The Performing 'I':

Performance, Self and Social Theory

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Introduction

This thesis aims to make space for a consideration of the phenomenon of performance in social theory, and to argue for the importance of continued efforts to theorise a performative perspective on social action. I wish to address what I believe is a significant absence in social theory - the lack of sustained attention to problems of the self in embodied, located interaction with others in space and time.

It is my contention that, in the absence of attention to processes of embodiment, theorisation of both the subject and the social is liable to drift into what might be called 'conceptualism'. As Heinz Kohut pointed out in the field of psychoanalysis, the higher the level of abstraction the greater the temptation to reify, or to treat the abstracted concept as having an independent operational existence (see Kohut 1977, 1985). Such intellectual constructs can certainly feed back into material social behaviour (what Giddens refers to as the 'double hermeneutic') when a theoretical abstraction attains sufficient epistemological force as to function as an image or a tool of discourse granted a generative verity (one has only to think of such terms as 'class conflict', 'the unconscious', 'the individual' and so on) within interactive processes.

I would have no hesitation in granting the same constitutive force to less highly wrought or everyday abstractions - encoded in cliche, fables, or litanies of 'how we/you should behave' - insofar as they attain a prescriptive/normaising level of linguistic formality and generality - that is, to the extent to which they participate in framing the boundaries of the discursive and behavioural (un)conscious operational in a particular context. However, to the extent to which formal operational concepts fail to provide an exhaustive
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explanation of the field which they purport to bifurcate, adoption of the opposite term in a binary pair is hardly likely to solve the presented dilemma - as indeed is demonstrated by the endemic struggles within feminist theory which seek to resolve the problem of whether, or how, to valorise an essential notion of 'the feminine'. In the case of the body/consciousness opposition, a consideration of a concretised 'body', or even 'the body' as a theoretical category is clearly not enough on its own to avoid the inadequacy contained in the very formulation of the opposition.1

I am proposing that a focus on performance - that is, on expressive social interaction - allows the theorist to investigate the nexus between the subject and the social, and between consciousness, the body and behaviour as it occurs in specific locations and instances over space and time.

It is without doubt that the field of enquiry thus outlined is an extraordinarily complex one. In this thesis, I have attempted to clarify the possible dimensions of the field covered by the 'performative perspective', and to provide a set of guidelines which might facilitate understanding, as well as suggest directions for future research.

The ensuing discussion will investigate the literatures of both social theory (including the writings of anthropological, feminist and cultural theorists) together with what might broadly be called performance theory (including drama and theatre theory). I wish to suggest that these two, quite disparate, traditions have useful and important things to say to one another; I am however consciously setting myself against the tide of what has been called 'the linguistic turn' in both social theory and recent theatre semiotics. It is my contention that the model of language is of restricted usefulness in dealing with the complexities of expressive interaction, and that
the confidence of theorists is misplaced who, with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, maintain that:

'We know no world that is not organized as a language, we operate with no other consciousness but one structured as a language - languages that we cannot possess, for we are operated by these languages as well. The category of language, then, embraces the categories of world and consciousness even as it is determined by them' (Spivak 1988: 77-78).

I would, rather, contend with Jiri Veltrusky that: 'Words cannot be fully translated into gestures, pictures, music; the meaning of a picture cannot be fully conveyed by language, music, the play of facial muscles, etc. Each of these types of sign is entirely different, each has its own unique ability to refer to certain kinds and certain aspects of reality and each is deficient in some other respects' (Veltrusky 1942 [unpubl.], quoted in Matejka and Titunik 1976: 281).

I will also argue the point that even a more general semiotic perspective is insufficient to comprehend the foundational indeterminacy of expressive and potentially expressive human behaviour. Subsemiotic transitions and imperfect exchanges between what Peggy Phelan has called 'the unmarked' (Phelan 1993) and the state Eugenio Barba has dubbed 'pre-expressivity' (Barba 1991:186-204), together with the processes whereby such subsemiotic expressivity is privileged or subordinated within fully formed semiotic systems, are as important a focus for performative research as are those modalities of semiosis that have attained the syntagmatic coherence of what might be called a 'language'. The question is not simply one of signification, but of what comes to be regarded as significant.

The constraints of this thesis unfortunately do not allow for a full discussion of the 'conversation' with the horizon of social theoretical writings which have led me to this point of departure. The residue may be felt as subterranean presences in turns of phrase, or references which imply the presence of an imagined auditor. In some
cases I have been able to direct the reader to sources through footnotes. In others I have had myself to create an 'absence' where I might have wished otherwise; for such omissions and for any undue compression of argument as a consequence I beg pardon.

The Dilemma of the Self in Performance.

In this thesis, I propose a focus on problems relating to the self in performance as a theoretical 'peg' on which to hang the various subthemes I wish to pursue. This should provide a narrative thread allowing us to negotiate the many cul de sacs in the performative maze, where an uncritical adoption of the path of previous explorers might leave us stranded.

I will be presenting the problem of the self in performance as a series of dilemmas - for the performer, for the observer, and for the bystander. The performer, the observer and the bystander represent notional positions within any one performative exchange, each of which will generate a particular perspective on the event. In any one specific exchange or matrix of exchanges, the context and circumstances which bound and shape the interaction will also contribute to the character of the experience as it might be perceived from any one of these positions; an individual interactant might experience one or more positionalities as significant over a period of time.

I am interested in the way images and concepts of the self are shaped, exchanged, and adopted by sets of human beings in such a way that changes in behaviour, and shifts in the vocabulary used to speak about and negotiate such changes, are brought about. This is especially at issue where the performer is likely to experience multiple or conflicting positionalities which will impact on the way they view themselves and their environment. This in turn
will affect the strategies they can, and see that they can, adopt (the mismatch between opportunity, information, desire and capacity being but one of the dilemmas that constantly confront the performing self).

My aim in exploring the outline of these dilemmas is less to construct new categories than to arrive at strategies which might allow social theory better to deal with the *exchanges* through which changes in selves are initiated, received, embodied and transmitted in more or less transformative ways. The particular content of these exchanges, and the systems of power/knowledge they exemplify, are likely to vary widely from one specific sociohistorical context to another. Max Weber's caveat in attempting to describe 'the spirit of capitalism' might well be applied to the effort to delineate 'the performing self':

'Such an historical concept, however ... cannot be defined according to the formula *genus proximum, differentia specifica*, but it must be gradually put together out of the individual parts which are taken from historical reality to make it up. Thus the final and definitive concept cannot stand at the beginning of the investigation, but must come at the end.' (Weber 1968: 47)

I would now like to introduce some working definitions which should serve as an introduction to the issues addressed in the main body of the thesis.

**The Self**

I should make clear at the outset that I propose to treat the self as *always embodied*. Thus abstract discussions of 'the self' will refer, both literally and metaphorically, to an experience as well as a point of view. The ground of self in my usage is a position and a perspective from which sensed, conceived and imagined events are experienced, and from which behaviours and actions emanate: the perspective of the performer, which is
necessarily that of a single human being. This ground can be (and has been) conceptually shaped to become a subject of discourse and an object of desire or avoidance within discursive regimes as a 'self'. Concepts of 'self' can thus be exchanged in the abstract, but will always be coloured by the particular practices of the particular contexts of self within which such discourses form. Whereas Kant, and following him Durkheim, created a clear conceptual distinction between the physical, sentient being and the intellectual, sapient, being, it is my intention to emphasise the links between concept, image, perception and sensation, together with the formative contribution of the actions and discourse of others, in the processes of mediation through which the self is shaped and expressed.

One of the central dilemmas for both philosophers and social theorists in speaking about subjectivity and/or the self in relation to the social world, is what appears as a paradox. On the one hand, is the persistent sense of singleness, of 'self' on the part of the individual person. On the other hand, as anthropological, sociological and historical research continues to demonstrate, human societies provide us with evidence that beliefs, behaviours, and social structures define and locate human beings in their subjectivity and in their being within social groups, whatever the differences between one group and another. We cannot speak of 'the self', in the way in which we in contemporary Western culture variously understand it, without having recourse to the long conceptual history, and to the matrix of assumptions and behaviours, with which it is surrounded, through which it manifests itself, and by means of which it is distinguished from other ways of describing human beings in their social world.

Steven Collins points out the fundamental difficulty here (Collins 1985). Either 'the self' is a universal and a priori category of human thought, or it is not. If it is, it cannot
be said to have a history as such. If it is not, and one adopts a thoroughly relativist or poststructuralist position, one cannot reliably arrive at generalisations on the basis of concepts or experiences held in common between cultures. However, simply constructing a supposedly universal category, such as 'the self' begs the question as to whether the concept actually exists in all human societies, or whether such a claim supports a dominant ideology at the expense of recognising differences that ought to be granted significance. The bulk of feminist theory, whether essentialist or deconstructive in intent, has devoted itself to revealing and disputing the unstated contents of supposedly universal propositions such as, for example, rationality or individuality, which on closer inspection can be shown to be heavily skewed towards masculine or patriarchal values (Stacey 1993). On the ethnographic level, there is evidence that simpler cultures such as the Gahuku-Gama of New Guinea, for example, have no expressed concept of the person. Despite strong, even violent, responses to infringements of personal boundaries, individual and social roles are not distinguished, but located within a strong bodily idiom which identifies parts of the body as essential constituents of the human personality (La Fontaine 1985: 128-30). It could be argued, therefore, that a broader term than 'the self' is required.

I have chosen to speak specifically of 'self' rather than of subjectivity, despite the danger that the term too closely implies a unitary entity, in order to remind both myself and the reader of the psychophysically situated character of what I would agree with Collins is a categorial and a priori human predicament - that of reconciling an often inchoate sense of an interior life (Kant's Gefühl eines Daseins) with the enabling and constraining pressures which work to pattern the person within the social world (see Collins 1985: 74-81).
In exploring further the implications of phases in the performance of the self which constitute dilemmas \textit{from the point of view of the performer}, I will have recourse to the vocabulary of G.H. Mead. This allows for a distinction between the 'me' and the 'I' as discursive positions; I will propose a further distinction between the discursive 'I' and what might be called the 'performing I'. The logic of these vocabulary choices will emerge as my argument develops in Chapters 1 to 3.

**Performance**

By 'performance' I mean to describe expressive social behaviour. Following John Cage (Cage 1968, 1979)\textsuperscript{3} I would characterise such behaviour as potentially having meaning either to the person whose behaviour is under scrutiny, to an observer, or to both. In this view, performance is distinguished from concepts of agency which rely on the attribution of consciousness and intention to the social actor. Performance is often, but not always, consciously shaped and often, but not always, the product of an intention to perform on the part of the performer. The performer may be largely unaware that her or his behaviour is open to interpretation as performance, and may well, if asked, offer an interpretation at odds with that of the observer. This is especially likely where the interpretive process involves an evaluative judgement of all or part of a performance.

Erving Goffman highlights the crucial relation between the performer and the observer, in pointing out that 'expressions given' and 'expressions given off' are equally weighted in deriving terms of meaning from the behaviour of human beings in their social context (Goffman 1971:16).

The self, from a performative perspective, is conceived as the dynamic outcome of the processes of its
constitution, rather than as a persistent theoretical object possessing particular taxonomic characteristics.\textsuperscript{4} A processual approach to the self, and to subjectivity identified as the performative aspect of the self, has been taken up under the influence of Foucault (Foucault 1977, 1981, 1986, 1987, 1988a & b), by radical social psychologists (Henriques et al 1984), and by theorists of the body writing from a perspective informed by a postmodern aesthetic (Feher et al 1989 a, b & c). In my view however, this processuality is still largely conceived at a textual, or relatively experience-distant, level. Introduction of the perspective of the performer is strategic here, in order to separate the work done on the self preparatory to and following on from its engagement with the social (the self concept or 'me' in its relation to 'you', 'us', 'it' or 'them'), from the self-at-the-moment-of-performance.

In using the term 'performance' I also intend to hold off as far as possible that image of noticeably inflected or overtly shaped expression often evoked in metaphors which link social life with the dramatic. Although social performers can be described as adopting character, mask or role in ways which are semiotically distinguishable from the behavioural personae previously identified as 'themselves', I wish to emphasise elements and processes common to a wide range of performance dilemmas rather than privilege attempts to distinguish within and between them.

However, by highlighting the patterned and contingent character of the self in performance, I am also drawing attention to questions of aesthetics, which I would argue necessarily attach to a performative perspective on social action. The dilemmas of art (including formal performance) are conventionally distinguished as belonging to a realm separate from everyday life, and demarcated by the acknowledgement, and suspension of
closure, of the fictive as if. Life, in this argument, is marked by the ways in which 'what if' is forced to account for itself in terms of what is. I will discuss the implications of the demand for closure within the boundaries of metaphysical systems treated as real, and which have attained the status of social fact through their embodiment in patterns of behaviour. I will argue that these closures mask the speculative, fictive constitution of dominant metaphysical propositions.

It is not, however my intention to conclude that the metaphoric character of social action implies a lack of consequentiality. On the contrary - for the self operating within a performative matrix defined as real, the conventions created within it constitute an epistemologically inescapable reality, which must be acknowledged and confronted as a 'social fact'. Judgements of right and wrong, good and evil, truth and falsehood, insofar as they also constitute an ontological reference system, attach to the actions of any self. At that level of generality they will influence the performative choices available, insofar as particular behaviours are already conventionally defined or categorised under such value headings. There are clearly some performance options, such as those belonging to gender, which are conventionally so heavily overdetermined as themselves to function as organising principles on which other sets of performative choices depend.

From within any such system, it is very difficult to recognise the fictiveness of the boundaries which act as primary aesthetic, as well as conceptual, modulators. For this reason, attempts to distinguish subsets of the performative, for example i) everyday performances;
ii) formal performances (including 'cultural performance') which, though heavily structured or 'scripted' 'non-daily' events, are located within the realm of the 'real'; and iii) avowedly fictional or 'aesthetic' performances; can only be conditional on establishing the significatory conventions in particular instances.

In this thesis I will generally adopt Richard Schechner's distinction between drama as behavioural performance expressly derived from spoken narrative or written notation, theatre as a description of the totality of what is ostended during a formal or aesthetic performance (including music or dance composed as part of the event), and performance as the most general 'umbrella' term (Schechner 1988: 71-73). However, given the overlap between categories in practice, and the lack of fit between these terms and specific discipline definitions (such as the Western "music, dance and drama", these distinctions are far from watertight.

I will argue that the bulk of the exchanges out of which a self finds its form have to do with reshaping the expressive behaviour under consideration, in interaction with others, in terms of its appropriateness in context. In these situations of practice, the aestheticisation of even the most ordinary of such exchanges is more readily recognisable. As Rosi Braidotti remarks in reference to the work of Irigaray and other French feminist writers (Braidotti 1989), the strategic restatement of real/aesthetic choices within boundaries predetermined ontologically can be immediately productive of the potential to reshape them in ways which acknowledge difference ("I am woman, I will behave differently thus"). A challenge to ontological boundaries, on the other hand ("what is 'woman', anyway?") is not only a different enterprise, but may involve the exploration of aesthetic options which are difficult to recognise, and which moreover may not yet have a basis in language.
An understanding of the basis on which judgements are made, and agreement as to who is empowered to make them, can make a material difference to the performer's ability to continue. Experience and skill have a crucial place in determining the vocabulary and outcome of these negotiations; in performance terms, questions of truth are less important than questions of conviction.

The central social problem for any performer is thus to establish the \textit{authenticity} of their performance, under conditions in which their knowledge of the relevant performance conventions, their ability to successfully conform to or challenge them, and the social implications of the success or otherwise of their performance, may vary widely from one situation to another. This problem is balanced by the problem of the 'other' who witnesses the performance, or to whom the performance is addressed. This other will, probably in the context of ongoing exchanges they themselves are having with other 'others', seek to locate and authenticate the performer's behaviour within aesthetic and ontological systems as they understand them. Questions of responsibility, reliability and truth are very much at issue for the \textit{beholder} of performance.

