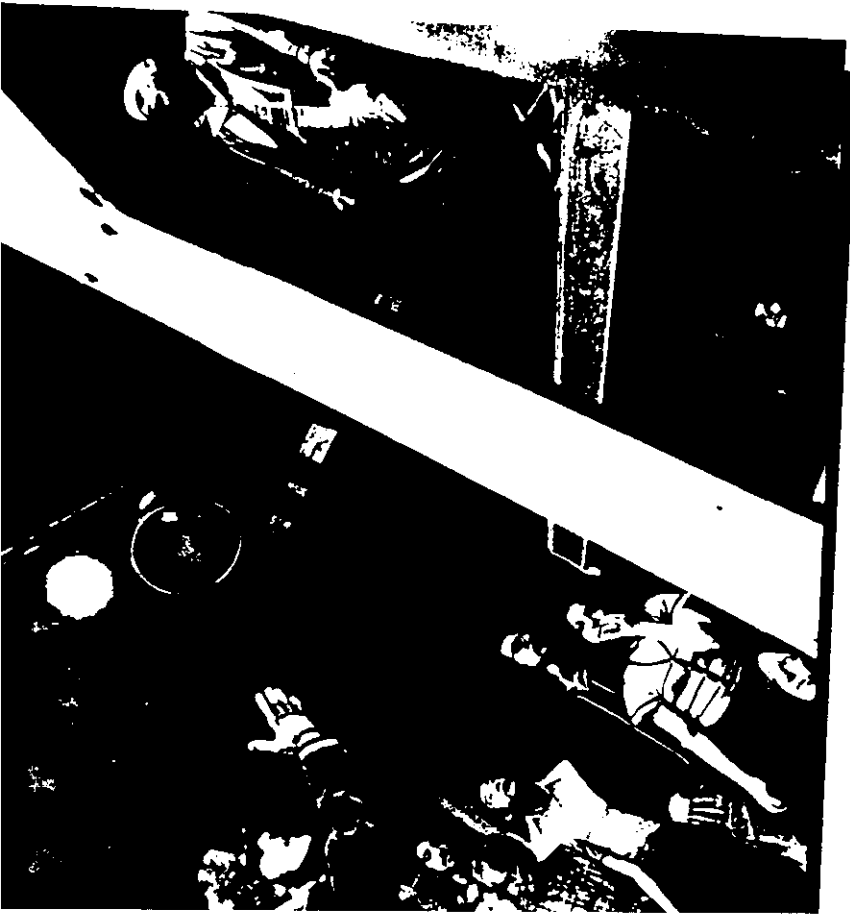




David Schechner

Performance
Rituals 1978

Performance
Theory

1 APPROACHES

THE CAMBRIDGE ANTHROPOLOGISTS

For the last hundred years or more, Greek tragedy has been understood as an outgrowth of rites celebrated annually at the Festival of Dionysus. Those rites have been investigated both in their relation to the god Dionysus and in their relation to the primitive religion of the Greeks. The result is a conception of Greek tragedy which is very different from that which prevailed from the Renaissance into the eighteenth century. The Renaissance humanists and their successors saw it in "civilized" and rational terms; in our time we see that much of its form and meaning is due to its primitive source, and to the religious Festival of which it was a part. This new conception of Greek tragedy has had a very wide effect upon our understanding of the sources of poetry in our tradition, and also upon modern poetry itself, including theater and music.

Unfortunately little is known directly about the rites of the Dionysian Festival, or about the poets, Aeschylus' predecessors, who gradually made the tragic form out of ritual. The scholars who devote their lives to such matters do not agree upon the evidence to be accepted, nor upon the interpretation of the evidence. But some of their theories are extremely suggestive, especially those of the Cambridge school, Frazer (of *The Golden Bough*), Cornford, Harrison, Murray, and their colleagues and followers. It is this school which has had the deepest influence upon modern poetry and upon the whole climate of ideas in which we now read Greek tragedy.

The theory expounded by Murray has been much criticized by other experts, and the whole field is full of disputes so erudite that the non-specialist can only look on in respectful silence.

(F. Fergusson, in Aristotle 1961: 36-9)

It's time to break the silence.¹ The instrumental books Fergusson alludes to are Jane Ellen Harrison's *Themis*² (1912), Gilbert Murray's *The Four Stages of Greek Religion* (1912a - later *Five Stages*, 1925), and Francis Cornford's *The Origin of Attic Comedy* (1914). Cornford's book is the only one entirely devoted to the theater, and thus it has been extremely popular among theater people. But the ideas espoused by the other books are just as well known. The Cambridge thesis purports to explain not only the origins of Greek tragedy and comedy, but their "essential natures" as well. Second- and third-generation critics have extended the somewhat modest proposals of the Cambridge group into "universal" systems widely used to explain the "basic form of theater" not only in the west but everywhere. Fergusson's *The Idea of a Theater* (1949) is a most distinguished American example. Fergusson applies the Cambridge thesis to a wide range of authors, from Sophocles to T. S. Eliot, Shaw, and Pirandello. His essays on *Oedipus* and *Hamlet* are classics. But these essays would be just as interesting, and a good deal less cluttered, if he did not insist on a ritual beneath the theatrical action of the plays.

The Cambridge thesis is not difficult. Studying survivals of Greek ritual, these scholars found what they thought to be traces of a "Primal Ritual" from which they felt both Attic tragedy and the surviving rituals derived. Murray began his "Excursus":

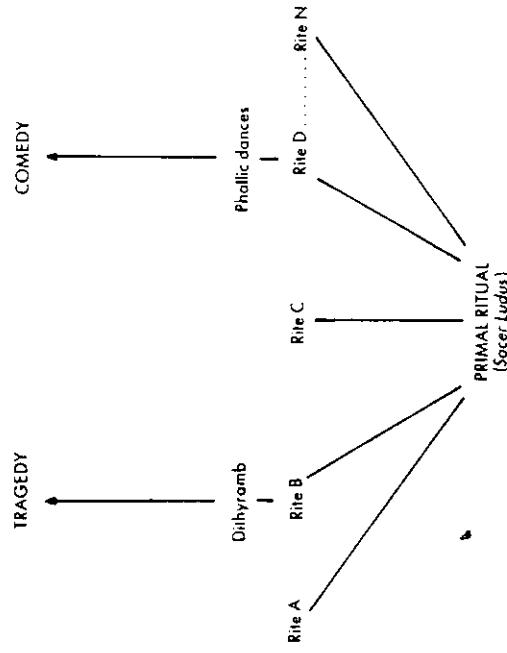
The following note presupposes certain general views about the origin and essential nature of Greek Tragedy. It assumes that Tragedy is in origin a Ritual Dance, a *Sacer Ludus*. . . . Further, it assumes, in accord with the overwhelming weight of ancient tradition, that the Dance in question is originally or centrally of Dionysus, performed at his feast, in his theatre. . . . It regards Dionysus in this connection as an "Eniautos-Daimon," or vegetation god, like Adonis, Osiris, etc., who represents the cyclic death and rebirth of the earth and the world, i.e., for practical purposes, of the tribe's own lands and the tribe itself. It seems clear, further, that Comedy and Tragedy represent different stages in the life of this Year Spirit. (Murray 1912b: 341)

The rub is: the assumptions of the Cambridge group have never been proven. A tremendous amount of archeological digging has gone on in Greece over the past seventy-five years, but nothing has turned up expressing all the elements of either drama or the Primal Ritual.³ This is crucial because Murray asserts, "If we examine the kind of myth which seems to underlie the various 'Eniautos' [death-rebirth] celebrations we shall find an Agon . . . a Pathos . . . a Messenger . . . a Threnos or lamentation . . . an Anagnorisis - discovery or recognition . . . [and a] Theophany" (1912b: 343-4). This formal sequence, propagators of the Cambridge thesis say, is the core action of the Primal Ritual, surviving

fragments of the dithyramb, and Greek tragedy. Cornford's contribution was to do for comedy and phallic dances what others did for tragedy and dithyramb. His reasoning is identical. "Athenian Comedy arose out of a ritual drama essentially the same in shape as that from which Professor Murray derives Athenian Tragedy" (Cornford 1914: 190). Harrison, in *Ancient Art and Ritual*, gleefully makes the connections:

We shall find to our joy that this obscure-sounding Dithyramb, though before Aristotle's time it has taken literary form, was in origin a festival closely akin to those we have just been discussing [seasonal death-rebirth celebrations]. The Dithyramb was, to begin with, a spring ritual; and when Aristotle tells us tragedy arose out of the Dithyramb, he gives us, though perhaps half unconsciously, a clear instance of a splendid art that arose from the simplest of rites; he plants our theory of the connection of art with ritual firmly with its feet on historical ground. (Harrison 1913: 76)

Figure 1.1



Before discussing how firmly Aristotle had his feet on the ground, let me depict the Cambridge thesis (figure 1.1). The Primal Ritual (Murray calls it a *Sacer Ludus*) gave rise to a number of rites. One of these developed into the dithyramb from which Greek tragedy arose; another became the phallic dances from which comedy evolved. The argument applies turn-of-the-century anthropological theories of cultural evolution and diffusion. It is highly speculative with several missing links.

The clearest example of the Primal Ritual's form comes from one of the last Greek tragedies to be written, Euripides' *The Bacchae* where, from line 787 to the end, Murray finds the "whole sequence" of his *Sacer*

Ludus. To do this, however, he must assume that "Pentheus is only another form of Dionysus himself"⁴ - thereby "explaining" why it is the young king, and not the god, who is torn to pieces. Nor is there any resurrection or apotheosis of Pentheus. It is Dionysus who appears, not to signal, as Murray says, an "extreme change of feeling from grief to joy," but to curse the whole city of Thebes. Using *The Bacchae* at all makes Murray's argument smell of tautology. But the Cambridge group must use *The Bacchae*, because other links with the Primal Ritual are even weaker. There is no Primal Ritual yet discovered;⁵ the connections between what rituals can be shown to have existed and the dithyramb are doubtful; and the connections between the dithyramb and Greek theater are unprovable.⁶

Theories of cultural evolution have long been challenged by anthropologists. The methodology of J. G. Frazer, which the Cambridge group freely uses, has been almost entirely discredited. Yet Murray maintained as late as 1961 (in his Foreword to Theodor H. Gaster's *Thespis*) that "It is hardly an exaggeration to say that when we look back to the beginnings of European literature we find everywhere drama, and always drama derived from a religious ritual designed to ensure the rebirth of a dead world" (Murray 1961: 9). However true this may be about the emergence of Christian theater from medieval church ritual, it is not true of either Greek theater or European theater (and its derivatives) from the Renaissance to the present. We might even see the reverse process: a dynamic braiding of ritual and entertainment (see chapter 4).

The connection between Greek drama and the dithyramb depends largely upon Aristotle's comments in chapter 4 of *Aristotle's Poetics* (Butcher's translation, 1961):

Tragedy - as also Comedy - was at first mere improvisation. The one originated with the authors of the Dithyramb, the other with those of the phallic songs, which are still used in many of our cities.

Even Cornford doubted Aristotle's authority as an ethnologist:

How much he [Aristotle] knew or might have inferred about the earliest stages of Comedy we cannot tell. He may have known as little as Boileau knew of the beginnings of the modern French Theatre. . . . If Boileau could be so ignorant of two centuries of ecclesiastical drama, of which tens of thousands of lines were in existence, we need not wonder if Aristotle did not know that the plays of Chionides and Magnes retained traces of a broken-down ritual plot, and that yet fainter traces survived in Aristophanes. (Cornford 1914: 219)

Pickard-Cambridge is equally clear, but to prove the opposite point:

as regards comedy, it is very doubtful whether he [Aristotle] is strictly

correct; as regards tragedy, the difficulties of his view will shortly become plain. We have, in short, to admit that it is impossible to accept his authority without question, and that he was probably using that liberty of theorizing which those modern scholars who ask us to accept him as infallible have certainly not abandoned.

(Pickard-Cambridge 1962: 95)

T. B. L. Webster finds that Aristotle makes "two completely distinct points: 1) tragedy was an offshoot from the Dithyramb; 2) (six lines later) it changed from *satyric* and was solemnized late; and there is not justification for equating them" (in Pickard-Cambridge 1962: 96). Murray deals with this slippery transformation thus:

It would suit my general purpose . . . to suppose that the Dionysus-ritual had developed into two divergent forms, the satyr-play of Pratinas and the tragedy of Thespis, which were at a certain date artificially combined by a law. (Murray 1912b: 344)

This rescues the Cambridge thesis, but it is all speculation. The fact is we cannot depend on Aristotle; nor can we accept what he says and arrive at the Cambridge thesis.

Why then has the Cambridge idea held such sway? It can be compressed, codified, and generalized: it is teachable. It is self-repairing: where the Primal Ritual cannot be found it has simply "evolved out of recognition"; where only "fragments" exist, these are vestiges, and so forth. It seems to explain everything: origins, form, audience involvement, catharsis, and dramatic action - especially the conflicts, mutilations, and deaths that characterize Greek tragedies. In short, the thesis is elegant, brilliant, speculative criticism. But it is no more than that. The "scientific proofs" the Cambridge group sought for their ideas have not been found. And perhaps it is time to abandon the Cambridge thesis as one which is too limiting, that no longer suits current perceptions of theater.

Ritual as the Cambridge group understands it does not seem very closely related to Greek theater - or Elizabethan or modern. The meaning of the word must be distorted out of usefulness if it is to apply equally to *Seven Against Thebes*, *Philoctetes*, *The Bacchae*, *Lear*, *Mother Courage*, *Waiting for Godot*, *The Bald Soprano*, *The Tooth of Crime* - or any other random group of distinguished plays. Even if one restricts the selection to a single period, the difficulties are immense. To apply the Cambridge thesis is to force the plays into contexts other than their own, to read around and under them. The development of happenings, inter-media, performance art, and so on raises still further questions. As for medieval theater which had as one of its sources church ritual,⁸ the players kept the biblical characters and plots while soon abandoning the form of the Mass and embroidering the stories with secular incidents.

I am not going to replace the Cambridge origin theory with my own. Origin theories are irrelevant to understanding theater. Nor do I want to exclude ritual from the study of the performative genres. Ritual is one of several activities related to theater. The others are play, games, sports, dance, and music.⁹ The relation among these I will explore is not vertical or originary – from any one to any other(s) – but horizontal: what each autonomous genre shares with the others; methods of analysis that can be used intergenerically. Together these seven comprise the public performative activities of humans.¹⁰ If one argues that theater is “later” or more “sophisticated” or “higher” on some evolutionary ladder and therefore must derive from one of the others, I reply that this makes sense only if we take fifth century BCE Greek theater (and its counterparts in other cultures) as the only legitimate theater. Anthropologists with good reason, argue otherwise, suggesting that theater – understood as the enactment of stories by players – exists in every known culture at all times, as do the other genres.¹¹ These activities are primeval, there is no reason to hunt for “origins” or “derivations.” There are only variations in form, the intermixing among genres, and these show no long-term evolution from “primitive” to “sophisticated” or “modern.”¹² Sometimes rituals, games, sports, and the aesthetic genres (theater, dance, music) are merged so that it is impossible to call the activity by any one limiting name. That English usage urges us to do so anyway is an ethnocentric bias, not an argument.

PLAY, GAMES, SPORTS, THEATER, AND RITUAL

Several basic qualities are shared by these activities: 1) a special ordering of time; 2) a special value attached to objects; 3) non-productivity in terms of goods; 4) rules. Often special places – non-ordinary places – are set aside or constructed to perform these activities in.

Time

Clock time is a mono-directional, linear-yet-cyclical uniform measurement adapted from day-night and seasonal rhythms. In the performative activities, however, *time is adapted to the event*, and is therefore susceptible to numerous variations and creative distortions. The major varieties of performance time are:

1. *Event time*, when the activity itself has a set sequence and all the steps of that sequence must be completed no matter how long (or short) the elapsed clock time.

Examples: baseball, racing, hopscotch; rituals where a “response”

or a “state” is sought, such as rain dances, shamanic cures, revival meetings; scripted theatrical performances taken as a whole.

2. *Set time*, where an arbitrary time pattern is imposed on events – they begin and end at certain moments whether or not they have been “completed.” Here there is an agonistic contest between the activity and the clock.

Examples: football, basketball, games structured on “how many” or “how much” can you do in x time.

3. *Symbolic time*, when the span of the activity represents another (longer or shorter) span of clock time. Or where time is considered differently, as in Christian notions of “the end of time,” the Aborigine “dreamtime,” or Zen’s goal of the “ever present.”

Examples: theater, rituals that reactivate events or abolish time, make-believe play and games.

Boxing offers an unusual combination. The length of each round (3 minutes) and the fight (a certain number of rounds) is set time. But a KO can end the fight at any moment and is event time while the measure of a KO (the 10 count) is set time.

In racing, the racers are competing against each other, either directly or indirectly (attempting to set a new record). The clock is the means by which racers are compared to each other. In football, however, the clock is very active in the game itself. Both teams, while playing against each other, are also playing with/against the clock. Time is there to be extended or used up. While stalling is a negligible strategy in baseball and a disastrous one in racing, it is crucial in football, where many games end with the leading team “running out the clock.” Suspense drama takes a similar attitude toward time; frequently the hero is trying to get something done before time runs out.

Most orthodox theater uses symbolic time, but experimental performances often use event or set time. Allan Kaprow’s happenings – both those he did in the late 1950s and 1960s and the more private conceptual work of the 1980s – use event time. Take, for example, *Fluids* (1967). As Kaprow describes the piece,

Fluids is a single event done in many places over a three-day period. It consists simply in building huge, blank, rectangular ice structures. . . . The structures are to be built in about 20 places throughout Los Angeles. If you were crossing the city you might suddenly be confronted by these mute and meaningless blank structures which have been left to melt. (Kaprow 1968b: 154)

Fluids is over when the monoblocks melt, however long that takes. Kaprow is aware of what this piece is about.

Obviously, what’s taking place is a mystery of sorts; using common

material (at considerable expense) to make quasi-architectural structures which seem out of place amid a semi-tropical city setting. . . . *Fluids* is in a state of continuous fluidity and there's literally nothing left but a puddle of water - and that evaporates.

(Kaprow 1986b: 154-5)

Similarly, Anna Halprin's *Esposizione* (1963) consisted of 40 minutes of performers' carrying heavy burdens while climbing up a huge cargo net. They moved as rapidly as they could and carried as much as they were able. When the time was up, the piece was over.¹³

Ionesco's *Victims of Duty* - like so many other dramas from Sophocles' *Oedipus* onward - presents an action controlled by event time within a world defined by symbolic time. Choubert must look for Mallot, that's his "duty." The steps of that search, though unknown to Choubert, are known to the Detective who forces Choubert to re-experience his past. What is important is that Choubert do what he is asked, not how long it takes. The "chew-swallow" sequence that ends the play locks Choubert, Madeleine, Nicolas, and the Lady into a routine from which there is no escape - the activity is endless because it is looped. An even clearer use of event time within the frame of symbolic time is the first scene of Jean Genet's *The Maids*. Claire is dressed as and playing Madame while Solange plays Claire. Because these are actors, the audience is fooled - performer X could play Madame as easily as play Claire. Step by step Claire/Madame and Solange/Claire move through the routine leading to the attempted murder of Claire/Madame. This scene is actually a dress rehearsal for the crime that ends the play. Both women are careful that the other does everything "necessary," no matter how long it takes. Still, they are in a rush - they must finish before Madame arrives. An alarm clock, brought from the kitchen (the maids' domain) into Madame's bedroom, ticks off the available minutes. The scene ends when the alarm rings - too soon for the murder to be consummated. Claire complains, "It's over already. And you didn't get to the end." Solange replies, "The same thing happens every time. And it's all your fault, you're never ready. I can't finish you off." This ritual-farce opening scene, with its *deus ex machina* alarm clock, is built on the tensions aroused by the conflicting temporal rhythms of symbolic (the drama), event (the murder), and set (the alarm clock) time.

