute a grammar of theatrical presentation, a grammar implicit in the practical composition of drama. [...] 'Theatricality' in ordinary life consists in the resort to this special grammar of composed behaviour; it is when we suspect that behaviour is being composed according to this grammar of rhetorical and authenticating conventions that we regard it as theatrical. We feel that we are in the presence of some action which has been devised to transmit beliefs,
attitudes and feelings of a kind that the 'composer' wishes us to have. (32-33)

In construing theatre activity according to a linguistic model embedded in "ordinary life," ironically Burns is required to privilege both the performer's intentions and the spectator's literacy in order to explain how spectators might reliably know that they are "in its presence." Not only does this privileging run against structuralism's impersonal grain, but it also reduces theatre's temporal span to its performance, when in fact the institutionality of theatrical forms ensures their endurance across performance and their impact on perceivers who are not spectators. Its institutionality is not given outright, but composed by the categories of rhetorical and authenticating conventions, for they alone apprehend those features relevant to theatre at the levels of organisation (over time and distance) and its institution as a practical and discursive organ of reproduction. By contrast, describing theatricality as a mode of perception cannot apprehend them.

We have already seen how Schechner's historical account of American neo-avant-garde theatre sustains an orthodox and metropolitan account of theatrical experimentation from the 1950s to 1970s, from Cage and Black Mountain College through The Performance Group. This is substantially the narrative given by the historians Bigsby, Innes, and Shank discussed in Chapter One above. Clearly, it is an inheritance which has to be handled critically. The critical significance of institution then attaches in two ways. It describes the received discursive matrix surrounding theatrical experimentation in the United States in the second half of the current century. Also "institution" is evoked through the use of the term "convention" to describe certain regulated features of things theatrical. The conventionalised theatricality, which Schechner, like Burns, aims to disseminate, obscures the institutional functions and interests shaping our conceptions of theatre. The distinction Burns in particular argues, for rhetorical and authenticating conventions by which different forms of theatricality secure their place in people's perceptions, is
structurally similar to the distinction argued by Jean Alter's sociosemiotic theory of theatre. A minor contest over Alter's book bearing that title highlights the contested terrain.

Alter posits two different functions, the performative and the referential. Alter's work was blasted in a review by Michael Issacharoff, who dismisses Alter's book as "pseudo-theoretical bombast" (423) and as "a consistently disappointing book that needed radical rethinking, revision and rewriting before publication" (424). One of Issacharoff's major assaults is against Alter's evident failure to consider any pre-established philosophy of reference before conceiving the performative/referential distinction. However, if one follows Derrida's reading of J. L. Austin's conception of the performative as an utterance which simultaneously signifies and enacts that which it signifies (Butler, "Burning" 198); then perhaps there is a pre-existing philosophical foundation for conceiving the performative as non-referential. This would give the grounds, which Alter assumes, for contrasting theatre's performative aspect with the posited referential function. The better argument for refuting any such distinction is that performativity as non-referential forgets the temporal dimension in which the conventions reiterated as performatives are somehow produced. Including duration within a conception of the performative means that its signifying is no longer simply "an enactment" that is "essentially non-referential," where non-referential is taken to mean "not related to facts or previously existing situations" (Gould, "Unhappy" 24). This is because reference would be made not to pre-ordained essence but to past production. Past production issues in iterable conventions, such as those pragmatically securing reference through the use of certain sounds understood as words denoting things. Here, Bourdieu's critique of Austin in Language & Symbolic Power is very useful; to his identification of the authority which legitimates certain positions of enunciation over others, I would add a temporal dimension. Such systems of authority and gradients of privilege are formed through time, rather than being instituted full-blown. In these terms, my study of
Schechner's performance project aims to track the institutionalisation over time of an abstract theatricality in and through the performance paradigm. Considering Schechner's work in phases, as argued in Chapter 2.1, serves this end.

In response to Schechner's repositioning of theatre, I aim to reorient an approach to the institutionality of theatres and their conceptions in academic and aesthetic discourse. The first step is to recognise that when theatrical (or social and cultural) conventions are defined as the "grammar" of a "language," as has Burns in setting forth her conception of theatricality, the organisational and institutional features of theatre are, under such a description, vested in rather than also emergent from theatre as practice. Against this, I would argue that theatre practice both emerges from and resists the enabling and constraining conditions introduced by the organisation of theatrical apparatuses of production and of theatrical institutions. It is this ongoing movement between tradition and innovation which a structuralist conception of language without a companion pragmatics fails to address.® By contrast, Burns' proposition is analogous to positing both a city and a dwelling house internalised solely within the individual urban resident, rather than as concrete (s)p(l)aces which structure and organise activity but do not determine it too rigidly (and with which the dweller can interact both in her imagination and concretely, while those two sorts of interactions obtain different kinds of consequences). In other words, my alternative view defends the possibility of

® I am not claiming that theatrical conventions and institutional arrangements do not inf(l)ect theatre practice, but rather that, historically once art achieves a certain autonomy from the productive sphere, in the sense of autonomy articulated by Romanticism, theatre practice both emerges from and resists the enabling and constraining conditions generated by theatre organisations and institutions. It is in this ongoing movement between tradition and innovation that it makes sense to speak, as Bourdieu does, of an aesthetic sphere more or less autonomous from the economic sphere. Economics certainly plays a role in the formation and longevity of theatre apparatuses, but Bourdieu is right to point out that the symbolic capital privileging certain traditions at the level of organisation and institution is not explicable only in monetary terms. This necessary complexity, which can consider monetary resources involved in but not fully determining theatre practice is not possible if theatricality is defined as a "language" along the lines of discourse theorised under structuralism. See, for example, Bourdieu, Language and Field.
theatre's emergence from the everyday as described by Alan Read and of the scholarly/political project of rendering in description the interstitial tactics recognised by Michel de Certeau. It opposes any conception of theatre as solely constituted by a grammar which is internalised in its practice, because the latter view makes it difficult to imagine "going out to the theatre" or making theatre as an elected activity marked out from other possible pursuits. Instead, according to Burns's description, theatricality can manifest itself anywhere if the appropriate conditions for enunciation and perception exist. The problem is not the consensual aspect, it is the reduction of the conventional to that which is merely apparent. If Burns manages to contain the reductive empiricism of such an approach through her detailed descriptions of theatre institutions, Schechner's project has no such leavening. His theatricality is a ubiquitous function delocalised and decontextualised at least in principle from theatre occasions. Schechner's formulation for theatricality does not satisfactorily disentangle the conventions, the behaviour repertoires, and the quotidian in order to recognise the multiple influences shaping the reproduction and transformation of each, or the partial character of the totality they form. It is either a truism or a naive falsehood to conclude, as he did, that "the same event can be political, ordinary, ritualized and theatrical" without stating for whom, in what ways, according to what pre-existing institutionalised enablements and constraints, and at what price? In other words, Schechner attempts to authorise an interpretative free-for-all without

10 In keeping with her interest in historicising theatre alongside the historical formations of human selfhood, Burns defines theatre as follows:

"Theatre thus reveals itself as a ritual device for the consonant renewal of belief in human autonomy for individuals required constantly to submit to the vexatious necessities of consistent, recognisable role behaviour in the world of ordered social life. The actor is the visible, literally corporeal, vehicle of this ritual reaffirmation, conceived by culturally selected individuals but enacted on the stage on our behalf." (144)

Thus, by attempting to simultaneously historicise selfhood as role-play and theatre as a collective activity, Burns derives a definition of theatre which is very functionally oriented, adequate as a description of certain theatre apparatuses.
defining either the terms by which or the terrain on which this project would be undertaken. This failure fragments the activity regarded and the activity of regarding simultaneously, by evacuating content and submerging form into "multiplex weaves" which produces, for his epistemology, an intransigent undecidability.

One thing, however, is certain: an unmoored sense of "theatricality" (later transposed into "playing") served as cornerstone for his developing project, announced in The End of Humanism volume as a project for -- in the interests of -- a dreamt future. The "Decline" diagnosis functions as an emblem of the performance project's warrant in its second phase. Theatricality as first theorised there pushes far beyond the context of theatre rehearsals and stagings, and of the ritual-theatre association. The absence the essay diagnoses is, among other historically accurate absences, lacks, and negations, Schechner's own absenting from The Performance Group. "My own attention has turned, temporarily I think, from actually making performances to the writing of 'performance theory," Schechner would write in the early 1980s (PC 120; BTA 149). While he did return to his activity as a theatre director, and now acts as an artistic director for a new company, this mid-career turn towards theory from theatre has been decisive for the contours of his performance project. The turn to theory coincides with the institution of performance studies as the theatre/drama graduate study programme at New York University, and it precedes Schechner's resumption of editorial control for The Drama Review, which he renamed TDR: The Journal of Performance Studies.

The conventionalised conception of theatricality has gained prominence since Schechner took up the cause of Burns' project. A German theatre semiotician named Erika Fischer-Lichte (whose finely detailed systemisation of theatre semiotics is both realistic in its philosophic commitments and nuanced in its appreciation of the connections and distinctions among theatre practice, organisation, and institution) announced in the mid 1990s her turn to the notion of theatricality. This announcement was made at a recent meeting of the International Federation of
Theatre Research, comprising a body of theatre researchers from around the world and serving an even broader readership through its journal. It was a response to the evident dissemination of theatre as a metaphor for other fields of study. Having diagnosed the "strange loop" whereby the theatre scholar looks to other disciplines for methodological guidance only to find variations on theatre's aspects figured in anthropology, sociology, and history; Fischer-Lichte announces what she calls a "social performance" position on theatricality, in contrast to the aesthetic position she attributes to Patrice Pavis. In setting forth theatricality in those terms, however, Fischer-Lichte defies her own prior philosophic realism by adopting along with "theatricality" a disruptive philosophic constructivism. The latter leads her to assert in her assessment of the production of the Japanese play Sumurun by "the progenitor of environmental theatre" (Green 19) Max Reinhardt, that "there can be no difference between theatre and 'reality,' or everyday life." To maintain this view is

11 The phrase "strange loop" is borrowed from Douglas Hofstadter to characterise the kind of self-refering and self-replicating maelstrom depicted in the drawing by Escher of the two hands sketching one another. Escher's picture vividly depicts the impossibility of tracing origins by showing absolutely interlocking co-creation. However, when I last looked at it the hands were drawn in fine detail to appear as a photograph of living hands, while it was only the sleeve cuffs that each pencil drew which looked "handmade"; this suggested to me that maybe the ambidextrous person is merely costuming his or her self, not constituting it.

12 Her detailed critical description of the mise en scène of Max Reinhardt's production of Friedrich Fresa's pantomime Sumurun (1910-1912; in Berlin, London, Paris, and New York) concludes extravagantly that

There can be no difference between theatre and "reality," or everyday life, for in theatre as well as in everyday life we construct our own reality, proceeding from our perception of more or less the same kind of material (human beings in an environment). In any case, reality is the product of a subjectively conditioned and performed process of construction. ("From" 103)

Rhetorically this extravagant conclusion effects a rupture with the detailed description of the scenography, which presupposes both in its authorial tone and in its effortless discernment of detail a realist commitment. In a footnote which ends this article, Fischer-Lichte explicitly sources incompatible bodies of work: "In the conclusion and argumentation I have drawn on my own theory of meaning [...] as well as on the theory of Radical Constructivism" (105); this interest in the philosophies of "world making" exemplified by Nelson Goodman in the USA and Paul Watzlawick in Germany is fundamentally and fatally inconsistent with philosophic realism as articulated in a more general form in Fischer-Lichte's own realist semiotics. The reason for this clash is that constructivism collapses the necessary distinction between ontology and epistemology by arguing that human conceptions create worlds. This is licenced by a cursory reading of Kuhn's famous statement about paradigm shifts: "It is rather as if the professional
to ignore the aspects of theatre as a general category by which the activities of theatre practices reproduce and/or transform theatre organisations and institutions, as practice emerges from but is not identical to its everyday ground. In Fischer-Lichte’s account of Sumurun such a conclusion annuls her detailed description of how the theatre space is transformed and deployed by the production, thereby effectively pulling the rug out from under her own observations. This is an unfortunate variation on Baron von Munchausen’s trick of extracting himself from a mud puddle by his own ponytail.\(^\text{13}\)

Like Burns in the 1970s and Schechner in the 1980s, Fischer-Lichte unhinges theatricality from material determinations and makes it a free-floating abstraction. Because it does not rely on aesthetic boundaries, Fischer-Lichte characterises this view as the “social performance” approach to theatricality. She associates it with Erving Goffman’s dramaturgical sociology and (wrongly, I think) with Nikolai Evreinov’s ironic tracts on “theatre in life.” “Accordingly,” Fischer-Lichte maintains, theatricality may be defined as particular mode of using signs or as a particular kind of semiotic process in which particular signs (human beings and objects of their environment) are employed as signs of signs -- by their producers, or their recipients. (88; boldface mine)

The determination of what constitutes a theatre instance is left to the either/or ambivalence sounded in Burns’s definition. If either performers or spectators can conjure theatre, theatre process loses any sui generis claim to an irreducible reality arising from what Susan Melrose posits as a “synergetic” convergence of factors (7). Indeed, conjuration is the defining verb, not labour, according to this conception. Theatre lacks an author when it is only a “shift of the dominance within the semiotic functions [which] determines when theatricality appears” (Fischer-Lichte, “From"

---

\(^\text{13}\) See Pecheux for a comparable reference to “the immortal baron who lifted himself into the air by pulling on his own hair” (108).
Explicitly the shift is not an objective given but depends on certain pragmatic conditions making theatricality observer-dependent, fluid, and indeterminate. Under this description, it would seem that no individual or group can put its signature to theatrical events, because their being is so undetermined, their appearance so subjective. Following the argument's logic to its "natural" end point, Fischer-Lichte consistently concludes that:

"theatricality" in the end, appears to be no more than a floating signifier in an endless communication process. That is to say that the term theatricality necessarily remains diffuse; as a concept it becomes indistinct, if not void. (88; boldface mine)

Or, to adopt Derridean terminology, theatricality puts itself under erasure. Hereafter this notion will be written as theatricality. The effect of theatricality is to diffuse the solidity formerly claimed by the historical categories of theatrical authors.

If the erasure of theatricality is both the outcome of the Burnsian discourse and also characteristic of performance discourse in the current decade, its emergence within Schechner's particular performance project occurs at a particular juncture in its development. Theatricality appears at the point when he is reconciling his departure away from his own theatre practice, when his leadership in TPG became unsustainable. Schechner's effective annulment of the category of the theatrical author, capable of generating theatre occasions which bear the author's signature, follows upon his own (provisional) retirement from theatre making, and his retreat into theory. It is as if, having struggled for a decade and a half to secure his

---

14 In critically considering Derrida's strategy of placing being under erasure, Colin Falck suggests that "Derrida's 'strategy' is in some ways the opposite of what Heidegger is doing when he puts the concept of Being (Sein) under erasure (SeiB) to signify its interdependence with our human nature" (28, fn63). If, as Falck suggests, there are different significations to the crossing out, then my strikethrough designates less an interdependence, although clearly under Fischer-Lichte's description there is an interrelation of production and reception modes, than a strategy described by Gayatri Spivak as "using the only available language while not subscribing to its premises" (Derrida, Grammatology xviii, cited by Falck 28). Such a strategy, "letting go of each concept at the very moment that I needed to use it" (Derrida xviii), of using and refusing simultaneously, describes the ambivalence which I remark in the social performance position's discourse on theatricality.
position as a theatrical auteur both in practice and in his Darwinian theory (see Chapter 2.2), Schechner now resolves not only to abandon that project but to obliterate the role he no longer worked to occupy. For this reason, theatricality raises the question of what happens to Schechner's avant-gardist practice when his attention shifts from theatre to theoretical production. I suggest that it continues, in the other media to which Schechner already has access, in which he already has authority. Schechner's avant-gardism continues in his public dissemination of performance theory as an institutional paradigm. This reading of Schechner's enduring avant-gardism provides a compelling example of Hal Foster's contention that critical theory has come to occupy the space evacuated by the surpassing of certain avant-gardist experiments in the arts of the last half century (xiv). Furthermore, because theatricality has come to circulate more broadly, beyond the obvious boundaries of Schechner's paradigm, his announcement of the turn from theatre to the theatrical, as from theatre to theory, seems to have remained attuned to broader shifts. For example, Fischer-Lichte's own turn to "theatricality" arises because the term "theatre" has been transferred to the most divergent fields. In the end, it was applied to signify any kind of exhibitory, demonstrative, or spectacular event including performance by circus artists, jugglers, clowns, entertainers; dadaist and surrealist "happenings" which took place in streets, cafés, parliaments, churches and other public places, May Day celebrations, rallies, meetings, union sport days, Party conventions and so on. ("Theatricality" 86)

Could this spreading of theatre observed by Fischer-Lichte be related to the leave-taking from theatre enacted by Schechner at the turn of previous decade? Certainly it relates to the failure to attend to the specificity of those apparatuses which produce theatre as labour and as spectacle. When the apparatus is ignored, the evanescence of theatre activity (Birringer 3-4) becomes an acute problem. As early as Dionysus in 69, Schechner clearly was engaged in redefining the terms under which the theatrical apparatus would be known. As Amy Green points out, "The
words 'theatre,' 'actor,' and 'audience' are conspicuously absent from the whole enterprise and Schechner's writings about it. 'The Performance Group' played to 'spectators' in 'the Performing Garage,' in what can only be taken as a rejection of established theatrical habits and definitions" (45-46). But theatre's receding forms part of Schechner's personal crisis, as an author/authority. In Schechner's published diary notes written in 1976 when at the end of a difficult tour of India, he reports on the two days of meetings at which TPG met to discuss the group's future.

These meetings are good because they open the possibility for change - even total liberation. For me the liberation can come in two ways: Control over TPG so it is an instrument of mine; or freedom from the Group so I can pursue these experiments on my own. [...] It's the intersection of [society and theoretical problems of performance theory] that interests me -- not 'holding together' a group (whatever its reputation). Reputations come and go, even art passes. But certain theories and social systems abide, if not for all time, for a long time. I want to teach, change the order of society, and have-make fun. (PC 46)

In both solutions are traces of a desire to see theatre installed in the fabric of social life with less ephemerality. In the terminological expansion, theatre's evanescence is evaded by expanding its range of designations, so that while theatrical occasions come and go, theatre itself is always reappearing. In the artist's own reassessment, theory and its social object provide a longevity denied the practitioner, since "even art passes." Both solutions diffuse the specifically theatrical (at the level of activity or commitment) into theatricality; both sacrifice theatre's specificity as concrete, material, and located labouring in favour of a less focussed mode of production. It's already proving difficult for Schechner to sustain creative production in the context of the Group he founded. So how does Schechner, an acknowledged creative and academic author, achieve liberation through this redefinition of theatre as diffused by performance theory?