\textbf{The Self as Sign-System}

The self is a function of systems of signification, and is itself a system of signs. It both generates and is the product of signifiers - and is in a further double sense a means by which significance is announced and tested. The performance of the self is a type - indeed a paradigm case - of symbolic action. Subjectivity in practice however, as Foucault reminds us, necessarily involves an embodied self, and is practised upon through the flesh as much as through discourse. An investigation of the practices of the expressive, embodied self requires the setting aside
precisely of those assumptions which establish the symbolic as so closely determined by language, and the intellect as so separate from sensation, that other expressive modalities (and, indeed, 'the body' itself) are relegated to some sort of murky, mute, residual category where they lie entranced awaiting the kiss of reason.

I prefer then to speak of semiotic systems in general, and of behavioural/discursive regimes of the self in particular, when addressing the practices through which concepts of self, and particular selves, are brought to points of change and persistence. However, awareness of the three basic performative positions (performer, observer, bystander) must be maintained when dealing with the self as sign-system from a performative perspective.

In the remaining part of this Introduction, I will briefly introduce the themes which orient the discussion in the body of the thesis.

Social Theory, Performance Theory, and the Performer

I am arguing that performing the self in, and in relation to, the social world is experienced as a dilemma by those who produce, receive, respond to and act as arbiters of the performance material concerned. Performances of the self are by definition so experience near as to make achieving a distance sufficient for productive contemplation a difficult feat indeed. Despite the growing volume of useful work dealing with the construction of subjectivities, including gendered subjectivities, in childhood (see for example Holloway 1984), studies of the processes through which change is engendered amongst adult subjects are noticeably sparse.
The common confusion among academic writers of the position of observer with an inherently and ontologically superior 'objectivity' is, I would argue, relatively naive. A formally attractive set of logical or linguistic categories, while offering some advantages in increasing one's power to hold out and separate areas of attention from the phenomenal flux of social action, may have only a contingent relation to the meanings negotiated from within the matrix of symbolic exchange. As heated debates on methodology and ethics in recent anthropology attest (see for example Rabinow and Sullivan 1987), observation of an unfamiliar social world can be as obscured by the learned assumptions and other cultural baggage of the observer (and even more vulnerable to misinterpretation or deliberate misinformation) as is the attempt to self-reflexively reformulate the material of one's own milieu.

The next dilemma concerns the place of metaphors drawn from formal performance in debates associated with the effort to arrive at an adequately sociological view of 'the self'. Despite the recurrence of a thematics of performance - in ambiguous references to social actors, in the language of role and mask as applied to behaviour in social situations, and in the extended conceit of the dramaturgical analogy - these metaphors have not been developed with any noticeable clarity. Notwithstanding the continued temptation to regard the social world as a species of performance, there is still a noticeable absence of sustained effort to treat the action of the self in the social world as being, in any serious sense, performed.

I will argue that the very complexity of the underlying mechanisms of exchange alluded to by these metaphors, combined with the intellectual habit of thinking in terms of fixed categories rather than dynamic processes, has contributed to this unease. This strand of argument
begins by recognising the tensions Mauss held apart in separating the social notion of person from the interior sense of self while attempting 'to show you how it has ended up by taking on flesh and blood, substance and form, an anatomical structure, right up to modern times' (Mauss 1985: 2).

It is my contention that a theory of the performative provides a fuller understanding of the ways in which concepts and images of 'a' self do become embodied, 'taking on flesh and blood'. I will attempt to show that elements of such a theory have been addressed, albeit in fragmentary fashion, in the literature of social theory, and that these fragments might usefully be complemented through a reassessment of the treatment of the self in the literatures of theatre, drama and performance theory, which deal with performance in its more formal, consciously aestheticised, aspects.

I will argue that both suspicion of and fascination with performance is evidence of anxiety about authenticity in its relation to hierarchies of privilege and social authority, especially in societies undergoing social change.

On the other hand, participatory performance practices are one of the core means by which persons are confirmed in their sacred and secular identities, through danced, masked or unmasked rituals which may or may not involve the embodiment of other entities through empathy, imitation or trance.

Whether or not larger social change is being negotiated, the doubleness of performance - and in particular the expressive space of the workshop or rehearsal phase - creates space and time free from the usual burden of social and personal responsibilities. In this 'liminal' space/time, participants have more latitude to negotiate
(re)presentations of dilemmas, or to urge outcomes, which in the everyday world would be pointless, difficult, embarrassing or downright dangerous, to pursue.

I hope to show that patterns of performance preparation and performance practice can be used as 'texts', or as evidence at least as valuable as a text, to illustrate some of the dilemmas experienced by socially contextualised 'selves' in the process of performing.

The search for a usable level of abstraction which might relate questions of social change to actual behaviour has led me in the direction of accounts of the skills and work practices of actors. Despite the dominance of the point of the observer in these literatures, at least until recently, the practices of actors, and/or the accounts of those who work most closely with them, provide the nearest possible equivalent to a field observation of the practices of the self. As practitioners of an embodied artform with a potential complexity of reference and expression approaching that of the social world, a study of formally skilled performers offers us the opportunity to enquire into processes of behavioural/discursive preparation for performance similar to those which may, for everyday social actors, be deeply private or else the product of such long habituation as to be almost inaccessible to conscious description.

This enterprise is, I have to acknowledge, in its infancy. Actors' memoirs are frustratingly short on craft specifics; few actors have been temperamentally and intellectually equipped to undertake the effort of recording them, even had they the time to do so. Above all, despite the wealth of published literary dramatic criticism, the worlds of training and rehearsal have remained largely oral cultures. A methodology of fieldwork has yet to be extensively developed; in my Conclusion however I will briefly indicate some
directions which I believe will prove fruitful for future research.

1 The tendency within the Western intellectual tradition to privilege a largely disembodied consciousness as the proper object of study has been remarked on by Bryan Turner (Turner, B.S. 1984, 1991). In defending the continuing usefulness of a Marxist concept of ideology Michèle Barrett has also acknowledged that to claim ideology as always material is as productive of difficulty as to make a hard and fast distinction between the ideological and its material 'base'. Once having made a distinction between sex and gender in order to avoid biological determinism, feminist theory for example confronts a renewed problem in the creation of an opposition between gender as a social category inclusive of subjectivity, and the body as intractably biological (Barrett 1988: xxiv-xxvi). The problem of how to read the body as not only the site for, but as imbricated with the constitution of, subjectivities-in-the-social, persists.

2 The performer, the person who 'is' or 'has' a self, has the dilemma of composing, presenting and preserving performances of and as them'selves'. The observer has the dilemma of appropriately interpreting and responding to the performances of other 'selves'; the theorist, as a specialist observer or bystander, has a particular interest in drawing general conclusions, and generating concepts which will apply to kinds or categories of performative situations.

3 See also the useful discussion of the relevance of Cage's work to an understanding of contemporary performance composition in Crohn Schmitt 1990: 5-37.

4 I would emphasise that the use of 'performance' here should be distinguished from the performativity linked to productive pressures, reification and alienation criticised by Lyotard among others as characteristic of the discourses of modernity (see Rose 1991).

5 Not all performances involve the development of fully realised characters, not all characters are 'realistic' in the sense understood by contemporary Western audiences, and not all actors aspire to, much less achieve, a level of stage performance approaching the expressive complexity demonstrated by many everyday social actors. They are, however, pursuing a craft which requires them simultaneously to behave humanly, and to represent types of human behaviour. In working with the same material in different contexts - that is, contexts which variously demand social and representational authenticity of performance - actors have the opportunity to become conscious of the shaping strategies involved in performances of the self.
Chapter 1

The Performative Perspective

In this chapter I will outline the characteristics of the performative situation, and the part it plays in shaping the performance of the self. I will identify important modalities of performance, and suggest the axes along which different performative outcomes can develop. I will also foreground the formative influence of the authority relations obtaining between performer and observer.

I would like to begin by reaffirming the performative perspective as one which draws attention to expressive action, and expressive exchange. As Victor Turner put it, 'the basic stuff of social life is performance' (Turner, V. 1986: 81). To make this claim, however, is not to clarify how performance works, or to identify which of the many possible theoretical constructions of performance behaviour is being presented here as significant. I have deliberately used the term 'perspective' rather than 'frame' in order to acknowledge that there is, in Stuart Hampshire's sense (see Cocks 1989: 27-32), a horizon of performativity from which a logically infinite number of frames could be drawn.1

The performative perspective invokes, at minimum, a dyadic relation between performer and observer/auditor; I have suggested that the position of bystander is also a performative position. To consider performance is thus to be already in the realm of the social. Performative behaviour is behaviour which has become subject to interpretation, imitation and attribution; to the possibility of discursive and/or further behavioural elaboration; and to demands for explanation and/or reconstruction from either or both of these basic performance positions. Performative relations very often
occur in contexts which involve more than two people, whether or not their internal relations are organised as if they were, from one exchange to another, being conducted dyadically; performance *invariably* involves sequences of exchange which extend over time.

Performance concentrates attention above all on what is *done*. While thinking, seeing and saying are clearly things that are done, in this context they are aspects or subsets of a general attention to doing. Not all embodied behaviour is necessarily performance. In performance, what is done by the self must be accompanied by seeing, or at least the desire to see or be seen: 'I want to do that, I can do that'. 'I can see what you are doing' is a performative utterance; it also renders performative the behaviour referred to. 'Look at what I'm doing! Can you see what I'm doing?' are offers of performance - in the offer, however, is also the implicit question 'Do you understand what I'm doing (the way I understand it?)'. It is anxiety about responses that fail to satisfactorily affirm *both* parts of the question that lead to ongoing exchanges and adjustments in the performance, hence the power of the negative 'You don't know what you're doing. You're doing it wrong.' or 'I saw that! Who do you think you are? Do you think you can get away with doing that?' or 'I understand what you're doing, or should be doing, better than you do.'

Broadening our scope from the politics of representation, we acknowledge the potential for generative, transmissive, rejective, transgressive and transformative shapings of the performed self. The metaphorised body which is the bodyself of performance resists the traditional opposition within dramatic theory between presentational and representational acting (see Beckerman 1990, Hornby 1992). Even when occurring in a performative context which is overtly and intentionally
fictional, the body of the performer is always engaged in re-presentation rather than simply representation.

However, a fundamental problem for the development of a performative perspective is that if performance is the 'basic stuff' of social life, it is so to such an extent that everyday performative behaviours become enmeshed in the ground of being of cultures and selves. We often notice performance only when it fails to conform to our intraculturally conditioned assumptions about appropriate everyday behaviour, or when it by contrast is recognisable within the conventions of aesthetic performance forms with which we are familiar.

'Microperformative' behaviours may be available to discursive consciousness only on a secondary level; we can discuss adjustments to performances much more easily than we can discuss the ways they come into being. In order to arrive at a performative perspective, therefore, we need to take into account the implications of standpoint or positionality in both its actual and more abstract senses.

A problem particular to performance is the boundary mismatch between language and the indeterminate, unconscious or preconscious, unmarked superfluity of other embodied behaviours (see Phelan 1993) which a performative perspective attempts to acknowledge. Insofar as theory operates primarily through language, it is paradoxically involved in attempts to specify the 'flaws, hesitations, personal factors, incomplete, elliptical, context-dependent, situational components of performance' (Turner, V. 1986: 77). In contrary motion to the perspectival intentionality emphasised by both Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, language, like Walter Benjamin's 'angel of history', is always looking and reaching backwards, across the gap between signification and substance recognised by Alphonso Lingis:
'As an event, the I is the breath that says "here", the tone of a body. It marks a here not by its meaning but by being uttered. The body that utters is not the body represented as a text of significations' (Lingis 1993: 164).

Movements of the body-substance extending within and beyond the sphere of breath and vocalisation may be even less amenable to linguistic descriptors; indeed, they may be difficult to describe as fully semiotic at all in the Saussurian tradition, in that they are perceived subliminally, and are insufficiently bounded to have achieved the status of comparability. Non-linguistic performative behaviours, insofar as they have attained a sufficient level of pattern and clarity to act as signifiers, tend to present in phasic and situational rather than syntactical clusters2: it should be recognised, therefore, that language has structural limitations in dealing with varieties of embodied experience which in practice will be transmitted intersubjectively in situ by means including body-to-body proximity, deixis and touch.

There are aspects of the shaped, rhythmical and responsive character of performative behaviours that appear to have some claim to communicate directly across language and cultural boundaries: director Peter Brook has described the work of his International Centre for Theatre Research as being ‘based on the fact that some of the deepest aspects of human experience can reveal themselves through sounds and movements of the human body in a way that strikes an identical chord in any observer, whatever his [sic] cultural ... conditioning.’ (Brook quoted in Schechner 1985: 27).

Such assumptions have however been energetically debated by Maria Shevtsova (Shevtsova 1989) and by Judith Lynne Hanna (Hanna 1983) whose research on intercultural reception of dance seems in fact to indicate that, at least for more formally developed dance performance traditions, an intracultural, and intraculturally educated, stance was necessary in order
to follow gestural as well as choreographic conventions. Brook's confidence may derive from his choice of theatre traditions which derive their movement styles more directly from everyday expressive behaviour rather than the more strongly codified 'dance' traditions in Hanna's examples. Eugenio Barba, on the other hand, who distinguishes strongly between 'daily' and 'extra-daily' performance techniques, claims universality not so much in the observer's capacity to infer common meanings, but in the qualities of dynamic (im)balance which inform an intercultural 'secret art' of the performer (Barba and Savarese 1991). One might suggest that insofar as performance behaviours evoke common human experiences, and derive from or delineate contexts of behaviour recognisable from one culture to another, they will be received as interculturally meaningful: the closer a semiotic system used in performance comes to the specificity and syntagmatic structure of language, however, the less likely it is to be understood in the absence of translation, preamble or other education in the conventions on which it is based.

Cultural specificity is not only, however, to be identified in gestural or other complex signifying systems which have attained a quasi-linguistic level of formal codification; Ray Birdwhistell (Birdwhistell 1970) identified what he called 'kinemes' or segments of non-verbal behaviour involved in longer everyday behavioural 'strips' such as smiling or walking, which could be classified according to gender, age and region. According to E. T. Hall (1968) and Michael Argyle (1988) non-verbal behaviours, including proxemic codes, display strong regional and cultural variation; the same could be said for the organising elements which give 'character' to both subverbal and kinetic movement patterns such as rhythm, pace, dynamic, tonality, shape, effort and duration.
I would suggest that the everyday observer will tend to interpret 'slices' of performance, including sequences of behaviour, globally unless attention is called to particular component elements or compositional characteristics. Such behaviours will not generally attract specific notice, insofar as they are considered subordinate to larger patterns or conventions. They may however be received as 'strange', as signifying ethnic or status membership, or as indicating particular intention, depending on the context of performative interaction. 'He walked up to her slowly.' 'He looked shy.' 'What a dag.' and 'I bet he's a Westie.' could all describe the same strip of behaviour.

The Modalities of Performance

Formal performance composition may well 'select out' and/or abstract modal elements in ways which can alter the observer's habitual mode of attention. Language, non-verbal behaviours, objects and other scenic elements can be utilised to heighten, extend, transpose or interrupt aspects of the flow and dynamic of everyday action in space and time, so as to foreground, reshape and reproblematisé everyday performative conventions and modes of reception (see Blau 1990). Such selective reshaping will itself become the basis for genre conventions recognisable as modes of aesthetic production particular to region, period, class or other subcultural formation including religious or artistic groupings, and which may be further formalised as the vocabulary of intentionally transmitted performance traditions.

Performance behaviours are likely to vary considerably from one location and context to another, given the tendency for behaviour to be locally categorised and overdetermined as to its significance and meaning. This factor could militate against the development of a
coherent analysis of nonlinguistic phenomena; I would however argue that the performance situation will exhibit certain general characteristics which can be employed as parameters for theoretical analysis.