Symbolic time, seemingly absent from happenings and the like, is actually most difficult to banish. Once action is framed "as theater" spectators read meanings into whatever they witness. Orthodox acting and scenic arrangements stress mimesis with its symbolic time; happenings stress the breaks between persons and tasks, thus the thing done may be mimetic without being a "characterization."

Objects

In everyday life objects are valued for their practical use (tools), scarcity and beauty (jewels, precious metals, art), bartering power (paper, wooden, and metal money), or age. In the performance activities all objects - except certain ritual implements and relics¹⁴ - have a market value much less than the value assigned to the objects within the context of the activity. Balls, pucks, hoops, batons, bats - even theatrical props - are mostly common objects of not much material value and cheaply replaced if lost or worn out.¹⁵ Often theatrical props and costumes are designed to look more costly than they actually are. But during the performance these objects are of extreme importance, often the focus of the whole activity. Sometimes, as in theater and children's play, they are decisive in creating the symbolic reality. The "other-worldliness" of play, sports, games, theater, and ritual is enhanced by the extreme disparity between the value of the objects outside the activity when compared to their value as foci of the activity. From the standpoint of productive work it is silly to put so much energy into the "control of the ball" or the "defense of 10 yards of territory." It is equally silly to think that a costume can make a king out of an actor, or even help Lee J. Cobb become Willy Loman. And of what material value is a saint's bones - or the Veil of Turin?

Non-productivity

The separation of performance activities from productive work is a most interesting, and unifying, factor of play, games, sports, theater, and ritual. What J. Huizinga and Roger Caillois say about play applies to all performative genres.

Summing up the formal characteristics of play, we might call it a free activity standing quite consciously outside "ordinary" life as being "not serious," but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. (Huizinga 1950: 13)

A characteristic of play, in fact, is that it creates no wealth or goods.

(Caillois 1961: 21)

But how can this be? On every side we see professional sports and theater (not to mention the churches and synagogues) enmeshed in big-time economics. Individual athletes earn millions, and leagues sign TV contracts worth billions. Money is exchanged for admissions, salaries, media contracts, concessions, endorsements, and so forth. Billions more exchange hands through betting. Large-scale enterprises are entirely dependent on these activities. And, as more leisure time becomes available, we may expect a steady increase in these expenditures. Are we

then to believe, as Huizinga does, that modern play is "decadent" because it participates so completely in the economic arrangements of society?

The issue is complex. It can be unraveled only by appreciating the structural elements of the performative activities. In productive work the economic arrangements determine the form of the operation. Thus a man with little money may run a small automotive shop employing a few workers. A large corporation with millions to spend may operate an assembly line. In large parts of our life home industry has stopped because it is more cost-efficient to mass-produce. Even when home industry makes a modest comeback it is either because computers secure linkups forming a network, or because individual consumers can afford to buy handmade goods. In those sectors where there are both small and large manufacturers - furniture, for example - the method of work, the scale of the operation, and even the final product differ according to the production of more objects. The entire operation changes its shape, *what it is*, according to various modes of production.

Rules

But the difference between sandlot and major league baseball is one of quality, not form. The same rules apply to both games. The San Francisco Giants may have *better* players than the Sixth Street Eagles, but the Giants can't have *more* players on the field and still call their game baseball. When the rules are changed - and sometimes they are changed in response to economic pressures, TV has had an effect on sports - they are usually changed all the way down the line. And when adjustments are made at the sandlot level - because not enough players show up, or whatever - these adjustments are recognized as necessary compromises with what the game *should* be. What I've been saying about sports could be said, with some variations, about rituals, games, and theater too. No matter how much is spent, paid, bet, or in other ways implicated in these performative activities, their respective forms remain constant. When money does "corrupt" a form - a game is fixed, a star hired not for her ability to play a given role but simply because of her "name" - people are able to recognize the misalignment. Some activities, like professional wrestling, fall between sports and theater: the matches are known to be fixed but a certain willing suspension of disbelief is practiced.

Economic arrangements thus affect the players, their bosses, spectators, audiences, fans, and bettors - everyone involved in the activity - while the activity itself remains largely unaffected. The money, services, and products (clothing, sports equipment, etc.) generated *by* these activities are not part of them. In games, sports, theater, and ritual - play,

again, is a separate case - the rules are designed not only to tell the players how to play but to *defend the activity against encroachment from the outside*. What rules are to games and sports, traditions are to ritual and conventions are to theater, dance, and music. If one is to find a "better way" to perform, this better way must conform to the rules. The avant-garde is apparently a rule-breaking activity. But actually, experimentation in the arts has its own set of rules. Think about it: the ordinary technological environments most of today's Americans live in and with - cars and planes, appliances, TV and stereo, etc. - have changed much more radically over the past seventy years than have the concerns or techniques of the avant-garde. Performance activities all along the continuum - from play through to ritual - are traditional in the most basic sense.

Special rules exist, are formulated, and persist because these activities are something *apart from everyday life*.¹⁶ A special world is created where people can make the rules, rearrange time, assign value to things, and work for pleasure. This "special world" is not gratuitous but a vital part of human life. No society, no individual, can do without it. It is special only when compared to the "ordinary" activities of productive work. In psychoanalytic terms, the world of these performance activities is the pleasure principle institutionalized.¹⁷ Freud believed that art was the sublimation of the conflict between the pleasure and reality principles; and he felt that artistic creation was an extension of fantasy life - he identified art with play. Indeed, the art of the individual may be as Freud described it. But these performance activities are something different. Only theater (music, dance) is art in the strict sense. Individuals engaged in ritual, games, or sports must conform to the rules which separate these activities from "real life." Although I do not wish to elaborate here, I think these activities are the social counterparts to individual fantasy. Thus their social function is to stand apart from ordinary life, both idealizing it (in these activities people play by the rules) and criticizing it (why can't *all* life be a game?).

Performance spaces

Perhaps this will be clearer if we consider for a moment where sports, theater, and ritual are performed. Great arenas, stadiums, churches, and theaters are structures often economically non-self-supporting. Situated in population centers where real estate comes high, these large spaces lie fallow during great hunks of time. Unlike office, industrial, or home spaces, they are used on an occasional rather than steady basis. During large parts of the day, and often for days on end, they are relatively unused. Then, when the games start, when services are scheduled, when the show opens, the spaces are used intensely, attracting large crowds

who come for the scheduled events. The spaces are uniquely organized so that a large group can watch a small group – and become aware of itself at the same time.¹⁸ These arrangements foster celebratory and ceremonial feelings. In Goffman's words, there is "an expressive rejuvenation and reaffirmation of the moral values of the community" in those spaces where "reality is being performed" (Goffman 1959: 35–6).¹⁹ Certainly, more than elsewhere, these places promote social solidarity: one "has" a religion, "roots for" a team, and "goes to" the theater for essentially the same reasons.²⁰ What consequences flow from TV's ability to conflate all these spaces into one box multiplied millions of times, we are just beginning to discover.

It will facilitate matters if I summarize the formal relations among play, games, sports, theater, and ritual in a "performance chart" (figure 1.2).²¹ Referring to it, we see that theater has more in common with games and sports than with play or ritual. However, certain key characteristics of happenings relate more to play than anything else; this is one strong indication of the real break between orthodox and "new" theater. Furthermore, play is obviously the ontogenic source of the other activities: what children do, adults organize.²² The definitive break between games, sports, and theater on the one hand, and play and ritual on the other, is indicated by the different quality and use of the rules that govern the activities. These distinctions in the rules are the keys to more general distinctions. The five activities can be rather neatly subdivided into three groups (figure 1.3). Play is "free activity" where one makes one's own rules. In Freudian terms play expresses the pleasure principle, the *private* fantasy world. Ritual is strictly programmed, expressing the individual's submission to forces "larger" or at least "other" than

Figure 1.3

Self-assertive "I"; +	Social "We"; ±	Self-transcendent "Other"; ...
Play	Games Sports Theater	Ritual
Rules established by player	Rules establish frames: "Do" (freedom), "Don't Do"	Rules given by authority
Pleasure principle, Eros, id, private world, assimilation	Balance between pleasure and reality principles ego accommodation	Reality principle, Thanatos, superego

Figure 1.2 Performance chart

Play	Games	Sports	Theater	Ritual
Special ordering of time	Usually	Yes	Yes	Yes
Special value for objects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Non-productive	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rules	Inner	Frame	Yes	Frame
Special place	No	Often	Yes	Yes
Appeal to other	No	Often	Yes	Usually
Audience	Not necessarily	Not necessarily	Usually	Yes
Self-assertive	Yes	Not totally	Not totally	Not totally
Completed	No	Not totally	Not totally	Not totally
Performed by group	Not necessarily	Yes	Yes	Yes
Symbolic reality	Often	Usually	Usually	Yes
Scripted	Sometimes/No	No	No	Often

Note: Happenings and related activities are not included as theater in this chart. Happenings would not necessarily have an audience, they would not necessarily be scripted, there would be no necessary symbolic reality. Formally, they would be very close to play.

oneself. Ritual epitomizes the reality principle, the agreement to obey rules that are *given*.²³ Games, sports, and theater (dance, music) mediate between these extremes. It is in these activities that people express their social behavior. These three groupings constitute a continuum, a sliding scale with many overlaps and interplays. However, differences in degree become differences in kind. Ritual and play are alike in many ways - periods of playful license are often followed by or interdigitated with periods of ritual control, as in Mardis Gras-Lent or in the activities of ritual clowns. The performance chart, to be read accurately, might be folded into a cylinder so that play and ritual are close together, the "opposites" of games, sports, and theater.

In figure 1.3 games, sports, and theater are "middle terms," balancing and in some sense mediating and combining, play (+) and ritual (-). In the middle terms rules exist as frames. Some rules say what must be done and others what must not be done. Between the frames there is freedom. In fact, the better the player, the more able s/he will be to exploit this freedom. This is clear for sports and games, but what about theater? For the actress playing Hedda Gabler, to give an example, the situation is complex (figure 1.4). The first frame concerns the physical stage or space, the second the conventions of her epoch; the third the drama itself; and the fourth are the instructions given to the actress by her director. She need not worry about any except this last, for each inner frame contains within it the rules established by frames further out.

There is an "axiom of frames" which generally applies in the theater: the looser an outer frame, the tighter the inner, and conversely, the looser the inner, the more important the outer. Thus the improvisational actor is freed from both director and drama, but s/he will therefore have to make fuller use of conventions (stock situations and characters,

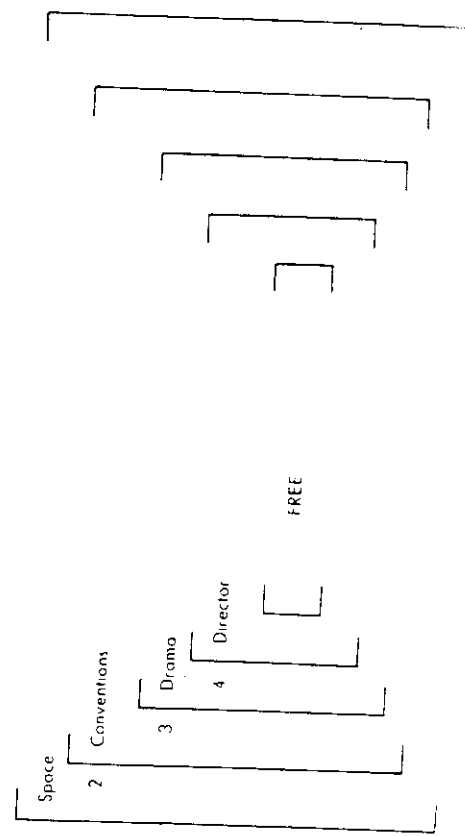


Figure 1.4

audience's expectations, etc.) and the physical space. The actor will also and himself directly confronting his own limitations: there will be little mediating between him and his audience. Even the wildest avant-garde work will be framed by space, sometimes literally interstellar space.²⁴ I know of no production where conventions are completely disregarded. However, the frames are not static, even within a single production. Kaprow's *Calling* (1965) took place in several locations, some of them outdoors. Because there were so few spatial or conventional limitations, Kaprow gave his performers very specific tasks: the inner frame was tight, the outer ones very loose.

This kind of analysis doesn't say much about the particular role of the actor, director, play wright, or architect-designer. But it does outline their relationships to each other and suggest that each function is meaningful only in terms of the whole set. One cannot discuss a single frame without referring to the others, because it is only within a pattern of relationships that a specific phenomenon takes place.

The indication that theater has more in common with sports and games than with ritual or play should be the cue to explore work in mathematical and transactional game analysis as methodologies for the study of theater. These studies could range from a close look at the ancient Olympic Games (rather than the Primal Ritual) and bear-baiting and cock-fighting as models for Greek and Elizabethan theater to the application of contemporary game theory. Philip McCoy, who undertook such an application, observes:

If one looks at a play as the crystallized interweave of conflicting interests, some of the structural tangles may be resolved into graphic patterns by the use of game theory principles. Martin Shubik in the introductory essay to his collection, *Game Theory and Related Approaches to Social Behavior* (1964) defines game theory in general terms: "Game Theory is a method for the study of decision making in situations of conflict. . . . The essence of a 'game' in this context is that it involves decision makers with different goals or objectives whose fates are intertwined." A tentative analysis of the first scene of *King Lear* according to the techniques of game theory reveals four separate "games" woven into a complex total texture which might be called the Lear-game. The shifting combination of players, the rhythmic occurrences of moves, and the directions of players' choices give in the graphic form of a "game tree" a structural picture of the scene more elemental than a mere design of the physical action or of the psychological motivation could ever be. This kind of analysis would be of practical use in determining broad patterns of movement and specific stage groupings; its advantage over a purely intuitive interpretation of a scene based upon character psychology is that it assumes an integral

grammatic structure which supports characterization while transcending individual action.

It would seem that mathematical game theory and transactional analysis have rich futures in the theater. This is so because dramas are completed actions involving interpersonal relationships usually pivoting on a conflict situation. Thus there is a nice fit between what drama encodes to what these theories are attempting to analyze. Further work needs to be done in the entire area relating theater to plays, games, sports, and ritual. What I have tried to do here is to outline some of the relationships and suggest possibilities for future work.

MODELS OF DRAMA CONSTRUCTION

One thing game theory and transactional analysis teach is the advantage of constructing models. These are - as they apply to theater - simple, graphic representations of the structure of the action(s) of a play or scene. Models have the double quality of brevity and precision. They could replace genre theory, which has proven inadequate in dealing with the proliferation of forms that marks the twentieth century. More specifically, detailed models of particular plays could be valuable aids to directors, designers, and actors. Of course, models are not the end of criticism, but the beginning. A model is an outline of a drama's action in terms of its shape. From there one could proceed to do the traditional work of a critic, dramaturge, or director: understanding characterization, theme, imagery, and so forth.

In the midst of today's experimental theater we have all but forgotten the triangular well-made play. But some of the essentials of that kind of construction apply to Greek and Elizabethan as well as modern western drama. A cursory view of this structure (figure 1.5) will aid us in outlining salient characteristics of our own (non-well-made) theater.

X and Y are forces, groups, or individuals in conflict. R is the resolution

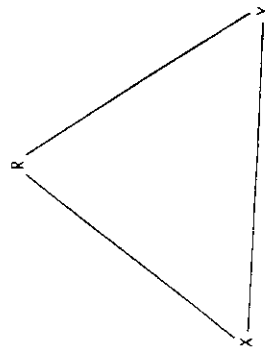
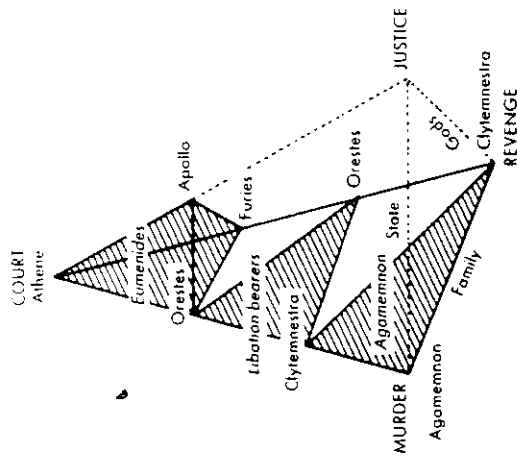


Figure 1.5

Figure 1.6



of the conflict relating X to Y. The drama continues until what separates (and also, obviously, joins) X and Y is mediated or removed through compromise, struggle, victory, reconciliation, defeat, or death. X and Y are in conflict because they are or represent opposing ideas and undertake mutually exclusive actions. X and Y are finally resolved into R, which is a new situation or institution. This construction is what Aristotle meant when he said that a drama has a "beginning, middle, and end."

Aeschylus' *Oresteia* is one of the earliest and most compelling examples of triangular structure. Because of the complexity of the trilogy, it can be most effectively represented by a model that looks like a three-sided pyramid (figure 1.6). One must not look at the diagram as a literal configuration. The *Agamemnon* is no larger than *The Libation Bearers*. The model shows relationships and dynamics. The shaded areas are the three plays; the dotted lines indicate implicit themes and actions; the solid lines outline what happens on stage. I am indebted to Philip McCoy, who helped develop this model.

The action of the *Oresteia* represents just one face of a more complicated structure which would, if worked out, represent the conflicting interests of family, state, and gods. Only in the *Eumenides*, the final play of the trilogy, are all the faces of the pyramid operative on stage. In the first two plays, the focus is clearly on the penultimate stages of the Curse on the House of Atreus, a domestic story. The state and god faces of the pyramid are implicitly present, but they emerge into full view only when Athens convenes a court of Athenians (thereafter perpetuated by the

state) to adjudicate between the Furies and Orestes. If one were to seek the genesis of the trilogy's action, it would be found in the base of the pyramid: in the tension among the family, state, and divine interests. The pyramid has four corners, or tension points: murder, revenge, justice, and the court. The court is at the apex: it is the means of resolving the conflicts arising from confrontations among the other three.

Turning to the trilogy itself, there are two basic lines in it, murder and revenge. Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, and Orestes all murder. Clytemnestra's crime is not tempered by divine injunction as are those of the men. Clytemnestra, Orestes, and the Furies all seek vengeance, and the first two achieve their goal. But behind these lines of murder and revenge another line operates, justice. Justice *does not exist* in the *Oresteia* until, in the *Eumenides*, Athene convenes the court. Justice is a creation of the gods put into the hands of the state. In the first two plays there is only revenge and the offender-victims. Agamemnon's murder settles the score between him and Clytemnestra, but little else. The political and religious implications of that murder are not worked out on stage. Tyranny in Argos and the offense to the gods are hinted at, not shown. These themes, important as they are, remain tangential to the main story, the family story.