I think Schechner is liberated as a creative author when he changes his concentration from theatre to theory. In theory, he can use his established academic
credentials to secure a forum for his creative ideas. In other words, what I am raising now, as I approach the third phase of theatre's reinsertion within Schechner's performance project, is the possibility that the shift from theatre to theory which Schechner began contemplating in 1976, marks a change in mode or media, rather than of agenda. The impulse to disrupt the status quo addressed first in Schechner's theatre comes to fulfil itself in his theory. If this is the case, then performance studies as an academic practice for Schechner remains as avant-gardist attempt to fuse life and art, in the tradition of Artaud, Brecht, Grotowski, Beck and Malina. Its marked difference concerns its site, within the university, and its tools, the forums and modes of academic production. To raise this question is to take seriously Foster's characterisation of elitist critical/cultural theory as "a secret continuation of the avant-garde by other means" which serves as "a high-art surrogate" (xiv). But it is also to take more rhetorically the texture of Schechner's own writings.

By virtue of its allegorical features, Schechner's performance project suggests that what is at stake in the theorisation and promotion of Schechnerian performance is something which confuses categories and blurs boundaries. Certainly allegoria dances across the reading/writing divide, by encouraging writing which usurps the readerly function so as to supply its own commentary, or at least direct it; as well as by organising the interpretation of anterior texts which are inscribed as authorised readings while they are in fact (also) authority creations themselves. Allegory

15 The ambiguity of allegoria can be given different spins. Writing in the wake of Derrida's logocentric critique but also against Paul de Man's deployment of allegory, medievalists Melville and Copeland declared "we would rather see in the play of allegory and allegoresis together an acknowledgement of writing as inherently impure, unable to make itself impervious to the invasiveness of the voice" (181). So if Derrida undermined the presence of speech by arguing that writing is primary and presupposed by speech, they have suggested that (at least by the Middle Ages, and certainly since) writing too is interpenetrated by its supposed opposite. This claim is secured through tracing in historical terms the intimate relation of hermeneutics and rhetoric. According to Melville and Copeland, the "[m]edieval allegoresis of the pagan autores exemplifies how hermeneutics replicates and appropriates the moves of rhetoric" (186) in ways which anticipate the enunciations of Schleiermacher in the nineteenth and Gadamer in the twentieth centuries (165-68; Gadamer). If their historical account is tenable, the implication is that Derrida's victory against the apparently illicit primacy of speech is a debate waged with a scarecrow.
describes both compositional strategies and interpretative practices (Whitman 6-8; Madsen 91), and with respect to *The Bacchae*, we've noted Schechner's engagement in both. In addition, allegory is, as Craig Owens argued in a seminal two-part article in *October*, a privileged mode in visual arts production in the contemporary avant-garde. Allegory, Owens contends, "is an attitude as well as a technique, a perception as well as a procedure" ("Part One" 68). In addition to sharing an avant-gardist "allegorical impulse" as discerned by Owens, the performance project exhibits the avant-gardist investment in manifestos and commentaries as integral to artwork. Manifestos and integral commentaries are associated with a range of avant-garde movements; and no doubt their results fulfil a number of functions. For example, the functions of the manifesto include: the recruitment to and consolidation of coherent groups or cells of production; the archiving or extended dissemination of works otherwise only locally or temporarily accessible; the guiding of spectators' or receivers' interpretations in accordance with the artist's conscious intention. In these terms, the function of the manifesto for the avant-garde artist resembles the role of the paradigm for the scientist or scholar. If there are sound epistemic grounds for arguing against Schechnerian performance as a paradigm for academic study, then the category of the avant-gardist manifesto stands as an alternative classification for the body of work which Schechner has produced for instrumental ends. The third phase of theatre's elaboration within the performance project provides the basis for a determination of performance as a manifesto. By analysing how theatre comes to be defined in the most recent enunciation of performance's purpose, the paradigmatic status Schechner has sought to install will be destabilised. It is disrupted not by rendering its structure in rhetorical terms, as in Chapter 3.3, but rather by reading it in relation to the world of cultural production it seeks to apprehend.
3. Performance as Paradigm

The key text for the third moment in theatre's reinscription by performance is Schechner’s keynote speech at the 1992 Association for Theatre in Higher Education national conference in Atlanta entitled “Theatre and Cultural Pluralism.” Although ATHE meets annually in different North American cities, this particular conference had been organised in a racially and economically diverse city burgeoning in new and alternative theatres. It aimed to address the multiplicity of theatrical practices by Americans (which includes people of diverse racial and ethnic origins and identifications) to a mostly white, largely academic audience. ATHE is a professional body comprised largely of academics, but also of professional and alternative theatre practitioners. Schechner was an esteemed and senior participant and his speech was situated in a prominent place (the inaugural panel) within the extensive and varied conference programme. With Schechner on the keynote panel were University of Missouri-Columbia theatre programme chair Clyde Ruffin; Cuban-American playwright Maria Irene Fornes; African-American professor Katherine Ervin, of Cal State; Asian-American Theatre (San Francisco) director Eric Hayashi; and Rosalie Jones, of the Institute of American Indian Arts (Dolan, “Geographies” 427). In a speech published under the title, “A New Paradigm for Theatre in the Academy,” Schechner called for the transformation of theatre departments into places of performance studies.

“A New Paradigm” begins by announcing the distinctions between multicultural and intercultural as useful descriptors for the changes marking late twentieth century American culture. Schechner locates debates about the value of higher education within intercultural conflicts (“New” 8). The question of college education within an American context matters to Schechner because of his strongly articulated concern about the status of theatre training in the nation. “[H]ow many ‘professional training programs’ are as good as their ads claim?” Schechner asks
Changing theatre departments from sites for professional training into subdivisions of performance studies is argued as redress for the “triply cheated” students for whom there are insufficient theatre jobs, inadequate theatre training, and unsound “basic academic education” (8). Performance, Schechner promises, is “so powerful and useful a paradigm for understanding human social action both on the personal and cultural levels” and needs to be taught to future teachers and artists as well as “to ordinary students” (8). “Why do we need so many theatre departments?” Schechner asks (8). The redundancy of theatre departments is linked in Schechner’s arguments to the “cultural crisis signaled by multiculturalism and interculturalism” (9) and their successful transformation becomes a way of “creatively” meeting the latter, since “Performance studied and practiced interculturally can be at the core of a ‘well-rounded education’” (9). Finally, Schechner links the future of the Western canon to the development of a robust and effective performance studies curriculum; and calls for “the coloring of the profession, the coloring of the student body, and the coloring of the curriculum” which in Schechner’s vision “go hand-in-hand” (10). The implication of this claim is, in the words of Jill Dolan, that “theatre, as the discipline is historically configured, was the reason racism continues in our programs and our institutions” (“Geographies” 427). As if in the interests of social justice, the new paradigm of performance is offered as a “creative repudiation” (Schechner, “New” 10) of theatre as it has been studied and practised.

Schechner’s controversial speech was published soon after the conference in the “TDR Comment” of The Drama Review which by then was renamed TDR: A Journal of Performance Studies. Jill Dolan gave an impassioned critique of this speech in an article published in 1993 in ATHE’s publicly available quarterly Theatre Journal, making the distinction that she is responding to “his performance on the
form the key texts by which the third moment of theatre's reinscription is rendered most salient. The very possibility of publication in journals like *TDR: The Journal of Performance Studies* and *Theatre Journal*, serving an international audience of readers more extensive and widespread, presumably, than ATHE's membership or its conference attendees, illustrates the symbolic power and material resources which structure, support, and promote the conflicting positions. By reading both, I aim to intensify a sense of conflict without settling for either opinion. Instead, as I approach this speech and its critique I access events through layers of writing and reception, I am reading it in terms of the triad established in Chapter 3.1 above among authority, authorisation, and authorship. Clearly, the very tools for this analysis are marked by the legitimating processes which produce certain portable artefacts rather than others. Privileged access is intimately associated with authorship, authorisation, and the formation and imposition of authority.

The triad of authorship, authority, and authorisation comprise the stuff of allegory. Allegory is sometimes associated with irony; Fletcher suggests that ironies are "condensed or collapsed allegories" (230). I believe that the ATHE address and its aftermath can be read ironically, conceived as the performance by a trickster, a

---

16 There may be production issues in the distinctions between "page" and the panel's "stage" which call for this caveat. Unfortunately, I am only able to respond to the written work of both thinkers.

17 There is no question that power(s) play through both sides of this debate. Dolan's eminence was growing at the time she emerged as a spokesperson for the specificity of theatre; indeed, since Dolan's reflections on the performance studies/theatre studies convergence, she has been elected president of ATHE; while her remarks on "Knowledges That Matter" (which plays upon feminist philosopher Judith Butler's recent title) were published in *TDR*. Dolan was identifying herself as a performance studies practitioner based in theatre studies. Certainly, confrontation and convergence characterise the debates in ways which undermine a dualist approach to pure opposition. Yet the language of opposition is hard to uproot. For instance, when reflecting on the substantial, indeed unexpected, attendance at the First Annual Performance Studies Conference in New York City in March, 1995, Joseph Roach contrasts the evident interest in the field with "the initial go-drop-dead response from ATHE at its Philadelphia meeting in 1993, and Jill Dolan's subsequent attack on performance studies in *Theatre Journal*" (184). Implied in this synopsis of recent history is an endorsement of theatre's apparent opposition to performance.
harlequin interested in stirring up trouble. Trouble is both the object of the speech and its topic. According to Schechner, theatre studies in its current, presumably American, configuration is the site of intercultural conflict. In Schechner's lexicon, "intercultural" is distinguished from "multicultural" which he effectively demolishes as an ideal by linking it with the antiquated image of "the melting pot." Most of his address is assembled under the title "intercultural" which Schechner presents as the underbelly of the neutered liberal multicultural ideal.18

The intercultural subject is the difficulties brought up by multiculturalism, the misunderstandings, broken languages, and failed transactions occurring when and where cultures collide, overlap or pull away from each other. These are seen mostly not as obstacles to be overcome but as fertile rifts or eruptions full of creative energy. Interculturalism is neither a settled issue nor a panacea. Think of it rather as the focus of problems, an arena of struggle. ("New" 7-8)

Certainly the term "interculturalism" is gaining currency in theatre studies. The New Scholars Prize at the 1997 World Congress of the International Federation for Theatre Research/Fédération International pour La Recherche Théâtrale was to be awarded for a paper on intercultural and intracultural theatre. But as it is described by Schechner, interculturalism seems to swirl around a submerged, implied, and

---

18 This demolition is neither unwarranted nor unique, but Schechner's mode of address is pompous. The arrogance is produced by Schechner's assumption that he has a unique vantage on the problems of cultural constitution. Similarly, the same supposition informs the title and tone of his 1991 American Theatre Magazine article, "An Intercultural Primer." "First, let me dispel an illusion. A multicultural American society is as difficult and perhaps as unfillable an ideal as 'the melting pot was" ("New" 7). Its false humanism is illustrated in the image of the "great civic parade during which each group publicly displays, and takes pride in, its own distinct qualities, its quintessential self" (7). The language of "equal opportunity" with which multiculturalism is linked gives up the lie. References to two national spectacles, the 1990 Los Angeles Festival (which would have been familiar to TDR readers from articles by Linda Frye Burnham and Peggy Phelan in the Fall 1991 edition, volume 35:3) which Schechner describes, and the 1992 presidential race to which he obliquely refers, demonstrate the failure of multicultural ideology to express the complex dynamics within the US. For more on alternatives to the "melting pot" see my article on John O'Neal "Actor and Activist: The Praxis of Storytelling."

19 For more on the opposition of multiculturalism and interculturalism as the latter bears upon his construction of the performance studies project, see also Schechner's 1991 essay "The Canon."
unspoken subject. The truth of this hidden subject I read as Schechner’s own privilege as an academically based artist secure enough in his standing to profit by intellectual experimentation. “How absurd,” wrote Bonnie Marranca a decade earlier, that our ‘avant-garde’ theorist/spokesman is a tenured professor in this country’s wealthiest university – NYU, the only place to go if you want to grow up and be an avant-gardist – and whose research in India on ‘interculturalism’ is financed by Rockefeller money! (Theatrewritings 133)

The irony, then is two-fold, the tactical level which (more or less self-consciously) Schechner deploys and the broader strategic field in which he himself is inscribed, characterised by what Marranca calls the “perverse [...] relationship of avant-garde theatre to its society” (133). The levels of irony impacted within Schechner’s call for a “new paradigm” is crucial to my new, allegorical reading of Richard Schechner.

The subject written into Schechner’s conception of interculturalism is one with a certain cultural and symbolic capital. The subject can be conceived at the juncture of a set of questionings which Schechner’s definition conceals; namely, for whom are these cultural collisions creative moments rather than actual obstructions? For whom, when, and at what distance does miscommunication, non-communication, or social failure engender new understanding? Whose arena is Schechner describing? Is interculturalism concerned with collecting as bibelots instances of cultural confusion, pinning down daily praxis of repression and resistance like so many butterflies on the collector’s corkboard? Is theatrical performance the preferred mode of capturing and replaying (or rewriting) the collisions? How, according to Schechner, does interculturalism relate to theatre? If interculturalism is as Beverly Stoeltje imagines, an “image of a kaleidoscope of aesthetic systems which can be turned upon any bit of data, producing different perspectives,” (qtd. in BTA 14), who is turning, and who is paying the price, through vertigo, disorientation, or disappropriation? What is interculturalism’s relation to what Schechner labels “our
often asserted, sometimes tested, but never proven assertion that humans are one 
species culturally, 'humanly,' as well as biologically" (BTA 109)?

This is where Dolan’s reading of Schechner’s performance adds a crucial 
critical dimension to the published text. Most importantly for my larger concern about 
the status of a manifesto in relation to a paradigm, Jill Dolan describes Schechner’s 
proposal as a “promise of liberation through performance studies” (429-30). This 
description returns Schechnerian performance to the period of its inception, in the 
turbulent 1960s described in Chapters 1.1 and 1.2 above. Dolan’s objections to 
Schechner’s proposal for performance as the new paradigm to “transform theatre 
departments” (see Schechner, “Transforming”) can be summarised along the 
following lines:

i. Schechner failed to appropriately situate himself, his privileges, and his 
positioning on a multicultural panel;

ii. Schechner failed to take into account the real praxis of theatre as articulated by 
the other panellists, opting instead to change the subject;

iii. Schechner’s advocacy of performance over theatre studies contributed to the 
enthusiastic “bid for inclusion” by a newly formed performance studies focus

---

20 Dolan writes,

Then Schechner took the podium, and a curious shift of emphasis occurred. Schechner stood out on the panel as 
the only white male, but he determinedly (and unfortunately) 
did not foreground his own identity position, marked personally and institutionally by power and authority; never 
once theorized his own speaking position on a panel about 
and of cultural pluralism; and proceeded to deflect the 
conversation away from issues of race and ethnicity toward a 
discussion of the problems with theatre as a discipline.”

427

Dolan found Schechner’s manifesto for performance studies as “deeply inappropriate” in this 
setting. Following upon the statements of the “men and women of color engaged in theatre practice” Dolan recounts that “Schechner unwittingly implied that their work be rejected (or at 
the very least, be progressed beyond) in favor of the broader scope of performance studies”

428.

21 According to Dolan, this was due in part to Schechner’s focus on disciplinary practice rather 
then subject positionality (427).
group to join “other focus groups based on identity categories that are just now
coming to find themselves legitimate objects and subjects of study in theatre”
(428).
Implied in this summary of Dolan’s key points are the rights and remedies for
marginalised theatre workers/researchers, which Dolan seeks to defend. Her
defence has a different tenor to Schechner’s claims for anti-racist inclusivity, pointing
beyond the various intellectual allegiances to broader questions about political
activism and the paths to social justice. Through considering the manifesto for the
performance paradigm in these terms, Dolan’s three key points emerge as three
facets of the same “performance problem”: its “suspiciously imperialist gesture”
(429).
In performance’s imperialism, the booty is both cultural and symbolic capital.
Although she does not use this terminology, it is clearly active in Dolan’s conception
of the event and its significance. Dolan reported of the opening panel, “The people
of color on the panel spoke carefully and persuasively about their work in theatre and
the academy, to the largely white audience that packed the auditorium” (427). In a
footnote, Dolan points out, “The kind of public, professional recognition of women
and people of color evidenced on the opening panel has been slow in coming, and
made the ATHE conference and this panel significant to the professional history of
the field” (427). The historic significance of the honours long overdue is clearly
valued by Dolan in a way which Schechner completely fails to acknowledge. Her
valuing implicates the power of patronage in arts and academic production.
Schechner’s prominent position, with its attendant responsibility for editorial decisions
in academic journals and book series, is implicated in the problematics of patronage
in ways that Schechner fails to meet directly.
I will argue that the ethics and politics of Schechner’s myopia are linked to the
difficulties facing theatre as an object of knowledge. For this reason, the keynote
speech remains located within the problematic under discussion of theatre’s periodic
redefinition by the performance project. Certainly an articulate sense of what constitutes “theatre practice” could have been mobilised to arbitrate, justify, and explain the real difference in the function and status within the (inter?)national professional body of a focus group for performance studies geared to studying questions produced within the Schechnerian model; and the Black Theatre Association, the Women and Theatre Program, or the Gay and Lesbian focus groups. These latter groups provide forums for people whose individual attributes or identity-alignments correspond with those features of race, gender, or sexual orientation which systematically have been either excluded or interpolated in prejudiced and/or oppressive ways into theatre practices and their study. (The distinction I am making does not arbitrate absolutely. A performance studies focus group is likely to talk about new methodologies by way of traditionally non-theatrical study objects. Similarly, the identity focus groups are likely to talk not only about oppression in theatre practice, but also about the identity politics of theatre studies.) The point of this distinction is that inclusiveness is not simply achieved by the eradication of meaningful boundaries between disciplines and practices, but also by the selective achievement of individuals within disciplinary matrices where hitherto people marked by their identity categories have encountered elitist obstructions and/or exclusions. Epistemically, my distinction raises the ever-present distinction between how study objects are constituted and the field of praxis that elicits or demands study. To see that objects and fields are both distinct and related is to regard them dialectically.

In dialectical terms, performance cannot legislate its own inclusivity. For example, the problems arising from the efficacy-entertainment braid or the practicalities of restoring behaviours are no more likely to secure an audience among those theatre workers and their researchers for whom the relation of art and life is negotiated in entirely different social and political terms. No doubt there would be points of contact between the focus groups listed above, just as there are
presumably points of dissension among the existing cluster which performance studies was striving to enter. What Schechnerian performance studies sacrifices, however, and what Dolan seeks to defend is the specificity of theatre as a potentially transformable site of prejudiced practice. In addressing the bid for inclusion by performance studies, she smells the difference, observing that "[p]ractice and methodology categories...seem qualitatively different from focus groups founded on identity categories" (428), but Dolan does not explore or explain it. The reader is left shrugging about Schechner's manners (bad or indifferent), when his personal, representative, or institutionalised colour-blindness is not the issue; rather the issues collect around the questions of what theatre studies does or might do or must do with and for theatre.