Performative behaviour is, as I have argued, embodied and socially interactive. It takes place within and between embodied subjects, in time and space, at a level of signification which allows at minimum for the transfer of subliminally perceived behaviour from one body to another. It extends through variously organised patterns and modalities, including the linguistic, to levels of complexity at which images, imaged or actual behavioural sequences, and discursive exchanges are presented, represented and transformed as the sign-vehicles for concepts of person and self and conventions of sociality. The effects of storage, transmission and mediation can significantly alter the embodied observer's perception and interpretation; the New York experimental director Robert Wilson, for example, locates his aesthetic of performance composition in the ability to slow down sequences of events in time:

'What I try to set up in the theatre is a situation where I can hear, and where I can see ... And so often I can't hear. Because what I'm seeing is interfering. And I can't see because what I'm hearing is preventing me from seeing' (Cole 1992: 161).

In moving to theorise the performative, I am certainly not proposing that the influence of language is negligible; neither do I intend to valorise an image of the body as containing a purer or more fundamental truth than that transmitted through the equivocations of discourse. Language is likely to be co-present with other semiotised, intersubjective behaviours in a variety of ways. Performances of the self in the social may be based almost wholly on language; to the extent that gestures are refined and codified, systems of gesture may approach the coherence of language - largely because
speech is the model on which such systems are based. On the other hand, as soon as we cease to think of human activity as a matter of speech somehow supported by and emerging from a more or less co-operative fleshy vehicle, and look rather at the ways in which speech interacts with body movement, gesture, rhythm, tone, pitch and so on, the picture becomes immediately more complex. What is most evident to the performative specialist is the relative independence of the modalities of action discussed above. The performer will, depending on their experience and expertise, habitually rely on one mode in preference to another, or make a more or less easy transition from one mode into another. Difficulties do arise in unfamiliar situations such as that of the formal experiment, or when circumstances call for new responses. When we go beyond the question of the possibility of non-verbal signifieds to, in Barthes' words, 'larger fragments ... referring to objects or episodes whose meaning underlies language' we must question his conclusion that they 'can never exist independently of it' (Barthes 1967). Such a formulation ignores the struggle which so often accompanies the attempt to translate sensations, perceptions, experiences, feelings and desires, as well as habitual responses - at least partially semiotised in that we sense them as having meaning, we feel them to be significant - from one mode into another. This struggle is, I would argue, not itself an indication of lack, but an indication of the need to acknowledge and recover the means and the modalities through which multivalent scraps and systems of semiotic material are generated by and pass through the embodied, performing self.

Before I go on to argue for ways of theorising the performing self, I would like to re-emphasise the importance of suspending closure on a number of common associations when dealing with the potential of the
performative as a tool of analysis. Firstly, we must not assume that all 'performances' are offered as presentations: behaviour which is not intentionally performative can be received, read and acted upon by an observer as if intentional. In performative exchanges within the social, such misattributions are extremely frequent, and can have tragic consequences.\textsuperscript{4}

Where performances are intentional, the desire to be understood cannot be assumed to have been satisfied on the basis of transmission alone. Models of communication based on a distinction between goal-directed and non-goal-directed behaviour (such as that of D.M. MacKay quoted in Turner, V. 1986: 82) allow for misinterpretation and 'correct' interpretation, but do assume a fundamental verifiability or transparency of meaning. Such models vastly oversimplify the complexity of semiotic material which is broadcast in any performative exchange. The polysemy and indeterminacy of performance, and the multilayered processes involved in attending, distinguishing, analysing, discarding, and responding to particular signifiers as carrying meaning (especially given the swiftness and volume with which one's own and others' responses occur in space and time), makes the business of 'communicating' so that an impression of mutual understanding can be sustained itself one of the fundamental and ongoing dilemmas of social life.

I wish to propose a performative perspective which is able to acknowledge that confidence in mutual comprehension \textit{and the reliability of subsequent performance behaviour(s) composed along the same lines} is built up as the result of processes of exchange which also integrally clarify the ontological boundaries appropriate to the performance context. Security of meaning is the gift we give one another when we modulate our behaviour and discourse in ways that are congruent with that of others, and when we behave in
ways that acknowledge relations of authority or at least signal our willingness to pay attention and to engage in exchanges that continue over time. It cannot be too much emphasised that the belief in the world-constituting clarity of language and the transparency of the written word, manifested even in deconstructively oriented academic discourse, is an instance both of the desire for understanding and the confidence in that understanding built up as a process of habituation. It may be justified in context; it cannot however be an a priori assumption, or necessarily transferable to other contexts or semiotic systems. In the context of performance, 'the word is an act of the body' as Japanese theatre creator Tadashi Suzuki states (Suzuki 1982: 89).

Not all performative exchanges are directed at self-constitution, nor are all exchanges of the self mediated through character or role. Performances may be directed at instrumental action 'Look, do it this way.' Information is also exchanged performatively, and so is the playful or aesthetic use of expressive behaviour for pleasure in more or less abstract ways that emphasise rhythm, tonality, line, dynamic and so on. Insofar as these activities are social, however, they can be inflected so as to carry interactive significance of other kinds, or may always/already carry overdetermined performative meanings in the semiotic matrix of their presentational conventions.

Instrumental behaviours (like physiological characteristics) do, however, become relevant to the self when they are claimed or acknowledged as attribute or competency 'I can do that. Look, I can do this.' or are attributed as such 'You can do this or that.' 'You have so and so; therefore you are such and such.' Competency is time and context-dependent; whereas I would agree with Lingis when he criticises Merleau-Ponty's description of the competently dancing body 'a machine which constantly
reprograms itself' as more appropriate to the self-reflexivity of the professional performer, I would disagree with his claim that everyday dancers at weddings and discos 'have no competence at it, nor do they strive for competence' (Lingis 1993: 165). Such dancers may well take pleasure in the level of skill they have, which is 'competent enough' for the purposes. I would argue in fact that such activities are a misery unless the performer can 'have confidence' (that is, take pleasure in) a level of competence which is seen as appropriate under the circumstances. Everyday performance which borders on aesthetic formality is often characterised by mutual encouragement, exchanges of cries, glances and verbalisations which recognise competence, or lower the barrier of significance in order to recognise the level of (in)competence displayed as 'good enough' to be included. On the other hand, being judged as incompetent is much to be feared. Attribution is significant in the process of composing the performing self; attribution by another calls attention to a potential in the self, and opens up an area of competency for claim, disavowal or exploration. It may, of course, also draw attention to a lack, a desired competency or attribute the self does not possess. The totality of Althusser's 'appellation' is however an extreme image of this attributive power on the part of the other. No matter how powerful an image of a desired self might be, or with what authority it is promulgated, it may or may not be enacted with sufficient consistency, skill, effort, or interest to validate it as an aspect of the self. The mismatch between desire and competence, the struggle between authority and insubordination, is the stuff of which physical comedy is made. The servant's efforts to evade the master's constitutive authority were a particular stock in trade of the commedia dell'arte, a tradition which produced Molière's 'Scapin', Beaumarchais' and especially da Ponte's 'Figaro', and which still provides
a rich source of transgressive theatrical action (see Fo 1991).

I will discuss the sociological use of notions of role or character in the next chapter. At this stage however I would like to draw attention to the difference between the variations or extensions of subjectivity that begin in play with the subjunctive mood 'what if I/you could do this or that, or were like this or that' and those which in the social world are mediated through their implication in processes of comparison and validation 'Do this the way s/he does. Can you do that?' 'Don't do that here' 'That's the way. Good girl!' and on into 'That's not like you/me. You're/I'm the kind of person who...' 'Who do you think you're fooling? 'I didn't mean ...' and so on. I wish to point out that they are not so much different in kind as different in the mechanisms by means of which, and the contexts within which, they are played out. It is also important to note that the verbalisations I have used here, and their actual equivalents, rarely stand on their own as performative utterances, but are accompaniments to enactment - the imitation, improvisation, repetition, variation and other more or less convincing rehearsals of behaviour in various contexts that eventually are adjudicated into something that can be called 'myself'.

The Performing Self

Before moving towards a discussion of the performing self as itself a dilemma, there is one last common approach to imagining the self to which I wish to offer a countersuggestion - this is, if you like, the return of the transcendent disembodied consciousness in the form of the transcendently truthful bodyself.

There have been numerous revelatory performance traditions committed to a demonstration of the performed self as essence. Whether such a conviction is drawn from
a phenomenological sensibility, or whether the essence which is the focus of belief is shown to emanate from a higher spiritual realm or manifests to the initiate as power, truth or 'energy' originating in the body, such traditions are characterised by an approach to training in which 'letting go' or stripping away what are seen as superficial characteriological formations 'frees' this essential self to become visible.

Often linked to one form or another of spiritual or religious practice, adepts of such traditions may well seek to transcend the individuality of the Enlightenment 'self' in awareness of a universal or 'world self', or in ecstatic union with a personalised god. Such performative practices have been widespread in the Christian (Ash 1990) as well as other mystical traditions (Eliade 1970, Sanderson 1985, Carrithers 1985, Schechner 1985 etc.). Elements of training drawn from what we might call 'the performance of essence' have been eagerly adopted by Western performers in the twentieth century, as theatre theorists, theatre creators and actors have sought alternatives to the discursive, 'psychological' and character-based European theatre tradition.5

These mystical and Orientalist appropriations from non-Western performance forms began with Antonin Artaud's encounter with Balinese dance performance at the Colonial Exhibition in 1931. This highly physicalised and ritualised theatre excited him to formulate the principles of a 'Theatre of Cruelty' which has in turn inspired a post-humanist, oppositional tradition of Western experimental theatre practice (see Roose-Evans 1984). In a project which owed a great deal to the influence of Nietzsche, Artaud claimed to have discovered, in Balinese dance, a tradition of body-based theatre in which direct, unmediated experience - a theatre of cruelty - was possible:
'I say that there is a poetry of the senses as there is a poetry of language and that this concrete physical language is truly theatrical only to the degree that the thoughts it expresses are beyond the reach of the spoken language' (Artaud 1958: 37).

Despite his quite serious misreading of the complex conventionality of the performance forms he witnessed, Artaud's manifestos have had a far-reaching influence. He focused attention squarely on the other 'languages' of theatre - space, sound, gesture and the power of the mise en scène - and on the direct, body-to-body sensory exchanges the proxemics of theatre permit. I must confess to my own response to the the rallying cry: 'The theater is the only place in the world, the last general means we still possess of directly affecting the organism and, in periods of neurosis and petty sensuality like the one in which we are immersed, of attacking this sensuality by physical means it cannot withstand' (Artaud 1958: 81).

I would argue, however, that performance lends itself to a demonstration of essence precisely because that is what it does - demonstrate, or in Eco's terminology, ostend (Eco 1977). Performativity does not, by itself, demonstrate the truth of one thing more than another. It is a means of offering behaviours as meaningful, but it is, in Kenneth Burke's term, a 'rhetoric' (Burke 1952) designed to convince. It generates truths only insofar as those to whom it is offered are prepared to validate it. It is for this reason that I would argue that any instances of the performance of self conceptualised as a presocial, transcendent essence are actually subsumable under the sense of a descriptive or ideal category substantiated through performance.

A view of the self in performance as a dilemma, on the other hand, lends itself to a deconstructive method, while at the same time highlighting the contingency of the different combinations of modalities, and the different uses of space, time and proximity, which have been
available for the constitution of particular selves, and which have resulted in particular conventions, and particular kinds of selves emerging in different performative contexts.

**Power and Authority in Performance**

Performance takes place, as I said above, at a minimum between an actual or imagined dyad. In order to express anything, one must have someone to express it to; on the other hand, as we have seen, the action - and especially the gaze - of the observer can reconstitute or objectify the behaviour of another, or animate an object, so that it is rendered performative. Under the pressure of observation, behaviour is likely to undergo change, to become more inflected. The performer may well feel obliged to offer a discursive accompaniment to their behaviour, which has now become performance; insofar as performed behaviour is subject to aesthetic evaluation on the basis of its smoothness and competency, the performer whose behaviour falls short on this score may be subject to feelings of inadequacy or embarrassment. If the gaze, and the consequent redefinition of the situation in performance terms is unwelcome, the performer may seek to end the encounter, even while extending it through expression of shame or outrage.

The power relation between performer and observer is very much at issue - the performer in control of the location and timespan of the performance, who has had a chance to prepare and who can decide what behaviour will be offered for observation and under what circumstances, is likely to deliver a very differently constructed performance to that of the person who must, willy nilly, perform, or who is unaware that they are under observation. Likewise the observer who chooses to watch, or who is permitted to watch after a period of anticipation, will have a different experience of the
performance from one who is forced to watch, or who comes unexpectedly upon a performance that they had not anticipated, or that they are aware that they should not see.

However, given my emphasis on the location of performance in body/space/time and within an interactive sociality, 'power' in performance will always be experienced as authority. This authority will not necessarily be prohibitive or exercised through sanction, as Foucault reminds us. Authoritative attribution may well encourage and enable experiment with and consequent transformation of performative capacity; a confidence in the performer's own authority is itself a probable concomitant of a sense of competence. However, the degree to which authority is exercised and experienced as generative will be situational, and played out within accumulations of performative sequences. Where it is prohibitive, it will, as I argued above, constitute a 'social fact': the transgressive performer may well be able to imagine, and to a certain extent to embody, variations to the boundaries determined or approved authoritatively, but will not necessarily be able to establish those performance variations over time. Authoritative prohibition may even effectively remove the opportunity to embody such variations performatively; the relations of authority within performance must then be seen as providing 'degrees of freedom' which will structure ongoing performative opportunities.

The positions of performer and observer are not always fixed - in many performance situations they necessarily alternate, or even continue more or less simultaneously. Given the enormous semiotic and interactive complexity of performance situations, and the wide variety of perspectives from which they can be analysed and composed, I will offer a series of points which I hope
outline the main performative axes germane to the construction of performance as a dilemma.

The Internal Dimensions of the Performative

The axis of appropriate *locatability* is, I would suggest, one variable along which social control, and concomitantly social approval and disapproval, is organised. In societies in which fine distinctions of presentation reflect and coordinate fine degrees of status, it is especially important to be sure that person A can be treated as if they are who they appear to be within a defined social order. Such relations are always rendered contingent in the space/time of a performance, where it is always possible that Other Things in the way of social order may be suggested in the course either of their direct representation, or through the ambiguous relation of the performance world to the reliable social relations prevailing in the world or worlds from which it is distinguished. A sexualised relation of dominance is one clear way of asserting one's symbolic power over the fluid and transgressive effects of desire set in motion by the imaginary relations involved in performance which may well, under other circumstances, favour the performer.

The second issue is one to which Jonas Barish devotes the bulk of his study on theatricality (Barish 1985) - the issue of believability. The axis of *recourse* or responsibility is, I would suggest, a variable of social organisation and control with which performance worlds may come into conflict. Whether the performance world is primarily activated through narrative, analogy or mimesis will, of course effect the form of the performance, as well as the degree of responsibility which may be attributed to the performer. Many performance forms do not demand either a mimetic positioning (leading to notions of liminality - a
threshold, or 'jump' into mimesis) or a level of mimetic engagement from the performer such that the spectator might be induced to believe that they have become that which they represent. There are also situations, most often involving ritual or other sacred enactments, in which there is a specific or ambiguous sense that the everyday person is invisible, and that what you see is the god, spirit or other sacred being. In such cases, the 'performer' may well be ritually assisted into and out of the mimetic threshold through bathing, periods of isolation, or abstention from normal sexual intercourse (see Schechner 1985, 1990). These, what we might call 'authorised' mimetic transformations, may well themselves be the social 'property' of one or more designated people, and a certain aura or awe may continue to attach to the one who was so recently possessed by the gods; it has been argued that some of the separateness of performers may derive from a response to their 'shape shifting' practices even in the absence of concerns about truthfulness (see Worthen 1984).