Orestes becomes his father's agent in *The Libation Bearers*. Killing Clytemnestra, he reverses the flow of the action. In the second play, she is in Agamemnon's situation: one who murdered for cause but who must accept the blood consequences of her act. In the third play Orestes is both victim and murderer, and the Furies are Clytemnestra's agents. Like the others, they demand vengeance. They get justice instead. The conflict between the Furies and Orestes is resolved by the court and Athene's benevolent intervention which not only frees Orestes, but ends the curse, establishes the court, and transforms the Furies into Eumenides, protecting spirits who will dwell forever under Athens. Justice, as Aeschylus shows it on stage, mediates between and satisfies the demands of family (individual), state, and gods.

Thus along the center line of the *Oresteia* pyramid are those who seek revenge: Clytemnestra, Orestes, the Furies. On the left side are the victims: Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Orestes. Clytemnestra and Orestes, mother and son, are both vengeance-seekers and victims successively; they are the interlocking figures holding the trilogy together, the dominant figures.

The issue between Agamemnon and Clytemnestra is only apparently resolved by his murder. The issue returns, reversed, in the second play. The "father-right"/"mother-right" conflict is settled only when Athene, while absolving the male, forces the female to accept permanent refuge and honor *beneath* Athens. The transformation from Furies to Eumenides is accompanied by a change in place which is important. The Eumenides

who keep watch beneath Athens are witnesses to the agreements made among individual, state, and gods. The Chorus - who performs the role of the Eumenides - is present in all three plays, operating from the base of the pyramid, constantly weaving the hidden face of the pyramid into the fabric of the trilogy's action. In the *Eumenides* there are two speaking semi-choruses and, if we include the jury of Athenians, three choral groups on stage simultaneously. These three may be seen as visualizations of the "basic" (at the base, beneath, chthonic) conflicts. The jury represents the state, the Furies the gods, and the Athenian women the individuals (family). These three roles are also played by three characters. Athene represents the state, Apollo the gods, and Orestes the individual. Thus the entire complex pyramid is doubly theatricalized in the *Eumenides* where the conflicting claims are at last mediated and harmonized.

A deeper look at the model shows that Clytemnestra and Orestes did not act "unjustly" when they murdered. There was no justice for them to appeal to.²⁵ Justice is "realized" only in the *Eumenides*, when all three faces of the pyramid come into full play. The conflict in the first two plays is polar with one of the adversaries winning. In the third play, there are four tension points which later become two. Apollo and the Furies struggle over Orestes who appeals to Athene. When that issue is settled by the tie vote and Athene's decision to acquit, the Furies refuse to accept the verdict, threatening violence *not* against Orestes but against Athens. Apollo and Orestes have gone (at least they speak no more lines, and Orestes has bid farewell). The play's theme changes from a contest over Orestes to a struggle between Athene and the Furies with Athens, the city, at stake. Athene, embodying the necessities of the individual, the state, and the gods as most Athenians of Aeschylus' day felt them, *forces* the Furies to accept their honored role as Eumenides.²⁶ Thus the trilogy ends. And when it does, the pyramid dissolves, leaving a simple triangle in its place (figure 1.7). There is in this new scheme no place for revenge. Hereafter, murder will be adjudicated by a court con-

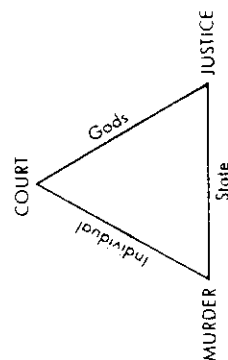


Figure 1.7

vened by the state, sanctioned by the gods, and binding on individuals. This "simplification" which Aeschylus achieves is the trilogy's final transformation. Throughout, other transformations - progressions - were moving the characters toward this new situation. What is left at the end are two of the three forces which formed the base of the pyramid. Revenge has been eliminated and in its place is the court.

If in figure 1.5 a plumb line is dropped from R through the triangle we get what can be called "the line of reason." This ideal path between X and Y is the "rational set of actions" which would peacefully resolve a play's conflict; if everyone stuck to this line, there would be no drama. Mediation by third party is the line in the *Oresteia*, and it clearly falls outside the action of the first two plays: it is impossible. In *Hamlet* the prince is trapped between his father's ghostly injunction, X, and Gertrude-Claudius' rule, Y. He cannot identify himself clearly with his father because that means opposing his mother, leaving Ophelia, possibly giving up the kingship which might some day be his. But neither can he yield to Claudius. Hamlet loved his father, fears the Ghost, and has no assurance that cooperation with Gertrude and Claudius will mean safety. The plumb-line of the play would be for Hamlet to act in Denmark's behalf (the line comes from Fortinbras). Instead, he surrounds himself with unnecessary proofs of Claudius' guilt - games which Hamlet plays to pass time and avoid decision. But Claudius will not wait forever for Hamlet's loyalty and, when the prince goes to England, the king arranges for his murder. Realizing that Claudius will hunt him down, Hamlet puts himself on the line. He recognizes that in acting out the carnage that ends the play he is not being himself, but performing a role assigned to him by circumstances. Before picking up the sword to duel with Laertes, Hamlet speaks of his double nature:

Was't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet.

If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,

And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,

then Hamlet does it not, Hamlet denies it.

Who does it then? His madness. If't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wronged;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

(V. ii. 213-19)

Hamlet is right: it is madness to play Denmark's part so that no member of the Hamlet family survives. But the part must be played, and Hamlet is the only actor fit for the role.²⁷

When speaking of heroes, resolutions, and closed structures with beginnings, middles, and ends, one is talking about "careers." A career is a humanly organized plan of action, often blocked by other people, sometimes prematurely ended by natural or other causes. In drama, careers are almost always completed: it is from this sense of completion

that audiences experience the working of "destiny," "fate," or "fortune." And it is from the notion of life-career that I made the triangular model with its double quality of completedness and focus. Susanne Langer puts into words what I've tried to draw:

Tragic drama is so designed that the protagonist grows mentally, emotionally, or morally, by the demand of the action, which he himself initiated, to the complete exhaustion of his powers, the limit of his possible development. He spends himself in the course of one dramatic action. This is, of course, a tremendous foreshortening of life; instead of undergoing the physical and psychological, many-sided, long process of an actual biography, the tragic hero lives and matures in some particular respect; his entire being is concentrated in one aim, one passion, one conflict and ultimate defeat. For this reason the prime agent of tragedy is heroic; his character, the unfolding situation, the scene, even though ostensibly familiar and humble, are all exaggerated, charged with more feeling than comparable actualities would possess.

(Langer 1953: 357)

This foreshortening which Langer identifies with tragedy is a mark of all traditional dramas; it is the symbolic time I spoke of earlier. Even a writer like Brecht, who claimed to be anti-Aristotelian, employs foreshortening. In *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, for example, a number of life-careers are presented; sometimes, as in *Mother Courage*, Brecht prefers to select episodes from a life rather than present one intensive experience. It all adds up to the same thing: no one ever lived a life in three hours.

WHERE THE TRIANGULAR MODEL DOESN'T WORK

The triangular model is misleading if applied to *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame*, *The Bald Soprano*, *The Maids*, *Marat/Sade*, many farces, and dozens of other plays of the twentieth century, some not so distinguished. Obviously, the post-dramatic theater of happenings cannot be discussed using orthodox analytical methods. The triangular model is inapplicable to experimental dramas, happenings, and many plays not modeled on life-careers. This is not altogether a historical observation. *Mother Courage*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* are all structured triangularly, while Euripides' *The Bacchae* is in many ways closer to Genet's *The Maids* than to Sophocles' *Electra*.²⁸

The dynamics of the theater of Beckett, Genet, and Ionesco (among others) are drawn from life-rhythms: eating, breathing, sleeping-waking, night-day, the seasons, the phases of the moon, etc. These rhythms do not have beginnings, middles, and ends in the Aristotelian sense. One

rhythmic cycle is completed only to begin again: nothing is resolved. These life-rhythms are functions of time. In post-dramatic drama, time replaces destiny.

When there are no careers, the inexorable passing of time "makes things happen." Of course, this is illusory: time merely measures the span in which things happen. The paradox of the existentialist human condition is that people are entirely free and they are entirely trapped. This being free and fixed in and by time is the subject of Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit* - there is "no exit" from time, thus those three people, free to do and say whatever they like, will finally do and say everything: that's hell.

Drama modeled on life-rhythms contains episodes of varying length, usually short, where tensions increase, explode, and return to the original situation (figure 1.8). X and Y are the forces or individuals in conflict. Although tensions are released through the explosive discharge of energy, the underlying conditions have not changed, nothing has been resolved; the release is temporary, and the situation is returned to a starting point where it begins all over again. Often the rhythms are set within the context of a game, and in many dramas structured this way rules replace plots. A single game, or a series of related games, usually of the rhythmic-explosive kind, are played. Instead of an action being "completed," permutations on a given set are explored. The story yields to the game as the generative matrix of the theatrical situation. Thus we have the game of "waiting for Godot," the game of "killing Madame" in *The Maids*, and so forth. This is a radical change because it decreases an audience's interest in character and individual psychology: people

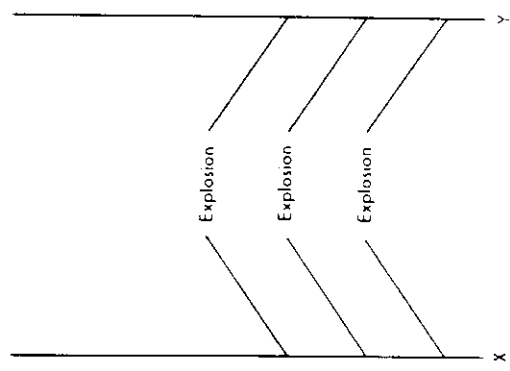


Figure 1.8

follow set routines rather than invent ways around and through difficult situations.

Happenings are the clearest example. Much of this new theater lacks human intentionality. John Cage described a 1964 concert at Brandeis University where he used 90 loops of tape and 13 machines:

The performance simply consisted of putting the loops on the various machines and taking them off. Doing this, a complex stage situation developed because we had to set up stands around which the tapes would go, and these things were overlapping. The number of loops made it fairly certain that no intention was involved in putting on one rather than another loop. The number of people and the number of machines also created a situation somewhat free of intentions. (Cage 1965: 57)

This does not mean that such performances are unplanned. Some are arduously rehearsed in a conventional manner. Others are programmed much the same way one would feed alternatives to a computer. The formal unity of the orthodox theater depends upon the heightened development of a single set of events, while the unity of happenings depends upon permutational variations of programmed events. The logic of the computer, not the story-teller. One is thus not interested in the feelings of the performers or characters (if there are any). These feelings are by-products. What is interesting are the variations played out by human bodies and minds, machines, things, and space. Most theater has not gone as far as happenings, which entirely free theatrical effect from narrative. But the tendency is there.

Time in today's drama is often circular or bracketed. Circular time is a series of events, one necessarily following the other, contained in a single unit that necessarily repeats itself. But there is no causal chain linking items in the series. Day follows night, spring follows winter - but day does not cause night, nor spring winter.

In Ionesco's *The Lesson* a pupil enters, the professor greets her, they add, she cannot subtract, he lectures, she gets a toothache, he shows her how to pronounce "knife," she hurts all over, he kills her, her corpse is disposed of (along with thirty-nine others), another student rings the bell, the sequence begins again. These events follow one another, but the comedy, the terror, depend on the spectators sensing that they do not cause each other. As the professor's maid Marie warns: "arithmetic leads to [but does not cause] philology and philology to crime." The series always repeats itself, but for no other reason than "that's the way things are in *The Lesson*."

In a determinist/random cosmology inexorable rhythms occur without cause. Deprived of the freedom consciousness gives, people directly

undergo the experience of inanimate matter. The pessimism associated with today's theater derives from this. Happenings do not share this pessimism because humanist considerations of "freedom" are never raised. Happenings celebrate the complexity of experience - "look what's happening to us!" - and the "random" aspects of the cosmology are emphasized. In theater, the "determinist" aspects are emphasized. Geometric progression obsesses Ionesco.

Bracketed time is much like circular time except that the events within a set do not necessarily follow one another in the same order, nor are the same events necessarily repeated each time. About 12 hours after dawn it will be dark again; actions take place within the bracket "dawn-dark" but they have no necessary relation to each other except that they occur within the bracket. *Waiting for Godot*: Gogo and Didi come to an appointed place each evening at dusk to wait for Godot - or for night to fall. Within the bracket "dusk-dark" they are free to do whatever they like "to give the impression" that they exist, as Gogo says. The action of the play consists of spectators watching them invent games to pass the time between dusk and dark. When Pozzo and Lucky appear - characters with "careers" - Gogo and Didi use them as material for their games. But in the second act, Pozzo is near the end of his career, and the most eloquent moment in the play is his rage:

Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! When! When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you?
(Beckett 1954: 57)

But time means nothing to Gogo and Didi. They are always forgetting it; they do not know how to measure it accurately. In their world, night falls suddenly, without warning. They have no need of time, except to see that it passes. Pozzo and Lucky leave, perhaps forever. And at the end of Act II, as at the end of Act I, Gogo and Didi "do not move." But something has happened, at least to Didi. He wonders, before paraphrasing Pozzo's speech, if he was "sleeping while the others suffered." He summarizes his situation:

Tomorrow, when I wake, or think I do, what shall I say of today? That with Estragon my friend, at this place, until the fall of night, I waited for Godot? That Pozzo passed, with his carrier, and that he spoke to us? Probably. But in all that what truth will there be?
(p. 58)

Pozzo's "the same second" becomes in Didi's paraphrase "lingeringly ... We have time to grow old." Didi has discovered time, and with it, irony. The Boy enters: the game, for this night, is ending. In the first act Didi asked the Boy questions: "It wasn't you came yesterday? ... This is

your first time?" and so on. In the second act, Didi asks no questions, he makes statements: "It wasn't you came yesterday ... This is your first time," and so on. The game is no longer full of suspense. In Act I Didi asks about the Boy and his brother; in Act II he asks about Godot. When the Boy tells him that he thinks Godot's beard is white, Didi stands a moment silently and then says, "Christ have mercy on us!" As the boy is about to leave, Didi says,

Tell him ... (he hesitates) ... tell him you saw me and that ... (he hesitates) ... that you saw me (Pause. Vladimir advances, the Boy recoils. Vladimir halts, the Boy halts. With sudden violence.) You're sure you saw me, you won't come and tell me to-morrow that you never saw me!
(p. 59)

In the first act Gogo was awake and Didi asks, "us ... You did see us, didn't you?" In the second act, having discovered time and irony, Didi separates himself from his friend: "you saw me." Didi's epiphany lifts him momentarily out of his situation so that he can more sharply see himself in it. But he is not free to act on his perceptions. Gogo wakes up and Didi reminds him that "We have to come back tomorrow ... To wait for Godot." Gogo and Didi exist within their brackets: the rules of the game are set. "But in all that what truth will there be?"²⁹

Non-time is the absence of time - events that are not sequential, circular, or bracketed. There is always the "real time" of the performance but, usually, the audience has forgotten about it. Although Ionesco's *The Bald Soprano* has an overall circular structure, many passages are examples of non-time. The Bobby Watsons multiply impossibly because they do not exist "here" and "now" or "there and "then." The Bobby Watsons are words and only words. In one of his alternative endings to *The Bald Soprano*, Ionesco suggests this kind of non-existence for his characters: "The actors should literally explode or collapse like their language; we should see their heads becoming detached from their bodies, the arms and legs flying to pieces, etc."³⁰ Throughout *The Bald Soprano* Ionesco hints that he is denying time. The clock strikes a variety of times, none of them correct and several of them impossible. The Fireman reminds his listeners that he is "going to have a fire in exactly three-quarters of an hour."

By listing as polarities corresponding qualities of the "triangular" and the "open" kinds of theater I can economically show their very different basic structures:

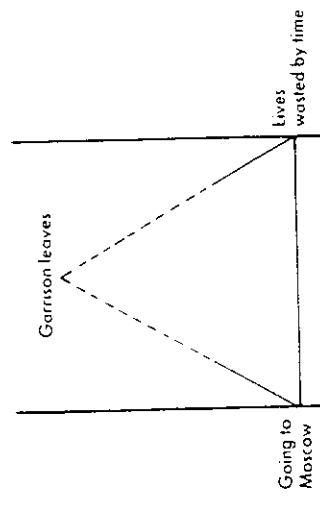
Triangular	Open
life-careers	life-rhythms
stories	games/rules
plot	rhythm or pattern
characters	characteristics

<i>Triangular</i>	<i>Open</i>
linear time	circular, bracketed, or non-time
action	activity
connections	jumps
resolution	circularity, bracketing, or no ending
dialectic	no synthesis
flow	explosions
acting the events	becoming the events
time makes changes	time is a cue
causality	determinist/random

Probably no single play or performance has all the characteristics of its matrix. And elements from one side of the list can be used in the service of a performance that exists mostly on the other side, as Peter Weiss and Peter Brook combined qualities from both triangular and open forms in *Marat/Sade*.

Chekhov is very interesting because his plays have apparent resolutions, they appear to be representative of triangular form. But, particularly in *The Three Sisters* and *Uncle Vanya*, the situation at the end is only a reinforcing, a deepening, of what was at the beginning. The strong triangular shape present at the outset evaporates during the play, replaced by an open structure (figure 1.9). That open structure is the "ghost" of the play, operating quietly within the action, but not clearly visible until near the end. Slowly the "ghost" is revealed, becoming the visible structure while the triangular form, so strong at the beginning, recedes and becomes the ghost.

Figure 1.9



Look at figure 1.9. In *The Three Sisters*, $X =$ Going to Moscow; $Y =$ Lives wasted by time. The sisters realize that if they don't "go to Moscow" - do something productive with their lives - they will shrivel into old age. Vershinin arrives, underlining their predicament by seeming to present a healthy, vigorous example: an officer from Moscow. But

Vershinin and his officers are also living useless lives. Irina, the youngest sister, sees a way out. She will marry Tusenbach, one of the officers; he will resign from the army and together they will leave town ... "tomorrow."¹¹ The other sisters make no real plans. Masha and Vershinin are locked in a hopeless affair because neither will leave their spouses. Olga is also stuck. Natasha systematically takes over their brother, Andrey, and their house; by the end of the play Masha and Olga have moved out. Irina's plans end when Solyony's bullet cuts Tusenbach down. Will she still go away? Chekhov's characters always make plans they don't carry out. Clearly the play shows the garrison "passing through" the town. This sense of "passing through" is one of Chekhov's favorite themes, present in all of his full-length plays. When all is said and done, nothing is done. The death that seems to resolve everything merely underlines and deepens a situation powerfully latent from the beginning. "Nothing matters," mutters Chebutykin at the end.

The excitement of the garrison - and the two romances - temporarily hides the sisters' real situation: like Gogo and Didi they are in their appointed place, between the brackets of youth and old age, doing what they can to relieve their boredom, and stifle their rage. They are unable to move. Their actions are abrupt and truncated, their fantasies unrealizable. The explosive qualities of many Chekhovian speeches (in *Sisters* and other plays) is the discharge of energy at the climax of a game that I associate with the open form. Chekhov's characters for all their talk about working have no careers. They are victimized by the routines the rhythms, of their existence. It is this hopeless routinization, combined with the desperate wanting of career, and the ironic absurdity of it all, that gives Chekhov's plays their unique combination of naturalness, humor, and despair.