In the face of changing performative modes and increasing intercultural exchange and interaction, it appears that "theatre" may have become an unvoiced hypothesis for American (-inflected) theatre studies. Certainly its position as a

---

22 In her reflection on the promise and problem of performance studies, Dolan describes an emigration by practitioners in the field who by necessity "look toward another discipline" in order to adequately theorise their own area of investigation. Here as well her description slips registers from epistemological issues to judgements about ontology.

Part of the seductiveness of relocating away from home, or of eliding the specific contribution of theatre studies to the performative, comes, perhaps, from theatre studies's historical borrowings from other fields to theorize itself. [...] But the necessity to look toward another discipline [...] marks in that borrowing, something second-class about theatre.

("Geographies" 422)

Those features of theatre which make it an eligible object of study differ from theatre's status as given within contemporary theatre studies; this is true simply because theatre studies has not anywhere exhausted theatre as an object of study, nor settled finally on any definable set of method to approach it. As a result of this adjustment to Dolan's line of thinking, one might, instead of devaluing theatre, suggest that there may be something second-rates about theatre studies, which hasn't yet found unique tools, or a unique synthesis of borrowed tools, to study its privileged objects. But even this alternative criticism surrenders too much ground to the attack Schechner has mounted.

---

23 One might envision a similar questioning within British configurations through the decades of productivity under the rubric of "cultural studies" and through the partnering of studies of theatre and film and/or television media under the rubric of "dramatic modes." The latter could have the effect of enshrining narrative drama as the heart of theatre, since it is the feature shared with the other media, rather than placing narrative drama as a particularly salient historical form whose hegemony has sustained periodic critiques by popular and experimental theatres.
concrete and located activity/institution has been called into question by the move described above towards abstract theatricality/theatriality flowing from Elizabeth Burns, through Schechner, to Erika Fischer-Lichte. This diffusion of theatre's specificity is not productive in a geopolitical moment when members of marginal communities are at long last receiving the artistic and scholarly recognition their works merit. It recalls the fact that Barthes' celebrated "death of the author" was announced precisely at the point when both colonial states in Africa and Western middle-class women were succeeding in their struggles for independence, self-determination, and emancipation.

Also, in its implicit privileging of the authority and authorial position Schechner himself claims, his dismissive position of theatre and its practitioners undermines his performance project's bid to lead a new interculturalist paradigm for studies of theatre and performance across cultures. First, there is no question that Schechner holds all theatres in equal regard. When Schechner attends a performance in "a new private high school" in Calcutta in 1971, he reports:

> The audience is richly middle class. I am in turn restless and sleepy. This audience and the play — about differing versions of a murder larded with banal observations concerning violence — are exactly what I want to destroy in the USA. The staging is routine textbook blocking and the acting is suited to a high school. I lean back and snooze. (PC 14)

It is an amateur production. Why bother destroying something so insignificant? There's an animosity in Schechner's response which seems misplaced. He is less than generous when he finds the work of the Free Southern Theater "square" (in Dent and others 222). If that animosity can be overcome, then perhaps a field of study predicated on interculturalism could be harmonising and politically progressive, as Schechner argues. In that case, Schechner's stance manifests a hierarchy of
values which American philosopher Richard Rorty associates with the "ironist" culture superseding liberal humanism.\(^{24}\)

Rorty has written:

> The metaphysician's association of theory with social hope and of literature with private perfection is, in an ironist liberal culture, reversed. Within a liberal metaphysical culture the disciplines which were charged with penetrating behind the many private appearances to the one general common reality—theology, science, philosophy—ware the ones which were expected to bind human beings together, and thus to help eliminate cruelty. Within an ironist culture, by contrast, it is the disciplines which specialize in thick description of the private and idiosyncratic which are assigned this job. In particular, novels and ethnographies which sensitise us to the pain of those who do not speak our language must do the job which demonstrations of a common human nature were supposed to do... Conversely, within our increasingly ironist culture, philosophy has become more important for the pursuit of private perfection rather than for any social task. (qtd. in Bhaskar, Philosophy 135)\(^{25}\)

The British Marxist philosopher Roy Bhaskar takes issue with Rorty's dismissive stance on philosophy as a "private optional obsession" (129). Equally, Marcuse's association of ethics and epistemics would oppose it. The trajectory of Marxist social criticism has defended the real potential in philosophy to guide the production of knowledge in ways that may contribute to the emancipation of humans and their collective reorientation to and within their host planet. Yet artist Allan Kaprow similarly speculates: "Professional philosophy in the twentieth century, having generally removed itself from the problems of human conduct and purpose, plays instead art's late role as professionalistic activity; it could aptly be called philosophy for philosophy's sake" (82). In an intellectual culture organised by materialist social

---

\(^{24}\) For Schechner's diagnosis of post-humanism see his essay "The Crash of Performative Circumstances; A Modernist Discourse on Postmodernism," published in The End of Humanism (EH 109-28) and in Performative Circumstances From The Avant Garde to Ramlila (FC 308-28).

\(^{25}\) Citation originally from Richard Rorty, Contingency, Irony and Solidarity (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989) 94.
thought, such a professional ghetto would not be tolerated. Clearly, the ironist reversal described by Rorty, suspected by Kaprow and mirrored by Schechner effects a political compromise at odds with Schechner’s apparent solidarity with struggles for social justice.

Interestingly for the question of avant-gardism which haunts my reading of the performance project, the parallels between Rorty and Schechner’s positions returns to the problem of art’s relation to life. Specifically, the kind of philosophical “nominalism” Richard Rorty practices, whereby philosophy is seen as “just whatever us philosopher professors do” (qtd. in Bhaskar, Philosophy 131) is epistemologically similar to the institution within the performance project of a broad spectrum of performance placing art and life in a continuum. In Rorty’s case, nominalism completely ignores the authorising structures legitimating as “philosophy” certain activities issuing from some people positioned in particular ways. In other words, the nominalism obscures the power dynamics by which conventions of production and reception, and enunciative positions capable of activating them, are produced and reproduced in binding ways. Consequently, philosophical nominalism summons a reassessment using Bourdieu’s conception of symbolic capital and his critique of Austinian performativity for its necessary social parameters. Even the glancing history of allegory as a genre indicates that authority and authorship are significantly more complex than such nominalism admits. Nominalism seems possible only from a place of already-achieved privilege, where the power to name is already inscribed within the field occupied by the announcer. The performance project itself executes and enforces a kind of nominalism by universalising theatre under the banner of performance without attending to its local variability and material

---

26 Citation originally from Richard Rorty, The Consequences of Pragmatism (Brighton: Harvester P, 1982) 220.
constitution. The insult to the panel of theatre practitioners identified by Dolan is the symptom of such ignorance.

Allegory as a rhetorical function points towards the irony implicated in the performance allegory but does not in itself create it. If aspects of Richard Schechner’s activism seem to be ironic, then there is a larger cultural context from which the irony derives, where it resonates, and to which it returns. Reading performance in relation to allegory, and its concerns with authorship and social/textual authority, registers the irony of Schechner’s position. If the irony derives in part from the perversity of avant-garde theatre’s relation to American society (as remarked by Marranca), because the performance project unfolds across art and academia, it also plays out in the discourse supporting liberal humanist studies.

Ironic marks Schechner’s address of the root of the intercultural conflict waged in American theatre studies, the sham professionalism of a practice which intensively trains performers, directors, designers, and technicians for jobs that hardly exist and that few graduates find. "If young surgeons were theatre BFAs or MFAs, they'd be saying things like 'Hey, after getting my MD, I only waited tables for six months before landing a temp as a nurse's aide. And last year I got a shot at a tonsillectomy.' ...Is this art?" asks Schechner. "Is this a profession? Is this what entering freshmen or first year graduate students are promised in those enticing advertisements?" ("New" 8). This is a funny — and, to my mind, an apt—characterisation of the state of affairs as I know them in US academe; Schechner’s spoof could segue easily into a debate about the theory/practice split, which while

---

27 Made even more poignant from a British perspective, because of the relative absence in the USA of anonymous economic provision for university students and the consequent mortgaging by many students (in any of the available programs in the private or public sector) of their anticipated earnings through student loan programs. The changes currently being debated in Britain do not approach the levels of borrowing taken for granted by many American students.
inconceivable in the education of future doctors, may be more routine in university drama departments. Having more genuinely asked, in an essay a decade earlier, "Is the answer to give up professionalism?" (EH 40) and postulating the mission for his East Coast Artists as sustaining a place to "work together so that it can give you 'a life' in the spiritual sense" but not a monetary living (ET xii), Schechner has made some useful contributions to the questions of professionalism, community, and commitment in theatre.\(^\text{28}\) Banes' argument about "Greenwich Village 1963" in her book of that title describes the broader context of the American neo-avant-garde which historically situates Schechner's work in theatre and theatre thinking in terms of community, commitment, and a freedom from professional categories.\(^\text{29}\) For Schechner, the amateurism opposed to constraining professionalism is not only a mode of operating (as in the devising period of TPG's first production) but also an aesthetic, characterising the rough acting style of his works.\(^\text{30}\)

\(^\text{28}\) In his visit to India in 1976-77, Schechner responds to the frustration of theatre director Shyamenand Jalan:

> We drink Johnny Walker Red Label, eat some food sent up, chew betel. Finally Jalan comes to the question pressing most heavily on him. 'How can a theatre be made by people who do not give their whole lives to it? No one in Calcutta is ready to give his whole life to theatre! Here theatre is from the amateurs!' I listen as Jalan talks for about an hour. He wants to give up his profession [as a solicitor], but cannot afford it. He wants professional actors, but doesn't know where to find them. (PC 12)

\(^\text{29}\) A different perspective on the historical situation of Schechner's contributions is provided by Zoltán Szilassy, who argues that the rebellious dramaturgy associated with Edward Albee, Arthur Kopit, Jack Richardson and others and the intermedia/multimedia experimentation growing from the Happenings movement are more intimately related than the commercial/experimental opposition might manifest. This has value in opening up the inherited discursive matrix in which the neo-avant-gardist work is generally located. If the historiographic questions raised in Chapter One were dominant concerns of this thesis, Szilassy's recognition would advance the discussion of how to rewrite the histories of the theatrical culture(s) in which Schechner's work emerged and sustained.

\(^\text{30}\) Personal communication, Mark S. Hammer 19 April 1998, speaking with reference to TPG's tour of Mother Courage to Washington, D.C. For examples of published commentary about acting styles, see reviews of Dionysus in 69 as cited by Shephard and in Dionysus in 69.
As operative mode and as aesthetic style, the question of professionalism is one aspect of the dynamic of how theatre emerges from everyday life and what, as it recedes, it returns to it. Kirby captures this when he describes a continuum of acting/nonacting as matrixed and unmatrixed. On the material level, if bread and wine are available through other means, then why not make theatre without the worry of professionalism and its ensuing regulations, in a less tightly matrixed situation than the employment relations as governed by Equity? To pursue such amateurism, however, is to presume that the material and psychic spaces to make and disseminate theatre to an attracted audience will endure, separate from the structures which produced the professional ethos one has rejected. The election is a wager. It may be an option, or indeed, a practical necessity for individual theatre practitioners seeking to reinvent their own artistic horizons, but it is hardly responsible for the field of theatre studies to shun questions about the preservation of theatre and theatre audiences in the advised absence of sustained and recognised institutions. The whole point of a rigorous university-based theatre studies is to push beyond the limits of the phenomenology of theatre praxis.

At the same times, the concerns arising from theatre praxis must feed into the questions theatre studies raises. For example, how to maintain spaces for theatre in the lives of its producers and partakers is a fundamental question for the lay and less institutionalised theatres; and so to function as theatre studies, theatre research must remain as pluralist as possible in its address of the futures of theatres. Bonnie Marranca articulates an approach diverging from Schechner’s characteristic polemics:

Those who believe in the avant-garde imagination should become more actively engaged in a continuing critique of avant-garde theatre and its place in society. What I am suggesting is a process, not a program of thought. Schechner is absolutely correct that ‘polemics’ are a necessary aspect of a healthy theatre. [...] All of us should question the patterns of funding, audience reception, the attitudes of producing organizations, and the directions in performance and writing, in a
continuing public dialogue of how we feel about theatre in this time and this place. (Theatrewritings 133-34)

By contrast, to provoke a reassessment of theatre's professional organisations in America or in the West more generally, through a mocking analogy with medicine seems off the mark, if not rather perverse. Medicine's relation to and difference from the everyday is marked by aims, authority, and authorised structures, of necessity much more prominently and strictly regulated. Medicine's efficacy demands such controls; people's lives are literally on the line. Theatre, however efficacious, is hardly comparable. For this reason, Schechner's rhetoric almost begs to be read as some kind of ironic theatrical performance, a tactical move to inflame debate, maybe even an impassioned defence of theatre in its own right. (As such, it is part of what provoked my thinking of Schechner's academic work as a creative performance.)

No doubt, the question of how people and groups will survive making theatre is a concrete and pressing one for each generation of theatre workers; Schechner himself addresses it in his essay "The Decline and Fall of the (American) Avant-Garde" (EH 11-76). Raising it a decade later, surely there remains more to claim on behalf of theatre's future than Schechner's blunt dismissal that "the staging of written dramas," which is "theatre as we have known and practiced it" "will be the string quartet of the 21st century: a beloved but extremely limited genre" ("New" 8). Elsewhere Schechner has referred to the literarist predilection as "[o]ne of theater's most enduring clichés [...] that the play comes first and from it flows all consequent productions [...] the author = the authority" (ET xli). The tyranny of theatre by written drama and its alleged authority seem to be the dominating image he imputes to the theatre studies he seeks to reconstruct. Let's be clear: Schechner is clearly announcing the characteristic concern of allegory by associating authorship and

---

31 The second statement appears in his revised version of "Six Axioms For Environmental Theater" written first in 1967, revised in 1987; the anti-literarism is congruent with other, broader trends in art and theory to destabilise aesthetic authority in the period of first writing.
authority. As a result of this equation, in Schechner’s discourse on performance, authorship and authority are co-implicating. But, in reality — that plane to which allegorical imagery is opposed -- who falls sway to this cliché about the playwright’s authority, and which writers or written texts does it describe? The fact that the alleged supremacy of “staged literature” (Solomon in Buchmuller and Koós iii) has already been challenged in myriad ways from within theatre praxis is not substantially addressed by Schechner’s endowing theatre studies with such a reductive conception of theatre. Whether or not pre-existing dramatic scripts inspire theatre practice, the distribution of precious resources which continually endangers particular theatre organisations persists. The question of resources and their distribution defies the equation of authorship and authority by pointing to a dimension of authority which structures theatre but does not author it. Material and certain symbolic resources authorise theatre as a special occasion. Unlike the authorial signature, material

---

32 I believe it becomes harder to establish boundaries between writing and literature. Factors influencing this include: the proliferation since not simply of play development projects and alternative authorship schemes in subsidised and regional theatre, but also the growth of creative writing literacy among school aged children; the emergence of university-based creative writing programmes (during the Vietnam years when advanced study was a preferred alternative to the draft); the convergence of poetry and performance in some urban coffee house scenes; and the modes of production, reproduction, distribution, and criticism opened up by the world wide web. If it is harder to establish any boundary between writing and literature as its tools become if not democratised, then disseminated, then it may also become harder to assess exactly what is wrong with authored scripts, in much the same way as it may become harder to value authored writing as literature.

33 For instance, in neither my actor training at Catholic University and with members of the Arena Stage company, nor in productions I’ve seen of plays directed by Anne Bogart, Liviu Ciulei, Yuri Lubimov, Lucian Pintilie, or Bill Rauch has the pre-existing play script seemed authorised in any way which exceeds, precedes, or supersedes the mise en scène. In many respects, the script seems little more than these words in that order, which may occasion certainly possibilities without pre- or overdetermining them. For case studies, see Amy S. Green’s book of American theatre of this period, The Revisionist Stage: Reinventing the Classics. By contrast, in The Graduate Acting Program at NYU under the direction of Ron Van Lieu, I often ran into the presumption of a singular reading which was authorised and also naturalised, so that pre-stage readings could not be subjected to debate. This deadliness is not universal in training or staging, although Schechner’s polemic against play-based theatre seems to suppose that it is. Whether there are more cases which substantiate or refute the claim about literary authoritarianism is hard for me to determine, however the tactical issue remains that this conception is central to Schechner’s view of theatre.
constraints and inducements often resist critical codification by concealing their
effects or naturalising themselves.

That theatre resists is something Schechner's own narrative registers, in his
implicit refusal to stop making theatre under adverse conditions. Schechner
proclaims theatre's demise as a kind of feint. As if to belie his own persistence and
effectively conceal his and others' labours to demolish a literarist cliché about the
authority of theatre deriving principally from drama, he proclaims an unwarranted
generalisation which sets in relief his own endurance in dissenting practice. As
someone who for three decades has directed theatre without simply staging dramas,
Schechner appears, in the context he describes, as somewhat heroic. At the same
time, his announcement effectively suppresses the accomplishments of and
possibilities open to others, by closing down the category of contemporary American
avant-gardism. It appears to me as an odd way to absolve his own provisional
retreat from theatre practice. Like Barba, who "has remained within the circle of the
stage while rhetorically announcing 'the death of theatre,'" (Innes, Avant-Garde 168)
Schechner too has condemned contemporary experiments arising from other
quarters. He condemns not so much by criticism as by ignoring them in his
representations of "the future of the field." For Schechner the future is performance.
As for performance, that could be just about anything, depending, in the first
instance, whether something is read "as" or "is performance" (Draft, n.p.).
Furthermore, the future of performance seems in Schechner's view to require the
destruction of kinds of theatre which defy its theories. As early as 1976, Schechner
was describing a certain kind of what Peter Brook might call "deadly theatre" (11-46)
as "exactly what I want to destroy in the USA" (PC 14). By 1986, Schechner was
turning his attention to an equally deadly theatre studies which he proposed to
reinvent through his performance paradigm. Performance's pluralism conceals
Schechner's clear agenda.
Clearly then, while acting "the trickster" (Conquergood's mascot) in ways which escape Dolan's earnest reading, Schechner's recommendation to think of "theatre" as "a subdivision of performance" ("New" 8) was deadly serious. The mode of his public statements may be ironic, his ethics ironist (in the terms defined by philosopher Richard Rorty), but the aims sincere. The argument to "transform" theatre departments is explicitly lodged in Schechner's TDR Comment in 1995 drawing upon a speech in 1994 at the Claremont Colleges, California, where Schechner cites himself as having

challenged the very existence of most theatre departments in the United States. I spoke of a new mission for theatre departments, a new structure and stance, something suitable to current and future circumstances, more honest in relation to their students, and surely better for theatre art. Once again, I want to share this vision because I believe it to be a viable opportunity to what we have now. And I know that if some such alternative is not adopted, 'theatre education' very soon will suffer a great crash, for it is already rotten and deteriorated.