The final axis may then be seen as the axis of *metaphoricity*, which lies for much of its length in a 'close enough' relation to the axis of recourse, but which should be seen as having different consequences. Whereas an inadequate index of reliability may result in a judgement that one is irresponsible, an irresponsible and inappropriate fiction is simply described as a lie. Whereas fiction is socially permissible and even encouraged in narrative as speculation or story, it is significant that the opposition between truth and lying is most strictly applied to the performative, whether it is manifested in discourse, in behaviour, or in a combination of both. The tendency to categorise all performances as varieties of lying, (especially those in which the locatability of the self of the performer is indistinct and raises ontological questions about the degree of departure from self, and transformation into 'not-self' or 'other
self'), is striking. I would argue that this axis most clearly demonstrates social anxiety about the degree to which the other methods of validation can be accurate in grounding social reality, and in holding social performers to account for their performances. It highlights the taboo against acknowledging that social and aesthetic performances are constructed in fundamentally analogous ways, and that it is extremely difficult to tell when anyone is lying, because of the ways in which all performative exchanges rely on methods of distinguishing between sequences which have only contingently diachronic status, but which can have very different consequences depending on their interpretive status.

Control over the permeability of conventional boundaries which demarcate the social 'real', and which therefore orient the perceived choices of social actors, is of enormous social and political importance in terms of the subsequent distribution of power and resources, and the capacity of social institutions to mobilise people to act and produce, insure against climactic disaster or physical deprivation in ways that advantage particular groups or individuals, and so on. At the same time, mutual validation is of enormous importance in granting solidity and legitimacy to various ways of being in the world. The value of a performative perspective lies in the extent to which it can be used to analyse these constitutive processes - the ways in which interpersonal and larger social exchange and organization is founded on conventions which constrain or enable the development of certain patterns of performance, and the degree to which these patterns limit and make available particular performative selves and are in turn accessible to change.

We have now covered the ground of the performative perspective in terms of its characteristic form and modalities, and indicated some of the parameters along which an investigation of the internal dimensions of the
relations of performance might be ordered. I have suggested that performance is embodied and multimodal, with the 'lack of fit' between the modalities within which the performer must work, and the subsemiotic character of much expressive behaviour, being determining factors in the interactions between performers and observers. Given these characteristics of the performance situation, together with the suggestion that the authentication of performance is one of the prime activities of the occupants of both performer and observer positions, the dynamics between performer and observer must be seen as important contributing factors to the shape of possible selves being negotiated by means of performative exchange. If these dynamics are to be adequately investigated, the position of the theorist must also be problematised.

The Ethic of Performative Observation

The performative perspective requires an ethic of observation from the theorist. This in itself entails a set of observational skills and practices which involve not only 'self-reflexivity' but a series of reminders of the need to switch attention - including its direction and its modality - in the course of a sequence of observation. The performative perspective 'builds in' reminders to the theorist of their own involvement in performance, which always takes place under conditions of movement within space and time. The goal should be to allow an observer to attain sufficient distance from their own habitual performative practice, but not so great a distance as to encourage them to forget the enmeshment in practice, and the particularity of involvement in the nexus of body/space/time, which performance implies. This ethic of observation should also involve a problematisation of standpoint: an acknowledgement of the interactive character of performance serves as a reminder to the observer to move position from time to time. The goal
here is to accumulate sufficient flexibility with which to interrogate, not only one's own assumptions, but the generality of the conclusions that can be derived from a particular point of view.

This formulation does of course in many respects restate traditional ethics and methods of scholarship; one difference lies in the attention to issues of embodiment and process. Another lies in replacing the opposition between subjective and objective enquiry with a methodology which, while acknowledging the inherent boundedness of human perception and experience, together with the particularity of its spatiotemporal and cultural location, seeks to achieve generality through sequences of comparative analysis from a variety of attentive positions.

The performative perspective replaces a concern with ontology and epistemology with a concentration on axiology and entelechy. Observation of performance itself, therefore, will mimic at a metaperformative level a model of performance which highlights the observer's own possible implication in performative interaction, as well as the endemic indeterminacy of the *mat ériel* which is both viewed and experienced. It may be objected that this represents an extreme circularity - my point, however, is that this circularity, or rather circumambulation, is characteristic of human experience, and therefore of the performative dilemma. I would here echo Spivak's call for attention to the value of the deconstructive journey, which is somewhat akin to Dilthey's distinction between wisdom and knowledge. Such wisdom can only emerge somewhere in the delicate balance between attention and forgetting. If the goal is to understand the *Weltanschauungunen* of others, as well as the experience of self that others have in relation to one's own, the continually renewed 'boundary-riding' processes of performative observation provide the
possibility of some form of redress for the aporias induced by an overreliance on theories derived from unidirectional points of view.

In Ronald de Sousa's discussion of emotions as a species of perception, and their role in patterning physiological 'performance' responses into more or less intentional constructs, he introduces the notion of 'bootstrapping' (de Sousa 1987: 237-264). This notion I also find useful in that it draws attention to the permeability of the boundaries between physiologically based and linguistic semiotic systems, and the degree to which they can inform one another interactively over time. His project, which is to demonstrate the rationality of emotion, is however an example of what I would call the 'central processor' fallacy. An overemphasis on the reach of reason, and the consequent drive to demonstrate the 'language-like' character of non-linguistic expression, obscures the extent and importance not only of the non-intentional, but the subsemiotic expressivity of the performing body.

I will now proceed to the second stream of my argument, in collecting together some of those fragments from social and performance theory, which I believe provide support for the performative perspective I have outlined above.

1 The frame of the dilemma of the performing self is but one - although of course one I am promoting as especially interesting - which could be drawn within the perspective horizon of performativity. The notion of perspective has come to be associated with the formal representational spatiality of the Renaissance, and therefore to imply a single, privileged observer operating as the static focus from which all lines of view radiate. I wish to retain a broader sense of perspective. Social actors are rarely static: even a single 'perspective' needs to be broadened to include at least the range of orientations of the body in space abstracted by Rudolf Laban as occurring in a sphere or cube (Laban 1975: 33-51). Given that I am arguing for a performative perspective which takes into account interaction as well as process within space/time, development of a theoretical perspective may well in practice involve the adoption of a series of observing positions; 'perspective' as view should be regarded as in principle including a multiperspectival approach.
2. This is not, of course, to imply that once patterns have been recognised they cannot be composed systematically into regularised syntagmatic form. What can be counted can be measured and compared; the development of Western musical tradition from the thirteenth into the twentieth century shows an increasing reliance on mathematical regularisation in tonality as well as rhythm (see Katz 1993). On the other hand, contact with non-Western musics has contributed to the renewal of interest from the mid-twentieth century in listening to sounds derived from environmental and bodily sources, in proto-pulse, the decay of sound into non-sound, overlapping rhythmic impulses, arrhythmic or aleatory compositional techniques, and so on (see for example Cage 1979, Bandt 1988).

3 Attempt an exercise similar to one which might be given to a student of the performing arts. The task is to interweave speech with a patterned sequence of behaviour; the speech may comment on the behaviour, or it may be drawn from impulse, text or memory. What are the results likely to be? Language and behaviour may be perfectly synchronised (a running commentary, although surprisingly difficult, is possible). This however takes practice. Verbalisation is much more likely to be segmented or intermittent; it may frame the behaviour as introduction, direction or explanation, it may occur in the course of the behaviour as exclamation, question or delivery during pauses in the sequence of behaviour, or after the sequence is over, as evaluation.

4. A quick glance at a daily newspaper provides a number of instances where performative misattribution has had life threatening consequences. Reports in 'The Age' for May 19 1994, for example, include an intracultural example of Victorian police called to the scene of a domestic dispute who killed a man whose weapon 'was later identified as a crossbow. He did not return fire.' (p.1) and an intercultural example of a woman tourist in Guatemala whose actions in taking photographs of local children were interpreted by locals within the frame of rumours of foreigners kidnapping children for their body parts. They attacked the judge's office where she had taken sanctuary. 'Members of the mob did not stop beating her until they were convinced she was dead' (p.10). These are certainly highly 'dramatic' examples; on a more mundane level, however, such misattributions form the unavoidable bedrock of intersubjective performative exchange.

5 The adoption by Western actors of Eastern practices can be traced as far back as Stanislavski's interest in yoga in the late nineteenth century (see Stanislavski 1980a and b). It has continued strongly in experimental theatre tendencies from the 1970s to the present (see Brown 1972, Benedetti 1976, etc.) and appears in particular forms in the mystical theatre projects of Peter Brook (Heilpern 1978, Williams 1988) and Polish emigre director Jerzy Grotowski, in whose later experiments fundamental psychophysiological communicative elements such as tonality and rhythm, and an interest in the experiential extension of time and space which reaches its peak in states of trance, are directed towards the induction in both actor and spectator of what is posited as 'pure' experience (Osinski 1991).
Behaving Oneself: The Performer's Point of View

In the first chapter, I argued that a performative perspective has been elided or subordinated in the dominant traditions of social theoretical thought, to the detriment of a more complete understanding of the complex processes by means of which expressive patterns of behaviour are shaped, and through which meanings are derived, generated, and changed in the course of social interaction.

I emphasised that from a performative perspective social action is always embodied, interactive and located in space and time. Social action becomes performative under two different conditions: when behaviour is expressively ostended by the performer for the observer, and/or when the observer receives behaviour as meaningful.

The last chapter was oriented towards a set of problems to do with the relationship between subjectivity and the social - the set of dilemmas of the self in performance, or the 'performing I'. The focus in this section was to establish the parameters within which a sense of self emerges in and by means of performance.

The performance of the self, I have argued, is generated within the social and takes place in interaction with others. Self-performance is therefore both contextual and processual. The creation of any performance situation will also create one prime task for the performer; to convince themselves and/or others of the trustworthiness and appropriateness of their performance. They must above all establish their performance as authentic.
The focus of this and the next chapter will be on the various situations in which performances of the self come about, and the variable means by which convincing performances are formed, received, recognised and evaluated. The contribution of existing theory to an understanding of performance will be discussed according to its illumination of questions of technique on the one hand, and the sets of ideas through which attention and conviction or belief are organised, on the other. These questions will be discussed in relation to two major theoretical problems which have dogged the study of the performative: the problem of the relation of person to self, and the nested problems of the implications of the relation between staged and social performance, including the set of theoretical explanations known as the 'dramaturgical analogy'.

The first of these problems will be approached in its relation to the position of the performer; the second as essentially constructed through the positionality of observation.

**Self-authentication: problems and parameters**

An emphasis on the dilemma of authenticity in performance has a number of theoretical consequences. The first is a recognition of the variability and indeterminacy of the behaviours which are potentially performative. The size of the task (the range of performance choices that are available to the performer, the degree of variation permitted or encouraged, the number of different contexts encountered and appropriately differentiated behaviours required, and the level of responsibility the performer is expected to take) the style of performance (its means, modalities, intensity, rhythms, levels of synergetic integration, interior focus, and occupation of time and space physically, vocally and gesturally; its dynamics of
expressivity with regard to self-ostension or effacement and reference to others; the degree to which the performer follows set forms or sequences and the degree to which the style of performance is sustained over time) and the level of proprioceptive and compositional awareness expected of the performer, will vary significantly both intra and interculturally, and from one performance context to another. Since I am arguing that a sense of self will be a product both of the performer's sense of their own competencies and the attributions of others, the specifics of particular self-concepts will need to be adduced from a detailed study of their performative circumstances.¹

A second consequence is the recognition that self authentication procedures, although they may be conceived of as happening in dyads, in practice are shaped through the networks of performative interactions within social groups. Members of one group will think of themselves and behave as themselves, in ways different from the self performance practices of another group. This will be so even where particular behaviours are not identified specifically as criteria for group membership; ways of sitting, standing, walking and eating are not only as important as ways of talking or thinking, but as we shall see may form the foundation and the framework for the more abstract orders of behaviour. Larger social groups will thus be made up of members whose performances have been more or less subtly, but nonetheless differently shaped according to their experiences as members of groups with, as Mary Douglas reminds us, variously permeable boundaries and possibly quite distinct styles of organisation and interaction internally and externally:

¹'The social body constrains the way the physical body is perceived. The physical experience of the body, always modified by the social categories through which it is known, sustains a particular view of society. There is a continual exchange of meanings between the two kinds of bodily experience
so that each reinforces the categories of the other. As a result of this interaction the body itself is a highly restricted medium of expression. The forms it adopts in movement and repose express social pressures in manifold ways. The care that is given to it, in grooming, feeding and therapy, the theories about what it needs in the way of sleep or exercise, about the stages it should go through, the pains it can stand, its span of life, all the cultural categories in which it is perceived, must correlate closely with the categories in which society is seen and so far as these also draw upon the same culturally processed idea of the body.' (Douglas 1978: 93).

It should not of course be assumed that all groups will exhaustively define the concepts and performance behaviours of their members' selves; as I have emphasised above, indeterminacy and difference are endemic to performance situations. However, group authentication processes will have a markedly standardising effect when one group is compared to another - the question of control over such processes is therefore likely to be of considerable social and political moment. In Homi Bhabha's words:

'It is in the emergence of the interstices - the overlap and displacement of domains of difference - that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. How are subjects formed 'in-between', or in excess of, the sum of the 'parts' of difference (usually intoned as race/class/gender, etc.)? How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange of values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable/' (Bhabha 1994: 2).

A third consequence consists of/is, in tension with the above emphasis on indeterminacy and variability, a claim about the consistency of the characteristic ways in which performances, and the contexts which give rise to them, are patterned or shaped. I am arguing that the elements from which performative situations are shaped, the matériel from which performed selves are created, and
the social dilemmas in response to which different performances emerge, do display consistent characteristics.

Chief among the elements are space and time, the performer and the observer; the chief material is the human body with its expressive capacities and limitations, as well as whatever substances and objects can be marshalled to assist it; the chief performative dilemma is the establishment and negotiation of meaning, so that social action and interaction can continue. The influence of these factors on each other, and on the orientation of social action, is I believe such as to warrant the sustained attention of social theorists.

In brief, I have argued that the central issues for the performer are the twin problems of conviction and authenticity, and for the observer are problems played out along the axes of locatability, recourse and metaphoricity. I will now go on to look at the circumstances and factors which contribute to the emergence of particular forms and patterns of performance from the horizon of performative possibilities - what Jerzy Grotowski refers to as 'performables' (Kumiega 1987).

In this context, both Marcel Mauss and George Herbert Mead deserve discussion as having signposted the way to a performative perspective. Neither of these thinkers can be assimilated uncritically; nevertheless, each has contributed foundationally to theorising an aspect of the embodied process of expression.

**Mauss, Mead and Performative Action.**

Mauss is important for our purposes primarily because he recognised the plasticity of the body and the crucial contribution of a pedagogy of body techniques, and
secondly for the challenge he still offers in distinguishing between 'self' and 'person'.

In two influential essays, 'Body Techniques' (Mauss 1979 [1935]) and 'A Category of the Human Mind: The Notion of Person, the Notion of 'Self' (Mauss 1979 [1938]), Marcel Mauss formulates a few apparently simple but far-reaching challenges to the way in which social actors might be regarded.

In 'Body Techniques' he proposes a reconsideration of the effects of habitual body usage, in particular those repetitions resulting from training or occupation, on human musculatures and hence on varieties of social action. These reconsiderations take two main directions: first, that 'there are things which we believe to be hereditary but which are in reality physiological, psychological or sociological in kind' (Mauss 1979: 107). Second, that attention to the question of technique also involves attention to the question of training: 'the teaching of techniques being essential, we can classify them according to the nature of this education and training. Here is a new field of studies: masses of details which have not been observed, but should be, constitute the physical education of all ages and both sexes' (Mauss 1979: 108).

Mauss' contentions are of interest for a performative perspective in social theory in that they allow us to see that both the shape and the sequences of physical action in the social are performatively contingent. He also states clearly the necessity to move towards 'a theory of the technique of the body in the singular on the basis of a study, an exposition, a description pure and simple of techniques of the body in the plural' (Mauss 1979: 97).