CONCLUSIONS

The accepted methods and vocabularies are inadequate for the analysis of both orthodox and new theater. The close textual readings of the New Critics, enlightening as they are, seem more related to literature than performance. Historical and biographical reconstructions, always valuable adjuncts to criticism, never can be central to it. The need to analyze the action of theater - so keenly felt by Fergusson - is not satisfied by the adoption of the Cambridge thesis or its derivatives.

I suggest other tools, other approaches. Mathematical and transactional game analysis, model building, comparisons between theater and related performance activities - all will prove fruitful. These approaches are difficult; often they demand that the theorist, critic, and practitioner learn the language of other disciplines (but hasn't this always been the

case?). These new approaches may be productive because they urge explorations of *horizontal* relationships among related forms rather than a searching vertically for unprovable origins. They also situate theater where it belongs: among performance genres, not literature. The text, where it exists, is understood as a key to action, not its replacement. Where there is no text, action is treated directly. The possibility exists that a unified set of approaches will be developed that can handle *all* performance phenomena, classical and modern, textual and non-textual, dramatic, theatrical, playful, ritual. Could it be that the historical rifts separating theorists, critics, and practitioners may be ending?

NOTES

1. Williams Arrowsmith on several occasions attacked the Cambridge thesis. For example, "It seems to me that nothing but chaos can come from the fashionable notion that because Greek tragedy begins in ritual, its structure is therefore ritual dramatized, its hero a ritual scapegoat, and its action a shadow-play of the death of the *Eniautos-daimon*" (1959: 37). My tack, as I hope will become clear, though in no way opposed to Arrowsmith's, is in a different direction. And whatever my quarrels are with the Cambridge thesis, a number of productions of Greek tragedies have exploited it, including my own *Dionysus* in 69.
2. It was in *Themis* that Murray placed his "Excursus on the Ritual Forms Preserved in Greek Tragedy" (1912b), the kernel of much thinking connecting theater and ritual.
3. The earliest mention of the dithyramb is found in a fragment of Archilochus of Paros (fr. 77 D) dating from the first half of the seventh century BCE. Most of our evidence comes from the fifth century: the epoch of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes. As A. W. Pickard-Cambridge notes (and my facts are taken from his *Dithyramb, Tragedy, and Comedy*, 1962): "The attempts to throw light upon the original character of the dithyramb by references to the derivation of the name have so far led to no certain results" (p. 7). This observation regarding philology is crucial because Pickard-Cambridge also states: "The dithyramb may be very old *if the philological indications are to be trusted*" (p. 31, italics mine). The point is that we don't know the original form - or even date - of these dances. Certainly we know nothing of a Primal Ritual that came *before* them. What is exercised is a version of the myth of origins: older is truer.
4. Murray associates Pentheus with Zagreus, Orepheus, and Osiris "who are torn in pieces and put together again." Pentheus' body is reassembled, but not as a prelude to a celebration. And we may ask why the "whole sequence" is contained in only the later part of the play - what are we to make of the first part? Murray's observations may be ingenious literary criticism, but they are neither convincing anthropology nor helpful dramaturgy.
5. T. B. L. Webster, editor of the second edition of Pickard-Cambridge, notes that he attacked Murray's Primal Ritual theory and in 1943 Murray

responded: "I was wrong, as Mr. Pickard-Cambridge pointed out, in attributing too exclusive and original an importance to this type of play [the Primal Ritual], but its existence is clear." Webster adds:

With our extended knowledge of the history of the Dionysus cult the theory can be re-stated in a form which is both tenable and valuable. But briefly, it is this: ritual of the *eniautos daimon* type in the Mycenaean age very early (and certainly before Homer) gave rise to myths which were dramatized very early and so established a rhythm which was so satisfying that stories from other mythological cycles were approximated to it.

(in Pickard-Cambridge 1962: 128)

Murray, however, did not abandon his thesis; certainly those theater scholars who draw on it have not been as shy as Webster suggests they ought to be. And even Webster admits his thesis is unproven.

6. Webster, who *supports* the dithyramb theory, says:

Our evidence for the early history of tragedy is so slight that any account is unsatisfactory. If *The Persians* must now be accepted as the earliest surviving play of Aeschylus, more than sixty years separate it from the beginning of the competition. *The Persians* already has all the solemnity and grandeur of Aeschylean tragedy.

It is difficult to see a thread leading back from here to a performance of fat men and satyrs.

(in Pickard-Cambridge 1962: 130-1)

Webster asserts that the

worship of Dionysus goes back to Mycenaean times and before that to Minoan times. The ecstatic dances of the maenads and the dances of the satyrs and fat men can be traced back to these sources. Much of the mythology . . . was already formed before Homer. The Dionysus cult of the seventh and sixth centuries are revivals, not new creations. (p. 129)

7. Artaud has muddied the waters by introducing in such a powerful way his notion of ritual. But by "ritual" I understand him to mean nothing other than the transcendence of the actor's personality by outside forces - codified systems of performance such as those used by the Balinese, or trance possession. Artaud does not say that theater *comes from* this or that ritual. He argues that theater *is* - or ought to be - ritual. The ritual process - as worked out by Victor Turner and others - applies more to the workshop-rehearsal process than to dramatic literature. See "Restoration of Behavior" and "Playing with Genet's *The Balcony*" in my *Between Theater and Anthropology* (1985).

8. There are two theories concerning the links between Church and theater in the Middle Ages. The traditional view locating theater's origins in Church ritual has been eloquently put by O. B. Hardison, Jr., in *Christian Rite and Christian Drama in the Middle Ages* (1965). Benjamin Hunningher in the second part of *The Origin of the Theatre* (1961) argues that the Church took in and then spit out the folk theater which had persisted from Roman times. Allardice Nicol's *Musks, Mimes, and Miracles* (1963) traces the history and remarkable persistence of the genres and characters of popular theater from

the ancient Greeks, through Rome, into the middle ages and on to the *com-media dell'arte*. Turkish scholar Metin And traces cultural exchange in terms of dancing, puppetry, and popular entertainment across the Islamic belt from Indonesia to North Africa and Spain. Many of these exchanges began well before the advent of Islam (And 1976, 1979, 1987).

9. I do not deal in any detail with dance and music, though obviously these are "performance activities" as important as theater, play, games, and sports. In terms of the discussion to follow, dance and music can be considered varieties of theater. In the performances of many cultures, including some of the west, there is no separating music-dance-theater. I am not only referring to opera or musical comedies, but religious services, parades, festival celebrations, and even sports. Also, experimental movements in the arts have emphasized intermedia.
10. Performance is an extremely difficult concept to define. From one point of view - clearly stated by Erving Goffman in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) - performing is a mode of behavior that may characterize any activity. Thus performance is a "quality" that can occur in any situation rather than a fenced-off genre. Various kinds of psychotherapy develop both practical and theoretical consequences from this. Or, as John Cage has argued, simply framing an activity "as" performance - viewing it as such - makes it into a performance. Documentary film and the splicing in of documentary footage into "fiction" films transforms ordinary behavior into performances. So do shows like "Candid Camera." However, in this writing I mean something much more limited: a performance is an activity done by an individual or group in the presence of and for another individual or group. I recognize that some activities legitimately called play, games, sports, and ritual would be excluded from my definition. My definition is further complicated by the fact that game theory applies both to performance and non-performance activities. However, in trying to manage the relationship between a general theory and its possible applications to various art forms, I thought it best to center my definition of performance on certain acknowledged qualities of live theater, the most stable being the audience-performer interaction. Even where audiences do not exist as such - some happenings, rituals, and play - the function of the audience persists: part of the performing group watches - is meant to watch - other parts of the performing group; or, as in some rituals, the implied audience is God, or some transcendent Other(s).
11. See, for example, Herskovits 1950: 427 ff., Bohannan 1963: 48 ff., or Pfeiffer 1982. The point is that these activities are so ancient and universal that discussion of origins are metaphysics, not anthropology.
12. Technology is cumulative and in many cases the result of diffusion. Therefore one can speak of technological evolution. But even here a strictly Darwinian model does not apply. Cultural evolution - in which the discussion of the "development of art forms" was a part - flourished in the heyday of social Darwinism, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. No one denies the Darwinian theory as it applies to genetically linked species (no one but creationists, that is); but, as Claude Lévi-Strauss has said, axes do not *beget* axes. There are no genetic links between or within cultures that

explain the diffusion or coincidence of cultural traits. Influences occur and cultural development follows patterns not yet clearly understood. In artistic matters - where technology as such is usually not so important - there is no such thing as accumulation. Artists, when they know the past, pick and choose what materials they want to use. They often do not build according to generally agreed-upon rules. The twentieth century has seen in the west an awakened interest in "primitive" art forms. And, more recently, artists in many cultures - Asian, African, native American, etc. - have begun to explore, and use "root" materials from their own and other cultures. But the term "primitive" - even in its literal meaning of "first" - is misleading. Early art forms, or fragments ripped from them, often repeat themselves; that is all anyone can say with certainty.

13. For a more complete account of *Esposizione*, see Halprin 1965. For a historical account and theoretical discussion of happenings and related activities, see Michael Kirby 1965a, 1965b, and 1972.
14. Gold, silver, and precious jewels are part of many rituals; and some ritual events - potlatches, for example - depend on the display and dispersal of wealth. In the first instance, the market value of these objects - were they offered for sale by weight or size - would be far less than the value society assigns to them as "holy objects." In the days when relics were sold the fraud was that people thought they were buying objects with a specific history while the priests knew the bones, or whatever, had only a fictive salable history. Priceless paintings bring high prices, but for what would the Vatican, or the Metropolitan Museum of Art, sell its collection? And where paintings have entered the market place as such their value has no relation to the raw materials - paints, canvas, etc. - of which they are made. As for potlatches, what is being displayed and enhanced by means of the distribution of wealth is the prestige of the giver.
15. Musical instruments are an exception. Maybe this is because the quality of sound - the essence of music - depends on the relation between the quality of the instruments and the skills of the performer. But even here great folk performers have made extraordinary sounds come from such common objects as washboards or steel pots. In most performance activities the human manipulation of simple objects is the determining factor; beyond a certain minimum standard, greatness is entirely in the hands of the performers. Whatever quality linen Desdemona's handkerchief is woven of, it takes first-rate actors to play *Othello*.
16. Even in non-industrial societies, where the means of production are not mechanized, *play*, games, sports, theater, and ritual are considered different than ordinary work. Ritual especially is thought to be a *necessary* prelude to, adjunct of, or thank-you for production: rituals must be performed or crops won't grow, etc. But this necessary link is not a confusion between the two kinds of activity; rather it is an acting out of the belief that both productive and non-productive activities are essential for human life. Furthermore, these rituals often include dances, dramas, games, sports, and playful activities.
17. In *play* and individual fantasy this world has not been institutionalized but remains the private privilege of each. It is in fantasy that people break the

rules – even the most rigorous rules of sports, decorum, law, etc. – and go away with it. There is a tangent running from this leading to theories of myth and the “creative impulses” of artists and scientists. See, for example, Lévi-Strauss 1963: 206–31 and Ehrenzweig 1970.

18. This self-awareness, and the awareness of the awareness, reflexivity, is a function of both the activities and the spaces where the activities take place. Audiences self-awareness is both informal and formal. Formal self-awareness is inculcated by applause, responsive reading, singing, organized cheering, etc. In orthodox proscenium theaters – where there is less opportunity for the audience to become aware of itself – there are lobbies and intermissions. See chapters 5 and 6.
19. I know I’m quoting Goffman out of context. He meant that any place where something is done that “highlights the official values of the society” – such as a “party,” or “where the practitioner attends his client” – is a celebratory place. I have specified what Goffman intended to keep general.
20. Going to the theater is consciously motivated only weakly by celebratory solidarity. If we include movie attendance with theater-going, we can perhaps say that people go because witnessing mimetic events relates them to their fellow human beings (“catharsis” in tragic theory). However, there is no denying that this function of theater-going has decreased compared to fifth century BCE Greece or Elizabethan England. At one point theater-going was a civic event; later, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it became a social event and people sat according to their class. Although it still expresses elements of this today – the better seats cost more money – I suspect that theater, and certainly movies, like watching TV, is more and more a simple pastime. That is why the theater audience is so slight: movies and TV are much cheaper pastimes. Still, theater and movies retain some qualities of social occasions – relatively few people go, or like to go, alone, while TV is acceptably solitary. Experimental performances are more expressive of social solidarity than orthodox theater. Spectators at avant-garde shows often know one another; people know what kind of audience to expect and whom to identify with. Arriving in clusters of two or more, larger groups are soon formed during intermissions and the impromptu socializing frequently continues after the performances.
21. I am indebted to Arthur Koestler (1961) for the way in which I use the terms “self-assertive” and “self-transcendent” in figures 1.2 and 1.3.
22. The relation between child play and adult fantasy needs more exploration. Freud’s suggestion linking the operation of the pleasure principle in infancy with our adult artistic creations is extremely interesting. See Freud’s “The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming,” first published in 1908 and reprinted in *On Creativity and the Unconscious* (1958: 44–54). Also see Ehrenzweig 1970 and Winnicott 1971. A great student of child play is Jean Piaget whose *Play, Dreams, and Imagination in Childhood* (1962) I recommend. Adults also play, and the relation between adult play and productive activity has not been given sufficient attention. I separate play from games in the following way: play is an activity in which the participant(s) set her/his own rules, while a game has generally acknowledged rules. Many of the activities transactional analysts would call games I call play.

Eric Berne (1964: 36 ff.) defines ritual this way:

a ritual is a stereotyped series of simple complementary transactions programmed by external social forces. . . . The form of a ritual is parentally determined by tradition. . . . Some formal rituals of special historical or anthropological interest have two phases: 1) a phase in which transactions are carried on under rigid parental strictures, 2) a phase of parental license in which the child is allowed more or less complete transactional freedom, resulting in an orgy.

This fits neatly with my contention that ritual and play join in crucial ways. Kaprow’s works often extend in time and space, but still there are boundaries. Lowry Burgess is working on a piece, *Quiet Axis*, that extends from earth to the far side of the moon and on to the Large Cloud of Magellan.

In Euripides’ *Orestes*, Tyndareus tells Menelaus that Orestes should “have haled his mother into court, charged her formally with murder, and made her pay the penalty prescribed, expulsion from his house. Legal action, not murder. That was the course to take” (ll. 499–504). The speech is ironic, suggesting that pre-Homeric Argos had Athenian law. The *Orestes*’s subject is the creation of that law. Euripides is “laying for – and getting – a bitter anachronistic laugh.

26. A feminist of the 1980s might argue that Athene, a woman acting in the interests of men, forces the female rage of the Furies to literally be repressed, pushed underground where this energy becomes – from the male point of view – benevolent, protecting the patriarchy that is Athens. After all, Aeschylus is a male writer.

27. An analysis of Hamlet’s character could be done from the perspective of transactional analysis. In Berne’s terms, Hamlet is forever playing the Child or the Parent, never the Adult. He is frequently involved in “crossed transactions” where he intentionally does not reply to the questions asked. Hamlet uses these crossed transactions to avoid becoming the Adult. He is forever avoiding getting done what needs to be done.

28. The relationship between Pentheus and Dionysus soon becomes something other than conflictual. The rhythmic and ritualistic preparation for Pentheus’ death – his dressing in women’s clothes, his prurient anticipation of what he will see or Cithaeron – parallel the ritual-farce of Claire and Solange who kill one of themselves in order to murder, and in place of, Madame. Both plays could be described as ritual-farces.

29. For more on this approach to *Godot* see my essay, “There’s Lots of Time in *Godot*,” in *Public Domain* (1969: 109–19).

30. Ionesco suggested this alternative ending to *The Bald Soprano* (1966, n.p.) in an ideographic version of the play. Because actual actors speaking lines run counter to a play Ionesco calls “a tragedy of language,” perhaps the best “performance” of the play is the ideographic book.

31. This movement from the house – the only real “action” in *The Three Sisters* – is represented by the shifting populations in, and the locations of, Chekhov’s settings. Act I: The drawing- and ball-rooms, filled with the sisters and their friends. Natasha enters, is made fun of, and goes into a corner where Andrey comforts her. Act II: The same setting, but Natasha is in

through several choruses of the song, and hits a final chord. Townshend has his guitar by the neck and is beating it into the stage. Feedback and distortion ring through the hall. Daltrey flies feet first into a stack of amplifiers, toppling them back off the stage. Moon kicks though his drum-head and hurls his tom-tom at the rest of the kit. Townshend attacks his stack of amplifiers with a flying kick and they fall off the back of the stage. Ent-whistle stands by the side of the stage and watches the destruction. Then, with a final kick at the guitar, clapping each other on the back, The Who disappear from the stage, and the houselights come up.

(Unpublished paper, 1976)

8. See Ekman 1972, 1980, and 1983; Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth 1972; Bird-whistell 1952, 1964a, 1964b, and 1970; and Goffman 1959, 1961, 1963a, 1963b, 1967, 1969, and 1974.

9. A fight-package is a bundle of sacred/magic materials carried into battle. The package is said to protect the fighter and to bring him victory.

10. Since writing this essay in the mid-1970s, the debate concerning cannibalism has sharpened. Some anthropologists doubt that there is, or ever was, cannibalism - except out of the need for sheer survival (shipwrecks, for example). The debate is reported in *Science* (Kolata 1986).

What [William] Arens concluded after investigating countless accounts of cannibalism is that there are no reliable first hand witnesses to this practice. Even in New Guinea where cannibalism is presumed to have spread the slow virus disease kuru, there is no good evidence for cannibalism, Arens and others say. . . . If I'm right, [Arens says,] anthropologists are engaged not in a lie, not in a hoax, but in a myth. They are retelling what is always assumed to be true." (p. 1497)

But others strongly disagree with Arens. D. Carleton Gajdusek . . . who won a Nobel prize for his studies of kuru in New Guinea, says that the evidence of cannibalism in New Guinea is so clear that 'it's beneath my dignity to answer the argument' " (p. 1497).

Factual or not, cannibalism exercises a powerful hold on the human imagination and, like incest, is a primary taboo. Cannibalism - either "barbaric" or, for example, Christian (the Eucharist) - is a strong component of many cultures' belief systems; there is an undeniable link between what is eaten and what "becomes part of." To share food is to contract friendship; to share that food which is the loved/hated other is to acquire power. And is it too much to suggest that mother's milk - the first food - is mother herself? What exactly is the nipple the infant takes into its mouth? A myself who is another. See Winnicott (1971) on transitional objects and phenomena.

8 MAGNITUDES OF PERFORMANCE

A FIGURE FOR ALL GENRES

At the descriptive level there is no detail of performance occurring everywhere under all circumstances. Nor is it easy to specify limitations on what is, or could be treated as, performance. Figure 8.1 is an exemplary but somewhat serendipitous panorama of just how diverse and extensive the performance world is. Criteria for inclusion in the chart were: 1) events called performances in this or that culture; 2) events treated "as performance" by scholars. I limited myself as much as possible to events that I have either seen or studied. 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. What hope is there of unifying such a figure?