Schechner assumes his authoritative position as guardian for theatre's study, and proposes three tracks: "performance studies" "as a key means of humanist education"; theatre arts "as a lifelong amateur activity"; and highly selective conservatories for "those who have both the ability and the talent to become professional" ("Transforming" 8-9). This sounds like an aesthetic eugenics.\(^{34}\)

Since, as critics Jools Gilson-Ellis from Britain and David Schlossman in the USA suggest, studies of intracultural and intercultural performing arts are already happening outside the rubric of an explicitly designated "performance studies," then the specificity and uniqueness of Schechner's performance project must have some other purchase upon the shifting terrain of theatre studies if it is to climb to the

\(^{34}\) A Pomona alum of the 1980s, David Schlossman of Northwestern University, robustly responds to Schechner's proposals by taking issue with his assumptions about the Claremont Colleges' curricula and for his "modest proposals" for how professional actors might in future be trained (12-15). But by invoking Jonathan Swift's deft satire, Schlossman equivocates on the question of Schechner's sincerity, which elsewhere Schlossman assumes.
standing of a paradigm. Otherwise, the institutionalised conception of performance would not be secured as Schechner's paradigm. Perhaps "nodalising" theatre permits performance theory to more easily master it, passing judgements against the theatre events and institutions that defy its value system. The authenticity of Schechner's proposal to submit theatre to the performance rubric contrasts with the irony of his theatrical diagnoses, demonstrating the reversal Rorty describes whereby values are not dissolved but rather reoriented. Schechner's entire performance studies project executes exactly this subsumption of theatre. As it becomes institutionalised as an organised field of study, the performance studies Schechner proposes can no longer be regarded as a more or less pragmatic aesthetics of and for theatre makers; and its failure as a "science" in the Kuhnian sense has not hindered its institutional pretensions. Below, I look more carefully at what the proposal of performance does to an understanding of theatre.

As Schechner presents it, the project of performance studies seems a pragmatic, challenging, and exciting answer to the question Schechner asks: "...if elite live performance such as the so-called 'legitimate theatre' is shrinking relative to film and TV (even as popular entertainments are growing) -- then why do we need so many theatre departments?" ("New" 8). But the position that takes the answer to this question as decisive assumes the following:

1. that audiences for actually occurring theatre are in fact shrinking;
2. that the implicit market logic -- which suggests that shrinking audiences might be symptomatic of diminishing demand and that on the basis of diminishing demand production should be curtailed -- is itself sound.

These are not questions which disclose themselves easily to immediate judgement.

For example, the second point is one addressed by Baz Kershaw in his essay "Framing the Audience" published in 1994 in a multi-disciplinary anthology on consumer culture. Kershaw makes clear that Britain provides a very interesting test case for the question of how market values influence theatre. In Britain, national government subsidy from the post-war up to the Thatcher era promoted an ethos...
less oriented to values of the marketplace than to aesthetic, social, or pedagogical concerns. His discussion identifies how the changes in government subsidy under Tory rule have meant an increasing commodification of theatre as a consumable event situated in a service industry which is ready to make use of theatre places as yet another set of “points of sale” for non-theatrical items like meals, drinks, and logo-laden souvenirs. The implication is that the consumption of these “consumables” is put closer on par with theatre attendance. Kershaw, having distinguished “theatre” as “the institutions, buildings, modes of production that are required to stage a performance” from “performance” meaning “the event itself” (“Framing” 165-76), maintains that “however much theatre actually becomes a commodity, the object of commodity fetishism, successful live performance will always transcend the effort to so contain it” (183-84). Live performance escapes containment because of the way in which it activates spectators’ imaginations to fill in the unavoidable “gaps and indeterminacies of the performance” described by Hilton (qtd. 182). In Kershaw’s address of one instance of the process raised in general by my second point, his argument relies on statistics regarding contemporary audiences, as anticipated by my first point. Kershaw affirms that audiences were in fact steady in number and increasing in heterogeneity during the 1980s, empirical features he relates to “theatre’s location in the whole cultural realm [a]s enhanced” (174-75). In other words, the questions about audiences and market values I’ve unpacked from Schechner’s dismissal of theatre studies are themselves inter-related. In tandem,

---

35 See, for example, Ansorge; Davies; Gooch; Goorney; Itzin; Kershaw, Politics; Shepherd and Womack.

36 Citation originally from Julian Hilton, Performance (London: MacMillan, 1987) 133. Joseph Roach cites a paper presented at the First Annual Performance Studies Conference in New York City in March 1995 by Miranda Joseph which “critique[s...] the idea that performance resists commodification by its retreat into invisibility. Performance, she argued, is rather the perfect commodity under late capitalism. That is so because performances, like conference organizers, may be completely consumed at the very moment of their production, creating a market for more” (164-65).
they return to the questions of discourse addressed in Chapter 1.1 where performance theatre’s representation in study was interrogated.

If Kershaw’s argument regarding theatre’s commodification in Britain defends against theatre’s demise by describing the “enhanced” location of theatre on Britain’s cultural map (which has come at a price, to be sure), what might be used to similarly argue against Schechner’s presuppositions in the vaster, less centralised American context? One would need empirical studies to test whether contemporary theatre is and is only what Schechner identifies as “legitimate theatre”; whether the audiences for theatre as so defined (or as redefined consequent to this first inquiry) in fact exceed, match, or number fewer than audiences of theatre in previous eras; and whether or in what ways the experiences of today’s theatre audiences are less significant or meaningful than the experiences of audiences in previous eras. An educated guess that theatre still flourishes in America more than Schechner has assumed can be based upon the insufficiency of Schechner’s apparent equation of theatre with staged dramas. Lots of theatre productions are organised around precisely that, a pre-existing script, but to suggest that all theatre practice is so organised is to cleave without warrant the existing and changing contemporary theatrical field (and to aggrandise Schechner’s revolt as a producing director). This cleaving is characteristic of Schechner’s logic. As illustrated, it is also characteristic of Schechner to value certain places (e.g. New York City) and certain practices (experimental theatre for adults) over others.

Clearly, then, Kershaw’s approach to shifts in theatre culture, which produce enhancement at some cost to theatre’s integrity but without mastering the indeterminacies produced by live performance, demonstrates that Schechner’s argument is in theory defeasible. The question is, does a point-by-point refutation aimed at formulating a dissenting empirical portrait sufficiently answer Schechner’s challenge to theatre studies? Or is something else in fact required? If Schechner is ironic or hyperbolic about written drama’s domination of theatre, then an empirically
oriented answer does not dismantle the mechanism operating through the irony but rather satisfies it. By engaging with Schenchner’s dismal prognosis in its own terms, we satisfy his desire to be recognised as a just authority. Instead, I suggest we treat the ironic advocate ironically. I believe that Schenchner remains attached to a notion of avant-gardism which would easily resituate itself retrospectively as prophecy of past change. Change that has already occurred is always the best candidate for a prophecy seeking full-proof standing, because such a retrospective prophecy is bound to get its apparent prediction right. As the belatedly recognised prophet of achieved change, an avant-gardist author can renew and extend his authority. As an alternative to this implicit repositioning, I suggest that reading the irony literally (as irony) provokes a rethinking of theatre as a category of praxis and analysis, not along the lines that performance theory predicates but rather one addressing the theory’s own presuppositions. In other words, apprehending the irony which appears to have escaped Dolan’s sensitive reading is to recognise an allegorical quality in the performance project but to refuse to authorise the commentary it has produced. This refusal is enacted by pursuing the provocation of the performance allegory in an alternative direction, one which aims through realist allegoresis at discovering the embedded meaning at the theory’s core. What makes it possible in part for Reading Richard Schenchner to perform this allegoresis is its situation between New York and London. Ironically, in the first instance, the effort begins with a literally minded dismantling of certain of the argument’s terms and turns.

In the keynote speech, Schenchner’s case for performance studies is effectively his case against theatre departments. Since theatre departments promise the grounds for performance’s emergence institutionally, Schenchner’s advocacy of performance expresses his aim to “transform theater departments.” The theoretical impulse to persuade theatre studies practitioners is exaggerated into a fierce exhortation. The ferocity of Schenchner’s rhetoric evokes allegory, since, according to art critic Craig Owens, “it should be remembered that allegories are frequently
exhortative, addressed to the reader in an attempt to manipulate him or modify his behavior" (Part II 67). In presenting performance studies as the heir or successor of a decrepit or degenerate theatre studies, through the process of “creative repudiation” (New 10), Schechner is relying on an opposition between theatre and performance which is not firmly established.37 His rhetoric recognises the tenuously of the duel he seeks to stage, and his premises are prefaced by a deceptive “if”:

1. “If most theatre departments really don’t train professional artists;
2. If those who are trained can’t find jobs because the market is flooded;
3. If most departments don’t produce either
   a. working professional artists,
   b. innovative scholars,
   c. or relevant scholarship...” (New’ 8).

Let’s assume the “if” is rhetorical, that is, that for the speaker “if” means “is.”38 These observations need to be seriously examined under the rubric of the central question, what does theatre studies do? If performance studies should replace it, there must be things which theatre studies cannot manage. Of Schechner’s conception, one might ask, for example:

- Under clauses (1) and (2): Does training = education? If not, is training less than, more than, or simply different than education?
- Under clauses (1) and (3)(a): If they don’t, why don’t universities departments turn out “good” theatre makers? What about the craft isn’t being transmitted or isn’t transmissible?
- Under clause (3)(a): If departments aren’t “producing” professional artists, are they employing some? Are they producing plays for paying audiences? Are they “producing” theatre spectators; in other words are their and other university-based students learning literacy or gaining the appetite to seek out theatre beyond the university now or in the future?
- Under clauses (3)(b) and (c): What criteria currently determine who counts as innovative scholars or what counts as relevant scholarship? How should such criteria be amended in order to nurture more innovative or relevant scholarship in the future?

37 See footnote 18 above.

38 Schechner recommends such a move in his introduction to Performance Theory when he accounts for his analytic strategy by reminding the reader that “sometimes--especially in the theater--it is necessary to live as if ‘as if’ = ‘is’” (PT xiii).
These observations flow from the problem of values. They circulate around the question central to this chapter, the question of what theatre studies is about. This question subdivides into two based on both connotations of that preposition; “what theatre studies is about” addresses both “the how” of what it “does” and the “object” which it constitutes in its address, the method and problem-field aspects of paradigm. Schechner assumes that his observations are accurate, that his examples are representative, and that a radical change in paradigm is required. His critic Dolan’s allegiance remains with theatre studies. Looking ahead, Dolan makes the claim:

If theatre studies is the post-modern, interdisciplinary aspect of the older, disciplinary-bound theatre, it can raise questions about the imperialist gesture of performance as ethnography, skeptically draw out the partialities of stories as truth, demystify the coincidence of actor and text, and fill its spaces with complex identities that anchor its commitments to a politics of anti-canonical inclusion. (“Geographies” 432)

Dolan criticises the advance of performance studies in the place of theatre studies on the grounds that it doesn’t guarantee the inclusiveness theatre studies now requires. Inclusivity was also the stated aim of the reconstruction Schechner advocated at ATHE (see “New” 10), but the performance project has already been seen to fail because of its commitment to the equation of authorship and authority and its snobbish approach towards a truly heterogeneous theatre. The latter deserves an ecumenical approach, along with a recognition that Alan Read’s questions, “is it good?’ ‘does it work?’ and ‘for whom does it work?” (12), can only be answered locally, and not legislated by fiat.

39 Of Dolan’s evocative proposal, I would encourage debate around the multiple relations possible and probable between the two terms “story” and “truth” in the light of the impossibility of impartiality. Furthermore, I would reverse the terms, proposing an investigation into the mystification of the illusion of a coincidence of actor and text, in order to seek out what historical grounds exist for supposing that such a category mistake is ever made by actual audiences. As for complex identities, I think accurate and informed practice make these inevitable and unavoidable, for only complex structures can comprehend who we are when we do... Finally, an apt definition of theatre will de facto be anti-canonical and inclusive, because, thankfully, innovations in theatre practice have never waited on theatre scholars.
A similar stance to Dolan's is articulated by performance studies practitioner Philip Auslander in a comment frankly entitled "Evangelical Fervor":

I have never felt that my original allegiance to theatre is somehow compromised by the notion that it is part of a larger picture. [...] What concerns me is the territorial imperative Schechner seems to think performance studies must obey: Performance studies can be born only from the ashes of theatre studies. [...] The idea that performance studies somehow is (or will be) a counterhegemonic guerrilla operation within the academy seems to me a painful exercise in self-deception. The plain truth of the matter is that performance studies, like all disciplines, is seeking its place in the academic sun, as Schechner's territorial imperative suggests. To gain the greater prestige and resources necessary to accomplishing [sic] that goal, performance studies must become more visible in the form of programs, departments, etc. In other words, despite any claims to taking up an oppositional position, the future of the field depends on its becoming institutionalized. (178-80)

The implicit need for institutional recognition conflicts with both the stated anti-establishment politics and the rogue epistemology of performance studies, and with any pragmatic acknowledgement "that similar work will not necessarily be called the same thing" (Gilson Ellis 177). The fact that Schechner's address of this conflict is, if it exists, a private matter means that in (public) practice, Schechner favours authority and authorial status over the ethical and epistemological commitments which he has, at times, espoused. For me, this is decisive in placing the mature performance project not as a paradigm for guiding academic study, but as an avant-gardist project with an articulate manifesto disseminated through the existing apparatuses of scholarly production. Schechnarian performance aims, like other avant-gardist undertakings, to remake the relation of art and life and thereby to participate in, if not to guide, social change using regulated (not to say ritualised) forms like speeches and published statements. Its levels of irony indicate the combination of craft and the unconscious, which since modernism has come to be associated with aesthetic production. Like contemporaneous productions in the visual arts surveyed by Craig Owens, Schechnarian performance-as-avant-gardism exhibits a profound relation to
allegory and allegorical modes of organising structure and meaning. In sum, performance, as it moves from theatre, through theory, towards its manifesto fancifully titled as paradigm, retains fundamentally its orientation as art ... by alternative and alternating means.
4. Schechner's Enduring Avant-Gardism

In classifying Schechner's performance project as avant-gardist art, I am reversing the observation made by Allan Kaprow, to the effect that "if any action of an artist meant as a renunciation of art can itself be considered art, then in those circumstances non art is impossible" (76). I am suggesting that in those circumstances, such as Schechner has created, where by virtue of everything being performance, non art is impossible. Furthermore, because non art is impossible for Schechner, his scholarship and his academic authority can be considered in themselves as art. In other words, I am rewriting Kaprow's observation as: if the circumstances for non art are impossible, then any action by an artist meant as a renunciation of art may be considered art. From his earliest work, Schechner intended his environmental theatre theory as a renunciation of art. But I have rejected that renunciation, on the basis that performance theory does not satisfy the criteria for a social scientific model.

Implied within this redefinition of the performance project's paradigmatic aspirations as an avant-gardist artistic action is a view of Schechner as an allegorical author. Authorship in the heterogeneous category of allegory is plural, because of the continuum allegory establishes between creation and interpretation, writing and reading. In such a semiotic economy, the meaning of allegory "mediates by providing a continuity between narrative and commentary" (Madsen 86). Such a relation between narrative and commentary relates to the interpretation/production blending identified by Honig; Madsen refers to the latter as "the central confusion of allegory: the term has been used to name both the quest for normative meaning and that meaning that is posited as normative" (29). Certainly as a purported paradigm for the study of all performed acts, the performance project actively solicits normative standing with regard to the production, consumption, and regulation of the significance attaching to and arising from cultural processes. Allegory's "chilly blade"
(Wheale 182) cuts to the heart of this aspiration, identifying how the performance project struggles to acquire access to and ownership over cultural goods.

The quest by allegory for normative meaning is enacted by the performance project through its desire to produce those enterprising interpretations capable of accruing authority; while in its figural modes, the posited meaning produced by allegory's confidence is attributed to the mystical core which, from Schechner's perspective, derives from ritual communion. The mystical core predicated by a figural allegory is viewed as the site from which, in theory anyway, the normalised meaning emanates; but the normalised meaning of the mystical core is, in practice, accessible only to (authorised) initiates. Schechner's interest in shamanism embodies his recognition that within the semiotic economy in which his work is located, the authorised initiate exercises an extraordinary power to shape experience and meaning. In these allegorical operations, power and privilege reproduce and extend themselves, across texts, by directing and producing readings. This double aspect of questing as an activity and a substantive, the quest's discovery, is articulated in Joel Fineman's essay title, "The Structure of Allegorical Desire," where the genitive "of" directs attention both to the structure of allegory and to the structure of a desire which is specifically a desire for allegory. The desire for allegory can manifest in a wish to reinstate a vivid relation with lost sources of meaning, as through allegoresis or allegorical reinscription; or as a desire to supplant anterior inheritances by allegorically reworking cultural legacies. In the case of Schechnerian performance, the allegorical structure Roman Jakobson describes adequately mapped the organisation of performance study into magnitudes and areas of research, as given in Chapter 3.3 above. The attractiveness of the hypothesised structure was that it was both extensive (in its reach) and unifying in its scope.

If in light of subsequent analysis, the keynote speech advocating the restructuring of theatre studies into performance studies is regarded as an experimental staging of a manifesto rather than as normative scholarly discourse, it
remains polemical, but can also be viewed as a kind of ironic comment on both conference proceedings and the particularly configured theatre conference which had invited him as a headline contributor. To understand the speech as an avant-gardist public performance, however, is to process it allegorically. Allegory uses indexing, the semiotic process whereby a term points to an associated term to which it may be related but from which it is distinct. My reading of the performance project itself as intermedia avant-gardist art relies on allegorical indexing to derive from its rather fanciful rendition of Schenck’s work a greater critical purchase. As a dominant semiotic mode, indexicality generates an “experience of everything bordering on or being part of something else” in “a unity constituted by sheer difference” (Baer 144). The index produces a more diffused, less developed meaning than the symbol which contains and encloses meaning, often into a condensed and concrete form (e.g. the Christian cross); therefore reading for indexical relations exposes relations rather than fully interpreting them. It is a process which must be undertaken with care, as the following parable illustrates.