His characterisation of technique as effective and traditional action certainly allows him to notice the distinction of body techniques by sex and age, the influence of time on the acquisition of technique, and the importance of authority in determining which actions will
be incorporated. It also however leads him to downplay the importance of the *expressive* and the *pleasurable* - the sensual, semiotic, aesthetic, ethical and conceptual exchanges which take place simultaneously, and which may be as central a cause of subsequent repetition of the behaviour as any demand on the part of an authority, or any reason or function superimposed by the theorist.²

I would echo Susan Foster's preference for the term 'practice' over that of 'technique' (Foster 1992), and for Michel de Certeau's characterisation of everyday practices as dependent 'on a vast ensemble which is difficult to delimit but which we may provisionally designate as an ensemble of *procedures* ' (de Certeau 1988: 43).

In order to resolve the possible contradiction between the specificity of a body and the more general 'specificity' relevant to the 'fundamental fashions that can be called the modes of life, the *modes*, the *tonus*, the 'matter', the 'manners', the 'way' (Mauss 1979: 109) of social groups, Mauss introduces the term *habitus*. He means by this to focus on the materiality as well as the sociality of behavioural habits. *Habitus* 'does not designate those metaphysical *habitudes*, that mysterious memory ... These 'habits' do not vary just with individuals and their imitations; they vary especially between societies, educations, proprieties and fashions, types of prestige' (Mauss 1992: 458).³

Mauss' discussion of the person begins by separating the Western, metaphysical notion of self from a sociological *category*, that of the subject or person. Then by a performative 'sleight of hand' he reunites them in the 20th century as the civilised person/self - psychological being and moral fact.
Mauss first promises an investigation into one of a series of what he appears to accept as a grounded and exhaustive set of 'categories of the human mind' - 'the idea of the 'person', the idea of the 'self' (moi)' (Mauss 1979: 59). He then separates the idea of self as innate and universal from the social notion of the person, which he sets out to show has undergone a series of changes from simple societies in which 'the clan is conceived of as constituted by a certain number of persons, actually roles; ... the purpose of all these roles [being] really to symbolize, each in its own portion, the pre-figured totality of the clan' (Mauss 1979: 65) through the juridical/legal Latin notion of 'persona' in which ancestral masks, rites and names were translated into individual rights and privileges, to the Christian investiture of the person (or personne morale) with a moral and metaphysical set of qualities which, on the model of the Trinity, found its unity in the expression of a selfhood which in turn laid the foundation for the fusion of person and self as a legal, psychological/ethical 'fundamental form of thought and action' as the modern individual (Mauss 1979: 90).

Mauss' narrative is unashamedly evolutionary. Presenting the rise of the individual as the story of the finding of the way, the chemin, on the part of a benign entity, Mauss manages to disguise a series of each-way bets. First is the presentation of the concept of self: Mauss manages to suggest both that the 'self' is something we only think is innate (Mauss 1979: 59) while maintaining that 'it is clear, above all to us, that there has never been a human being without the sense not only of his body, but also of his simultaneously mental and physical individuality' (Mauss 1979: 61). Mauss resiles from fully confronting this contradiction as a dilemma or paradox of the mismatch between concept, image and sensation within and between bodies, in favour of relocating the perceptual gap to that between body, person and mask.

Mauss does make some interesting points about the allocation of roles, and the use of mask, in the symbolic
language of clan ceremonies. First, that the mask simultaneously objectifies an image and an idea that is heightened - it is more than the individual who for the time of the ceremony inhabits it. Second, that the 'person' is the mask; it is, in concrete form, the weight of the social duties and relationships that the individual carries only for the time being, but which belongs to an ancestral chain linking its current bearer into a coherent universe.

However, Mauss is concerned less with following the intricacies and possible contradictions in the use of mask, than in making a claim about a consistency of social organization amongst societies that appear to be similarly organised symbolically, and to behave in similar ways ceremonially, whether they actually use masks in their ceremonies or not.

He goes so far as to claim that 'between face-painting (and often body-painting) on the one hand and a dress and a mask on the other, there is only a difference of degree, not any difference of function' (Mauss 1979: 73). In doing so, he dismisses the question of medium, means and modality - the ways in which the use of particular objects and materials can give rise to internally referential semiotic systems, the extent to which the storage of meanings by such means preserves sign vehicles and sign vessels over time, and the degree to which such usages function as a species of notation - in short, an entire field of semiotic enquiry.

He is equally cavalier with the question of the relation between play, fiction and reality: 'In these ceremonies the man fabricates a superimposed personality which is true in the case of ritual, pretence in the case of games' (Mauss 1979: 73). The absence of a theory of semiosis contributes to his failure to notice the ambiguity of the truth-creating relations in ceremony, and his failure to acknowledge the liminality of the space occupied by both ritual and games. It therefore leads him
to gloss over a vital discontinuity in his argument with regard to the status of self and person as socially created.

The new story is of the transformation of person, to a point at which mask and person merge into a consciousness in which everything culminates in a metaphysical representation of the self. This self is the rabbit which Mauss triumphantly pulls out of the hat. Formerly lurking within the paradox of a 'simultaneously mental and physical individuality' (Mauss 1979: 61), the self has now not only usurped the ancestor's former claim to primordial validity, but claims the ground of a new paradox: the self is both unique and yet universal, in a way which distinguishes it from the suprahuman yet localised potency of the ancestral imago.

The trajectory of Mauss' discussion, while appearing to clarify the notion of the person as social, has the rapidity of a three-bean trick as he moves from an analysis of practices and procedures differentiated in time and space, to an elucidation and defence of concepts belonging to a particular cultural sphere and arc of history. In terms of an ethics of performative observation, he has clearly moved without acknowledgement from a position as an observer of practices who constructs a discourse about his observations, to a position as an inheritor of a discursive tradition, who is also a performer within it.

Insofar as it is possible to disentangle the experience from the story, however, a number of solid observations about the relation between the subject and the social emerge.

One is Mauss' proposal that most if not all societies fix some form of formulation for the paradox of the self in the social, and the social as vehiculated through and by the embodied self. Second, that this process very often
takes the form of an affirmation through enactment of the wholeness of the relevant social world, and the groundedness of the relation of selves within it. In these enactments, there is a close relation between abstract ideas and their embodiment in ritual or ceremony. Third, that these enactments have a recursive character, in which objects and rhythms play a major part in effecting the desired transformation.

Missing from Mauss' discussion altogether is a coherent attempt to link the forms of ritual to everyday interactions, except through the re-emergence of a universal and abstract 'self-consciousness' in the 20th century as once again the property of 'everyman'. Also missing is a thorough discussion of the relation between concept and image as exemplified in the invitational metaphoricity of the mask and other psychosemiotic bridges to action. As John Berger points out: 'seeing ... establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled' (Berger 1978).

Despite this absence, however, Mauss' attempt to settle the question of appearances in favour of an abstraction paradoxically evades closure. His interest in the protean aspect of the person is such that even while shaping a narrative of evolution towards a transcendent self, he manages to avoid proposing that the person is in any way a representation of the self. His discussion therefore refreshingly avoids the metaphors of mirroring that have so dominated Western conceptual analogies and representational compulsions. As Donna Haraway argues, the potency of current technologies to reproduce and semi-autonomously to vary both images and bodies makes it especially important to recognise the delusional fantasy behind the notion that copying will mirror existing reality (Haraway 1992).
The focus of George Herbert Mead on the other hand, while uninformed by comparative historical or anthropological information, was consistently on the problem of how the sense of self emerges within social interaction. Mead claims that although the physiological organism is born with perceptual capacities, the self is not inherent in the organism; it can only be accumulated in social interaction, and is dependent on the capacity to symbolise developed through play. It is only through what he calls 'the conversation of gestures', and in particular through the conceptual incorporation of the action of the other into one's own action - 'taking the role of the other' - that self knowledge and self directed action could emerge.

Mead therefore proposes a mechanism by means of which the social and its symbiotic selves affect one another; the growing capacity of the self to anticipate, as a result of experience, a relational matrix in which both the gestures of the self and the gestures of 'the others' involved in the interaction at hand can be positioned. The child in play learns to create imaginary others as well as imaginary selves, and to rehearse anticipated conversations in preparation for future interactions.

'The child says something in one character and responds in another character, and then his responding in another character is a stimulus to himself in the first character, and so the conversation goes on. A certain organized structure arises in him and in his other which replies to it, and these carry on the conversation of gestures between themselves' (Mead 1962 p. 151).

This transition is supposed to be accomplished in the rule-governed constitution of, and response to, the 'generalised other'. According to Mead, mature social communication could only really be said to occur at the point at which the communicative symbols produced by the self, emerging through the conversation of gestures, affect the sender in the same way as they would affect
the receiver. The self thus becomes a participant in, as much as a reflection of, the social order in which it came into being; language, with its capacity to be produced from the body but to stand outside the body of its origin, is the identified means of symbolic exchange which both separates humans from animals, and makes rational conscious communication the distinguishing modality of human sociality.

This reliance on an organic analogy rendered the growth of the self out of the social essentially unproblematic; a natural process within the social conceived as a fluctuating, complex, organic whole (Baldwin 1986). Mead did acknowledge the possible existence of partial selves, and conflicts within the self which might contribute to the inhibition or suppression of particular sorts of self expression, but implied that only nervous instability would lead to lines of cleavage in which certain activities became impossible.

The degree of variability or conformity which might be expected to emerge from a society of selves constituted in such a set of relations to one another is ambiguous. Mead provides no explanation of how different groups with incompatible values or self systems might emerge, or on what basis an 'individual' self or group of selves might choose, or be forced to choose, between them. His interactive picture does however represent a significant advance on theories which assume the social to be an accumulation of individuals, or alternatively which focus on images of dominant social structures which allow little room for subjective or intersubjective action. It allowed him to imagine a dynamic exchange, in which both images of 'the self' and particular actions of the self belong to processes which might well move in and out of consciousness. Mead's emphasis on the reception and action sequences of human social actors provides an explanation of the way in which patterns of self emerge,
allowing him to avoid the assumption that selves are sited organically in any other aspect but their storage in memory and habit.

This articulation of dynamic exchange is evident in his approach to the temporality of the organisation and action of the self. I find this aspect of Mead's discussion particularly useful as a means of escaping from language based metaphors which fix the self as a single, integrated position and entity.

Mead's distinction between 'the me' (those experiences and attitudes describable as residues of the self in the light of experience) and 'the I', (variously defined as the response of the self in action, and a running commentary from the position of the first person singular as to the motives, intentions and attributes of the self in action) has proved to be one of the most misunderstood sections of his theoretical exegesis.

Criticisms of Mead's 'I' tend to portray it as metaphysical, or a phenomenological construct. Lewis however correctly points out Mead's desire to foreground the reliance of 'the economy of our conduct' on the fact that the connection between stimulation and response should be available to, while most often sinking below, the level of consciousness (Lewis 1991 pp. 118-119).

Mead was pointing to important characteristics of human action, symbolic or otherwise; firstly that any meanings, intended or unintended, are unavailable to self consciousness until the moments after their performance, and secondly that any statement of intentions can be only imperfectly predictive of what actions will actually emerge.

However, Mead's move from a general theory of 'conversation of gesture' toward a valorisation of
language as the means of symbolic exchange and the foundation of humanness meant that he spent considerable energy denying role-taking capacity - and consequently both social behaviour and the development of selves - to 'lower order' animals:

'We have no evidence of such a situation in the case of the lower animals, as is made fairly clear by the fact that we do not find in any animal behaviour that we can work out in detail any symbol, any method of communication, anything that will answer to these different responses so that they can all be held there in the experience of the individual' (Mead 1962:124; see also 92-97, 118-120, 137, 236-237, 358-362).

This allowed him to de-emphasise the importance of subvocal and other physically transmitted 'gestures', including those received below the threshold of consciousness. Narrowing the scope of the 'conversation of gestures' to vocalisation as the essential and unique modality of human communicative meaning has been questioned by the example of the work of Jane Goodall on the Gombe chimpanzees (Goodall 1986), as well as by the laboratory experiments Lewis cites as the possible foundation for a sociophysiological psychology.

I would suggest that it is not only the place of language which needs to be recontextualised into a wider framework of 'gestural conversation'. The leap into language, like the leap to the 'generalised other', establishes a theoretical border sectioning off a nobody's land, a 'no where' in which the indistinct yet constant movement of particular, local resonances can continue to be ignored. Even the notion of 'the body' invites metacorporeal overgeneralisation. As Susan Foster laments:

'These writings seldom address the body I know; instead, they move quickly past arms, legs, torso and head on their way to a theoretical agenda that requires something unknowable or unknown as an initial premise' (Foster 1992).
The theoretical and practical task addressed by the performative is that of opening up the territory *between* the un-conscious, the un-spoken, the unmarked, and the patterns of thinking that dominate experience by means of abstraction - concepts organised through language and social sanction that so easily take up the horizon of attention of those trained to disattend to anything *else*.

By re-attending to the question of what it was that you, that I, experienced, and by allowing space and time for tentative, partial, exploratory answers to emerge (by means which acknowledge that non-verbal responses can be valid) a performative perspective encourages the emergence of generalisations which yet retain the flavour and affinity of the local.

Despite the ambiguities and limitations of Mead's formulations, the distinction between the 'me' and the 'I', as well as both senses in which the 'I' is used (amounting to a tripartite terminology), are in my opinion worth retaining as directing our attention to the various phases of social action in which the self might become an object for social theoretical attention, and available as a resource of memory. Of these phases, it is the 'I' of discourse which is unambiguously available to consciousness in the act of its being spoken, however narrow its reference at the time. The ground of the 'me', or self-concept, and the momentary experience of the performing 'I', or the self-in-action, are both potentially broader and productive of the indeterminacy we have previously identified as characteristic of social action.

Though patterned by habit, the manifestations which make them up are subject to recall only by virtue of their having been attended to; they may be missed, or generally be unavailable to the consciousness of the performer, the observer, or both.
The actions of the performing 'I' will probably be more available to the observer than to the performer themselves (the factor which led Mead to concentrate on the vocal gesture as most mutually available, and therefore most rational) until after the phase of action can be fed back into awareness. As I suggested in the previous chapter, it is here that the attributions and authority of the observer may have a determining effect on the production of future patterns of behaviour and attention.

Neither of these three phases of performance of the self is, I would contend, asocial, nor indeed inaccessible to theorisation; they must be considered equally important in identifying the activities which lead to persistence or change in patterns of behaviour. A recognition of the degree of indeterminacy within which contextual performance practice takes place, and the level of attention on the part of both performers and observers required to articulate and detail a set of consistent practices, allows the theorist to account for the volume of social resources expended on delineating, and the significance attached to the business of ordering and evaluating, contexts of practice.

The Performative as Pedagogy

I would like to return to Mauss' suggestion that education is as important as imitation in forming the patterns of embodied practice; I would also like to suggest that such an education is as much about ways of ordering and sustaining recognisable patterns of behaviour, as it is about refining the compendia of skills from which they are made up. A question that is very difficult to tease out here is the determining influence of consciousness and concepts on indeterminedly produced behaviours in the development of patterns which can be adjudicated as to their significance.
It is wrong to assume that all education, whether discursively or behaviourally based, emphasises the conscious acquisition of particular skills or techniques, and is conducted through sets of concepts or principles which have been articulated and ordered - set out - in advance. The claim of the sociological and anthropological enterprises to validity is in any case based on the premise that coherent patterns embedded in social action may be identified and 'explained' by the observer in ways which may not be congruent with the discursive awareness of the original actor(s).