If "universals" are wanted, they might be found in processual models explaining how one set of genres, ritual performances for example, becomes other sets. Does ritual "evolve" into dance, theater, and sports, and if so how? This search for universals occupied Victor Turner during much of his life. Turner felt his social drama/liminal-to-liminal model worked universally. In one of his last essays - "Are There Universals of Performance in Myth, Ritual, and Drama?" (1985) - he said as much:

Theater is but one of the many inheritors of that multifaced system of preindustrial ritual which embraces ideas and images of cosmos and chaos, interdigitates *clowns* and their *foolery* with gods and their solemnity, and uses all the sensory codes to produce symphonies in

Figure 8.1 Performance Time/Space/Event Chart

	<i>Aesthetic theatre</i>	<i>Sacred ritual</i>	<i>Secular ritual</i>	<i>Sports</i>	<i>Social drama</i>	<i>Amidst or less</i>	<i>Hours</i>
<i>Private & restricted</i>	Theater on Chekhov Street ¹	Initiation rites	Executions in USA	Sports played at home	Election of pope	Execution	Theater on Chekhov Street
<i>Private but open</i>	Happenings & performance art	Bar mitzvah	Ph.D. orals	Sandlot baseball	Murder trial	Puja at Hindu temple	Happenings, bull games, etc.
<i>Local</i>	Ordinary theater & dance	Teyyam	Macy's Thanks giving's parade	Big league baseball	Turnerian social drama	Stuart Sherman ⁴ street spectacle	Ordinary theater & dance
<i>General</i>	National network TV drama	Pilgrimage	Inauguration of US president	Olympics	Hostage crisis; wars	TV commercials	Feature films
<i>Sacred space</i>	Bread & Puppet Theater in St John the Divine	Religious events; aborigine home wedding	Town meeting in church	Aztec ball game	Church where pope is elected	Puja, Eucharist	Ordinary church service
<i>Secular space</i>	Ordinary theater & dance	Jewish circumcision; home wedding	Macy's Parade; Olympics	Playing fields	Town square; legislative hall	Stuart Sherman; Jewish circumcision	Ordinary theater & dance
<i>Found space</i>	Rooftops, beaches, streets, galleries	Sacred trees, rocks, rivers	Parade routes	Sandlot ball	Wars; US embassy during hostage crisis	Some happenings	Parades; some happenings
<i>Transformed space</i>	Stage set; environ mental theater	Churches; Ramilla environ-ments	Courtroom; execution chamber	Stadiums	Courtroom; throne-room	Execution	Ordinary theater & dance
<i>Indoor space</i>	Theaters	Churches, temples	Courtroom; execution chamber	Field-houses ²	Courtroom; legislative hall	Some happenings; execution	Ordinary theater & dance
<i>Outdoor space</i>	Greek or Elizabethan theater	Aborigine initiation grounds	Parade route; US inauguration	Stadiums	Twilight "duel" ³	Stuart Sherman	Greek or Elizabethan theater
<i>Single space</i>	Ordinary theater & dance	Church service	Courtroom	Stadiums, fieldhouses	Courtroom; legislative hall	Execution	Ordinary theater & dance
<i>Multispace</i>	Many happenings; environ mental theater	Pilgrimage	Parades	Marathon running; Olympics	Hostage crisis	Some happenings; guerrilla theater	Some happenings

<i>Date</i>	<i>Months or more</i>	<i>Single time once only</i>	<i>Repeated</i>	<i>Multitime sequenced</i>	<i>Calendarial cycle</i>	<i>Event generated time</i>	<i>Symbolic time</i>
Election of pope	Some initiations	Execution	Theater on Chekhov Street	Election of pope	Some Aborigine performances	Election of pope	Theater on Chekhov Street
Some happenings	Tehching Hsieh's "Year-long" performances	Bar mitzvah		Some happenings	Puja at Hindu temple	Some happenings; sandlot baseball	Some
Ramilla, Yaqui, Easter	Orokolo cycle ⁶	Some happenings	Ordinary theater & dance	Yaqui, Easter, Ramilla	Macy's Parade; Ramilla	Big league ball	Ordinary theater & dance
Olympics	TV soaps	Boxing title match	Feature films	Olympics	World Series; Olympics	World Series	Feature films
Election of pope; Aborigine ceremonies	Pilgrimage	Bar mitzvah		Yaqui, Easter, Ramilla	Yaqui, Easter, Ramilla		Yaqui, Easter, Ramilla
Wilson's Ka Mtn ⁷	Hostage crisis	Wilson's Ka Mtn; hostage crisis	Ordinary theater & dance	World Series; Olympics	World Series; Olympics	Baseball	Ordinary theater & dance
Wilson's Ka Mtn	Brook's theater in Africa ⁸	Many happenings & performance art		Aborigine ceremonies	Macy's Parade; Aborigine ceremonies	Sandlot baseball	Schechner's <i>Phibetates</i> on beach ¹⁰
Murder trial	Orokolo cycle; pilgrimage	Some happenings	Ordinary theater & dance	Yaqui, Easter, Ramilla	Yaqui, Easter, Ramilla	World Series	Ordinary theater & Dance
Murder trial	Tehching Hsieh's "Year-long" performances	Some happenings	Ordinary theater & dance	Murder trial	Church services; folk Bugaku ⁹	Indoor sports	Ordinary theater & dance
Wilson's Ka Mtn	Orokolo cycle; pilgrimage; Tehching Hsieh's "Yearlong" performance	Some happenings	Elizabethan theater	Yaqui, Easter, Ramilla	Yaqui, Easter, Ramilla	Baseball	Elizabethan theater
Murder trial		Boxing title match	Ordinary theater & dance	Murder trial	Folk Bugaku	Indoor sports	Ordinary theater & dance
Olympics; Yaqui, Easter, Ramilla	Orokolo cycle; hostage crisis	Hostage crisis	Yaqui, Easter, Ramilla	Yaqui, Easter, Ramilla	Yaqui, Easter, Ramilla	World Series	Yaqui, Easter, Ramilla

Notes

The chart lists examples anecdotally. That is, many more examples could be given for almost every category. What the chart shows is the great diversity of

performative events in terms of genre and use of time and space; and it shows the interrelatedness of events-time-space.

The chart can be read as a grid. For example, a Ph.D. oral examination is an example of private but open secular ritual; a town meeting held in a church is an example of a secular ritual taking place in a sacred space; the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade is a calendrical/cyclical event taking place in found space. And so on. All items can be located according to three axes: event, time, space.

Not all items are so explained, but they can be. And some items, obviously, occur in more than one category. So, Ramilla is multiteme: segmented plus calendrical/cycle plus symbolic time plus days in duration. But Ramilla is not so easy to locate in terms of whether or not it is aesthetic theater or sacred ritual or social drama: it is all of these, and at some moments more one than the others. Thus the chart's weakness: it categorizes whereas many performances transform from one category to another, or slip across categorical boundaries. Still I have found making the chart helpful in organizing my thinking about performance; and I hope that it will be of use to others.

1. The Theater on Chekhov Street is one of several in Moscow operating privately outside the control of censorship. A description of it, and other private performances, is found in Law (1979). Private restricted performances are common in places where public free expression is limited; it is also the mark of certain kinds of ritual that can be attended by certain people only.
2. Fieldhouses, as the name suggests, are indoor spaces that attempt to bring the outdoors inside. Even more out front in this intention are domed stadiums whose astroturf looks like grass.
3. The Tiwi settle certain disputes by using a ritual duel staged in the main village square. The duel is described by Hart and Pilling (1966). Using their account, I discuss the Tiwi duel in

chapter 2. The Tiwi duel is a near perfect example of Victor Turner's "social drama."

4. Stuart Sherman stages "spectacles" on street corners, in theater lobbies, in various other places not usually thought of as performance spaces. His spectacles are theatrically modest: a small table, an assembly of props all of which can fit in an attaché case, no dialog, a total elapsed time of under thirty minutes. As he became more successful, Sherman began to work inside theaters, on stage, in more orthodox ways.

5. Tehching (formerly Sam) Hsieh is a performance artist who specializes in "one-year performances." According to Barry Kahn: "On 30 September 1978, Sam Hsieh began a year of solitary confinement inside an 11'-6" x 9' x 8' cell which he built within his studio. 'I shall not converse, read, write, listen to the radio or watch television until I unseal myself.' A friend, Cheng Wei Kwang, took charge of his food, clothing, and waste. At 5.00 p.m. on 11 April 1980, Sam Hsieh punched in on a standard industrial time clock he had installed in his studio, an act which he repeated every hour on the hour until 6.00 p.m. on 11 April 1981. And on Saturday 26 September 1981, Sam Hsieh began his third one year performance: 'I shall stay outdoors for one year, never go inside. I shall not go in to [sic] a building, subway, train, car, airplane, ship, cave, tent. I shall have a sleeping bag,' his statement said" (1982: 41). From July 4, 1983 until July 4, 1984 Hsieh was attached to performance artist Linda Montano by an eight-foot rope. Their joint statement read in part: "We will stay together for one year and never be alone. . . . We will be tied together at the waist with an eight-foot rope. We will never touch each other during the year." During his year-long performances Hsieh schedules certain times when the public can view him.

6. The Oroko of Papua New Guinea used to perform a cycle play that took years to complete. It is described by Williams (1940), and also discussed by

me in chapter 2. Extended performances - or connected cycles of performances - are not uncommon. A sports season can be thought of as a cycle of performances. Major League baseball is certainly this way - with several high points: opening games, All Star Games, "important series" near the end of the season, "traditional rivalries," playoffs, and World Series.

7. Robert Wilson staged this seven-day performance as part of the Shiraz Festival in 1972. It involved 50 persons and took 168 hours. It was staged on a mountain and took the form of a kind of ascent or pilgrimage. *Ka Mountain* is described by Trilling (1973: 33-47) and Langton (1973: 48-57).

8. From December, 1972 through February, 1973, Peter Brook and thirty actors, technicians, and support persons traveled by Landrover through Africa from Algiers, across the Sahara, into Niger, Nigeria, Dahomey, Mali, and back to Algiers during their trip they staged improvisations, exchanged theatrical items (songs, dances, skits, techniques, etc.) with Africans, and showed their own work. They played in many different situations. A uniting, and signaling, item was their "performance carpet." "We got out [of our vehicles]," said Brook, "unrolled our carpet, sat down, and an audience assembled in no time. And there was something incredibly moving - because it was the total unknown, we didn't know what

could be communicated, what couldn't. All we discovered after was that nothing had ever happened resembling this before on the market [at In-Salah, in Algeria]. Never had there been a strolling player or some little improvisation. There was no precedent for it. There was a feeling of simple and total attentiveness, total response and lightning appreciation, something that, perhaps in a second, changed every actor's sense of what a relation with an audience could be" (Gibson 1973: 37-51).

9. In December, 1979 I observed Dianichi-do Bugaku in northern Japan (Kazano City) at a Shinto shrine. Peasants, wearing traditional masks, including a famous golden one said to possess great power, dance for about three hours on a makeshift square, elevated stage - like a boxing ring without ropes - set up in the center of the interior of the shrine. It was said that this same performance is done each year, and dates back many hundreds of years.

10. In 1960 I staged Sophocles' *Philoctetes* on the beach of Truro, Massachusetts (near Provincetown, where I was running a summer theater). The audience had to walk over a mile of sand dunes to reach the place where the performance took place. Philoctetes himself roamed the dunes; Neoptolemus and Odysseus arrived by boat (we had launched them about a half-mile further down the beach). The Truro dunes really conveyed the sense of desert island that the Sophocles play asks for.

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more than music: the intertwining of dance, body languages of many kinds, song, chant, architectural forms (temples, amphitheatres), incense, burnt offerings, ritualized feasting and drinking, painting, body markings of many kinds, including circumcision and scarification, the application of lotions and drinking potions, the enacting of mythic and heroic plots drawn from oral traditions. And so much more. Rapid advances in the scale and complexity of society, particularly after industrialization, have passed this unified liminal configuration through the analytical prism of the division of labor, with its specialization and professionalization, reducing each of these sensory domains to a set of entertainment genres flourishing in the leisure time of society, no longer in a central, driving place. The pronounced numinous supernatural character of archaic ritual has been greatly attenuated. (Turner: 295-7)

Turner regrets what he calls the "*sparagnos*" of ritual, but he detects "signs that the amputated specialized genres are seeking to rejoin and to recover something of the numinosity lost in their . . . dismemberment" (1985: 297). I pursued a similar theme in chapter 4, where I suggested that the development of theater from ritual was only one way in a two-way process, that rituals emerge from theater (or other performative genres).

Turner's idea fits nicely the approach of the "Cambridge anthropologists" who, during the first decades of the twentieth century, thought they had found a "primal ritual," what Murray called a *Sacer Ludus* as the source of classical Greek theater. (See chapter 1 for a fuller discussion of the Cambridge thesis.) But the "origin" of the theater, dance, and music could as well be healing, or fun-making, or story-telling, or initiations, or nothing at all. Performance may be coexistent with the human species.²

Ritual has a broader scope than the Cambridge group supposed. Ethological and neurological approaches to ritual are extremely important for performance studies. From the ethological perspective, rituals are behavioral displacements, exaggerations, repetitions, and transformations that communicate and/or symbolize meanings not ordinarily associated with the behavior displayed. As Irenaus Eibl-Eibesfeldt writes, "ritualization is the process by which non-communicative behavior patterns evolve into signals. . . . In a ritual expressive movements are integrated in a more complex event which is structured in a rule-governed way" (1979: 14, 10).

But let me back up.

Figure 8.1 lays out the time, space, and event parameters of performances without regard to culture or genres. I wanted to take an intergeneric, intercultural perspective and see what the "limits" of performance were. I tried to think of performances of different magnitudes, from the very

longest, lasting months or even years, to split-second events; from the largest, spanning millions of miles, to the smallest "brain events" of conceptual art - performances making no spatial claims at all; from clear examples of theater, dance, and music to what Clifford Geertz might lift his eyebrows at as the blurriest of genres: the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979-80, a bar mitzvah, famous murder trials (like those of Klaus von Bulow or Jean Harris), Hindu temple services, title boxing matches, TV soap operas, the Yaqui Easter Passion play, orthodox Euro-American theater and dance, noh drama, ramilla, etc. Some of these performances are one of a kind while others are generic; some are rituals, some entertainments; some take months, others are over in a matter of minutes or take no time at all. What figure 8.1 expresses is my triune thesis: 1) there is a unifiable realm of performance that includes ritual, theater, dance, music, sports, play, social drama, and various popular entertainments; 2) certain patterns can be detected among these examples; 3) from these patterns theorists can develop consistent broad-based models that respect the immediacy, ephemerality, peculiarity, and ever-changingness of individual performances, runs, and genres.

In the essay that follows I will develop only a few aspects and consequences of the time/space/event chart. My aim is to indicate what the magnitudes of performances are, where each magnitude of performance takes place.

INSIDERS, OUTSIDERS³

Erving Goffman built his work on the basis that everyday life is framed and performed. Early in his investigations he wrote, "All the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn't are not easy to specify" (1959: 72). Not easy because everyday life is suffused with interactions that are rule-bound, conventions that are networks of reciprocal expectations and obligations.

The legitimate performances of everyday life are not "acted" or "put on" in the sense that the performer knows in advance just what he is going to do, and does this solely because of the effect it is likely to have. The expressions it is felt he is giving off will be especially "inaccessible" to him. But as in the case of less legitimate performers, the incapacity of the ordinary individual to formulate in advance the movements of his eyes and body does not mean that he will not express himself through these devices in a way that is dramatized and pre-formed in his repertoire of actions. In short, we all act better than we know how. (Goffman 1959: 73-4)

Goffman goes on in this early, but decisive, enunciation of his core idea

to say that in cultures where trance is practiced – such as Haiti (the *oungans* have added Korea and Bali, as well as certain African, Afro-American, and Euro-American religious sects) – the entranced person will

be able to provide a correct portrayal of the god that has entered him [because of all the contextual knowledge and memories available; that the person possessed will be in just the right social relation to those who are watching; that possession occurs at just the right moment in the ceremonial undertaking, the possessed one carrying out his ritual obligations to the point of participating in a kind of skit with persons possessed at the time with other spirits. (Goffman 1959: 74)]

Goffman emphasized that his observations are usually not shared by the possessed people. "Participants in the cult believe that possession is a real thing and that persons are possessed at random by gods who they cannot select" (1959: 74).

This break between the experience of the observer and that of the participant is one of the most interesting things about trance possession from the point of view of performance theory. This break is on a continuum with the less radical but still distinctly observable breaks between the experiences of performers and audiences in all kinds of performances. In terms of trance a very few examples must suffice as indicators of a general tendency.

Insiders: Shakers of St Vincent: "Power is a breeze descended that comes as a rushing wind into the heart. When it leaves, you feel something leaving you." (Henney 1974: 59).

Outsiders: Shakers of St Vincent: Three "levels" of trance are perceived. "The first external sign of dissociation may be a convulsive jerk of one or both arms, of one or both shoulders, or of the head. It may be a shudder, shiver, or trembling; a sudden shout, sob, hiss, or series of unintelligible sounds. . . . As more and more individuals throughout the church become involved in the random symptoms of the first level . . . a subtle change of behavior characteristic of the second level takes place. . . . Idiosyncratic movements and sounds, and breathing peculiarities become less conspicuous because of the concerted attention persons in possession trance give to the same rhythm pattern. . . . Sooner or later the second level of possession trance changes. The smoothly patterned phenomenon in which each individual submits to the group-impressed rhythmic beat is disrupted as the dissociated persons emit loud sighs and yells, and breathe with complete disregard for the previous regular timing. . . . All movements and sounds again become individualistic. . . . That the Shakers themselves are aware of differences in possession-trance levels came to my attention when I played for them some of the tapes I had made." (Henney 1974: 61-2)

Insiders: Balinese *sanghyang* trance: "GM [Jane Belo's Balinese assistant]: what is the feeling like when you are beginning to be smoked [put into a trance]? Soekani: When I am just being smoked my ears are stopped up, hearing the song. After that I immediately lose consciousness, I feel as if I were all alone. When I am about to come to myself suddenly I know where I am. . . . Darja: When I've gone in trance, my thoughts are delicious, but I do not remember them. What's more, my whole body is very hot. And then, if I am touched with holy water, my thoughts are like a crazy person's. . . . Darma: When I'm a *sanghyang* snake, suddenly my thoughts are delicious. . . . When my body is like that, as a snake, my feeling is of going through the woods, and I am pleased. GM: At.ck if you're a *sanghyang* broom, what's it like, and where do you feel? Darma: like sweeping filth in the middle of the ground, Like sweeping filth in the street, in the village, I feel I am being carried off by the broom, led on to sweep." (Belo 1960: 221-2)

Outsiders: "The hypnotic threshold, the selective awareness of certain stimuli and imperviousness to others irrelevant to the situation, well-known in hypnosis experiments, is illustrated in the players' remarks about hearing the song, but not hearing people talking of other things, not seeing the singers, but trampling upon them when angered. The feeling of lowness, which Darma described as delightful, fits in with the whole constellation of ideas about being mounted, being sat on, and so forth, wherein the pleasurable quality of the trance experience is connected with the surrendering of the self-impulses. This is one aspect of the trance state which seems to have reverberations in the trance vocabulary in whatever country these phenomena appear – and the aspect which is perhaps the hardest for non-trancers to grasp." (Belo 1976: 158-9)

Even further outside are analyses like Chapple's (1970) and Lex's (1979):

Voodoo drums, the regular and driving rhythms of revivalistic ceremonies, the incessant beat of jazz or its teenage variants in rock and roll, must synchronize the rhythms of muscular activity centered in the brain and the nervous system. Combined with the dance or with other rhythmic forms of synchronized mass movement – stamping the feet or clapping the hands over and over again – the sound and action of responding as the tempo speeds up clearly "possess" and control the participant. The external rhythm becomes the synchronizer to set the internal clocks of these fast rhythms.