The different valences to indexical and symbolic readings bears heavily upon the explanatory weight a given reading will sustain. This is particularly the case with allegory, because of the fluidity of the term. The following case highlights the limits upon an allegorical reading of Darwinism which over-invests in its symbolic character. In the late 1970s, the American historian Hayden White advanced a view of Darwin’s landmark study, The Origin of Species which insists that it ‘must be read as a kind of allegory – a history of nature meant to be understood literally but appealing ultimately to the image of coherency and orderliness which it constructs by linguistic ‘turns’ alone” (133). At approximately the same time, naturalist Stephen Jay Gould considered one such allegorical reading. In each case, the term allegory signals a revaluation, approbative or (as in the case) degrading, achieved by resituating practices, texts, events, and/or phenomena. Gould’s criticism of the second allegorical reading is instructive.
The scrutinised text was a popular journalistic piece by Tom Bethell which claimed that Darwin's criteria for natural selection was tautologous, and therefore not legitimate or authoritative, since "what Darwin really discovered was nothing more than the Victorian propensity to believe in progress" (qtd. in Gould, Ever 41). Gould's criticism of Bethell's argument consists in defining the survival by the fittest as an expression, rather than a definition, of the fitness of creatures (42). In other words, Gould treats survival as if it were a symptom (e.g. index) of fitness rather than its criterion. The importance of Gould's defence of Darwin (which does not pretend that he was anything other than a Victorian natural scientist, conforming to a prejudicial value scheme) consists in establishing a general causal ordering, whereby "superior design in changed environments is an independent criterion of fitness" and indicating that natural selection can only theorise "local adaptation" not "cosmic" improvements "which means, in short, that "[i]t got cold before the woolly mammoth evolved its shaggy coat" (42). Gould further points out that the immanent content of Darwin's theory, along with the historical information that the general theory of evolution singly and without Darwin's theory of natural selection, was ratified by Victorian Britain. Together, these observations raise doubts about Bethell's allegorical interpretation of *Origin of the Species* which reads it as a socio-political symptom. Similarly, Gould's arguments against Bethell can be used to question the confidence with which White designated *Origin* as an allegory for Victorian ideals of progress and class oppression.

In considering White's advance and Gould's counter-argument (via his criticism of Bethell), it would seem that engaging allegory testifies to at least two moments of instability which my critique of Schechner's work seeks to capitalise upon. First, the instability within the time of creation attributed by an impulse to view a text or project as allegorical (as when Darwin's text is regarded simply as a bolster for the status quo, and therefore designated as allegory on that account); and second, the instability of the time of critique (as when landmark texts or prominent
projects are allegorically (re)assessed. In both of these moments lies a performative aspect. The most important feature of this critical performance is not that allegory's terminology finds a purchase in a site of analysis, but rather that independently of allegory, a criticism (like Gould's of Bethell's misdescription) finds its grounds, articulating itself foremost in non-allegorical terms. Allegory's role is, by contrast, secondary, organising the findings rather than (as in the case of Hayden White) circumventing the research process.

The performance project as allegory indexes the avant-gardism hitherto associated only with Schechner's theatre praxis, not his theoretical production and its academic (e.g. institutional) aspects. The latter render insufficient current historical accounts of Schechner's theatre and the extensions of his ritual theory of art beyond theatre into theory. They are insufficient not because they fail to address these other productions, but because they fail to read them dialectically in relation to the broader constellation in which Schechner pursues aims that are always, finally, aesthetic. In the end, however, this redefinition of the performance project in terms of avant-gardism relies on a particular intellectual history of the concept of avant-gardism, which the performance project does not cite but to which it implicitly adds.

In the 1970s, Peter Bürger produced a compelling critique of avant-gardism in the tradition of the Frankfurt School of cultural criticism. Bürger's analysis in The Theory of the Avant-Garde traces the relation between the emergence of a distinct "social system 'art'" as "part and parcel of the developmental logic of bourgeois society" (32). The artist as a "specialist" is, according to this Marxist view, one manifestation of the more widespread division of labour constitutive of modern capitalism. The nineteenth-century movement called Aestheticism is both the "apogee" of this tendency towards specialisation, institutionalisation, and autonomy (32), as well as being the precondition for the emergence of what Bürger calls the "historical avant-garde" which attacked the negative consequences of art's alleged autonomy, namely "the artist's loss of any social function" (33). Here we arrive at
territory familiar from the discussion of Schechner’s ritual theory of art in relation to Nietzsche, Artaud, and Brecht, as given in Chapter 1.3 above. Accordingly, Bürger sets forth the following definition:

The intention of the avant-gardist may be defined as an attempt to direct toward the practical the aesthetic experience (which rebels against the praxis of life) that Aestheticism developed. What most strongly conflicts with the means-end rationality of bourgeois society is to become life’s organizing principle. (34)

Hal Foster, a contemporary inheritor of Bürger’s seminal theory, succinctly restates it as: "the aim of the avant-garde for Bürger is to destroy the institution of autonomous art in order to reconnect art and life" (15).

Foster reads this attempt as doomed, because it makes inaccessible that life from which art as institutionalised and autonomous was historically distinguished, by depriving those who would approach it with the dialectical instruments to do so. Most importantly, however, Foster’s reading of Bürger’s theory calls attention to avant-gardist aims as strategies not as ontologies. That is, the destruction of specialised art institutions appeared at a certain epoch as promising the liberation of creative forces, not their renunciation. If it were also an ontology, however, any regimentation of creative forces into form (which is potentially subject to institutionalisation) would be opposed on principle; this would deprive the historical avant-garde Bürger studied of its characteristic stylistic moves such as montage, allegory, and chance (64-82).

Part of Bürger’s agenda in closing down the category of an historical avant-garde as a failed experiment concerns his desire to annul the neo-avant-garde’s adoption of these stylistic features as legitimate contemporary tactics. "Art as an institution prevents the contents of works that press for radical change in a society (i.e., the abolition of alienation) from having any practical effect" (Bürger 95). It is this “intention of returning art to the praxis of life” for avant-gardism set forth by Bürger (58) that best describes the action of Schechner’s performance project.
In order to secure this new reading of an academic enterprise as avant-gardist art, Bürger’s assumptions about art institutions must be reassessed. According to Hal Foster’s critique of Peter Bürger’s theory, the struggle twentieth-century art has had with the entire question of institutionality defines avant-gardism’s general problematic, into which are subsumed the characteristic question of art’s relation to life and the avant-gardist attacks against art’s ostensible autonomy. Foster’s account places a primacy on the question of institutions in the formulation and fostering of experimental arts; the institution, whether as museum or as academy, has increasingly become the source of revenue for experimental arts but also the site (literally and abstractly) for the cultural critiques experimental art generates.40 Instead of obliterating art institutions through a sublation of art into life, American artists since the 1950s have found ways of penetrating them in order to expose and critique their assumptions and operations. Their strategies and tactics have challenged inherited notions of art works as objects subject to possession. Henry Sayre explains:

[T]he abstract expressionists recognized that the action painting itself was the mere record of a series of moves that was the action of painting. The ‘work’ as activity was privileged in this way over the ‘work’ as product. A museum might well have purchased a Pollock, but it could never purchase the action of Pollock painting – the event itself, the real work. [...] Art is no longer that thing in which full-fledged aesthetic experience is held perpetually present; art no longer transcends history; instead, it admits its historicity, its implication in time. (4)

Because institutions govern those activities which they are capable of eliciting and containing, they function in reproductive roles which are also implicated in historical time. In contemporary art institutions, Foster sees the aims of the older historical avant-garde to reinvent conceptions of art “works” as realisable, for the very first

40 Similarly, if more implicitly, Henry Sayre explores the significance of institutional and conventional forces in the imagery, tools, and placing of American arts since 1970. See for example, Sayre’s discussions of Nixon sisters (35-40); Laurie Anderson (145-55); and new dance (101-44).
time, through the tactics of contemporary artists which quote avant-gardist styles and forms. Two of Foster’s more blunt examples are Hans Haacke’s installation “MetroMobilitan” (1985) in which a banner broadcasting the petroleum company’s support of Apartheid also announces the exhibition of “Treasures of Ancient Nigeria” sponsored by Mobil (26); and Fred Wilson’s installation at the Maryland Historical Society called “Mining the Museum” (1992) included in a display case containing ornate silver pitchers, goblets, and mugs alongside a pair of metal slave manacles (27). For Foster, these works are examples of the ways in which artists since the 1960s “develop the critique of the conventions of the traditional mediums, as performed by dada, constructivism, and other historical avant-gardes, into an investigation of the institution of art, its perceptual and cognitive, structural and discursive parameters” (20). Institutions with ideological functions form the object of such avant-gardist subversions of convention, rather than reified communal experiences attempted by Aestheticist or ritual experimenters. The shift so described is imitated, if palely, by the move of Schechner’s performance project from theatre to theory to institutional activism. For Schechnerian performance realises itself not in his environmental stagings, which for Schechner fail when “images [he] had in his head were not being played out in the theater” (ET 261), but in the institutionalisation of his theory as an ostensible, if inadequate, paradigm for study.

As a methodological principle organising Foster’s critique of Bürger’s theory of the avant-garde, Foster introduces the psychoanalytic concept of deferred action (Nachträglichkeit). Deferred action is the process whereby repetition reveals a past trauma as traumatic. Foster uses it to describe how it was only with the neo-avant-garde of the second half of the century that the critique of art institutions launched in the early twentieth century could first be realised. “[H]istorical and neo-avant-gardes are constituted [...] as a continual process of protension and retension, a complex relay of anticipated futures and reconstructed pasts – in short, in a deferred action that throws away any simple scheme of before and after, cause and effect, origin and
Deferred action relates to the process of criticism, because criticism seeks to recode texts or events. Furthermore, deferred action signals the important role in recoding played by time. The meaning or significance of an event is not necessarily legible at the time of the event. The lag in legibility produces the possibility for resignifying. For Richard Kostelanetz regarding the "theatre of mixed means" in the early 1970s, as for Foster in the mid-1990s, the significance of the delay of deferred action is that it allows recoding. For Kostelanetz, recoding sustains in principle the distinction between art and non-art, because "a powerful memory of a certain moment of a particular piece is generally a conclusive, albeit subjective, sign that it had more to offer than another. (For this reason, perhaps, all reviews of unfamiliar art should be written long after the performance takes place.)" (287). For Foster, recoding articulates the distinction (as connection) between the historical and neo-avant-gardes, the distinction between institutional co-optation (Bürger's thesis) and institutional subversion/transgression/critique (as viewed by Foster and Sayre).

Deferred action as a means to provoke recoding relates to allegory. This is because of recoding's subjective basis, and its pragmatic persuasiveness. Through recoding, the critic gains a sense of value, over time, of a work. The critic's purchase on the significance or value of the production resembles the possession Walter Benjamin has decried in his refutation of historical idealism:

> Just as a man lying sick with fever transforms all the words which he hears into the extravagant images of delirium, so it is that the spirit of the present age seizes on the manifestations of past or distant spiritual worlds, in order to take possession of them and unfeelingly incorporate them into its own self-absorbed fantasy. (Origin 53)

Benjamin's acute diagnosis of this process is as an attempt by the historian or critic "to insinuate himself into the place of the creator" (53). If he were to succeed, the authoritative position of the receiver would, like allegoresis, write a new creation through an active reading. By making deferred action central to his account of the
American neo-avant-garde, Foster bring allegory into focus, not (like Owens) as an artistic strategy as much as a critical one.

In some respects, deferred action works in the logic of the performance project, to make it cohere as a singular enterprise despite its inherent instabilities. It appears on several dimensions. For Schechnarian performance, the re-valuation of primitivism is one case of nostalgic (rather than traumatic) deferred action, as when archaic communalism becomes the pinnacle rather than the cradle of subsequent human achievement. Similarly, theatre reappears in the mid 1990s as a domain of intrinsic value. In his millennial-minded comments entitled “Theatre in the 21st Century,” Schechner confesses,

I know TDR is a performance journal, that performance is a lot more than theatre, and so on. Still, if the truth be known, my heart pumps theatre blood. There is nothing (yes, I know about food, sleep, and sex) that engages me more totally, more intensely, than rehearsing. And nothing thrills me more than a performance I have helped bring to life. (5)

Schechner here affirms his role as a theatrical author. Theatre, he announces, is his “life blood” (5). The call which ends his essay for “theatrical diversity” (6) in the midst of the performance spectrum suggests that the performance project has been a verbose rehearsal of a fearful absence, like the fort/da game Freud’s grandson played with a spool of thread. In thinking of the neo-avant-garde in relation to its predecessors, Foster speaks of “a recession that is also a return” (ix-x); but this recent essay by Schechner heralds theatre’s second return. For first, theatre recedes for the artist Richard Schechner only to return in an artful practice that exceeds the stage, seeping into other forums, finding form in the apparent non-fictions which remain, in the end, as fanciful as the dramatic fictions Schechner the director worked to supersede. “I believe participation should generally be in the service of disillusion,” Schechner declared (ET 69), even when that disillusion engenders a broader fiction, like the fraudulent fancy that “[j]oining in Dionysus” was anything “like declaring for Christ at a revival meeting — [...] an act of the body
publicly signaling one’s faith” (43). Paul Velde observed that in Dionysus in 69, “Community is thus experienced and affirmed, though at what level of consciousness is uncertain. The actors, and perhaps the audience, are liberated, but of what? If we do not know the answer, can we say there has been a liberation?” (qtd. Shephard 119). The affirmative conclusion in place of sceptical examination sets Schechner apart from the more meticulous (or tortured), less ingenuous of his theatrical and theoretical peers: Eugenio Barba, Herbert Blau, Joseph Chaikin, Jerzy Grotowski. It gives to Schechner’s public persona a kind of flamboyance, which is enshrined in performance’s iconography in the figures of the trickster and harlequin.

If deferred action forms part of Foster’s content as an effective descriptor, however, it also describes his procedure, for Foster’s work is an example of a discourse tracing the rebound of sense onto an already-inscribed inheritance. The same could be said of my study. The works I discuss are not “new” or unknown; my work articulates a new collation rather than a new addition to or edition of Schechner’s work. It is a reading. Like other active readings, it rewrites what it reads in relation to its own interests and agenda. Within my reading of Schechner’s work in theatre, theory, and academic forums as an avant-gardist performance project, deferred action has organised this critique. The terms by which an institutional critique are made were already articulated in the earlier theory itself, but performance’s institutional aspirations were only read as a real threat (as traumatic) when they were replayed in a different context. That new context was the one in which theatre’s institutional standing as an object of study and as a discipline were challenged as if from within, at the ATHE conference. Nevertheless, the crucial difference between the neo-avant-garde visual arts surveyed by Foster and Schechnerian performance, and the reason why this performance allegory will not stand up as a fable for the broader avant-gardes, is that in the performance project Schechner is, in a great measure, citing himself.
Schechner's own production in theatre and in theory provides the source text which he cites and reproduces. Ironically, this repeated self-citation enacts his claim made in another context that authorship equals authority. In this way, Schechner plays both creator and "cultural businessman," that "person who exploits the labour of the 'creator' by trading in the 'sacred' and the person who, by putting it on the market, by exhibiting, publishing or staging it, consecrates a product which he has 'discovered'" (Bourdieu, Field 76). Schechner did not discover his own work, but rather fashioned it as a creator seeking to capitalise on the discourse he elaborates. Having implicitly perceived that "the painter, writer, or composer" - all those figures whom conventionally are named as authors - are structurally speaking only "the apparent producer," Schechner's project has both raised and apparently resolved "the question of what authorizes the author, what creates the authority with which authors authorize" (76). The significance of the purported paradigm is that it supplies the value Schechner wishes to attribute to his environmental theatre by inflating its aesthetic features into historically-rooted traditions (linked to prehistoric rites, shamanism and primitive religious practices) while enhancing its contemporary significance as lying "at the core of a well-rounded education" ("New" 9). When Schechner proselytises about performance, he is playing "the impresario, who 'defends the authors he loves'" (Bourdieu, Field 77); except that in his case, the author he loves most is himself. According to the accepted standards for defining a paradigm, creative authorship of the kind Schechner has practised undermines intellectual authority by substituting for considered and peer-reviewed research polemic. The impetus for the changes Schechner now advocates on behalf of the conception of performance he has pioneered seems to be more germane to its author than it is receptive to or informed by the true heterogeneity and plurality of the field he seeks to redraw. Since

It is the field of production, understood as the system of objective relations between [the] agents or institutions and as the site of the struggles for the monopoly of the
power to consecrate, in which the value of works of art
and belief in that value are continuously generated
(Bourdieu, Field 78);

it is to the larger field of production within which Schechner works that my discussion
now turns.
5. Thinking Theatre

The broader field of theatre as cultural production upon which performance works is unstable. It is possible, I would suggest, to describe the instability of theatre studies in a history which parallels the emergence of Schechner's performance project. For instance, one succinct summary of the heterogeneity of the field was articulated over two decades ago by playwright/theorist David Cole. Cole's book, *The Theatrical Event: A Mythos, A Vocabulary, A Perspective* began with a question which remains a pertinent and provocative spark for inquiry into the mission and methods of contemporary theatre research. "Our experience of theatre lies in fragments that we have no idea how to reassemble," Cole wrote in 1975.

In fact, we are not even sure what they are fragments of. We include under the heading 'theatre' objects and events that, if they do not positively exclude each other, certainly are not related in any very obvious way. Actors exchanging energy; pages in a book; visual patterns; sequences of spoken words; people coming together to work in the presence of other people who watch—any of these can, at a particular moment, be what we mean by theatre; but what do we mean by theatre? What is the underlying thing, or event, of which these aspects are the aspects— and how does it come to have such dissimilar aspects? What, for example, has theatre as a group transaction to do with theatre as a visual artifact? Or theatre as a social phenomenon to do with theatre as [an] aggregate of texts? In what sense can an unstaged script and an unscripted staging be spoken of as belonging to the same activity? Indeed, limiting the question only to scripts: how can a single thing be susceptible of investigation by methods as diverse as Emotion Memory and magazine articles? (ix)

In the absence of an articulate and stable, if provisional, answer to the question: -- what do we mean by theatre? -- theatre studies is left in a precarious position vis-à-vis its practice. The absence has ushered in a multiplicity of approaches to a wide range of study objects, which has been an invigorating, even dazzling process. In my survey of recent literature addressing the formation of studies of theatres, there appear to be a variety of issues confronting individuals and institutions. Some of
these issues include; the ephemerality of theatre performances which profoundly affects the ability of the field to construct objects for study (de Marinis 1985; 1993; Phelan 1993); institutional features such as the variation in the departmental and faculty organisational structures within which theatres are studied within universities (Worthen, “Texts”); the alliances of its practitioners with other disciplinary matrices (Dolan, “Geographies”; Fischer-Lichte, “From”); the divisions between and associations of professional university-accredited training and scholarship (Barker); the historically-rooted preferences in different cultures or countries for performance reconstruction (Langsted) or literary-interpretative work (Bryant-Bertail; Van Kesteren); and the difficulty of fostering a truly sociological study of theatres (Shevtsova, “Sociology”). To this continuing uncertainty and the complex possibilities and foreclosures it marks, another transformative element has entered the scene. That element is performance.