Learning even very complex performance behaviours can be, as Richard Schechner observed from his experience as a witness of training in the Indian Kathakali dance form (Schechner 1985), very much a question of doing: 'This doing-as-training is a kind of plunge into direct experience. Students learn to perform (in Kathakali, in Noh) very much the way infants learn language. They are surrounded by what they are learning, which is 'broken down' not into abstract grammar but into graspable units of movement and sound. Only a few masters will ever learn the "grammar" of Kathakali, and many masters will never learn it; they will simply get better and better at doing it. ... One does not explain grammar to an infant. You talk to the baby, you try to elicit responses from the baby, and you might even adjust your way of speaking to the baby's: substituting vocables for words, slowing down the speed of talking, raising the pitch of the voice an octave, gesturing broadly to illustrate the meaning of the words. It doesn't matter, at this beginner's level, whether or not the neophyte knows anything about the "grammar" of what's being learned. Grammar, history, and philology come later, if at all' (Schechner 1985: 216).

Schechner's example is of a circumscribed and hierarchical *formal* performative training, in which the object is to radically alter the bodies, as well as the behaviours, of the participants. In this light, his claim that the process is somehow 'natural' is questionable, although it is clear that the process of experiential
immersion described is very different from that of a Western training which privileges an appeal to the abstract concepts from which the behaviours presented as desired are supposed to flow.

I would also contest Schechner's claim that a conceptual understanding always comes last, even in a context of experiential immersion which may not be underpinned by a pregiven set of abstract theorisations. It is important to distinguish here between the kinds of concepts which arise from or govern proprioceptive organisation, and the way in which they are organised.

Dance theory has been strongly influenced by the notion of the body as a 'thinking' organism, following the work of Mabel Elsworth Todd and others (see for example Sweigard 1974, Todd 1978). In his fascinating study of the kinaesthetic sense in the 20th century, Hillel Schwartz (Schwartz 1992) borrows from Eleanor Metheny a distinction 'between kinaesthetic ideals (or kinestructs) and central kinaesthetic experiences (kinecepts)' (Schwartz 1992: 105). This terminology suggests one relatively direct method of organising the relation between sensation, perception, image and idea in the area of human movement. I would suggest that a 'kinestruct' may be present as an influence on the organisation of movement without its necessarily having attained such a level of discursive coherence and relation to other ideostructs and abstract questions of value as to qualify as theory.

It is difficult to believe that even the most clumsy novice will have no means of conversing with others about the progress of his training, will not have had some expectations prior to entering the training hall, or will not begin to construct, even if only privately, a set of criteria by means of which he can judge whether or not today's work has gone as well as yesterday's. These may
begin more as vague images than fully fledged discursively based concepts. They may not provide a sufficient foundation on which to base predictions about the course of training a year from now, and are very likely to be different from those of the teacher, particularly if the teacher is relying on a conceptual schema integrated with a fully detailed compendium of images and a resource of proprioceptive memories drawn from extensive experience.

Schechner, is, however, making an important point about the relation of kinds as well as levels of theory to the acquisition of behaviour. The caesura in the passage above 'lifts out' a reference to the great 14th-15th century founder of the Kanze school of No, Zeami - whose theoretical writing Schechner wishes to contrast with the less theoretically dominated Kathakali training:

'Certainly Zeami knew the 'grammar' of Noh - his writings are reconstructions based on well-thought-out deconstructions - but he never implies that others need to follow him in this deconstruction/reconstruction process" (Schechner 1985:216).

Schechner's reference to "grammar" is uncertainly pointed. Zeami appears to have been responsible for the formal aesthetic reorganisation of 'what had been essentially a country entertainment with strong ritual overtones into a superb total theatrical experience in which mime, dance, poetry, and song were combined so that each art could be transcended in order to produce for his audiences an experience of profundity and almost religious exhilaration' (Rimer 1984: xvii). The early training of the No performer would appear to contain as strong an emphasis on 'doing' as that Schechner describes in the Kathakali tradition (see Emmert 1987). This 'doing' is certainly organised according to a 'grammar' in which vocabulary items such as walking, sitting, hand and head movements and so on are extended into standard sequences or shima (Emmert 1987: 127) in a similar way.
to the development of *enchainements* in Western classical ballet training (Ashley and Kaplan 1984).

What is striking to a Western reader however is the degree to which his writings address not simply basic performance skills, but the use of skill to support the investigation of highly abstract philosophic, aesthetic and ethical issues to do with the relation between the physical skill and interior process of the actor, and the audience's reception of the theatre event. This is 'grammar' of a very different order.

Zeami's writings on theatre are as much 'high theory' as Aristotle's. However, the great difference in the perspective on the art of theatre from which Zeami writes - it is clearly that of the performer-composer rather than that of Aristotle's 'poet' - produces a different set of concepts, which have a very different relation to the practices to which they refer.

Where Aristotle sought to identify the elements of dramatic narrative, and to prescribe their relations, so as to determine the ways in which the ethical and emotional content of the drama focused the attention of the audience on 'correct' relations to social authority (see Boal 1985)\(^5\), Zeami's concerns were so to refine the elements of expression, and to bring them so precisely into relations of contrast and opposition, that intimations transcendent to *any* form of representation might be experienced.

Thus, although there are some areas of overlap between, for example, Aristotle's term *mimesis* or imitation, and Zeami's concept of *monomane* or role playing, the latter term is far more extensive in its reach. The writings of both theorists refer to performance forms which used mask, music and movement in ways which were highly stylised and, to our eyes, equally distant from realism -
yet Aristotle's emphasis on imitation as a definition of dramatic action contrasts strongly with Zeami's contention that imitation was only one of a performer's skills, and a relatively banal one at that (Ishii 1987: 113). The Aristotelean catharsis described a 'peak state', producing an orgasmic eruption and decline of identificatory emotion on the part of the audience towards the dramatic event at a high point in the refracted trajectory of the narrative (Blau 1990: 373), while Zeami's hana (the 'flower' of skill through which beauty may be contemplated by both performer and audience) and yugen, the mystery and intensity attained by the mature performer through which the attention of the audience is concentrated and channeled, were concepts which attempted to encompass a contemplative partnership between performer and audience built on a mutual recognition of the tensions of perspective implied by the position of each (Ishii 1987: 114-118).

It is clear that the primary concerns of the two theorists, and the requirements of each in regard to the training of both performers and audience members, are significantly different. Aristotle in fact makes almost no reference to the art of the performer, while concentrating his attention on the form of the drama, and indirectly thereby on the audience as providing proof of its power (Bennett 1990: 4). Zeami focuses on what the performer does, while constructing an overall aesthetic based on the production and contemplation of ambiguity (see George 1987) which, in its emphasis on the interlocking relations between acting, music and movement 'reveal[s] a remarkably contemporary consciousness' (Rimer 1984: xvii).

Schechner's 'grammar' thus appears to cover at least two differently nested relations between body-based behaviour and the ways in which it might be theorised. Margaret Donaldson's important distinction between
'embedded' and 'disembedded' thought (Donaldson 1982) might be useful here. Donaldson points out that late Western capitalist culture has come to place a particularly high value on disembedded thought, and in particular on logic and other mathematically related thinking, as a consequence of the technical need for computational abstractions which can order particular instances or events within more general formulae. Her argument is however, contra Piaget, that many of the operations required can be performed by five or six year old children if they are reframed in more experience-near terms. I would further argue that, in order for \( p \) therefore \( q \) to be understood, there must be some instance of the principle available in prior experience before the abstraction can be transferred into its own more or less autonomous discursive universe.

The Kathakali training, for example, is clearly operating within a very regularised idiom. This may not have been fully explained to the student, the teacher may not have learnt it, or think it appropriate to transmit it; in this as in other hierarchies of power/knowledge, knowledge that orders other kinds of knowledge may be revealed only at a certain level of seniority. There may not yet have been an attempt to formulate it abstractly, or such an attempt may have been made and forgotten. There is no doubt that the process of abstract formulation \emph{can} change the overall character of a body of knowledge, and the practices that it addresses; Schechner's own writings however constitute an instance of a conceptual transformation of observed behaviour that may or may not end up having an effect on the operation of the training he observed.

This does not mean that knowledge is not already operable at an introductory or local level - to take Schechner's own example, a baby is from its birth dealing with a world in which events and behaviours are ordered by time, space
and gravity, and by adults whose concepts, habits and intentions are going on largely without reference to it. This world acquires order for the baby partly as filtered through its caregivers' ideas about babies and their sense of the appropriate encounters and interpretations it should be furnished with - the impressions from others which contribute to the development of a proto-person; but also partly through the development of the baby's own perceptual capacities, and the concepts its own haphazard contact with a world already semiotised by others allows it to develop - the emerging sense of a proto-self.

Required here is a notion of the organisation and operative effect of concepts: what I would like to call *epistemological reach*. Secondly, but no less importantly, is an appreciation of the effect and organisation of particular *practices* and contexts of practice.

I would argue that it is not possible for us to encounter others without also encountering the semiotic systems, systems of attention and systems of interpretation and attribution within which they work and which they represent. On the other hand, there is little evidence that where abstract systems of thought exist, they *necessarily* inform the actual practices being negotiated at a performative level, or the systems of meaning with which they are enmeshed. The relation of disembedded thought to embedded practice, therefore, is not sequential. The *practices* of thought we think of as disembedded should be regarded as situated discourses in Foucault's sense, but in a performative perspective they necessarily invoke questions about their practitioners. However powerful the tools of abstract thinking may be, their distribution and effect on other practices requires detailed contextual investigation; concepts will continue to be very much influenced by the contexts of practice in which they arise and from which they take their shape,
and will in any case acquire context as they are put into practice, as Durkheim’s point about ritual reminds us.

We know that behaviours are acquired and passed on; we know that desultory as well as purposive educational practices take place; we know that it is possible to theorise both within and about such practices. However, the different ways in which one variable can affect another, and the different opinion about their interrelation one might be tempted to offer depending on one's position in the process, need to be taken into account in building methodologies of research into performance.

Research into the modal integration, the patterns of segmentation, and the interpenetration of physical, spatial and conceptual elements in performative interactions must respect the specificity and detail of particular contexts of performance, while remaining alert to the effects of this patterning, and the ways in which other, different possibilities might emerge within or between contextual boundaries. Such research could include the extent to which changes to self practice are negotiated in relation to models mediated through wider distributory or regulatory institutions, as well as presented by face to face interactants. It should however also investigate the rate at which the performer faces new learning tasks, the mix of modalities and levels of complexity through which performative interactions are mediated, the extension of attention and memory expected of the performer, and the degree to which the ability to produce appropriately formed behaviour in a particular context is adjudged crucial.

Such research should also most importantly, consider the ways in which skills, and extended patterns of performance, are built up over time.
The Performer: practice, time and truth

Formal performance styles demand a high degree of virtuosic competence from their actors, demonstrate a high degree of semiotic coherence, and locate themselves within deliberately constructed space/time boundaries which, in Peter Brook's phrase 'charge' their separation from everyday life (Brook 1975). Professional performers demonstrate obviously 'non-daily' approaches to physicalisation across vastly different performance styles, and it would be silly to claim that the clown, the Noh performer or the Balinese dancer would not be instantly recognisable as being to an extent separate from their everyday selves while they were performing at least, in whatever context they found themselves.

Other formal performance styles may adopt a deliberately muted approach to the 'announcement' of performance boundaries. A naturalistic or Method actor, for example, may make it a point of pride to engage in preparatory exercises in the anonymity of the street, success being measured by their ability to contour their character's 'self' in its detail to the muted and inconstant dynamic of those around them, and then to transfer that dynamic to the stage.

The synergy and grace of performance virtuosity, however stylised, can only be achieved over time as the product of detailed attention and a great deal of practice. However, such virtuosity is by no means restricted to the stage performer. The ability to sustain an intense and highly inflected performance style will also be a mark of others whose social position encourages or demands it, who have the stamina, and who have or are prepared to find the time to develop performance style as craft. The politician, the doctor, the lecturer, the car salesman, the teenage girl, the actor, the aristocrat, the hysterical are all capable of sustaining their performances. Virtuosity
brings with it the capacity to *initiate* performance, and to *create a situation as performative* as and, to a greater or lesser extent where, the performer chooses. Detailed investigation would reveal similarities in technique, and identifiable differences in dynamic, intensity and prolongation, in the day to day performances of most people, whose behaviour while no less complex is usually far less consistently shaped.

The most effective performances may well be those of whose virtuosity we are unaware by virtue of their having prior authentication. As Erving Goffman pointed out, even our most fundamental identities are created and confirmed in the process of performing them for others: 

'when we observe a young American middle-class girl playing dumb for the benefit of her boyfriend, we are ready to point to items of guile and contrivance in her behaviour. But like herself and her boyfriend, we accept as an unperformed fact that this performer is a young American middle-class girl. But surely here we neglect the greater part of the performance. ... To be a given kind of person, then, is not merely to possess the required attributes, but also to sustain the standards of conduct and appearance that one's social grouping attaches thereto. The unthinking ease with which performers consistently carry off such standard-maintaining routines does not deny that a performance has occurred, merely that the participants have been aware of it' (Goffman 1971 pp.81).

For the performative 'non specialist', a graduated repertoire of more formal or inflected performance styles is likely to be called into being situationally, and to be managed more or less successfully and with a greater or lesser level of enjoyment, discomfort, and sense of risk, depending on the level of competence and authenticity expected by themselves and others. This may not be high - as Durkheim observed of ritual 'Being overlain progressively by the rising flood of daily experiences, they would soon fall into the unconscious, if we did not find some means of recalling them into consciousness and revitalising them' (Durkheim 1972: 235). But it is precisely because the difference is social, and
contextually rather than categorically created, that we must pay regard to the constraining and enabling normative and aesthetic conventions consensually present or authoritatively imposed, in analysing particular performative situations.

Particular social groupings will have accumulated reserves of images, expectations and articulated positions which particular performers will be encouraged or forced to occupy; these areas broadly correspond to those recognised sociologically under the head of role or status, and those referred to under the head of structures or institutions of social action.

A major problem with conventional role theory however is the extent to which contextually based performance demands, conceived as 'role', are subtextually allowed to be at least partly a fictional construction on the part of the theorist. They are also conceived as being fully delineated and equivalent to one another; a set of ready-made attributive qualities which can be donned and doffed by the social actor as they move more or less easily from one 'scene' to another.

At its most unidimensional, role theory appeared to assume a set of personae being available in the social to which particular individuals were allocated, rather like the finite set of 'names' of the Zuñi Mauss describes (Mauss 1979:64). The notion of 'role conflict', developed to account more closely for the multidimensionality of social experience, (see Biddle 1979) still tended to be characterised as a dilemma about choices rather than the at times overwhelming task of composing a performance in the face of complex and quite possibly inconsistent expectations⁶. The assumption that social enactment is always conscious and purposeful (see Zurcher 1983) fails to recognise the switch between performing and observing positions demanded of the social actor, and also
fails to recognise the effort involved in bringing social performances to anything like the level of definition conjured up by the borrowing from a finished stage performance of the image of 'role'.

Given that an investigation of the relation of formal performance forms to other expressive interaction depends on an enquiry into self concepts which are not particularly amenable to study except insofar as they are manifested in practices of personhood which in any particular instance must be performed, I have argued that to rule out of account the epistemological reach of images and concepts negotiated through festival, ritual, or staged performance is deliberately to leave out an entire 'slice' of information about the ways in which a society or a culture establishes and manages what it finds significant. The question of the truth status of performed (re)presentations within that society or culture deserves theoretical attention, but as a linked, not a prior, investigation.

We are now in possession of a great deal of information about the social dilemmas and practical difficulties faced by the 'I' in the process of building up a reliably recursive self.

These difficulties include the acquisition of the skills and competencies which produce conviction, while negotiating the sensations, attributions, expectations, demands and other responses on the basis of which judgments of authenticity are made. As a performer's competence increases, they will themselves produce authentication responses to the point at which the behaviour under question becomes habitual. A particular difficulty for the performer is that performance behaviours can reach a level of habitual distinction, articulation and integration such that only an external
event or specific intervention will renew the performer's awareness of its contingent status.