(Chapple 1970: 38, quoted in Lex 1979: 122)

The *raison d'être* for rituals is the readjustment of dysphasic biological and social rhythms by manipulation of neurophysiological structures under controlled conditions. Rituals properly executed promote a

feeling of well-being and relief, not only because prolonged or intense stresses are alleviated, but also because the driving techniques employed in rituals are designed to sensitize or "tune" the nervous system and thereby lessen inhibition of the right [cerebral] hemisphere and permit temporary right-hemisphere domination, as well as mixed trophotropic-ergotropic excitation, to achieve synchronization of cortical rhythms in both hemispheres and evoke trophotropic rebound.⁴ Furthermore, it is difficult to separate the impact of repetitive behaviors on the brain from their influence on the rest of the nervous system because the various driving techniques simultaneously excite numerous neural centers. In a given ritual one specific practice alone may be sufficient to establish a state of trance; that several techniques are engaged concomitantly or sequentially indicates redundancy, to guarantee reliability, potentially affecting the entire group of participants. In other words, manifold driving techniques accommodate individual differences in experience and genetic makeup. However, any complete interpretation of ritual trance also recognizes the symbolic qualities of human behavior. (Lex 1979: 144-5)

These differences are not just exercises in the "emic-etic" pitfalls of field work. The great big gap between what a performance is to people inside and what it is to people outside conditions all the thinking about performance. These differences can be as great within a single culture as they are across cultural boundaries. In fact, in my own experience, performers from different cultures are more likely to understand each other - and be able to exchange techniques, anecdotes, information - than they can understand, and be understood, by people within their own culture who have not themselves either been performers or gone out of their way to understand what performers experience. Performance experience - unlike eating, housing, speaking/listening, etc. - is something the outsider has to specifically go out of her/his way to get from the inside. This curiosity concerning experience prompted Turner to experiment with "performing ethnography."⁵

The situation of the "professional performer" - a person who reflexively masters the techniques of performance (whether or not s/he gets paid for it) - is very different from the "Goffman performer" who is likely to be unaware of her/his own performance.⁶ The theorist in Goffman's world is always an outsider because the theorist exposes precisely what the Goffman performer conceals or is unaware of: the very fact that s/he is performing. There are actually two kinds of Goffman performer: the ones who conceal, as *conmen* do; and the ones who don't know they are performing. Of this second type there are two subdivisions: ordinary

* Emic and etic are anthropological terms often used together, meaning, respectively, "to experience a culture from the inside"; "to experience a culture from the outside."

people playing their "life roles" as waitresses, doctors, teachers, street people, etc. And those whose particular actions have been framed as a performance in documentary film, shows like *Candid Camera*, or on the 6 o'clock TV news. The woman whose children have perished in a fire in Brooklyn pours out her grief and bewilderment in front of and for whom? For the cameras, and behind them, invisible but present, the "public." Perhaps, even, for herself as later she watched replays of her own grieving. A person in a similar plight who does not "make the news" has not become a performer. There are real-life consequences: the woman on TV is likely to have offered to her the assistance of viewers moved by her circumstances, while an unbroadcast person in a similar fix will have to depend on her own resources and official aid only.⁷

Clearly, there are several bands of participation and reception, and these define what kind of performance is going on. The comparisons among framed-as performers, Goffman performers, and professional performers are depicted in figure 8.2. Using figures 8.1 and 8.2 together, one can situate performances of different cultures and genres. The main question one asks is whether a performance generates its own frame - is reflexive (self-conscious, conscious of its audience, the audience conscious of the performer being conscious of being a performer, etc.); or whether the frame is imposed from the outside, as when TV crews arrive at the scene of a "tragedy." In between these extremes are many gradations of purposeful concealment or information sharing - even what the US Government calls "disinformation" (what the Nazis called propaganda, what Madison Avenue calls a "campaign"). Concomitantly, there are degrees of publicly articulated performance conventions, staging, and training.

BIRDWHISTELL AND EKMAN

Ray Birdwhistell locates the sources of some of what Goffman discussed in very minute behavior observable only by studying human interactions as they are recorded and therefore susceptible to being slowed down, stopped, and repeated on film and tape.⁸ Can we call the facial gestures that Birdwhistell says happen in milliseconds - such as eyebrow flashes, the turn of the lips that characterize certain smiles, tongue flicks, etc. - "performances"? Birdwhistell says these "kinemes" are culture-specific. There is an American way of flashing the eyebrows - or, perhaps it is more accurate to say, there is an American cultural context within which brow flashes communicate culture-specific meanings. But kinemes are not under anyone's conscious control - unless, that is, you study them in slow motion, learn what muscles are involved, and train yourself to execute the gestures, as Birdwhistell himself has done (and as, I would

suppose, many actors have done from the days of Delsarte onward"). Birdwhistell is an animated lecturer precisely because he can demonstrate in terms of facial displays a midwestern American teenage female's mode of greeting as distinct from that of a teenager from the deep south. As Birdwhistell points out there is a difference between understanding kinemes as expressing meaning and situating those kinemes in the various cultural settings that give them distinct social meanings. The number of kinemes is limited: "the [American] kinemic catalogue will probably contain between fifty and sixty items" (Birdwhistell 1970: 27). But these items can be combined with each other in various social contexts to yield the full range of "American" body languages. Birdwhistell's work has been used in conjunction with Goffman's as the basis of many workshops in body language and management of expressive behavior - what Arlie Hochschild (1983) calls "deep acting."¹⁰

Maybe the "deepest" acting goes on at the neurological level. Paul Ekman's work in this area, though apparently inimical to Birdwhistell's (the two have debated each other), actually meshes productively with it. Ekman believes that there are universally recognized facial displays of "target emotions." Ekman and his colleagues are currently detailing relationships between the autonomic nervous system (ANS) and acting. Here I mean acting as done by professional stage actors, though I do not doubt that similar results would be obtained using Goffman performers. In fact, the evidence is accumulating that the difference between "ordinary behavior" and "acting" is one of reflexivity: professional actors are aware that they are acting.¹¹

Ekman's experiments show that the six "target emotions" of surprise, disgust, sadness, anger, fear, and happiness elicit "emotion-specific activity in the ANS" (figure 8.3). He got these data in two ways, using actors from San Francisco's American Conservatory Theater. In one, subjects "were told precisely which muscles to contract . . . constructing facial prototypes of emotion muscle by muscle"; in the other, "subjects were asked to experience each of the six emotions . . . by reliving a past emotional experience for 30 seconds" (Ekman 1983: 1208-9). This reliving of a past emotional experience is the classic acting exercise from the turn of the century, called "emotion memory" or "affective memory" by the Russian theater director Konstantin Stanislavski (see note 10). Stanislavski developed this exercise to help actors actually live on stage the emotional lives of the characters they were portraying. The same exercise, with modifications, is practiced today by many actors following the Method of Lee Strasberg and his Actors' Studio in New York.¹² In fact, Ekman wrote, "The idea of studying actors was suggested to me by Lee Strasberg some years ago. Although I never met Strasberg, we corresponded at some length about how our research might be used to explore the nature of the physiological changes that can

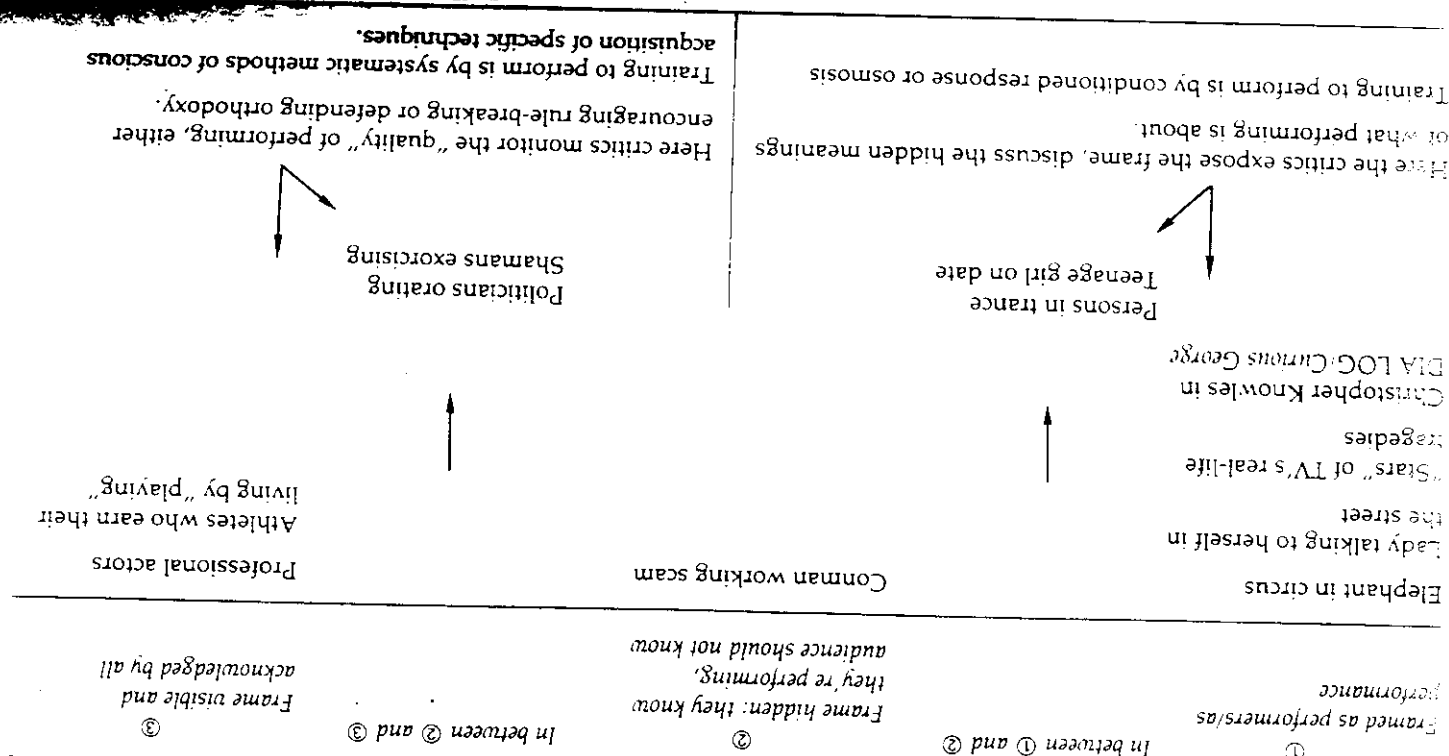
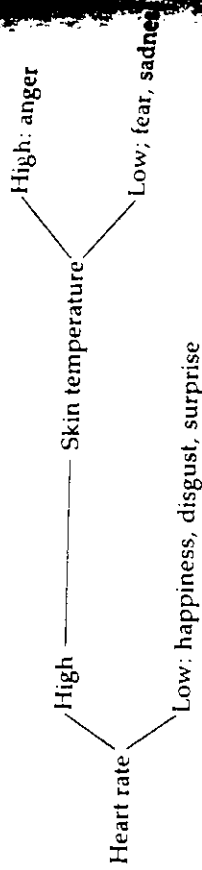


Figure 8.2

Figure 8.3 Emotions that Ekman (1983: 1209) distinguishes on the basis of hear-rate and skin-temperature differences



occur when the 'method' is used" (Ekman 1983: personal communication).

The actors who made Ekman's faces were not aware of what emotions they were constructing; rather they were coached muscle by muscle as they looked at themselves in mirrors.¹³ Their work was a *flagrant* demonstration of "mechanical acting" – the kind despised by most American performers, but exactly what is learned by Indian young boys beginning their studies as performers in kathakali dance-theater. There is a most rigorous system of body and facial training is followed, one that more or less adheres to the ancient Sanskrit text on theater, the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which I will discuss below in connection with Ekman's work. What should be noted now is that the facial and body displays practices by students of kathakali are not "natural" but exaggerated, wholly composed "deconstructions/reconstructions" of human behavior (see Schechner 1985: 213–60 and Zarrilli 1984). If the kathakali displays also elicit changes in the ANS, might this not indicate that the human neurological system accepts a very deep emotional learning? That is, human "fixed action patterns" or "ethological rituals" might be specifically transformable – a Batesonian play frame built into the brain.

As noted, reliving emotions from past experience is an exercise familiar to anyone who has studied acting in America. It is so common, in fact, that many people working in experimental theater eschew it, detesting its clichés, lack of spontaneity, and underlying mechanistic approach to human feelings: the performer is drawn away from the actual present circumstances on stage, concentrating instead on a "there and then" experience bootlegged into the present. On the other hand, such powerfully relived feelings generate performances in many ways similar to trance.

What is truly surprising about Ekman's experiment is not that emotional recall works, but that "producing the emotion-prototypic patterns of facial muscle action resulted in autonomic changes of large magnitude that were more clear-cut than those produced by reliving emotions" (Ekman 1983: 1210). That is, mechanical acting worked better than getting the actor to feel. This is absolutely contrary to the Stanislavski-

Grasberg canon. It also suggests that Hochschild's "deep acting" exists at the ANS level. And it asks for Birdwhistell's kinemes to be tested: do culture-specific facial displays also affect the ANS? Just how labile are humans, and to what level of the nervous system? Acting – professional and/or Goffman types – may be more than a neocortical event; acting may engage the old-mammalian and reptilian brains.

Ekman's experiment adds a new dimension to a growing body of evidence that suggests:

1. There are universal signals that not only repeat signifiers but signifieds: a "universal language," if you will, of "basic emotions" (see especially Ekman-Eibelsfeldt 1979).
2. This "language of emotions" is nonverbal and consists mostly of facial displays, vocal cries, body postures (freezes), and movements (stamping, rushing, reaching).
3. There is a corresponding universal system in nerve and brain process – and this system probably underlies what anthropologists have called ritual (see Turner 1985 and d'Aquili, Laughlin, and McManus 1979).
4. The culture-specific kinemes that Birdwhistell finds are built on top of and out of the "universal language of emotions." That is, the universal language is neither static nor fixed but transformable – the more so, the more conscious individuals are of it. Professional performers – from shamans to actors in soap operas – skillfully manipulate the relationships between the two corresponding systems, the universal and the culture-specific.

Thus performances "take place" all along the continuum from brain events to public events of great spatial and temporal magnitude.

Ekman's findings do not invalidate what Birdwhistell and like-minded researchers have been saying: that each culture has its own way of encoding, using, contextualizing, and making into art the multi-channelled systems of non-verbal and paraverbal expressions. I want to go further. Each human group – family, circle of friends, work group, ensemble – develops its own dialect of movement. Artists are particularly adept at constructing variations of basic codes. This is what "style" is all about. What a theater work is – not all it is, but the core of its "originality" – is how far a work can speak its own language without becoming unintelligible. Works called avant-garde or experimental sometime go beyond this boundary, are rejected, only to be later incorporated into the canon as mainstream codes catch up with the avant-garde and critics and public learn what the previously rejected works were "about." That is, they learn to contextualize the works, to relocate the boundaries of accepted conventions to include works that were previously out of bounds. If this doesn't happen, the works are forgotten.

THE NATYASAŚTRA

The *Natyasastra*, compiled in India between the second century BCE and the second century CE, describes in great detail various facial and bodily poses and expressions needed to perform the "eight basic emotions" of classical Indian dance-theater: love, happiness, sadness (or grief), anger, energy, fear, disgust, and surprise. A ninth emotion, peace or sublime tranquility (*śānta*) was added later (see plates 8.1–8.9). Humankind has countless gods, but I would be very surprised if there were not some agreement concerning the "basic emotions." Love, energy, and peace are not on Ekman's list, possibly because he considers them to be "mixed" or composite emotions.

Compare one of Ekman's muscle-by-muscle descriptions with what the *Natyasastra* instructs the actor to do. Ekman (1983: 1208) says the fear face is made by raising the eyebrows and pulling them together, raising the upper eyelids, and then stretching the lips horizontally back toward the ears. The *Natyasastra* deals with several kinds of fear and different classes of characters each of which reacts differently to fear. But there are some possible generalizations. In Ghosh's translation (Bharata-muni 1967: 144): "Fear is to be represented on stage by . . . shaking of the narrow limbs, body tremors, paralysis, goose pimples, speaking with a choked voice." Regarding the eyes and surrounding musculature, of which Ekman makes so much, the *Natyasastra* states: "the eyelids are drawn up and fixed, and the eyeballs are gleaming and turned up" (p. 155); and "the eyes are widely opened, the eyeballs are mobile in fear and are away from the center [of each eye] (p. 157). Also, "the glance in which the eyelids are drawn up in fear, the eyeballs are trembling, and the middle of the eye is full blown due to panic is called *Trāsta* [frightened]" (p. 159). But the *Natyasastra* is not entirely consistent. Its authors are always quoting *ślokas* (sacred couplets). Sometimes these say that fear is to be represented by half-closed eyes. The *Natyasastra* is not a scientific study but a compilation of the stage experience by many actors over a span of centuries. A wide variety of emotions is conveyed by specific facial and bodily gestures for the eyes, eyelids, eyebrows, nose, cheeks, lower lip, chin, mouth, and neck; there are also sixty-seven gestures for the hands and many gestures for other parts of the body.

No one knows exactly how, in its day, the *Natyasastra* was put into action. Most probably it was a text like Stanislavski's books or Jerzy

Plates 8.1–8.9

Plates on left The nine rasas performed in kathakali. (Photographs by Phillip Zarrilli)

Plates on right The six key emotions as expressed in the face according to Paul Ekman. (Photographs courtesy of Paul Ekman and Wallace V. Friesen)



1 Śṛṅgārā: love, happiness



2 Hāsya: mirth but also impudence



3 Karuṇā: sadness



Ekman: happiness



Ekman: sadness



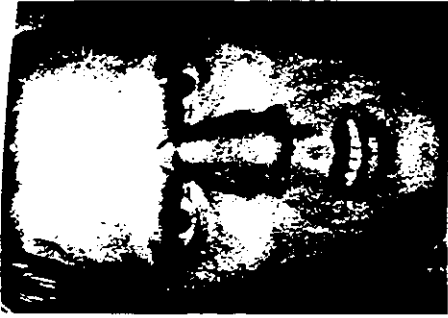
4 Kaudra: anger, violence



5 Vira: vigor, heroism



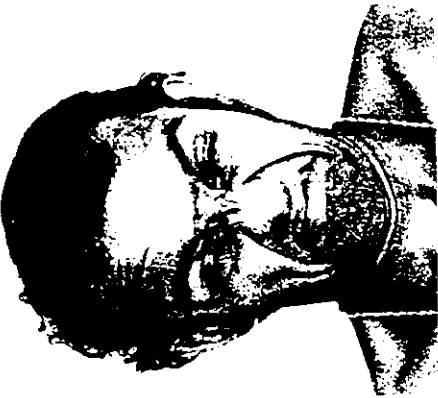
6 Bhavanaka: fear, guilt



Ekman: anger



Ekman: fear



7 Bibhasa: disgust



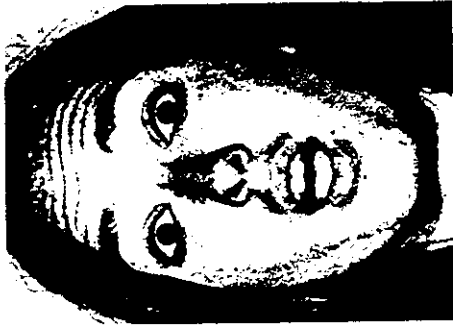
8 Adbhuta: surprise, excitement



9 Sama: peace, meditation



Ekman: disgust



Ekman: surprise

Grotowski's *Towards a Poor Theatre* (1968a), a collection of examples that proved successful on stage. As such the *Natyasastra* serves as a node or transfer point linking previous practice with future practice. The hiatus of several centuries divides the Sanskrit theater of the *Natyasastra* with even the oldest of the still-performed Indian dance-theater, the *kutiatlam* of Kerala. But in *kutiatlam*, as in its sister genre, *kathakali*, rigorous training continues the tradition of the *Natyasastra*. In *kathakali*, there are numerous exercises for the eyes and facial mask (see plates 8.10–8.12).