According to American theatre researcher Bert O. States:

> It goes without saying that the field of theatre studies is rapidly being re-shaped by the principle of **performance**, abetted by the rise of multiculturalism, interdisciplinary and gender studies. So far the major task has been to coax out the various manifestations of performance, to find, so to speak, our neighbors in places we haven’t bothered to look for them before. By and large, this coaxing has had the character of a colonization [...]. (“Performance” 2; boldface mine)

States’s depiction of this current trend adds to an already long list many questions for and about theatre studies. Theatre historian R.W. Vince describes the state of American theatre studies as follows:

> Various attempts have been made in recent years to define both the object and the subject of theatre studies, but we still appear to be left with the uncertain axiom that the boundaries of the discipline tend to expand in direct ratio to the intensity of the efforts to define and confine it. The number and variety of activities of a theatrical or paratheatrical nature that the theatre historians often find within their purview are multiple: ceremonies and rituals of many kinds and purposes; pagentry and procession; spectacles and shows of myriad description; folk dances and
vaudeville; sports and athletic events. The list appears endless. But there remains a suspicion that any attempt to limit the list, to restrict the area of investigation by defining 'theatre' in any particular way as a precondition of study, will prove both arbitrary and self-defeating. (13-14)

Into a culture of uncertainty about theatre's value and standing as a site of investment and as an object of investigation, the performance project inserts itself and its unique approach to theatre, which it has already predicated as one node on a broad spectrum of performative activities.

It might be argued that by depicting theatre as only a node on the performance spectrum, Schechner has relieved theatre of an ontological burden it could not tolerate, as a precisely formed art whose limits were well-determined, setting it off from although in relation to other performing arts. Or, alternatively, nodalising theatre could be seen as relieving theatre studies of an epistemic burden it could not tolerate, since its more senior traditions of literary and historiographic analysis, and their more junior pluralist studies, may be seen to lack the tools, concepts, and frameworks to study performances beyond the conventional theatres of Europe and North America. For certainly theatre as an occasion cannot sustain the spatio-temporal density attributable to economics, political systems, or even religious rituals, because theatre as a unique event in space-time does not possess their staying power. The singularity of its live performances, as described in theatre semiotics (e.g. Fischer-Lichte, de Marinis), may earn for theatre a unique standing with regard to the durability attributable to social structures and cultural traditions, even when theatre itself is regulated by convention. Theatre, from this point of view, recurrently vanishes, even if some of theatre's fodder (its written dramas, its modelbuchs, its franchised scores41) are archived, enshrined, or sold. Theatre's recurrent vanishing makes it quite unlike the institutionalised, structural/systemic or

41 On the latter, see Fuchs 128-43 on "Theater as Shopping," which contains descriptions of franchised shows like Tamara.
habitual modes of performance's other nodes: politics, medicine, religion, and interpersonal interaction (FR 21). How we think of theatre, its specificity as well as its plurality, determines how cred(ta)ble we deem its nodal status on the performance spectrum Schechner predicates. Consideration of two issues can assist us in this assessment: temporality and aesthetics.

Theatre's vanishing is a characteristic of its being in time-space. However, its time-space character is not simply or solely the ecstatic plenitude promised by a ritual theory of art as reunifying a congregation against the alienations enforced by everyday life. It is, instead, far more "contradictory" as Johannes Birringer explains:

> Each rehearsal, each night of performance is a new beginning that preserves what comes back, each act an affirmation (which makes it institutional) whose consequences cannot be 'saved' or guaranteed. When I spoke of the contradictory space of theatre, I meant to refer to the different realities – the simultaneity of the unsimultaneous – present in theatre productions that take place in time and through time, on either side of the existing or invisible wall.

For Birringer, this temporal structure -- which both divides and double backs upon presence through each "new beginning that preserves" – produces for theatre "its schizophrenic awareness of its own unreality" precisely at the point when "the volatile progress of its human labor" and "the contingencies of the space in which it labors" affirm its "liveness", its presence. "This suspension of the time-space or 'world' of performance divides the theatre from itself" Birringer observes. But for a ritual theory of art, such as Schechner has adopted and adapted, this division is intolerable. For how can theatre assert its efficacy as ritual when "the lived body of work becomes a fiction the moment it vanishes" (Birringer 3-4)? This is the fate for theatre occasions which Schechner's spectrum of performance seeks to interrupt and divert. Small wonder, then, that Schechner admires the Asmats' reputed "ability to repeat sacred ceremonies, consciously to re-enact them" (PD 226). Schechner, I feel, is terrified of theatre's inevitable disappearance as action and as occasion. It's an odd form for someone to choose if reputation is a premium value (ET 264).
The spectrum dispenses with the quiet aftershocks of theatre's recurrent disappearance and its refusal to settle into a self-identical or stable object of study. For the theatre the performance project seeks out and inscribes is so ritualized that it seems not to end. Onto the continuum of intercultural "performance types" which "runs from those performances where the performer is changed through the 'work' of the performance to those in which he is transported and returns to his starting place" Schechner maps a closed cycle of preparations, warm-up, performing, and cooling down and further labels all the points but performing as "ordinary" as distinct from a "performative world" (BTA 125-26). At the level of theory, as opposed to his theoretically-informed empirical descriptions, Schechner affirms ritual theatre's potentially infinite cyclicity by labelling point A as "START/FINISH" (126). But if in some respects a "finish" is indeed a new beginning, it only starts something which, however similar in intention or in outline, will be different in some respects. Whether those differences, from one night's closing curtain to the next night's lights up (to use imagery from proscenium theatre), make a difference depends on what theatres one is studying and which variables. That they might make a difference (in the case of rioting, award announcements, press presence, casting changes, ticket sales, audience recognition, participants' epiphany) cannot be overruled in advance by a presumptuous theory. By obstructing the time-related shifts conceivable within relatively stable and cyclic processes, the ritual theory of theatre limits change by recruiting an end-state (the conditions when a performance finishes) to the description of its origin. For theatre workers engaged in ongoing performances of the same dramatic or performance score, this has a certain empirical validity, but only if one discounts the audiences for whom the performance time is a special occasion, rarely repeated. From its beginnings in a project which participated self-consciously in social change, by intervening in, capitalising upon, and seeking to direct social turmoil, Schechner's ritual theatre acts in theory to contain change.
The kind of ethical pluralism I advocate differs from the “both/and” approach exemplified in Schechner’s definitions of performance, theatre, and ritual. For example, he creates a functional paradox when he announces:

Performance originates in impulses to make things happen and to entertain; to get results and to fool around; to collect meanings and to pass the time; to be transformed into another and to celebrate being oneself; to disappear and to show off; to bring into a special place a transcendent Other who exists then-and-now and later-and-now; to be in a trance and to be conscious; to focus on a select group sharing a secret language and to broadcast to the largest possible audience of strangers; to play in order to satisfy a felt obligation and to play only under an Equity contract for cash. (PT 142)

The recurrent conjunction in these phrases is “and” rather than “or,” even though for any particular performance, the impulse is unlikely to be directed towards or arise from both aims. It seems that in displaying the range of options open to a ubiquitous performance, Schechner has posited an impossible object. In order, perhaps, to disentangle the many variants of performance which may arise along the ritual/theatre continuum, Schechner explains:

The move from ritual to theater happens when a participating audience fragments into a collection of people who attend because the show is advertised, who pay admission, who evaluate what they are going to see before, during, and after seeing it. (142)

In other words, for Schechner consumerism makes theatre of ritual. In this respect, he’s not far from Bürger’s view of the subsystem of art arising from the development of bourgeois capitalism (Bürger 32). “The move from theater to ritual,” meanwhile “happens when the audience is transformed from a collection of separate individuals into a group or congregation of participants” (142). Clearly, this reasoning is neo-Nietzschean, for it attributes individuated, Apollonian consciousness to theatre-goers and Dionysian collectivity to ritual’s participants. With its structural proclivity for the “both/and” described above, the performance project aims to apprehend not ritual or theatre, but ritual and theatre, and most importantly the hybridised ritualised theatre
reiterated in the misleading conjunction threaded through the preceding list of performance's origins. To effect this in practice requires an authoritative agent capable of recruiting theatrical processes and procedures towards ritual ends. Explaining the way in which cyclical processes of change/restitution (e.g. transportation) can overlap with lasting change (e.g. transformation), Schechner evaluates his own authoritative role:

I didn't know it at the time, but I used workshops with The Performance Group as a way of transforming individuals into a group and then used the Group as transporters in an attempt to make a collective out of individuals who constitute an audience, a temporary collective -- a community for the time being. (PC 119; BTA 148)

This "community for the time being" was a compromise built on an "evasion of the circumstances in the streets of New York [...and] within the Group" (ET 43). The Group could not "acquiesce to being a function of the audience's fantasies" (43) but if it would not and could not conform to the conceptions of community it inspired in its spectator/initiates (42-43), its work in Dionysus in 69 summoned "a new aesthetics" (43).

The opportunity for authentic interaction with the performers made it true that Dionysus was not an orthodox play (that is, a finished thing, a self-contained event) but life (an organic, unfinished thing, an open event). The audience brought their old aesthetics to Dionysus. When they saw these did not fit, they didn't formulate a new aesthetics -- instead they concluded that the play was not a play but life (43).

Ironically, the performance project executes this same abdication – failing to answer the call for new aesthetics, new poetics to describe new and hybrid forms – by posing as social science. In this way, it attempts to refuse aesthetic questions, as if its performance spectrum has solved the problem of art by eliding its distance from and difference to life. This refusal of aesthetics in the name of social science is reversed, however, by the reading of Schechner's performance not as a paradigm but as an avant-gardist penetration of academic institutions.
From this vantage, Schechner's depiction of theatre as a node on a performance spectrum appears very unstable. To answer it, theatre studies practitioners may direct these current questions towards a debate about performance studies:

1. In what ways might it make sense to speak of “theatre” as a coherent object?
2. What happens to this sense of a “theatre” when it is posed in relation to other nodes in the performance spectrum?
3. How is theatre served by the postulate of a broad spectrum, as opposed to any other image of a diverse field of practices among which certain features might be shared?
4. Is theatre’s apparent self-identity as given by the performance project an artefact of its positioning within the spectrum, or does it precede theatre’s interpolation into performance?
5. More largely, is there a coherence to the objects of the multiple and diverse endeavours of theatre studies departments? If there is, is it sound and defensible epistemologically and ethically? Or is any coherence the effect of ideological forces undermining the production of new knowledges?
6. Is there an autonomous project, in communication with but distinct from those undertaken under the banners of cultural or performance studies, literature or history, which emerges from the ensemble of activities regularly engaged within theatre departments? If so, does theatre studies function in a dialectical relation – of connection to and distinction from – both other disciplinary matrices and theatre practice beyond academe?
7. Or does the assemblage of artefacts and activities acknowledged by David Cole continue to confuse, if not theatre scholars for whom this condition may be naturalised by habit, then quizzical theatre students?
The breadth of these questions, their need for both local and more systematic address, points to what media studies scholar John Comer has described as a "knowledge problem".

Knowledge problems concern what it is that academic inquiries seek to find out, and the kinds and quality of data and of explanatory relations which particular ideas and methods might be expected to produce. (147)

Implicit in both Cole's and Vince's descriptions of American theatre studies is some conception of its knowledge problems. For Cole, one answer to theatre's uniqueness was to proceed analogically, drawing upon shamanism and psychoanalysis as sources to image the distinctive relations constitutive of theatre without aligning them as genealogically related in developmental and/or functional terms. Cole's study implicitly replies to and critiques Schechner's institution of his ritual/theatre analogy as a remedy to art's apparent and unsatisfactory divorce from everyday life. (Not surprisingly, it received a poor review in The Drama Review and remains out of print, despite the warm reception accorded his subsequent book, Acting as Reading.) To undertake any such attempt now, however, is to fly in the face of long-standing reticence, described by R. W. Vince and cited above.

On the basis of Vince's depiction, I conclude that the disciplinary flux, of which Jill Dolan's response to Schechner's speech was eloquently symptomatic, originates in the absence of stable founding definitions. The flux both arises from and impels an abdication of any need for or possibility of founding definitions. Nonetheless, a

---

42 See "New Books," The Drama Review 19.2 (1975) 141. "This book presents, at least metaphorically, the image of the actor as a shaman, an archetypal messenger. The approach could be stimulating, exciting and useful. Cole, however, also uses his formulations to denigrate performances that do not appeal to him." Cole's chief target is theatre which demands audience participation. "If only spectators could be got to talk to the actors, touch them, love them - and sumnum bonum - undress with them," Cole's opponents ostensibly claimed, "we would come marching into a new dawn; unresponsiveness would vanish; and theatre would once again engage the whole man as of yore" (73). To understand such participation as "the white hope" to "give new life to the theatre" is, in Cole's estimation, to ignore the necessary passivity and ambivalence which contact with the uncanny requires and engenders.
provisional description of theatre practices or their features which defies its consolidation as a "node" of the performance "continuum" would reveal how performance allegorises theatre, compromising it exactly as Dolan suspects, if perhaps for reasons she does not provide. Such a provisional description could anchor Dolan's argument about focus groups for which "[p]ractice and methodology categories...seem qualitatively different from focus groups founded on identity categories" ("Geographies" 428) and enhance its strategic purchase. The provisional description could re-authorise theatre as a materially located site of contingently formed praxis, against its condensation as a node on a performance spectrum, where it is misrepresented as the legitimate theatre's staging of written dramas.

If the first thing required for a robust reply to Schechner's steady redefinition of theatre -- first as a node, then as a diffuse theatricality put under erasure, and finally as a redundancy to be repudiated -- is a richer, more complex conception of contemporary theatre cultures, the second thing required is a more robust and nuanced conception of how studies relate to the objects and processes in the real-world which they seek to apprehend and explain. These requirements are both necessary, and either alone is insufficient. This is the case because theatre studies is responsive to, but not solely structured by, theatre culture. So while theatre studies is not autonomous from theatre practice, nor is it entirely subjugated to it; for there are other, non-theatrical forces at the level of discourse and institution which condition theatre studies and which may have diminished or at least differential impact on extra-academic theatre practices and institutions.43 This asymmetrical relation is not absolutely or permanently calibrated (one can easily imagine advances in theatre studies during a period of relative stasis in artistic innovation at the level of

43 To comprehend the kind of conditioned autonomy and asymmetric interrelation requires a conception of constellationality premised on an active sense of emergence, and the dialectical relation (of distinction and connection) between studies and their objects. See Bhaskar, Dialectic and Plato for critical realism's use of these terms.
convention), but it is also not elected. The discourse of theatre studies can negotiate its relation to historical or contemporary theatre practices and institutions, but not sever them. How theatre studies negotiates its relation with theatre is contingent, but that it must is not; it is this ongoing commitment to theatres by theatre studies which is embodied in the descriptive phrase for theatre studies as "the study of theatres"; the "of" activates the asymmetric relation I've here described. For philosopher Roy Bhaskar, there is a parallel between the operations of intentional agency, desire, and discourse that confirms this asymmetric relation; for all three establish a connection across a distinction.

Discourse, it is important to stress, must be about something other than itself or else it cannot talk about itself at all. For this [the latter, e.g. talking about itself] presuppusses an act of referential detachment. [...] Desire, we said, must be for something other than itself or else it cannot be satisfied. [...] Similarly praxis must be with something other than itself, otherwise it cannot do or make anything. (Dialectic 230-31)

Effectively, this articulates the dialectic of study which Schechner's performance project undermines through its self-referential redefinition of common terms like theatre, ritual, and performance.

To accept Schechnerian performance as a paradigm is to reproduce its speculative moves and the ignorance it produces. The consequences for emancipatory knowledge about the social world are limited by its adoption. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick warns that "[i]n the theatrical display of an already institutionalized ignorance no transformative potential is to be looked for" (78). Sedgwick is speaking about the biblical Story of Esther as a model for "imagining coming out and its transformative potential" (78); but the same might be said for the result of accepting in its own terms the paradigm Schechner advocates. Alternatively, to resituate Schechner's ostensible authority as the omnipotence allowed any virtuoso creative author is to allow his performance project another kind of role. Like any artwork, it emerges as a symptom, an expression, a refraction,
and/or an abstraction of an embodied consciousness situated in a particular place and age; to image, critique, interrogate, objectify, dominate the world it emerges from and to provoke, amuse, enthral, excite, entertain its audience. As art, it may condition but cannot provide in itself a viable paradigm for legitimate social scientific study.

To position Schechner's work in this way is the aim of *Reading Richard Schechner: Allegories of Performance*. By identifying Richard Schechner's reinscription of theatre within the performance spectrum as an allegorical move made in the context of an extensive, but singular, neo-avant-gardist art project aiming to fuse the categories of art and life, Schechner's unique contributions to theatre are acknowledged, even while his ostensible paradigm for knowledge production is annulled. Under my reading, this performance project is seen as an artful invention, inhabiting in a disruptive way the academic institutions in which theatre has been studied. Because it has galvanised a dialectical reconsideration of that study, its provocative role has been salutary. Without a thoroughgoing critique in terms of its rhetoric and performativity, however, Schechner's performance project risks being naturalised as a viable model for future theatre studies. In rejecting Schechner's rejection of aesthetics, I deny his performance theory its claim to social scientific standing. By re-authorising Schechner's performance project, I have aimed to de-authorise it as a candidate for any future reconstruction of theatre studies.
Conclusion

The introduction to this new reading of Richard Schechner began by summarising the conceptual ecology in which performance was emerging as a salient category in the social sciences, philosophy, and art. To end, I defend the necessity of arguing, dialectically, for distinctions as well as connections. I begin with a lazzo routine stolen from Radio 4's comic contest, "Just a Minute." Contestants in turn vie for the opportunity to speak for sixty seconds on a single topic, without hesitation, repetition, or deviation. The buzzer sounds; Paul Merton has challenged Derek Nimmo for deviating from the subject of "sour grapes." Nimmo had said something about a wine made with sour grapes being called brew. Merton pointedly asked, "Is wine, strictly speaking, brewed?" Nimmo's defence was, "Well yes [meaning no, wine is not] but any liquid can be called brew." Merton's riposte defends the commitment I am here trying to enact since, to use his words, "Well, yes, you can call cat's urine 'brew' but that doesn't mean I'll come round to your house for drinks!"