Large tracts of a performer's 'self' behaviours may be ordinarily unavailable for renewal - 'annoying' or context-inappropriate behaviours such as rhythmic or intermittent physical tics, coughs and postural shifts, the habit of speaking 'too loud' or 'too fast', the breaching of proxemic codes and so on are more likely to be called to account in the normal course of events. Mauss' apologetic revelation of his own inability to 'keep up' with changes in swimming techniques is rather endearing in this context: 'the habit of swallowing water and spitting it out again has gone. In my day swimmers thought of themselves as a kind of steamboat. It was stupid, but in fact I still do this: I cannot get rid of my technique' (Mauss 1979: 99).

Since even apparently trivial behaviours can, as Freud's work revealed, link to a dense matrix of other behaviours, they may be so 'fixed' - so embedded in proprioceptive, ideational and emotional habitual associations, and/or so linked to physiological and other dependences - that enormous effort is required to effect alteration even should the performer wish to bring change about.

Paradoxically, other more schematic behavioural changes may be easier to influence. The effect of ritual is, as Durkheim pointed out, to locate the individual within the social through the regular repetition of practices which order both the social world and the abstract forces which divinities represent:

'So it is not surprising that even in the religions where there are specific divinities, there are rites having an effective value in themselves, independently of all divine intervention. It is because this force may be attached to words that are pronounced or actions that are carried out just as well as to corporal substances; the voice or the actions may serve as its vehicle, and it may produce its effects through their mediation, without the aid of any god or spirit. Even should it happen to concentrate itself
especially in a rite, this will become a creator of divinities by that very fact' (Durkheim 1972: 227).

Durkheim here, I would argue, touched on a crucial element in the factors which lead to the persistence or otherwise of particular social and self-constructs - the question of how much they, and the elements that make them up, are practiced.

A person located within a performative dyad or social group in which particular practices are prevalent, will be much more likely to incorporate these practices into their own set of competencies (whether or not they are delineated sufficiently to subject them to discursive negotiation). The more formally they are articulated, the more likely they are to be seen as significant items, and their inclusion in practice monitored by observers. Behavioural change also depends on there being a place to practice, and a form within practice takes place; such practice of itself can and will provide a foundation in 'reality' for the ideas presented as being associated with it, provided they are not subject to overwhelming challenge or repression. This is in many ways a simple and obvious proposition; its implications however are far-reaching.

Practices spread through absorption, reconstruction or instruction. They are replicated by means of direct contact or mimesis under the influence of image and concept, and they are approximated through processes of experiment with or without the aid of notatory and other forms of stored transmission. Opportunities for practice will be crucial in determining the extent to which changes in groups and selves are firstly able to take place, and secondly are recognisable as taking, or having taken place.
It should be remembered that there is no society so simple that any member of it will experience only one context of practice, and thus only one source of ideas about themselves. Even in simple social groups where all interactants are drawn from the same finite pool, different combinations of people will attend to different situations in different ways; not all contexts of practice will make the same performance demands on participants, nor will skills acquired in one context necessarily be fully transferable from one situation to another. It should furthermore be recognised that behavioural change can begin from a point located within any one axis of performance, and could be based on one or more of a number of performative variables. The acquisition of basic skills from which longer sequences can be constructed, the capacity to recognise and reproduce sequences, the ability to combine items from a range of available modalities so as to assist or enhance the range and focus of expression (such as objects, items of costume, key phrases, gestures shaped in particular ways, and so on), and the awareness of and ability to articulate abstractions about the shape, context and 'point' of the behaviour through the formulation of images and/or concepts will not themselves necessarily follow a set order of acquisition, unless this itself has also been formally prescribed.

I would suggest that we tend to identify as fictional only those aspects of performance which are coherent, and stylistically heightened beyond the 'template' of dynamics and rhythms accepted as appropriate for contextually determined performance competencies; we treat as 'mistakes' variations which disrupt these templates in less ordered ways, and may simply fail to notice variations at a more muted level, forgetting that a performance of 'not being noticed' may be as deliberately composed as an exhibitionistic one. The socially accomplished performer will therefore be encouraged to
have developed competencies in two key areas: the competency of presenting themselves as a person who also possesses sets of practical and interactive skills, and the competency to successfully negotiate the shape and dynamic of the interactions in which they are likely to become involved.

Whatever the level of accomplishment of the performer, the likelihood that their performance will contain variations over time remains high. The more accomplished the performer, the more they will be able to exert control over the subtlety of their performance, and the degree of situational variation they can negotiate. It is, finally, by no means certain that the various contexts of practice from which a sense of self emerges will mesh synergetically. The more complex the field of performative contexts in which a person finds themselves, the more likely it is that they will experience mismatch, incompatibility and even conflict between performance demands.

I would argue that changes in performance practice on the part of the performer happen both broadly and approximately, and in isolated areas of what may be perceived socially as an integrated set of practices. The ability to reproduce behaviours with integration and exactitude is itself an indication of a high level of skill in the practice concerned, as is the ability to vary those behaviours in ways seen as appropriate. Until that point of competence is reached, the performer will need to rely on the presence of the observer to a greater or lesser extent.

We have now dealt at some length with the performance problems associated with the performer's point of view. In the final chapter I will address directly those problems of interpretation and authentication that are most at issue from the point of view of the observer. I will
suggest that anxiety over the reliability of authentication procedures underpins the anti-theatrical prejudice; in reaffirming the continuity of formal with social performance practice, I will attempt also to re-establish the position of the performer as one from which research into the social world can usefully take place.

1 I am therefore arguing against the restriction of the notion of 'the performing self' to those situations in which particular or general alterations to the style or scope of familiar performances make their contingency noticeable to their contemporaries. Social change may well be accompanied by changes in performance of the self; for example, Christopher Lasch, Mike Featherstone and others have linked a shift from a concern with 'character' to a concern with 'personality' in Western culture to the development of consumer capitalism from the 1890s, and particularly strongly from the 1920s to the 1950s (Lasch 1979, Featherstone 1991). I would however disagree with the implication that social interaction was less performatively based prior to these doubtlessly significant shifts in the generality of absorption of a performance scope, style and awareness which is recognisably difficult to locate and correlate with the other day-to-day performance contexts of the majority of those who have adopted it, or variants of it. Performance styles certainly appear to have been differently organised, and more strongly differentiated according to class and region, prior to the spread of standardised consumer goods and aspirational 'lifestyles' fostered by Hollywood and the transnational media. It is naive however to believe that suddenly there was 'performance' where before there was not; equally important performative shifts can be shown to have occurred in the notion of 'character' from the 16th to the 19th centuries (see Burns 1990) and in the performative implications of changes in the distinction between public and private, mask and 'self' in the same period (Sennett 1976). Instructively enough, the thrust of changes in Western dramatic acting styles has almost gone in contrary motion; the virtuosic rhetoric of Elizabethan acting and the oratorical classicism of the European 18th century having given way to the 'natural' passion of the Romantic stage (see Worthen 1984). Attempts to solve the puzzle of the truth or falsity of the dramatic actor's self-presentation have been increasingly resolved post-Stanislavski in terms of efforts towards 'being' rather than 'acting' in professional practice (see for example Benedetti, R. 1970, 1976); Hillel Schwartz argues that fear of and opposition to metaphors and experiences of disjunction, dispersion and automation in the West has increasingly been addressed from within an aesthetic that, post-Dalcroze, has emphasised the potential for an integrated self-realisation through movement (Schwartz 1992). This aesthetic has received perhaps its clearest articulation in the 'modern dance' movement.

2 His collection of anecdotes includes many counterexamples to his own argument. The delightful speculation that the sudden appearance of a new but common way of walking on the part of young women on both sides of the English channel is due to the influence of Hollywood (a speculation reinforced by subsequent feminist and cultural studies) leads to the rather coy observation that 'sexual techniques and sexual morals are closely
related' (Mauss 1979: 119); his Pygmalion-like action in paying a little
girl to spit 'at four sous per spit' (if instrumental, then instrumental in a
different sense, since surely his interest at least was not purely that of
concern for the state of her colds, and if hers was out of desire for a
bicycle, then we have here an instance of commodification of spitting,
rather than an example of the use-value of spitting) (Mauss 1979: 118);
and indeed the whole question of the gender division of body techniques
which is raised, but by no means thoroughly canvassed in his remarks -
all these would argue for a much more subtle theoretical vocabulary than
the rational/instrumental explanation which Mauss somewhat cursorily
provides.

3 Pierre Bourdieu retains some of Mauss' emphasis on the body in his use
of the term habitus to describe the operation of located
behavioural/semiotic matrices (Bourdieu 1986), while shifting the
emphasis from action to consumption. Working class people have different
bodies, as well as different habits of taste (Bourdieu 1986: 190-193).
His attempt to relate a semiotics of taste to a thoroughly consumerist
analysis based on relations of production does, however, tend to obscure
the complex ways in which these boundaries of social signification are
maintained and shifted. The notion of habitus works best where Bourdieu
can point to a connection between a coherent social group and a set of
practices linked to geographic location; he notably fails to account for the
sets of distinctions based on age or gender, however, which Mauss had
promised as a prime object of research into body techniques. An analysis
of gender as performative would, I suggest, go further in explaining the
persistence of gender-based competencies and attributions across class,
regional and habitus boundaries, despite being noticeably inflected by
them.

4 For a critical discussion of the validity of the term 'category' see Collins
1985.

5 Boal is highly critical of the regulatory effects of Aristotelean theory in
this regard. The audience is rendered passive; they give 'power to the
characters to think and act in their place. In so doing the spectators purge
themselves of their tragic flaw - that is, of something capable of changing
society' (Boal 1985: 155). Nevertheless, it is clear that Aristotele's
poetics, even if repressive, at least acknowledges social action. Zeami's,
on the other hand, addresses the goal of transcendent contemplation on the
basis of an assumption of stasis - the tragedies of individuals do not
threaten the social order.

6 Donna Haraway puts the problem succinctly 'Most important obligations
and passions in the world are unchosen; "choice" has always been a
desperately inadequate political metaphor for resisting domination and for
inhabiting a livable world' (Haraway 1992: 42-43).
Chapter 3

Performance forms - analogy and anxiety

Theory is necessarily constructed from the point of view of the observer. The articulation of even the most experience-near of concepts depends on the attainment of a certain reflective distance on the part of the commentator, and it is very unlikely that anyone who feels competent to comment on their own or anyone else's performance, will do so in the absence of some form of working concept. However, as Clifford Geertz points out, 'People use experience-near concepts spontaneously, un-self-consciously, as it were colloquially; they do not, except fleetingly and on occasion, recognize that there are any "concepts" involved at all. That is what experience-near means - that ideas and the realities they inform are naturally and indissolubly bound up together' (Geertz 1983: 58).

There are very few concepts as 'experience near' as the self. The interest of ethnographers in describing the self-concepts of others has led them slowly to confront the issue of their own presence, and to address the problems raised by the textuality and relations of production of ethnography as a First World socioeconomic activity

'The gap between engaging others where they are and representing them where they aren't, always immense but not much noticed, has suddenly become extremely visible. What once seemed only technically difficult, getting "their" lives into "our" works, has turned morally, politically, even epistemologically, delicate' (Geertz 1988: 130).

Recognition of the highly problematic relation between the discourses familiar to the theorist, and the concepts and practices operational at the local level, has substantially undermined early confidence in the possibility of arriving by a process of accumulation at a taxonomy of human social organisation
'The ethnographer does not, and, in my opinion largely cannot, perceive what his informants perceive. What he [sic] perceives, and that uncertainly enough, is what they perceive "with" - or "by means of," or "through" . . . or whatever the word should be. In the country of the blind, who are not as unobservant as they look, the one-eyed is not king, he is spectator' (Geertz 1983: 58).

Alasdair MacIntyre takes account of some of these issues in discussing the relation between theoretical observation, with its interest in generalizations about rules, roles and causality, and the concepts operating within the societies which are the objects of study (MacIntyre 1971). Arguing against Peter Winch's contention that theorists should not go beyond the terms of self-description current in the vocabularies of the 'native informant', MacIntyre maintains that the theorist cannot avoid the construction of conceptual frameworks which relativise and transcend the local viewpoint. Translation, while difficult, is not only possible but logically necessary in order not only to cover the conditions under which it is possible for a representative of one social group to understand another, but to explain the spread of changes in systems of belief within cultures.

He does acknowledge however that an understanding of the criteria upon which local systems of belief depend is an important precondition for the construction of illuminating theoretical generalizations at another level. Otherwise 'if we compare for example marital institutions in different cultures, our definition of "marriage" will either be drawn from one culture in terms of whose concepts other cultures will be described or rather misdescribed, or else will be so neutral, bare, and empty as to be valueless' (MacIntyre 1971: 229).

I would agree with MacIntyre that 'different Institutions, embodying different conceptual schemes, may be
illuminatingly seen as serving the same social necessities' (MacIntyre 1971: 229). The question of the character and the epistemological reach of the 'other level' of generalization he recommends is, however, still very much at issue.

The attempt to clarify the dilemma of the self from a performative point of view confronts the theorist with a number of problems, only some of which are likely to be common to all other observers, or all other theorists. Scholars working through the fields of literary and cultural theory, postmodernism and feminism have emphasised the project of enabling 'selves' marginalised within cultures to 'speak' (see for example Belsey 1985, Cocks 1989, Probyn 1992); the performative perspective I have been constructing here requires the theorist to take detailed account, not only of how particular selves and groups of selves might speak, but of what they can do and how they might do it.

The question of the optimum balance between immersion in, and distance from, 'the native's point of view' is a particularly intractable one in performance research, especially when, given the almost inevitable recourse to methodologies of participant observation, the presence, competencies and attitudes of the observer are likely to have a considerable impact on the conduct actually obtaining within the observed performance context. In order to get close to an adequate understanding of the performative aspects of a culture, the researcher must also 'get into', or at least get close enough to, the performative circumstances through which performance exchanges take place.

The most profound professional difficulty attaches to the confidence the theorist can have in the degree to which she or he has managed to 'defamiliarise' their own culturally local assumptions when observing the
practices of others, and their awareness of the probable effects of having interjected their own 'self-practices' into their conclusions. As Elspeth Probyn points out, 'Given the way in which masculinity is so often constructed as the unremarkable norm, it is perhaps not surprising that even the most torrid of ethnographic self-reflexivity leaves untouched material questions about the gender, sexuality and class of those who conduct the self-reflection' (Probyn 1993: 60). Another difficulty attaches to the question of whether the 'self' of the theorist and the 'selves' of the subjects of observation are perceived as primarily textually or physiologically based, and whether the shifts and slippages between various media of expression and various levels of generalization have been adequately explored.

The researcher must also be able to produce a 'close reading' of local exchanges in a way which demonstrates a reasonable degree of sensitivity to the shape of the processes and criteria which obtain for the primary participants. In his article 'Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight', (Geertz 1987), Geertz retails not only the chance events which disposed the local inhabitants to trust him enough to allow him access to their everyday experience - in this case reactions in crisis which convinced them that he shared their position - but his heightened awareness that 'The culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, that the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong' (Geertz 1987: 239).

Geertz has proposed what amounts to an enactment of the 'hermeneutic circle' as an approach to this dilemma 'a continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of local detail and the most global of global structure in such a way as to bring them into simultaneous view' (Geertz 1983: 69).
This approach has many similarities to the shifts in position I advocated above (pp. 41-44) as part of an ethic of observation of the performative. I am however less sanguine than Geertz and MacIntyre (or for that matter Dilthey) that when dealing with the performative one can be confident of the cohesion, the 'circularity' of information to be gained by any dialectical method that assumes a transcendence, or disembeddedness, in 'the most global' of conceptual frameworks.