In these exercises the forehead, eyebrows, eyelids, cheeks, and lips are all manipulated independently to gain individual control of the muscles like that demanded of the eyes. The eyebrows are exercised up and down while the eyes remain fixed on one point. While keeping the eyebrows raised and the eyes open and fixed on a point, the eyelids are independently articulated and fluttered. The lips and cheeks are exercised by practicing a closed-lip smile. . . . Similarly the muscles must be exercised to gain the pliability to give a broad frown. . . . While the facial mask is exercised, the young student must also learn the nine basic facial expressions which correspond to the nine permanent *bhavas* [feelings] and the corresponding *rasas* [emotions aroused in performer and spectator]. At first each facial expression is taught in purely technical terms.

(Zarrilli 1984: 133)

In the hands of a *kathakali* master these disciplines are not constraints, but the means to precise and spontaneous performances.

The *Natyasastra* – and the arts based on it – insist on what Ekman's experiments show: there are links between "mechanical acting" and feelings; the causal chain can go in both directions: feelings can lead to stage action while the practice of specific stage exercises can arouse feelings in the actor. In a definable way the performer can be moved by her/his own performance. Thus the performance – the psychophysical score of a scene, dance, piece of music, etc. – occupies a space *between* the performer who is doing the action and the spectator who is receiving it. The performer performing can be the "objective correlative" T. S. Eliot finds in the enunciable literary text.¹⁴ Reading the *Natyasastra* and studying the dance-theater forms using it reveals that *abhinaya* – acting – is not only the means by which the audience gets the performance but also the way in which the actors get it – the "it" being not only gestures but the feelings as well: feelings which are aroused by the practice of the proper gestures.

Take *kathakali*, for example.¹⁵ The basis for becoming a *kathakali* performer is mastering a certain body configuration with its attendant steps, gestures of the hands, feet, torso, and face – especially the mouth, forehead, eyebrows, and eyes – in what to an American appears to be a very

Plate 8.10 Two *kathakali* trainees at the Kerala Kalamandalam are massaged in order to give their bodies flexibility, shaping their bodies into proper *kathakali* instruments. (Photo: Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi)



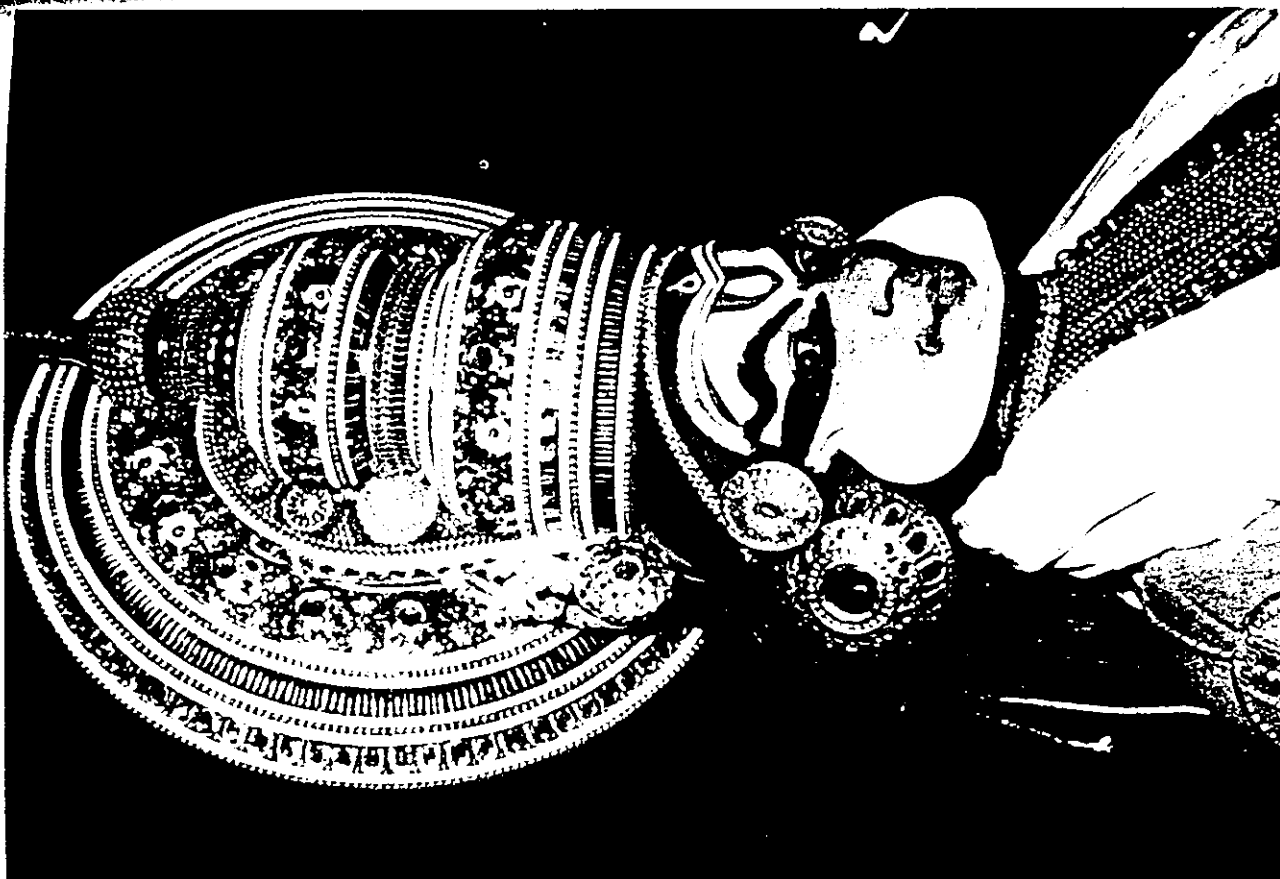
Plate 8.11 A trainee at the Kerala Kalamandalam practicing his eye exercises. Facial expression, including precise control of the eyes, is essential in *kathakali*. (Photo: Richard Schechner)



mechanical way. Boys begin training between the ages of 8 and 16, the younger the better. They train for six or more years as their bodies are literally massaged and danced into shapes suited to kathakali. Even as they are learning the stories – taken mostly from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and the *Puranas* – their faces, feet, hands, and backs are learning by rote the sequences that add up to the finished performances. These sequences do not “make sense” by themselves; they equivocate concerning Ekman’s assertions of universals. But these sequences can be thought of as aesthetic ritualizations of already ethologically ritualized “natural” displays. To a person educated in kathakali’s face and hand language, the dancing makes sense, gestures convey specific meanings – as concrete and definite as American Sign Language. As they begin their training the boys have little idea, except as spectators, about these finished performances. But somewhere along the way the training “goes into the body” (as the Balinese, who use similar methods of training, say). An illumination of sorts occurs: what is being written in the bodies of the dancers is read *from the inside* by each of them.

What was rote movement, even painful body realignment, becomes second nature – a full language capable of conveying detailed and subtle meanings and feelings. The maturing performer now begins to internally experience his role with a force every bit as powerful as what an American Stanislavski-trained actor might experience. I believe that if such a kathakali performer were tested for ANS variation the results from the composed, performed facial displays would not be less pronounced or in any way markedly different from those of the muscle-by-muscle enactment of the “natural” emotions tested by Ekman. Aesthetic acting, learned from the outside, “composed” and culturally determined, penetrates deep into the brain. What was at the start of training an external effect becomes during the course of training an internal cause. As Padmanathan Nair, one of the best kathakali actors, told me in 1976: “A good actor is the one who understands the character very well, thus becoming the character itself. . . . [But] we should not forget ourselves while acting. While acting, half of the actor is the role he does and half will be himself.” Bertolt Brecht, so affected by Chinese acting, would have been very pleased with Nair’s answer. The “half actor” who is the role is the one who has internalized the fixed gesture patterns of kathakali; the “half actor” who is himself is the one observing, manipulating, and enjoying the actions of the other half. To achieve this kind of acting it is necessary to assimilate into the body the precise second-by-second details of performing. In kathakali, at least, this kind of mastery begins mechanically, *à la* Ekman; “feeling” at the experiential and/or ANS level comes later.

Plate 8.12 A fully made up kathakali face, ready for performing. Even with the extreme stylization of the makeup, gesturing with the face is a very important part of expressing the role. (Photo: Clifford R. Jones)



LYING AND THE PERFORMER'S THREE HALVES

A depiction not merely of emotions, but of emotions that can easily be recognized, that can be composed and communicated – the raw material of theater wherever it is found – is also the stuff lies are made of. As Ekman points out the face is not only a truth-teller but a liar without peer. And lying, as much as truth-telling, is the stock in trade of theater.

The face appears to be the most skilled nonverbal communicator and perhaps for that reason the best "nonverbal liar," capable not only of withholding information but of simulating the facial behavior associated with a feeling which the person is in no way experiencing.

(Ekman 1972: 23)

Here the Ekman of 1972 does not yet know what the Ekman of 1983 found out: that the "mechanical" construction of a face in the configuration of a "target emotion" elicits an ANS response, i.e. an "experience." Thus lying is a very complicated business in which the skilled liar – a person who can make a convincing face – *knows* he is lying but *feels* he is telling the truth (see Ekman 1985). Exactly Nair's (and Brecht's) response. The half actor who "does not forget" himself is the knower, the half who "becomes the character itself" is the feeler. Exactly how this works neurologically remains to be investigated. Possibly there is a right-brain left-brain operation going on.

This would suggest, even, that a skilled performer has "three halves." Both the ergotropic and trophotropic systems are aroused, while the "center" of the performer, the "I," stands outside observing and to some degree controlling both the knower and the feeler. Clearly a complex operation engages both the cognitive and the affective systems simultaneously, without either one washing out the other. A similar "triple state" accompanies some kinds of trance, while in other kinds of trance the feelings may be so powerful that they blot out entirely both the "knowing half" and the "observing/controlling" half of the performer.

Actor training in many cultures is largely about manipulating, controlling, manifesting, and communicating exact gestures, sounds, and other behaviors that elicit in the spectators particular *rasas* or feelings. It is not always expected that the actor experience the *rasa* s/he is producing. Of course, in some systems, both in the west and elsewhere, "authentic" feelings are asked of the performer.

The degree of authenticity required by varying genres of behavior (you see, I am going beyond "theater" and into "life") gets back to figure 8.2. Sometimes there is a mix of contexts and manipulations where ambivalence and ambiguity are delighted in. For example, animals at the circus are not aware of the varying human social and cognitive contexts of their behaviors. But it is these contexts that make the show enjoyable to the

human spectators. The elephant bowing at the end of "his" act is not saying "thank you" although the spectators receive the elephant's behavior as such and applaud even louder accordingly. But how is what the elephant does different from what Laurence Olivier did when, in blackface, as Othello, raging, "Down, strumpet!" he takes up the pillow to murder Desdemona? The difference is that Olivier's knowing half knows he is just acting and as such controls his gestures so that he does not injure the actress playing Desdemona. Even more, Olivier feels and does not feel rage against that actress. Olivier is absorbed in the task of "performing the actions that communicate to himself and to his audience the emotions required." The whole bundle is necessary in order to understand this kind of acting. The Balinese dancer in trance is in a middle position. She might not know at the time that she has been dancing, that the *dedari* (gods) have possessed her. But before and after dancing, she knows what trance is (in her culture), what the proper gestures are, what behavior is acceptable *while in trance* (even how far "out of control" to get). The trancer's situation is very different from that of the crazy lady shouting to the wind on a street in Manhattan. The crazy lady is talking so convincingly to an absent Other that around her has gathered an absorbed, amused crowd. She may be performing the gestures of a great monologist, but prompted by some interior cue she is no better off than the circus elephant. Worse, even, because no trainer can get her to stop "acting," no shout of "Fire!" will make her quit the stage for a safe exit.

Or take Christopher Knowles, the "brain-damaged" or "non-ordinary" or "specially creative" boy (depending on one's point of view regarding the ancient and widespread tradition of using such people as entertainers) who worked with Robert Wilson in the 1970s. They did a two-person show, *DJA LOG/Curious George*, where Knowles was – like the circus elephant or the lady in the street – just "being himself." Wilson contextualized his interactions with Knowles as a performance for the public who paid fancy prices to witness and admire it. Sometimes Knowles' responses to his way of retelling the children's story, and Wilson's questions to Knowles, were very funny, wise, ironic, appropriate: one of those Simpleton Saints. Saint or not, Knowles was an elephant bowing at the circus – whatever his remarks meant to members of the audience they meant, or were, something else to Knowles. Because Knowles couldn't lie, he couldn't be a liar – he could only be *situated and displayed as if he were an actor* inside of Wilson's show.

BRAIN LATERALIZATION AND PERFORMANCE

But how can one specify the differences between performances that are so only contextually and those that the performer is conscious of

Theatrical performance – from trance to Olivier to kathakali – seems to be a peculiar human activity in which there is high arousal of both ergotropic and trophotropic systems while some of the center – the “normal I” – is held back as an observing-controlling self. Performance training is the development of a number of communicative skills *plus* learning how to arouse the two extremes of brain activity without canceling out the center “I” self; the theatrical performer never wholly loses self-control. Precisely how this is done in terms of neurobiology remains to be discovered, though I believe Ekman’s work on the relation between the ANS and facial muscular control is a big step in the right direction. Strong theatrical performances are thus dangerous – on the edges – and yet playful; they are examples of psychophysical “deep play.”¹⁶

Trance performances are on or even over the edge: self-control is reduced to a minimum or absent, thus the necessity for helpers – people who stay out of trance specifically to aid those who are in trance, preventing injuries, assisting the trancers as they come out of trance. The crazy lady in the street is not in trance because she has no way out. She has surrendered to, or been taken over by, schizophrenia. The normal “I” self has been permanently abolished. Christopher Knowles and the circus elephant have a “damaged” or non-existent “I.”

Performing artists are forever playing around – not only with the codes, frames, and metaframes of communication – but with their own internal brain states. Although artistic and scientific creativity have long been thought to be similar, there is this decisive difference: scientists focus their work on external phenomena; even a neurobiologist works on somebody else’s brain. Performing artists – and, I would say, mediators, shamans, and trancers too – work on themselves, trying to induce deep psychophysical transformations either of a temporary or of a permanent kind. The external art work – the performance the spectators see – is the visible result of a dialog among: 1) the conventions or givens of a genre, 2) the stretching, distorting, or invention of new conventions, and 3) brain-centered psychophysical transformations of self.

PERFORMATIVITY, THEATRICALITY, AND NARRATIVITY

In other writings (Schechner 1985) I have described in detail the deconstruction/reconstruction process that performers use to effect transformations of self. This process, present in different cultures and genres under various names, is the “ritual process” Van Gennep first specified and Turner explicated. D’Aquila, Lex, and Fischer investigate the same process from a neurological perspective. From a theatrical perspective what happens is that a person enters training or workshop as a “fixed”

or “finished” or “already-made” being. The training consists of specific methods of “beaking down” the neophyte, of rendering her/him psychophysically malleable. Quite literally the performer in training (or workshop) is taken apart, deconstructed into bits. The “bit” is not only computer jargon but a venerable theater term meaning the smallest repeatable strip of action. Bits are as important to *commedia dell’arte* as they are to naturalistic or even formalistic acting; a bit is a molecule of action. The boys learning kathakali repeat the same bits over and over. Directors are always telling actors to “take that bit again” because it is at the bit level that acting can be “worked on” from the outside. Stanislavski, co-founder of the Moscow Art Theater and progenitor of the first and still the most influential school of modern acting and directing, broke down the scores of his *misès-en-scène* into bits (sometimes translated into English as “beats”¹⁷).

Once bits are freed from their attachment to larger schemes of action, they can be rearranged – almost as the frames of a film being edited are rearranged – to make new actions. This rearranging is not mechanical, for it is accompanied by varying degrees of self-conscious, reflexive reconstruction. How these rearrangements are accomplished in different cultures and genres varies. Sometimes the methods are kept secret as in *nôh* theater or in some initiation rites. Sometimes there is the opposite tendency – even a passion to spread the techniques as with many who make a career out of training actors and dancers. The devices of performer training go beyond the physical into realms of simulation, feigning, pretending, playing around with – all kinds of “as if-ing.” Every performer knows that this kind of playing around is a dangerous game verging on self-deception accepted as truth.¹⁸

Human communications systems are not reducible to the static model of “sender-channel-receiver,” or any variation thereof, that assumes the existence of discrete parts. The human system is an extremely subtle multiplex-feedback one in which the originator of feelings is also affected by the emotions s/he is expressing – *even if these emotions are a lie*. That is what Ekman’s experiment, and good acting, are saying: the doing of the action of a feeling is enough to arouse the feeling both in the doer and in the receiver. Olivier need not work himself into a jealous rage against the actress playing Desdemona; but neither is he devoid of feelings; performing the actions of Othello will arouse Olivier. The so-called surface of emotion – the look on the face, the tone of the skin, the tilt of the body, the placement and moves of muscles – is also the emotion’s “depth.” Muscular, cortical, and subcortical routines are linked and can be mutually trained.

Ekman’s work and the instructions of the *Natyasastra* should caution scholars against depending on linguistic models when it comes to figuring out what’s going on during performances. There are no universals of

spoken or written language – no phonemes or graphemes that mean the same thing everywhere. Nor are there performance details at the level of artistic expression that are the same everywhere. But there are certain looks, sounds, and movements – certain facial displays, screams, laughs, sobs, crouches, stamps, and arm movements – which, if not universally understood, come close to conveying the same *feelings* everywhere. Nor are these feelings trivial: they constitute the very heart of human performing art and ritual. What I'm saying is that performances of theater, dance, music, ritual by the very nature of their existence as behavior – as things are done – give us our best examples for the intercultural study of human communication.

In a clumsy but ironically accurate way governments recognize this: from the most simple to the most sophisticated, when one group wants to communicate to another across various boundaries (linguistic, political, cultural, geographical) the main initial signal is an exchange of performances, a mutual display of rituals. There is something about dance, music, theater, and ritual that needs no translating – even as there is very much that is so culturally specific that it takes a lifetime of study to understand the performances of a culture not one's own. What jumps borders are the *rasas*, the “universal target emotions” and what is so very culturally specific are the definite “texts” – the particular minute weaves of interaction made from these universal target emotions.