Attempting to define what for theatre makes it brew and not cat piss is risky, but in the prevailing climate where theatre is used to figure everything from face-to-face interchange to United Nations conferences some boundaries may be articulated which, whatever compromises they introduce, are in their (un)intended effects less deleterious than their general absence which allows theatre to be figurated and abstracted without apparent intrinsic restraint or extrinsic limit. Such compromise, with its costs, works to sustain the truth that theatre is not simply the object of theatre studies, but also in variable (and variably productive) ways its ground. Explicitly, the relation I seek to defend is the relation of emergence which

1See literary philosopher Gayatri Spivak's article in Radical Philosophy on the 1995 UN conference in Beijing on women in which she contends, "These conferences are global theatre. There is, of course, no politics which is not theatre." (2).
describes how theatre labour makes theatre from everyday life, using as its materials objects, relations, and experiences from real or imagined life; and equally, the codified forms of communication and aesthetic relations which any project inherits and either reproduces and/or transforms through its labour. According to philosopher Roy Bhaskar, "[i]n emergence, generally, new beings (entities, structures, totalities, concepts) are generated out of pre-existing material from which they could have been neither induced or deduced" (Dialectic 49). To understand such a system of emergence requires explaining the contingent, polyvalent interplay of its component parts, the key attribute of which interplay is that it is not reducible to its underlying conditions (Dialectic 50-53; Plato 73). In order to assess theatre's status within performance theory, in terms including but not limited to the contingent, polyvalent interplay of aspects of theatre and everyday life, I have used several analytic and critical strategies, which I summarise below.

I considered Schechner's ritual theory of art which built upon the Nietzschean orientation of the Cambridge School classicists in Chapter 1.3. Its ritualism both located Schechner's theatre praxis in a time of cultural and political turmoil, and related it (both positively and negatively) to a longer history of theatrical experimentation which included not only his more immediate predecessors/peers like Grotowski, Beck, and Brook, but also earlier twentieth century innovators like Artaud and Brecht. Second, I have described in Chapter 2.1 how across his endeavours, Schechner has sought to develop his ritual theory by studying forms of theatrical and non-theatrical performances which can be regarded in terms of entertainment and social efficacy. In Chapter 2.3 I explained how, as part of his expansion of theatre into a diffuse theatricality, Schechner has come to theorise entertainment/efficacy as a braid of features relevant to perspective rather than to their object. Finally, I have signalled how Schechner's current conception of theatre reduces its real-world variability into a caricature of legitimate dramatic theatre, which he calls "the string quartet of the 21st century" ("New" 8). In this image, the nodalisation of theatre which
Schechner commenced in his earliest performance theory seeks its institutional form in the eclipse of theatre studies by performance studies ("Transforming"). Now, I suggest that the emergence of theatre from everyday life is paralleled by the emergence of theatre studies from theatre; both emergent structures retain the potential to react back and impact upon their grounds. This interactivity across the distinction generated by emergence is not one of fusion but rather one of dialectical connection. The productivity of emergent causality and of interactive generative relations of connection across distinctions is not uniform, monological, or reductive; indeed through the causal relations of emergence and ongoing dialectics of stasis and change, notions of "theatre" sediment both in theatre practice and in theatre studies. Those notions, however, need not be identical or coincident, given the enduring if always negotiated gap between objects and processes and their descriptions.

Nevertheless, the variability in notions of "theatre" does not undermine their generative functions or utility. Their measure is not divorced from their use, so long as that use is described with integrity. The finest example of the productivity of considering "theatre" as ground, not only to its study, but to its practice is elegantly stated by the Indian theatre worker/cultural critic Rustom Bharucha. In his foreword to "The Request Concert project" he writes of his partnership with a German theatre designer:

And so, after a year of discussion, travel, correspondence and meetings with unknown people, we have embarked on a journey. Despite our cultural differences, there is a common ground on which we have chosen to work. Let us call this ground 'Theatre', though what we hope to be engaged in for at least the next three years of our lives goes beyond what is commonly understood by theatre. (Theatre 91)

My citation of Bharucha’s recognition of the role of some communal concept of theatre as grounding experimentation implicitly illustrates the permeability between theatre as an activity and as an abstract concept. This is doubly true since his
insights are available for uptake only because they have been published in academically credible form. Theatre and its study are asymmetrically related, since for example Bharucha's collaboration with Manuel Lutgenhorst might have occurred without Bharucha's publishable documentation. Furthermore, theatre practices and institutions change, with or without regard to studies of theatre (formalised in academic production), but theatre studies cannot equally resist change in the face of shifting modes of production, dissemination, and reception. This is due to its institutional character. Capital is invested in sustaining the disciplinary boundaries and exchanges as well as the standards of practice through which theatre studies (re)produces itself in the academy. Schechner has understood the capitalisation of academic production and profited by it; uniquely, perhaps, he has implicitly also both understood the neo-avant-gardist interest in art's relation to institutions but also found a dynamic and profitable way of acting upon it to secure an authoritative authorial position for his own theatrical, theoretical, and pedagogical productions.

To read Richard Schechner's work as a singular project is to consider the development from viewing theatre as a node on a continuum including ritual, sports and play; to being an abstract quality, theatricality; to being a minority form on an expansive performance spectrum (see pages 261-62), as being related to his moves from a concentration on theatre, to theory, to institutional activism. My reading affirms that both theatre's receding and the particular tenor of performance theory relate to Schechner's crisis as an author/authority (see pages 287-88). This trajectory constitutes a consistent, if unstable, avant-gardist attempt to fuse art and life through an expansive notion of performance as a mode of action (an "is") and as a mode of perception (an "as") which has been inscribed through theatre and theory. To interpret it in these terms is to read Schechner's work against its grain. In the Foreword to the first edition of Environmental Theater (ironically his book most centred on theatre labour, its possibilities and its constraints) Schechner rejects an
aesthetic positioning of his work. "My studies of anthropology, social psychology, psychoanalysis, and gestalt therapy are the bases of my belief that performance theory is a social science, not a branch of aesthetics. I reject aesthetics," he declares. The rejection of aesthetics as a discourse has seemed to extend into a rejection of art, in the elisions of the specific character of the performing arts as distinct from religious or civic ritual, sports, games, therapy, or interpersonal relations. However, the rejection of art is rhetorical.

In reality, Schechner has continued to make theatre and market it to audiences and to academic colleagues as such. Furthermore, he has used his theatrical sense to structure his public pronouncements so as to attract an audience, to proselytise, and sustain critical attention by galvanising adherents and opponents in appreciable measure. The rejection of aesthetics in favour of a social scientific paradigm is also only rhetorical, for the logic which underpins his substantial redefinition of theatre as theatricality for performance studies is not sustainable in light of theatre's heterogeneity to which theatre studies is mandated to attend. The project asserts the normative status of adequate knowledge without delivering authoritatively. The authority generated by the performance project circulates closely around Schechner as the authorial figure capable of signing performance on his own behalf. Symbolically and materially, Schechner has profited by this signature, trading upon it as legitimated academic authority. The illegitimacy of the tenets of performance studies as they have been developed in his work undermine that apparent authority, however, and push the work towards creative writing. Its allegorical features, from the mode and economy of production to its structure, inform this valuation of Schechner's work as fiction. To read Richard Schechner's work both as a project and as allegorically structured is to reinscribe it in an aesthetic discourse, at one remove from a defensible social scientific mode of scholarly production. In this reading, a complexity of theatre and for theatre studies is reclaimed against the reduction and dissemination attempted by Schechner's conception of performance.
To close, I will identify what I believe to be the key traits of Richard Schechner as a creative author, working across media in a theatrical and academic institutional frame.

The performance project functions essentially as a prism capable of focusing the different trajectories of interpretation of the Dionysus myth (see pages 69-70 above). Like the Cambridge School, it addresses (indeed enforces) the relation of theatre and ritual. Furthermore, it amplifies the appearance of social role-play in *The Bacchae* and explores the use of (theatrical) transformation as socially if not politically subversive. Similarly, I would argue that as an author, Schechner remains occupied throughout his career to date with the themes articulated in *The Bacchae*. These include contests over authority; the tension between civil society and ritual; the destabilising force of the foreign. In practice, I would further suggest that his authorial style unfolds through disguise and posturing (see page 24 above). These too are issues raised by Euripides's play. Explicitly, in The Performance Group, Schechner assumed a parental role with regard to his collaborators, saw himself and was apparently seen by others as a father figure and a guru (ET 255-76, 285-86; Savran, *Breaking* 183). In his advocacy of performance studies he has appeared to theatres studies audiences as a "trickster" — the figure Dwight Conquergood announced as "the 'guru' of this new antidiscipline" (qtd. in Carlson, *Performance* 189; see page 170 above). Does Schechner play the trickster, too, and not just the guru? Certainly, like a trickster, Schechner has striven "to shift ground" in order to "establish [his] own style" to set him apart from his elders (qtd. in McNamara 6; see page 92 above). Is the ground all that Schechner has sought to shift? Or is it reality?

Schechner tells us, "nothing thrills me more than a performance I have helped to bring to life" ("Theatre" 5; see page 107 above). It's easy to read this as the statement of an honest and passionate stage director. But what if stage directing is not Schechner's only theatrical art? I've speculated that Schechner's recent avowal
of theatre's value is like a return of repressed content (see page 262); I'll now suggest that it may have more endurance than this image of trauma suggests. Theatromania is the name Friedrich gives to the view which sees in life "the double of theatre" ("Drama" 209; see page 72 above). If Schechner, like Artaud, is a theatromaniac, then perhaps (for him) the playing never stops, and only the roles change. If theatre is lived as if it never ends, it is not surprising that the aesthetic difference of art and life is occluded, by theatre's analogy with ritual, by the privileging of instrumental theatres over the merely entertaining, and by theatricalising social life (page 74 above). When Erika Fischer-Lichte's genealogy of the "social performance" position traces it to Nikolai Evreinov ("Theatricality" 86), she provokes the question of whether Schechner too can play the harlequin with zeal. His enunciative voice is, after all, more flamboyant than Barba, Blau, Brook, Chaikin, or Grotowski (see page 329 above). Evreinov is a wonderfully productive and complex figure, situated as a peer of more celebrated figures like Craig, Meyerhold, and Stanislavsky; his dramaturgy has linked him with Pirandello (Pearson) while his flamboyant persona as a perpetual harlequin has stymied biographers attempting to unify his traces into a verifiable portrait of a producer, director, playwright, and theater theorist. This problematic of "Evreinov" as a self-dramatisation is the overarching concern of Spencer Golub's book length study, Evreinov: The Theatre of Paradox and Transformation. Evreinov is a masterful ironist, and certainly the convergence of Schechner's ethics with the culture described by Richard Rorty suggests that Schechner shares a certain ironic perception. Like the "ironist culture" Rorty depicts, Schechner's project "associate[s] theory [...] with private perfection" (qtd. in Bhaskar, Philosophy 135; see page 302 above) and that's why Schechner's place is always announced (see Edwards; also page 213 above). Ultimately, however, in his advocacy of performance as a paradigm and in his regular monitoring of his own reputation, the author Richard Schechner appears through his texts as rather more earnest. It isn't easy being an earnest ironist, and the tension between
the two may explain the peculiarity of Schechner's position with regard to theatre, its place in the world, and their study.

I identify Schechner's earnestness impulsively and intuitively. But I would argue that his commitment to find external authorities to support his tactical and strategic relations as a theatricalist director of *mise en scène* deriving from "the principle of whole design" (ET 126) is indicative of a search for legitimacy that is deeply earnest. It's as if the aspiring auteur feels bound to convince us of the adequacy, if not accuracy, of the metaphors and metonymies he stages. He wants his audiences to believe him, when in theatrical languages, he speaks metaphorically. After all, something must "authorize[...] the author [and] create[...] the authority with which authors authorize" (Bourdieu, *Field* 78). In this case, anthropology and everyday life serve to underwrite Schechner's creative licence. Because audiences, of either theatre or theory, don't demand this substantiation or corroboration, I can only think it serves a need in the author himself. It's as if he needs to know we know that we have good grounds to credit his vision. For some reason, his impulses and his craftsmanship are not sufficient to convince the author himself of the merits of his discourse (see page 139 above). The compulsion to corroborate leads Schechner's texts from his own experiments in theatre to ethnological descriptions from research and fieldwork (see my questions on page 109 above). It also, I think, informs the project's failure to affirm theatre's episodic rhythms of emergence into occasion, and dissolution into, and out of, memory. Theatre's evanescence would exacerbate his desire for stature. His artistic aims concretise in a manifesto for praxis, not of theatre per se, but of study (see pages 287-90). Through it, structures of pedagogy and scholarship would affirm what fleeting theatre could not, namely Schechner's standing as an authorised author.

The field of anthropology bolsters the author's creative libido (see pages 156-60 and 253 above). Because of its strategic role, however, any reflexive questioning or contestation of anthropological knowledge is difficult for the author to address. On
the one hand, the naïve empiricism of his “figure for all genres” sets his observations somewhat beyond dialogic criticism (see page 212-13), while on the other, an opaque category of “tradition” serves as the substrate for behaviour restoration (see page 201 above). Experience is no more transparent (see page 223) than tradition is subject to recuperation as restoration (see page 199-200). Regarding the texts Schechner has authored as a citational space allows for the appearance of myriad discourses within them while sustaining the view that the only “real” context for the performance spectrum is his own discourse (see page 211). Schechner's writing effectively invokes himself as his own first adherent.

Given his earnest desire to earn a reputation, it's not surprising that Schechner would in time aspire to be a transdiscursive author, in whom authorship and authority meet (see page 185 above). In pursuing this aim, Schechner's project literally operationalises de Certeau's observation that discourse “produces practitioners” (148; see page 189 above). By advocating for performance so strenuously, Schechner is effectively wagering that at least part of his success will derive from his producing performance studies practitioners. To the extent he succeeds in placing his own work as the authoritative foundation of theirs, the productions of other performance studies practitioners will further corroborate his own achievements as an author. This explains the “territorial imperative” Philip Auslander recently diagnosed (“Evangelical” 178; see page 317 above).

Embedded in this author I'm identifying is a reactionary impulse. First, self-contained and hierarchical communities seem to serve as Schechner's social ideal (see page 56 above). Furthermore, in its disregard for the complexity and judgmental autonomy of audiences, Schechnerian performance works to contain change (see page 336). This is the long-term disposition of the man captured in the image from Dionysus in 69 as a “libertarian liberal” for whom “[f]ear is the authentic content of his idealist action and ambiguity its authentic form” (Brecht, “Dionysus” 168; see page 129 above). The reaction to the problem of social change cuts in two
directions, and this creates a fundamental tension for the project's author. First, there is the cynical recuperation of the lucrative possibilities of popular anti-establishment activities, the syndrome Julian Beck names Woodstock Nation (Beck 169-70; see page 48 above). Second, there is the self-interested impulse to institutionalise performance to gain symbolic/cultural capital (see page 193 above). The problem the second creates for the first is that to succeed as an advocate for institutional change, Schechner has to affirm the alternative he proposes, without too much cynicism. Maybe his earnestness justly compensates for the early, somewhat cynical, savoir-faire Hoffman and Lahr observed (see page 112-13). My view of Schechner's reactionary aspect would shift dramatically if his contemporary audience's complexity were registered in his current discourse, and if he surrendered his position of authority enough to engage in polyphonic dialogue. The recognition I imagine would include the self-reflexivity Dolan missed in Schechner's performance at ATHE (see pages 292-93); but also an acknowledgement of "the rules and conditions of its production" (de Certeau 44; see page 190 above). This alone would supply performance with an awareness of its pragmatics (see page 179 above).

In concluding my critical portrait of the author I discern through my reading of Schechnerian performance as a project, I would like to discuss a shift in Schechner's enunciative position which is not recuperated by his work's development. The shift is, in my view, concrete, but its name is elusive. For lack of any better points of reference, I will describe it in religious terms. When Schechner began his career in theatre scholarship, I believe he was working in a Judaic tradition of intellectual allegoresis. In a stunning image, he closes his essay on "Negotiations with Environment" with the following words. They are drenched with resonances of allegory and allegorical resonances.

I remember when I was very young my Grandpa Schwarz (my mother's father) showed me an old Talmud. It was bound in wood and had a lock on it. He explained that this was because the Talmud was a forbidden book in parts of Europe and anyone found
possessing it would be prosecuted. Therefore, Talmuds were disguised to look like small wooden chests. The book itself was like nothing I had ever seen. In the center of each page was a short Biblical text. Around it, in varying geometrical patterns, and spreading out to the very edges of the page, were other texts; comments on the Bible and comments on the comments. One did not read the Talmud straight across, as one reads normal books. One searched the page, jumped across blocks of print – and centuries – followed different patterns as the mind and eye wished, traced with one’s finger the ‘line of an argument’ which might begin early in the Christian era and go weaving across the page, still unresolved and urgent late in medieval times. One recapitulated history, confronted the thinking of many wise men, discovered many contradictory assertions. Or one read it like a spiral unfolding complicated arguments flowing freely and smoothly through the centuries. The logic of that Talmud is the logic of a space without edges. The book held time, and the only way to read it was from the inside. (PD 198-99)

Like a Rabbinic sage, this author was inspired by “the dictum: ‘Interpret and receive reward!’” (qtd. in Madsen 73; see page 243 above). Now, we know from his own report that Schechner, an “atheist Jew” (FR 4), underwent a conversion ceremony, taking a Hindi name in order to gain access to sacred sites (see page 95 above). I want to ask if this was Schechner’s sole spiritual conversion.

I believe that over the course of the years he worked with The Performance Group Schechner’s Judaic outlook changed, and that his perspective was reoriented to follow Christian thinking. The first sign I see of this reorientation concerns Schechner’s attraction to ecstatic ritual. He is frank about his interest in communal experience: “I used the workshops with The Performance Group as a way of transforming individuals into a group and then used The Group as transporters in an attempt to make a collective out of the individuals who constitute an audience, a temporary collective – a community for the time being” (BTA 148; see page 144-45). I sense in Schechner’s conception of community a kind of nostalgia for prelapsarian unity. I think that he holds dearly to a conception of some sort of cultural Eden, identified on his performance web in terms of prehistoric rites. I further believe that in
this respect, as in so many others, Elizabeth LeCompte’s position implicitly critiques Schechner’s approach.

In a conversation between Richard Foreman and Elizabeth LeCompte first published in the *Village Voice*, Foreman says, “I’d like to think that in happier, healthier times maybe I wouldn’t even be an artist.” LeCompte echoes the possibility of an alternative vocation when she adds, “Yeah...I've had a vision of just doing landscape architecture. It has to do with figuring out how to replant the earth the way it was. Returning it. You know.... Returning it to the way it might have been naturally” (qtd. in Fuchs 92). Fuchs suggests that because the landscape functions “as the excluded ideal alternative” in works directed by Elizabeth LeCompte, “for LeCompte, artistic endeavor itself represents (both stands for and depicts) a kind of original sin, a fall from the whole of nature”(103). For Schechner, by contrast, the work seems to offer a way to recreate the wholeness of paradise. I think in his desire for the predicated wholeness, however, Schechner forgets that the gift of the fall from paradise in the *Genesis* story is self-consciousness. The self-consciousness visited upon Eden’s first humans was born of knowledge. I feel that Schechner has lost sight of the value of knowledge, and its endless deferral in the Jewish tradition, as one considers every issue “on the one hand...and on the other.” Such deliberation over meaning and significance was inscribed in the margins of his grandfather’s holy book. It is also at work, I believe, in the working practices of The Wooster Group under their “invisible director” (Cole, *Directors* 91; see pages 145-50 above).