In figure 8.1 I offered examples of performances of the varying magnitudes from the point of view of *mise-en-scène*, the various ways of organizing time, space, and events. But existing within these *mise-en-scène* are Ekman universals. If Ekman is correct and there are certain facial expressions recognized universally, and if his work could be extended to include “target” gestures, moves, and sounds all studied from an ethnological perspective, then we might be able to find out how performances use these universals. Do they build up from Ekman universals to Birdwhistell kinemes to specific genres to individual variations (the artist's “originality”)? Or is context the determining factor – so that performances actually “build down” from larger meaningful units to smaller and smaller meaningless “performables”? Brain events, microbits, and bits (see below for an explanation of this terminology) are not themselves units of meaning – they are like phonemes and words that acquire meaning only as used in sentences or bigger semantic units. Thus performances of small magnitudes gather meaning from their contexts. Or perhaps it is more complicated. Meanings may be generated and transformed up and down the various magnitudes.

Studies by Victor Turner (1985), Frederick Turner (1985), Melvin Konner (1982), and d'Aquili, Laughlin, and McManus (1979) signal a convergence of anthropological, biological, and aesthetic theory. The focus of this convergence is the human condition.

“finished product” toward examining the “whole performance sequence”: training, workshop, rehearsal, warm-up, performance, cool-down, and aftermath. When this whole sequence is considered, it becomes clear that the ritual process is identical to what I call “restored behavior,” “twice-behaved behavior,” behavior that can be repeated, that is, rehearsed (see Schechner 1985: 3–150). Ritual process is performance.

From this perspective, performance magnitudes are not only about time and space but also about extensions across various cultural and personal boundaries. Thinking this way raises provocative questions: When is a performance a performance? How long does a strip of behavior have to be before it can be said to be performable in the ritual or aesthetic sense? When strips of behavior are taken from one context and played in another does it make any difference if, in the replaying, the strip means something entirely different from what it meant “originally”? These transformations of meaning are inevitable if context determines meaning. But it's not so simple, because every strip, no matter how small, brings some of its former meanings into its new context. That kind of “memory” is what makes ritual and artistic recombinations so powerful.

To jump still farther ahead, it seems to me that the human community taken as a whole is entering a postmodern phase where the construction of intercultural aesthetics and ritual is essential. This ethnopoetics¹⁹ occurs on three levels simultaneously: at the panhuman Ekman level where research might lead to the confirmation of the existence of some kind of behavioral version of Jungian archetypes; at the sociocultural level of diverse, particular performances: what anthropologists and performance theorists have until now focused on; at an emerging posthumanist, postmodern level of the exchange of information through multiplex channels – a kind of intercultural reflexivity.²⁰

Stay with me a bit longer. Are we to call the facial gestures Ekman described “performances”? Why not? Can't they be brought under conscious control? So, too, we can call the vast social dramas that Turner describes as “performances” – even though they may involve whole societies for years. Surely the events in Lebanon over however many decades make a well-knit Turnerian social drama, one that can never get beyond crisis and failed redressive action. Media encourages these large-scale dramas to be viewed with varying degrees of anxiety and amusement by hundreds of millions of people. A “Rashomon effect”²¹ occurs where the same data are woven into many different narratives according to cultural bias, editing, and individual interpretation – and these become parts of a Geertzian interpretation of cultures *by* different cultures.

The work for performance theorists now is to correlate a number of performance magnitudes identifying the transformational systems operating among them. Let me suggest seven “performance magnitudes” whose interconnectedness ought to be explored:

1. Brain event: the neurological processes linking cortical to subcortical actions; ANS; the ergotropic-trophotropic system. Ekman's recent work, the speculations of d'Aquili and Lex. Turner's last investigations concerned these processes (1983). "Deep acting" works on this level as well as on levels 2 and 3.
2. Microbit: seen only with the help of the slow-motion or stop-action camera. What Birdwhistell says delimits the kinemic vocabularies of discrete cultures.
3. Bit: the smallest unit of consciously controllable repeatable behavior. Ekman composes his subjects' faces bit by bit in order to affect their ANS at the brain event level. Directors and choreographers often work bit by bit, especially if they wish to compose images without interference by the performers' intentions.
4. Sign: composed of one or more bits and readable as an emotion, a piece of discrete information. Ekman claims that certain facial displays are universal signs. Ordinarily theater and dance deal with events at the sign, scene, or drama levels. It is at these levels that spectators consciously receive performances.
5. Scene: a sequence of one or more signs that make up a whole unit of interaction. Goffman studied these. Narrative structures are visible at this level.
6. Drama: a complex, multiplex system of scenes ranging from aesthetic dramas to Balinese cockfights to initiations to long cycle plays such as the Ramlila or the Yaqui Easter passion play. Geertz and Turner have analyzed these from a narrative point of view.
7. Macro-drama: large-scale social actions viewed performatively – what Turner calls "social drama" where whole communities act through their collective crises.

As we understand the relationships among these seven magnitudes – how, especially, the smaller are elicited, manipulated, and then composed into the larger and how the larger deport meanings down to the smaller – I think theorists will be able to better distinguish "performativity" from its close relations, "theatricality" and "narrativity." Performativity is present in all seven magnitudes but most decisively at levels 1, 2, and 3: the brain event, microbit, and bit. Theatricality begins with level 3, the bit, and is dominant at levels 4 and 5, the sign and the scene. Theatricality is absorbed *as scene* into levels 6 and 7, dramas and macro-dramas. Narrativity begins at level 5, the scene, and is dominant at levels 6 and 7, the drama and macrodrama.

Ekman's work centers on performativity. Birdwhistell focuses on the area between performativity and theatricality. Goffman deals with theatricality. Turner, during most of his life, was concerned with narrativity – his theory of social drama can best be understood as a theory of

performed narrative. Toward the end of his life, Turner became more and more interested in performativity, thus his speculations in "Body, Brain, and Culture" (1983).

Performativity – or, commonly, "performance" – is *everywhere* in life, from ordinary gestures to macrodramas. But theatricality and narrativity are more limited, if only slightly so. Differences in degree of magnitude do lead to differences in kind. Aesthetic genres – theater, dance, music – are framed theatrically, signaling the intentions of their composers to their publics. Other genres are frequently not so clearly marked – but this does not make them any less performative. And although performativity permeates all seven magnitudes, it doesn't work the other way round. There is neither narrativity nor theatricality in a brain event. Performer training begins below the level of theatricality or narrativity; workshops and rehearsals often deal at these sub-theatrical, sub-narrative levels. Scholars who want to understand these formative processes must not focus on shows put on for the public – even Goffmanian performances of everyday life – but must attend to the brain events, microbits, and bits that pre-exist performances of larger magnitudes.

There is a continuity of performance magnitudes, from interior brain events to bits of training and the making of signs and scenes – the deconstruction/reconstruction process of workshops and rehearsals – on to public performances of varying scales – the end point being performances of worldwide or even cosmic dimensions, such as the Olympics, the shooting down of KAL 007, or Lowry Burgess's *Quiet Axis*.²² Some of these are media events, some social dramas, some art works. We have entered the epoch where a performance can be *both* a social drama and a media event, for example, the Iranian hostage crisis of 1980. However limited their magnitude at their points and moments of origin – a lone 747 trailed by a single fighter, an artist conceiving an art work – they soon catch a larger audience. Some net hundreds of millions of people in narrative and symbolic macrodramas unique to our own times and technologies. Others, like Allan Kaprow's recent private happenings,²³ remain intimate, almost dimensionless both spatially and temporally.

To what degree does our very survival as a species depend on how peoples and their leaders "act," not only in the sense of comportment but also in the theatrical sense? Exactly how a crisis is "handled" – played out, performed – becomes a matter of extreme importance. This brings me back to a basic paradox: humans are able to absorb and learn behavior so thoroughly that the new "performed" behavior knits seamlessly into ongoing "spontaneous" action. Performance magnitude means not only size and duration but also extension across cultural boundaries and penetration to the deepest strata of historical, personal, and neurological experience.

NOTES

1. See Victor Turner 1969, 1974, and 1982. For a discussion of why it might be better to apply not one but several performance theory templates in inter-cultural studies, see Schechner 1985: 3–34.
2. Evolutionary progressions applied to performance make me very uncomfortable. Why ought theater, dance, and professional and/or recreational sports "come from" ritual – as if ritual were the great unitarian artwork of prehistory shattered into the multiple genres of classical, modern, and post-modern societies? Rather, ritual as a *genre* exists side by side with the other performative genres. As far as the *ritual process* is concerned, I've discussed elsewhere how ritual process = performance-making process; therefore the ritual process was always part of performance, as much at the beginning as now (see Schechner 1985: 35–116; 261–94).
3. For a recent discussion of the complex relationship between anthropologists and the cultures they study, see Marcus and Fischer 1986. For a particular example of what happened in Kerala, India, when a team of scholars and film-makers studied *agnicayana*, a "vedic ritual," see my discussion of the filming of the 1975 *agnicayana*, my review of Frits Staal's *Agni*, Staal's response to my review, and my response to Staal's response (Schechner 1985: 55–65; Schechner 1986b; Staal 1987; Schechner 1987a).
4. According to Lex, "*Ergotropic* response consists of augmented sympathetic discharges, increased muscle tonus, and excitation in the cerebral cortex manifested as 'desynchronized' resting rhythms; the *trophotropic* pattern includes heightened parasympathetic discharges, relaxed skeletal muscles, and synchronized cortical rhythms" (1979: 135). The *ergotropic/trophotropic* responses are related to the distinct functions of the two hemispheres of the frontal cortex. Brain studies show that the two hemispheres are each specialized, though not as absolutely as the popular literature suggests. The right hemisphere is visual-spatial while the left is verbal and mathematical; trophotropic responses are associated with the right hemisphere, ergotropic with the left.
5. For Turner's discussion of "performing ethnography," see Turner 1986: 139–55.
6. See Goffman's extensive writing on this subject: 1959, 1961, 1963a, 1963b, 1967, 1969, 1971, and 1974. As people become aware of performance techniques, they learn how to manipulate them. Workshops teach people how to perform in everyday life. It goes without saying that media skills – and the professional staff to exploit them – are necessary to every politician's career. Those interested in the classics of performance relevant to today's world ought to study not Aristotle's *Poetics*, but his *Rhetoric*.
7. See my "News, Sex, and Performance Theory," in Schechner 1985: 295–324.
8. See Birdwhistell 1964b and 1970 and Schefflen 1973.
9. According to theater historian Marvin Carlson (1984), François Delsarte (1811–71) began his *Cours d'esthétique appliqué* in 1839. The unfinished work, handed

down in sometimes contradictory forms by his disciples, gained a reputation quite the opposite of what its originator intended. Delsarte, reacting against the mechanical and formalized actor training of his time, attempted to return to nature by carefully observing and recording those expressions and gestures produced not by art but by instinct and emotion. But when these were codified for his students, the result was yet another mechanical system, the formal details of which were so rigorously taught by Delsarte's disciples for the remainder of the century that even today his system is almost a synonym for mechanical, arbitrary expressions and gestures, the very thing it was created to prevent. (Carlson 1984: 218)

There is a lesson here. Human activity – both physical and mental – is so labile that whenever a system appears that is "based on nature" it invariably finally discloses itself as being a cultural construct. The so-called "natural system" develops sclerosis as its adherents defend it against inevitable cultural change. They think they are opposing nature to culture when no such opposition exists. At most, there is a continuous oscillation between genetic tendencies and cultural systems that rewrite these tendencies over and over again, each time somewhat differently. For an American interpretation of Delsarte's system – including many exercises – see Stebbins 1902, reprinted 1977.

10. As defined by Hochschild (1983), "deep acting" is acting done by a person with a "trained imagination." Using the work of Stanislavski as her guide, Hochschild discusses Stanislavski's particularly powerful "emotion memory" exercise, whereby a person imagines all the "given circumstances" of an event – for example, the room, the temperature, the people present, the time of day, the smells, and so on – and soon the emotions of the event are "spontaneously" relived in all of their original force. The parallels with Freud's "abreaction" are obvious. Hochschild shows how deep acting is used in everyday situations. "In our daily lives, offstage as it were, we also develop feeling for the parts we play; and along with the workaday props of the kitchen table or office restroom mirror we also use deep acting, emotion memory, and the sense of 'as if this were true' in the course of trying to feel what we sense we ought to feel or want to feel" (Hochschild 1983: 43). She then goes on to show how techniques of deep acting are used by corporations and other "emotion managers" who wish their employees – mostly people in service jobs – to actually feel what those managing the institution think the job requires them to feel if they are to be effective in their work. In such a setting, airline stewardesses and stewards are taught to enjoy being helpful, ambulance paramedics to remain cool and efficient in the face of life-and-death crisis, etc. Deep acting persists, even when the learned affect and behavior might be inappropriate. For example, when airline stewardesses suing United Airlines, which fired them because either they had married or turned 32, appeared on the stand they "behaved" more like hostesses than litigants. When the lawyer who is challenging their testimony stands up and says, "I am Mark Bigelow, representing United Airlines," the witness is as likely as not to lean forward with a big smile and say, "Hi!" (Lewin 1984: D1). Hochschild contrasts deep acting

with "surface acting" where "the expression on my face or the posture of my body feels 'put on'" (1983: 36). Paul Ekman's experiment with "put-on" faces, discussed below, shows that a put-on expression may affect the autonomic nervous system every bit as much as a feeling deeply acted.

11. In Indian and Japanese dance-theater – kathakali and kabuki, for example – non-ordinary body techniques are employed. Every gesture, look on the face, and move is codified. There is an extreme difference between the way each of these genres looks, but is there a corresponding interior difference? That is, were kathakali and kabuki actors portraying their stylized, codified displays of emotion tested, would their ANS show any, or as much, reaction as the actors Ekman tested? Or would the kathakali performers' responses differ from the kabuki performers'? That is, is it only "natural emotional displays" that yield ANS reactions, or will culturally composed displays do the same? My guess is that the culturally composed displays will affect the ANS.
12. For a discussion of the Method and other American variations of Stanislavski's system of actor training, see two special issues of *TDR*, *The Drama Review* devoted to "Stanislavski in America," 9 (1) and (2) (1964), and Christine Edwards' *The Stanislavski Heritage* (1965).
13. Ekman told me that he had repeated the experiment without mirrors and obtained the same results. This, he says, shows that the subjects were not responding to seeing their own faces, but only to the muscle-by-muscle "making" of the faces.
14. Eliot in his essay on *Hamlet* states: "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked" (1951: 145). This is precisely Stanislavski's "emotion memory" exercise.
15. For detailed descriptions and analyses of the training techniques in kathakali as practiced at the Kathakali Kalamandalam, India's première kathakali school, see Schechner 1985: 213–60 and Zarrilli 1984.
16. See Geertz 1973: 412–53.
17. The Russian émigrés – Richard Boleslavsky, Maria Ouspenskaya, Michael Chekhov – who first taught Stanislavski's system in America spoke with a heavy accent. When they said "bit" their students heard "beat." "Beat" seemed an appropriate musical metaphor, and so the new pronunciation stuck. But Stanislavski meant "bit," a term familiar to vaudeville entertainers as well as to actors on the legitimate stage.
18. A classic example of this in the anthropological literature is Lévi-Strauss's (1963: 167–85) account of Quesalid, the Kwakiutl who set out to expose the fakery of shamanism but ended up as a renowned shaman in his own right, believing in the very techniques he had intended to debunk. See chapter 7.
19. Jerome Rothenberg used the term "ethnopoetics" at least as early as 1975 when he and his co-editor Dennis Tedlock put out the first issue of *Alcheringa Ethnopoetics*. In 1983, starting his "Pre-Face" to *Symposium of the Whole: A Range of Discourse Toward an Ethnopoetics*, Rothenberg said:

The word "ethnopoetics" suggested itself, almost too easily, on the basis of such earlier terms as ethnohistory, ethnomusicology, ethnolinguistics, ethnopharmacology, and so on. As such it refers to a redefinition of poetry in terms of cultural specifics, with an emphasis on those alternative traditions to which the West gave names like "pagan," "gentile," "tribal," "oral," and "ethnic." In its developed form, it moves toward an exploration of creativity over the fullest human range, pursued with a regard for particularized practice as much as unified theory.

(Rothenberg and Rothenberg 1983: xi)

20. Efforts in this direction are visible both artistically and in terms of scholarship. The series of three conferences in 1981 and 1982, culminating in the World Conference on Theater and Ritual held in New York in August, 1982, is perhaps the clearest example of this effort. Chaired by Victor Turner and me, the conference brought together scholars and performing artists from Asia, Africa, Native America, and Euro-America who, over a nine-day period, discussed and saw performed examples of a number of genres. Attention was paid not only to the finished performances but to techniques of training, workshops, rehearsals, cool-down, and aftermath. The two other conferences in the series, involving fewer participants, considered Yaqui performing arts and contemporary Japanese theater. In the artistic sphere, a powerful "fusion movement" is combining Asian with western performance. This has resulted in a number of interesting productions and even a few new genres, such as Japanese *butoh* dance. And one must not forget the extremely active tourist promotion of performances. Most tourist performances are sub-genres sharing qualities of condensation and simplification and playing to audiences who want to be entertained. Some tours, however, blur into a kind of fieldwork, with qualified anthropologists and other experts setting up the programs. In all cases, there is a double pressure: to be "authentic" (a rotten term impossible to define), to modify what happens to suit the needs of the visiting group. Finally, many performing groups leave their home territories to bring their arts to strangers. This is not only a matter of western impresarios and organizations importing "native arts." Aboriginal Australian groups hold festivals where they can see each others' dances and exchange techniques. Once every four years an all-Pacific festival is held. Similar exchanges are increasing all around the world.
21. The "Rashomon effect" is named after Akira Kurosawa's 1950 film. In *Rashomon* a number of narrators present their version of an event whose "objective" truth can at best be vectored, not settled. As narrators change, so does "truth." But the "Rashomon effect," like the movie, is neither a celebration of relativism nor a skeptic's complaint. It is an unfolding of epistemological passion.
22. According to Burgess:

The Quiet Axis is an aesthetic structure that opens a benevolent revelation into the cosmos from the far side of the moon to the Large Cloud of Magellan. There are given zones or aspects of its manifestation beginning

with the Inclined Galactic Light Pond in Bamiyan, Afghanistan (1968-1974) passing through the earth to the second work called The Utopic Vessel (1974-1979) in the South Pacific Ocean beside Easter Island and from there extending into outer space and the southern heavens to the third realization called The Gate into Aether (1979-1988) and then returning through the earth and backward in time to the fourth twinned work called the Boundless Cubic Aperture (1980-1995). The fifth work, Memory and Forms of the Unmanifest, touches The Boundless Cubic Aperture on the far lunar surface. The sixth and seventh aspects address the center of the earth and violet stellar source that is centered in the Large Cloud of Magellan, a source 50,000 times more bright and energetic than the sun.

23. Kaprow distinguishes between what he calls "artlike art" and "lifelike art." Artlike art is familiar to people - galleries, theaters, opera houses, etc.: art that is art. Lifelike art is often indistinguishable from ordinary living. For example:

For each day of a week, around 3 p.m. when the wind rose on the dunes, a woman took a walk and watched her tracks blow away behind her. Every evening she wrote an account of her walk in her journal. To begin each successive day, she read her journal story and then tried to repeat exactly what had happened. She described this experience, in turn, as faithfully as possible, until the week elapsed. Half in jest, she wrote in one passage, "I wanted to see if I could stop change".

(Kaprow 1983: 100)

And then there are "conceptual performances" where events never happen at all: the thought process is enough.

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