In the place of a characteristically Jewish deliberation, Schechner shows signs of increasing fatalism. First, this takes the form of a robust orientation to a future actively under construction. In his announcement of theatricality as “[o]ne of the truly fine things to come from the high energy experimental period” ending in 1980, Schechner affirms that his polemic about theatricality is staged “on behalf of the future I want to bring into being” (EH 73). That future is predicated in terms his performance theory will develop. As time passes, Schechner becomes more militant
about that future. "I know," he claims, "that if some such alternative [like his
performance paradigm] is not adopted, 'theatre education' very soon will suffer a
great crash, for it is already rotten and deteriorated" ("Transforming" 8-9). There is a
fundamentalist overtone in this, which contrasts vividly with the contemplation the
memory of seeing the Talmud inspired. What makes me read this fundamentalism
as Christian rather than Zionist, is Schechner's postulate that restored behaviour "is a
model of destiny." Rehearsing restorable behaviours perfects them for this fate.
According to Schechner, it "joins original causes and what happens at the end of
time," and Schechner goes so far as to refer to eschatology (PC 154; BTA 79). In
other words, restoration redeems them, remaking them in their own likeness while
purging them of the evanescence of worldly theatre. This image of spiritualised
resurrection defies the Talmudic heritage Schechner once affirmed. In this image,
the performance project sums up its grandest, and most irrelevant, ambitions, while
positioning its author as a prophet.

Fathers and sons populate the Old Testament. Every father is someone's
son. In The New Testament, the stratosphere sandwiched between heaven and
earth separates father and son. In Schechner's writings, we find him being or playing
or seeing himself placed as a father. Even the mark of his paternity, Joan
MacIntosh's swollen belly, was cast as a mould for a heavily pregnant Jocasta in
TPG's production of Seneca's Oedipus (Green 54). Fathers are important to sons
and daughters because they objectify immortality, the unchanging presence of
structure, symbolic access, the law. Since "Negotiations with Environment," I find no
record of his having been the son of someone. Until his essay "Uprooting the
Garden," Schechner did not refer to his being anything other than the first in a line.
Then, to launch a discussion about opening up Aeschylus (9), Schechner vividly
describes his father.

I wanted to talk to my father, but he was eighty by then
and if we hadn't talked up to that point how could we? I
grabbed him as he came down the stairs of the house
my mother's father [Grandpa Schwartz] built while she, my mother, was still a girl. I sat my father down on the second step from the second floor landing. I took hold of his wrists, I leaned close into his face.

'Pop, Pop,' I said. 'Pop, Pop.'

He stared at me. His eyes were very wide. His mouth was moving open and shut, open and shut, the way a fish on land grabs silently. How can this fish be suffering? It isn't making a sound. Screaming, shrieking, howling, lamentation, and moaning are the media of pain. When those who suffer are silent we are permitted the illusion that they are also peaceful.

They can be regarded -- looked at from a distance, admired for the beauty of their appearance: aestheticized. (3)

In the next paragraph, Schechner turns to another sort of father, attributing to Brecht responsibility for "paving the way for today's (too) aestheticized theatre" (3). Schechner seems determined to gesture to both a biological father and a theatrical progenitor, without allowing either to speak on his own behalf. Schechner admits that it may be he who "has refused to hear. My encounter with him on the stairs is both mute and pregnant with inexpressible (for me and him) meanings. Probably this inexpressibility is what keeps me going, both in and out of the theatre" (5). Schechner probably means that the unresolved relation fuels both his theatrical and non-theatrical pursuits; but I want to open the possibility that the ambiguity in the last phrase of this statement refers as well to Schechner's concentration in and leave-taking from theatre making, as he turned to other modes of creative production. He calls himself "a breaker-maker" and because "what [he] believe[s] in is a continuous deconstruction and reconstruction of realities," he affirms his faith, not in life after death, like his father, but in "life after life" (10). This affirmation still distorts living.

In "Uprooting the Garden," Schechner explains the global village as "a genetic web Hebraically expressed in the story of Adam, but as well explained by the Vedic Purusa," which tells of the "Self alone" splitting by "chain reaction" to populate the world with "all the beings that are" (5). In the place of the Adamic legend about humans' entry into knowledge, he has substitute a Hindu myth narrated as a
narcissistic crisis. "Looking around, this [primordial] person saw nothing other than itself... It was afraid" (5). To the narcissist, I say: you are not alone.

About a decade and a half before he stopped his father on the stairs, Schechner beheld another frail and silent body.

We bend over a small boy, maybe 2 years old. He is no larger than 18 inches and weighs I don't know how little. His legs and arms are thinner than my Calcutta-made imitation Parker Ball Point [pen]. His stomach is bloated. His head is proportionately huge. Only his eyes and the tips of his fingers and toes move. His skin is yellowing and like old paper, the skin of the very oldest man this planet contains. [...] Missing from the ward are the usual sounds of children, even sick children. There is no talking or laughing. Not even much crying. What there is is lots of silence underlined by muffled coughing. Silence, wet, and the smell of life ending. (PC 19)

Walter Benjamin announces in his "Theses on the Philosophy of History" that "[o]nly that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And the enemy has not ceased to be victorious" (Illuminations 255). Schechner's view of the dead is different; observing the impoverished people dying in Calcutta's streets, Schechner wrote: "The most pathetic sight are those nearly dead. Lumps of burlap collapsed in the fierce sun. Unmoving. These people are ignored by everyone. They have gone over the line separating the living and the dead. They make no demands" (PC 3). And yet, the dead — and the dying, and the aged — do demand, for their activities, however long ago ceased, leave behind as intended or unintended consequences the structures we inhabit, reproduce, and transform. They charge us not only with the burden of history, but also with the complexion and complexity of our present.
Appendix One Table I

Chronology of Selected Published Writings By Richard Schechner

**Single-author books**


**Jointly authored volumes**


**Edited anthologies**


Contributors included Gregory Bateson; Ray Birdwhistell; Erving Goffman; Jerzy Grotowski; Jan van Lawick Goodall; Johannes Huizinga; E. T. Kirby; Claude Levi-Strauss; Konrad Lorenz; and Victor Turner.


Contributors included Herbert Blau; Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimlett; Du-Hyun Lee; Ranjini Obeyesekere; Rosamond B. Spicer; Colin Turnbull; Edith Turner; the late Victor Turner; and Phillip Zarrilli.
Anthologised essays


Journal articles


"There's Lots of Time in Godot." Modern Drama 9 (1966): 268-76.


“Playing.” Keynote Address to The Society for the Association for the Study of Play (TASP). Rvd. in *Play & Culture* 1.1(1988); FR 24-44.


Interviews


Published Roundtable Discussions


Table II

Chronology of Schechner’s Theatre Productions


June 1968. Schechner leaves New York two weeks after the opening to travel on his Ford Foundation grant to Latin America (Shephard 120, 142).

November 1968. The Group begins seven months of group encounter sessions led by Larry Sacharow, Judy Althenuas, and Fred Althenhaus (ET 195, 201-5).

December 1968. The birth ritual and death ritual are first performed first without clothes. Soon after the ecstasy dance is also naked (ET 115).


January 1969. Mid-western tour for *Dionysus in 69* booked through the Radical Theatre Booking Agency (Shephard 186-209). In Ann Arbor, Michigan the Group is arrested for stage nudity and held over night in a municipal courthouse jail (Shephard 197-201).

July 1, 1969. Under Schechner’s instruction, TPG’s lawyer draws up a legal notice asserting Schechner’s sole authority as Executive Director and Artistic Director of the corporation and of The Performance Group (ET 259).


September 1969. *Dionysus in 69* performs at the Bitef Festival in Belgrade (Shephard 225).


January 1970. The Performance Group dissolved (ET 273) following a breakdown in working relations diarized by Schechner from 25 September (ET 205-7). The precipitating event was Schechner’s firing of an actor.

March 1970. The Performance Group reforms with Stephen Borst, Spalding Gray, Joan Macintosh, and Richard Schechner. Associations with Jerry Rojo, Paul Epstein, and Catherine Farinon-Smith (of New Arts Management) continued. Research on *Commune* began and workshops at colleges continued. The interest in therapy shifts from Daytop Centre’s encounter school to Gestalt Therapy more generally (ET 208). Schechner refers to this as the first recreation of TPG (PC 31).

1970 Work began on *Commune* (ET 273-74) with new members including James Griffiths, Patric Epstein, Bruce White, Patricia Bower, Mik Cribben, Jayme
Daniel, and Elizabeth LeCompte. Later joiners include Maxine Hernan, Timothy Shelton, and Converse Gurian. Of those members, only LeCompte and Shelton stayed longer than a year.

May 1970. Protest in Washington, D.C. against the invasion of Cambodia. 100,000 gather, many strip and padded in the reflecting pool at the foot of the Lincoln Memorial. It was Schechner's first experience of "social nakedness" (ET 110).

Summer 1970. TPG Residency at SUNY New Paltz (ET 110)

1970-1972. Intermittent work under Schechner's direction on Commune, using as source texts The Tempest II, sc. ii; Marlowe's Edward II, V, sc. v; King Lear, IV, sc. vi; Richard II, I, sc. ii; with reference to the Mansons' slaying of Sharon Tate, the American search for Eldorado on the frontier; and the My Lai massacre (ET 292; Sainer 127-65).

December 1970. Commune opens. The Performance Group. The Performing Garage. Soho, New York City. Environment designed by Jerry Rojo (ET 11, 29). The score includes a scene in which fifteen audience members are asked to enter the center of the performance space to represent the victims of the My Lai Massacre (ET 47-49)

January-February 1971. Friday night performances of Commune are followed by discussions. In addition to audiences and Group members, Andre Gregory (of the Manhattan Project), critic John Lahr, and Dan Newman (of Livingston College) participated in these talks (ET 73).

February 28, 1971. Commune performance (usually ninety minutes) has a three-hour break because of audience (non) participation (ET 49-55).


April 24, 1971. On the day of a mass anti-war demonstration in Washington, D.C., the Group donates the box office taking to the antiwar movement and recruits all spectators to stand in as victims during the massacre scene (ET 55).

December 1971. Direct participation of the audience in the My Lai scene is eliminated (ET 56).

Summer 1971. TPG Residency at University of Rhode Island. Workshops include a six-hour ecstasy dance (ET 103-5).

October 1971. Richard Schechner and Joan Macintosh depart for India.

April 1972. Schechner and Macintosh return. Work on Don Juan is postponed, and a finished script is selected instead: Sam Shepard's The Tooth of Crime.

May 1972. TPG's work on Tooth began as Schechner and Shepard corresponded (ET 228-39). TPG's corporate structure is revised to include all Group members who elect the board of directors who in turn elect the officers of the Group. Board members included: Stephen Borst, Spalding Gray, Elizabeth LeCompte, Joan Macintosh, Jeremy Nussbaum (the Group's lawyer), Jerry Rojo, and Richard Schechner. Borst and Schechner were co-executive directors (ET 268). These changes mark TPG's second re-creation (PC 31).

Summer 1972. Revision of rehearsal policy so rehearsals were open except when privacy was needed. TPG Residency at University of British Columbia Vancouver. Jerry Rojo spends three weeks in Canada with TPG to design the environment (ET 240).


1972. Jim Clayburgh joins TPG as a performer and a designer (PC 30, PT 138).
May 1973. Sam Shepard writes to Schechner describing how TPG's production diverges from his vision (in PT 76).
June 1973. The pattern of where in the environment scenes are played is set (T 79-81). As an experiment Schechner and actor James Griffiths don't explain the conventions of spectator and performer movement to the audience (82).
April 1974. TPG decides to take Mother Courage to India (PC 32). April through June Mother Courage rehearses upstairs at the Performing Garage, about five hours a day, four days a week (PC 32-33).
June 1974. Tooth closes. TPG teaches days at NYU and rehearses four nights a week in the Garage's main theatre until mid-August (PC 33). Alexandra Ivanoff, a classical singer, joins TPG as musical director (PC 34).
July 1974. NYU students invited to open rehearsals of Mother Courage (PC 36).
November 1974. Mother Courage rehearses full time, five days a week, six or seven hours a day. Colleagues and friends invited to open rehearsals (PC 33, 36).
February 1975. Mother Courage opens (PC 33). With music by Paul Dessau and design by Jim Clayburgh (Ryder).
1975. TPG stages David Gaard's play The Marilyn Project (Kirby, Marilyn).
October 1975. Schechner writes to sponsors of the Indian tour detailing the production's requirements (PC 40).
1975. Timothy Shelton who had played Eilif in Mother Courage leaves the group. Ron Vawter joins TPG (PC 31).
January 1976. Schechner is advised by letter not to stage any play in a village because of the money required and the lack of audiences. Schechner writes by return to affirm TPG's desire to play in villages (PC 44).
February 3, 1976. TPG arrives in India. This is Schechner's Fulbright scholarship year. TPG travels from New Dehli to Lucknow, Calcutta, Singjole, Bhopal, and Bombay on the strength of a $21,000 grant from the John D. Rockefeller, 3rd Foundation and an additional $13,000 from contributions and the company's savings. Jim Clayburgh designs the touring environment (PC 37, 54).
Informal talks begin among TPG members about the future (PC 38-9). Under its own auspices, TPG holds workshops in techniques of performance (PC 50).
February 23-24, 1976. In Chandigarh, TPG collaborates with its sponsors to hold a workshop in performance techniques as part of a month-long experiment in translating a folk ballad into a performance in a rural setting organised by Balwant Gargi (PC 50-52).
March 6-14, 1976. TPG in Calcutta to perform five times. Under USIS auspices TPG holds workshops in performance techniques (PC 43, 50, 54).
March 16-17, 1976. TPG meets in Calcutta to discuss the Group's future. It was decided that people would seek artistic autonomy, including directing future TPG projects and that more meetings would determine TPG's future (PC 45-46).
March 18, 1976. Despite the opposition of sponsors, TPG plays in Singjole, a village about three hours from Calcutta. 2,000 people attended (PC 44).

April 3-6 1976. *Mother Courage* plays in Bombay (PC 47-48) in the Cathedral and John Connon School courtyard, with sponsorship from the National Centre for Performing, among others (PC 54). Under the auspices of USIS, TPG holds workshops in performance techniques (PC 50).

Late April 1976. Jehu Beach near Bombay. TPG meets to discuss its future.

June 21, 1976. With the exception of Schechner and Macintosh, TPG members leave India (PC 52). James Griffith, who had played Cook, also leaves TPG (PC 31).

July 1976-February 1977. Schechner and Macintosh embark on workshops and observations of performances in India (PC 51); including Ramlila (PC 238-88).

1977. Schechner directs TPG production of Seneca's *Oedipus* using Ted Hughes's translation (Green 52-58). Jim Clayburgh designed the environment in the Performing Garage (BTA 147, plate 32). The cast included Stephen Borst and Joan Macintosh. According to Green, "The play coincided with the breakup of his marriage to Joan Macintosh, who played Jocasta and was pregnant through much of the rehearsal period" (53). It was their last collaboration.


March-May 1979. Eight performers selected for further work (BTA 266). Workshops on fantasies, psychophysical exercises, vocal work and yoga. TPG members participated only sporadically (BTA 262).

Summer 1979. Schechner ran student workshops at Connecticut College, assisted by Borst, Vawter and ideokinesis specialist Carol Martin (later Schechner's wife) (BTA 262, 276).

August 1979. A version of *The Balcony* was staged with students from Connecticut College (BTA 276) and the written text based on new translations was finalized (BTA 262).

Autumn 1979. Rehearsals for TPG's New York production with Gray as the Bishop, Borst as the Police Chief, Vawter as Irma, Dafoe as Arthur, and Howes as Carmen. Dafoe, Gray, Howes and Vawter continued working with Elizabeth LeCompte as well, rehearsing *Point Judith* in the Performing Garage's Envelope. Salaries were low and TPG members were given preferential treatment (BTA 262-63).


January 1980 *The Balcony* closes (BTA 263). Schechner is in Asia (BTA 279).

"Shortly thereafter I left The Performance Group. Within a year those who remained renamed it the Wooster Group" (BTA 293).

1981. Schechner directs Richard's Lear at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and toured Minneapolis under the auspices of the Walker Art Center and the
Coffman Union Program Council of the University of Minnesota (Zarrilli, "Richard" 92).

1983. Schechner directs an Hindi language production of The Cherry Orchard in New Delhi at the outdoor theater of the National School of Drama Repertory, designed by Nissar Allana (ET xiv, liii).

1985. The Prometheus Project with Annie Sprinkle. The Performing Garage, Soho New York City (Fuchs 116-19; Schechner "Uprooting").


1993. Schechner directs ECA production of Faust/gastronome at La Mama, East Village, New York City.

1995. Schechner directs ECA production Fragments from The Three Sisters at La Mama, East Village, New York City.
Bibliography


------. "The End of the Millenium; Or the Countdown." Address and discussion. Institute of Contemporary Arts, London. 9 May 1997.


Best, Suki. *That was then... this is now*. 1997. Photographers Gallery. London.


-----. *Queer Theatre*. Book 2, The Original Theatre of the City of New York. From the mid-60s to the mid-70s. Frankfurt am Main: Surkampf, 1978.


—-. Personal interview. 1 May 1995.


Casdagli, Penny. Personal interview. 27 August 1992.


----- and Mady Schutzman. "Theatre of the Oppressed Workshops with Women; An Interview [with Augusto Boal]." *The Drama Review* 34.3 (1990): 66-76.


Goldberg, Marianne. "Trisha Brown; All of the Person's Person Arriving [Interview]." The Drama Review. 30.1 (1986): 149-70.


—. Personal notes on *Playback* in the field. 1994.


Lafoon, Don. Personal interview. 22 April 1993.


McCauley, Robbie. Personal interview. 28 April 1993.


McCusker, Mary. Personal interview. 1 July 1992.


Mirrione, Jim. Personal interview. 9 March 1993.


O'Neal, John. Personal interview. 18 October 1991.


Orlan. "This is my body...this is my software." Cameraworks, London, 1997.


Parachini, Allan. "Art & Uprising: The fires are out in Los Angeles but cultural institutions may have been permanently scorched." American Theatre Magazine July/August (1992): 25-27.


Rear, Deborah. Personal interview. 17 November 1994.


Schutzman, Mady. "Activism, Therapy, or Nostalgia?: Theatre of the Oppressed in NYC." The Drama Review 34.3 (1990): 77-83.


Sirinsky, Marc. Personal interview. 9 July 1992.


-----. Personal interview. 16 June 1992.


Taussig, Michael and Richard Schechner. "Boal in Brazil, France, the USA; An Interview." *TDR* 34.3 (1990): 50-65.


Watzlawick, Paul, ed. The Invented Reality: How Do We Know What We Believe We Know? (Contributions to Constructivism). New York: W. W. Norton, 1984.


Winter, Carol. Personal interview. 13 May 1994.