The metaphor of textuality to describe performance phenomena can be misleading, to the extent that it creates an impression of 'finished' codification and an image of performer and performance 'text' as separate entities. While some patterns of performance behaviour may have attained semi-'textual' status in the form of recognised and expected convention (see Burns, E. 1972), others may not yet have reached the status of a 'text', or may in practice have the effect of opposing or altering such 'texts'. Individuals may pattern their behaviour more or less consciously, and more or less adequately with reference to the techniques and the expectations of others - they may not see convention as relevant, or may simply be unaware of its existence. 'Ignorance' of the law is not a defence from the legal point of view; it is however the business of lawyers to go about promulgating the authority of the law, and to assert that people ought to know about it, and take it into account. Lack of awareness of the law is certainly a more than occasional phenomenon.

It should not therefore be assumed, at least by theorists interested in accuracy, that all departures from 'textuality' are transgressively framed in terms of the conventions that might be presumed to apply. I have been arguing strongly for the view that indeterminacy is endemic to human behaviour, and certainly to expressive behaviour. As I pointed out above in discussing the
relation of concepts to practice in training, it is important to consider not only the complexity and interrelation of the 'local' concepts that might be acknowledged as operational in the context of the training, together with the influence these concepts actually have on the practices to which they refer, but also to look at the ways in which forms of behaviour come to be recognisable semiotically, and regularised as conforming or otherwise to existing norms and rules. In this process, a lack of recognition on the part of the theorist of the extent to which they are themselves 'performing' within certain culturally derived suppositions and conventions, will further increase the likelihood of misattribution and mistranslations in the observations they make, and the conclusions that they draw.

Existing bodies of theoretical literature dealing with the performative in social action, however, display frameworks that are far from unified. Despite the apparent attractiveness of performative analyses of the social developed on the basis of metaphors drawn from the theatre or other examples of formal or aesthetic performance, such 'dramatistic' or 'dramaturgical' analogies seem inevitably to come unstuck - unhorsed in the mire not only of the particularity of the formal performance traditions on which the theorist relies, but brought down by objections to do with the fictional status of staged dramatic action, and hence its relevance and reliability when it comes to establishing anything about real social action.

As if this were not bad enough, the makers of performance theories appear to have had enormous difficulty agreeing on the extent and shape of the phenomenon of 'performance' in the social world, let alone being able to come to a coherent set of conclusions.
We might identify differences and disagreements amongst theorists of the performative as based on the extent of the performative in relation to the totality of social action, the level of formality and diachronic boundedness of the performance forms it is considered appropriate to study, and the direction of causality assumed to operate between staged, formal and less formal performances. Quite profound differences are apparent as to whether 'social dramas' arise out of everyday interaction, whether staged and everyday dramas actually share fundamental structures or whether the relation between the theatre and everyday life is simply an instructive and intermittently illuminating metaphor.

John J. MacAloon discusses differences between such theories on the basis of the generality of their concept of the performative (MacAloon 1984). It will be apparent that my argument seeks to establish a view very much toward the general end of this scale; it may be objected that in this case it is inappropriate to rely on examples drawn from formal or 'aesthetic' performance practice to the extent that I have done here: I should make clear my view that formal performance practices can provide excellent examples of the general workings of performative process, providing that they are seen as examples of performative action, and are not assumed to stand automatically as models for performance in other contexts. It is not my intention to deny that aesthetic performances are specialised variants which form under specific circumstances; it is however far from the case that a representational form is the sine qua non for establishing particular aesthetic practices as valid examples of general performative principles.

This danger is particularly apparent when a text-based semiotic system is applied to the categorisation of kinds of interactive experience; I shall comment critically on the assumptions colouring generalizations made in
selected 'dramaturgical analogies' in the ensuing discussion.

The Theatre and the Social - the bumpy ground of an analogy.

Theories of the nature of the relationship between staged or formal performance forms and everyday life tend to revolve around two opposed positions. Put crudely, one position holds that the conflation of life and theatre is mistaken, if not downright dangerous. Life is real, whereas theatre is illusion - only life can contain truth, whereas the theatre, being built on lies, can lead to nothing but further lying. The other equally strongly holds that there is somewhere, somehow, a basic identity or at least similitude between performance on the stage and performance in life.

a) Kenneth Burke - drama as life

Kenneth Burke coined the term 'dramatism' in order to discuss human conduct by means of theories of action rather than theories of knowledge (see Burke 1954: 274). The dramatistic approach was located as part of a project to identify certain formal persistences, and to create discursive links between literature, social organization and individual behaviour on the basis of the claim for the existence of a consistent symbolic rhetoric appearing cross-socially. Even formal discursive devices and imagery 'can be socially infused, in the total action of the person using it, though technically or operationally such a spirit could be ignored, and even unnoticed' (Burke 1954: 280). Symbolic action tied to social division is then employed to adjudicate questions of property and authority 'Thus the purely operational motives binding a society become inspired by a corresponding condition of Mystery' (Burke 1954: 276). Burke identified 'five key terms' by means of which he proposed to identify a
dramatistic Grammar: Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, and Purpose (Burke 1969: xv). His project was to exhaustively classify social action on the basis of the relations obtaining between these terms, expressed as ten 'ratios' which were assumed to have the force of principles of determination not only of theoretical investigation, but of the conduct of social action itself (Burke 1969).

Despite his status as 'founding father' of a performative perspective in social theory, however, Burke's terminology has been subsequently but little employed. Its literary origins, its Eurocentrism, its emphasis on a notion of purpose or motive which has become unfashionable amongst later generations occupied with semiosis or meaning in general, and its attempted universalism have been perceived as barriers by later theorists (see MacAlloon 1984: 5-7). While Burke's formulations convey most force as tools for the analysis of dramatic texts in the light of their performative possibilities, his lack of distinction between the theorist's interest in orders of concepts and the notions which might actually be infused into a social order, have placed technical limits on the extent to which his theories can be applied in 'other' cultural contexts. Nevertheless, his intellectual scope remains inspirational, and his originality still commands respect. The suggestion that social action is organized and is analysable as forms of performance; his emphasis on the primacy, and operational force, of symbolic exchange as a foundation of social order; his sustained disbelief in biological explanations despite his readiness to accept symbolic behaviour as grounded in biological conditions; and above all his insistence on the interdependence of concept and action has ensured his continued recognition as a contributor to performance theory.

'The transformations which we here study as a Grammar are not "illusions", but citable realities. The structural relations involved are observable realities. ... An epithet assigns substance doubly, for in stating
the character of the object it at the same time contains an implicit program of action with regard to the object, thus serving as motive' 
(Burke 1969: 57)

b) Erving Goffman - Life as Theatre

The breadth of Erving Goffman's claims for the presence of performative action in everyday social interaction has also secured continued attention, although the focus of his 'dramaturgical approach' is very different from Burke's.

In a somewhat disingenuous rider to the argument in his most notorious work, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman 1971), Goffman goes to some lengths to disclaim the relation between drama and life as anything *but* metaphor 'Now it should be admitted that this attempt to press a mere analogy so far was in part a rhetoric and a manoeuvre' (Goffman 1971: 246). He is ready to drop the imagery he has sustained over seven chapters on the grounds that, after all, 'An action staged in a theatre is a relatively contrived illusion and an admitted one; unlike ordinary life, nothing real or actual can happen to the performed characters - although at another level of course something real and actual can happen to the reputation of performers *qua* professionals ...' (Goffman 1971: 246).

The 'real' point of the argument is revealed to be a concern with the *structure* of social encounters 'the structure of those entities in social life that come into being whenever persons enter one another's immediate physical presence. *The key factor in this structure is the maintenance of a single definition of the situation, this definition having to be expressed, and this expression sustained in the face of a multitude of potential disruptions*' (Goffman 1971: 246 [my italics]).

I would argue that this final 'revelation' is of a piece with the theatrical trope that sustains the composition of
Goffman's entire argument. Goffman creates a world in which the social performer is more or less constantly 'on stage', and in which the effort to sustain appearances, to engage in 'impression management' in the service of 'the work of successfully staging a character' (Goffman 1971: 203) is largely defensive in the face of what is presented as the endemic suspicion of a social world the members of which, it must be presumed, are equally engaged in this front-maintaining behaviour - and equally secretly conscious of its fragility, and its inherent spuriousness. It is a world where a brave, shining front is required to mask a constant and gnawing anxiety, hence the emphasis Goffman places on tact and 'dramaturgical circumspection' - the loyalty, discipline and 'team work' required to successfully bring off the 'on' part of the performance, and which has its backstage corollary in the relaxation and camaraderie expressed in the less stressful 'off' phase, when the performers can feel themselves to be, if only for a moment, among friends.

This is a very different drama than Burke's stately, rather classical, dramatism. Of a piece with Goffman's lifetime interest in the seedy underbelly of North American cultural practices, this is a Broadway world, a film noir world, the world of the con and the hard sell, of vulnerability masked with a painted face - a world in the depiction of which the dramatist David Mamet has shown himself to be a worthy successor.

Goffman's flip, revelatory aesthetic has clearly been a strong influence on the popular reception of his dramaturgical analogy, both from those who have been fascinated and those who have found it repugnant. Part at least of its impact lies in the accuracy with which Goffman targets the anxiety about authenticity that I have presented as an indissoluble aspect of performance in the social. His own position on the performer's authenticity is characteristically left unresolved; the
rhetorical division of performer from character allows him both to maintain that

'The self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location, whose fundamental fate is to be born to mature, and to die; it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented, and the characteristic issue, the crucial concern, is whether it will be credited or discredited' (Goffman 1971: 245) and to leave the sustained impression that somewhere underneath is probably a small but frightened 'real self' who manipulates these glossier effects in a vain effort to establish greater social acceptance.

Nevertheless, the analytical aspect of Goffman's argument is far from flippant. If we take seriously his intention to contradict the assumption 'that the content of the presentation is merely an expressive extension of the characteristics of the performer' (Goffman 1971: 83) and instead to assert that the key dilemma of maintaining a single operational definition of a situation 'will involve the over-communication of some facts and the under­communication of others' (Goffman 1971: 141), then his insights deserve our continued attention. Goffman asserts that a consideration of expressive behaviour must include both 'expressions given and expressions given off' (Goffman 1971: 16), or in another formulation that 'when an individual appears before others, he knowingly and unwittingly projects a definition of the situation, of which a conception of himself is an important part (Goffman 1971: 234-35). He provides a useful distinction between the commitment of the performer, in the sense of their being vulnerable to the unavoidable consequences of occupying a particular position or role, and their attachment, in becoming 'affectively and cognitively enamoured' of an available self-image (Goffman 1961: 78-79). He further reminds us that there are three crucial roles in the negotiation of particular performance situations 'those who perform; those performed to; and outsiders' (Goffman 1971: 144). Despite his interest in
the discrepancies of role performance, and the influence of occupation and institution on the performance possibilities of their 'inmates', his lack of sustained attention to the effect of differences in gender, class, race and age until quite late in his career (see Goffman 1976, 1977) compromises the status of generalizations based on the picture of 'the self' he provides. However, his argument stands as a genuinely dramaturgical theorisation of the structuring aspects of performative practice.

Fifteen years later, in *Frame Analysis* (Goffman 1974) Goffman returns to an analysis of the problematics of the theoretical observation of social action, and the ways in which it might be regarded dramaturgically. This time, however, he does so not only with a much more detailed attention to the phases in which staged performance preparation is actually carried out but with a more precise focus on the role of the observer in creating the 'theatrical frame'.

'A performance, in the restricted sense in which I shall now use the term, is that arrangement which transforms an individual into a stage performer, the latter, in turn, being an object that can be looked at in the round and at length without offense ... by persons in an audience role' (Goffman 1974: 124).

The emphasis on the transformative power of observation here removes a great amount of the pejorative load carried by the earlier argument, and allows Goffman to admit the inadequacy of the term 'role' to deal with the variously contextualised 'keyings' (Goffman 1974: 45-46) or 'laminations' (Goffman 1974: 156-157) of 'strips of behaviour' built from essentially the same material (Goffman 1974: 563-565).

A concern with the implications of performative fabrication through an emphasis on the Western theatrical notion of character is still in evidence, as is ambivalence
about the ontological status of performative reality as contingent, in descriptions of the 'primary framework' as 'said [my italics] to be real or actual, to be really or actually or literally occurring' (Goffman 1974: 47), and alternatively as being established social fact 'the innermost part of a framed activity must be something that does or could have status as untransformed reality' (Goffman 1974: 156).

c) Divers(e) dramaturgies

This unease with attempts to resolve the truth status of the semiotic is less clearly expressed in the writings of other dramaturgical theorists. Goffman quotes Dell Hymes' perspective on interactive attribution 'there is a sense in which performance is an attribute of any behaviour, if the doer accepts or has imputed to him responsibility for being evaluated in regard to it' (unpublished paper, quoted Goffman 1974: 124).

Other approaches, most notably from within anthropology, produce an almost opposite emphasis on social or cultural performance forms as themselves being directly constitutive of social action.

MacAlloon notes the interest of theorists as diverse as Victor Turner, Milton Singer and Dell Hymes in 'cultural performance'. 'Cultural performance' is seen as the formalisation and ostension through performative means of significant aspects of the culture, both 'to itself' and to others. 'They are more than entertainment, more than didactic or persuasive formulations, and more than cathartic indulgences. They are occasions in which as a culture or society we reflect upon and define ourselves, dramatize our collective myths and history, present ourselves with alternatives, and eventually change in some ways while remaining the same in others' (MacAlloon 1984: 1).
In identifying the performative as a general feature of human societies, Victor Turner points out that the drama is designed to reflect human concerns in symbolic form. He distinguishes the performative reflexivity of the organised formal performance as 'a condition in which a sociocultural group, or its most perceptive members acting representatively, turn, bend, or reflect back upon themselves, upon the relations, actions, symbols, meanings, codes, roles, statuses, social structures, ethical and legal rules, and other sociocultural components which make up their public "selves" ' (Turner, V. 1986 p.24).

Turner's theory of 'social dramas' 5 has been criticised by Richard Schechner among others as relying rather too heavily on the Western model of conflict-based dramatic action derived from Aristotelean prescriptions which focus on the textually mediated transmission of narrative, at the expense of attention to other modalities and means of performance composition. Another of his concepts, however, may have a more general relevance; following the French ethnologist von Gennep, Turner has argued that formal performance is best understood as a threshold or 'limen'; a space which, although it marks a boundary, also invites passage. (Turner 1986: 25).

His later work displays greater emphasis on the liminal character of 'dramatic' events. He also explores the specificities of non-Western theatre traditions in much greater detail (Turner 1984), coming thereby to characterise 'most cultural performances' as 'belonging to culture's "subjunctive" mood' (Turner 1984: 20). He continues to maintain however 'that social dramas are the raw stuff out of which theater continues to be created as societies develop in scale and complexity and out of which it is continually regenerated' (Turner 1984: 24), thereby bypassing the need to investigate the ways in which 'social dramas' are received as reality, rituals are
seen as belonging to the 'subjunctive mood' in some circumstances but not in others, and theatre forms can arise from other performative genres such as song or story, or modes of everyday interaction, so as to create new (possibly oppositional) framings for performative issues.

Despite his interest in the 'dramas' of intracultural conflict and its resolution, Turner describes them in ways that extend Goffman's 'single definition of the situation' to an entire society. His version of social harmony, while it recognises the likelihood of conditions of instability, therefore underplays the possibility of a multiplicity of situational and self definitions, negotiated in the long as well as the short term through uneasy accommodations between groups with different practices or values, or the more or less grudging acceptance of authority exercised through hierarchies of semi-autonomous performance, evaluated and ranked on the basis of dominant myth or outright repression. He also avoids systematically distinguishing between performances which are maintained as formal by means of political authority, and those conducted under other situational definitions.

Milton Singer's local observation of particular Indian 'cultural performances' led him on the other hand to propose a "double structure of tradition". This double structure consists of 'analogies and formal and methodological "parallelisms" between a generic social structure abstracted from persisting relations among roles and statuses, and a generic cultural structure derived operationally from "persisting relations among media, texts, themes, and cultural centers" '(quoted in MacAlloon 1984: 4). Singer's approach is closer to the distinction between social institutions, organizational formations, and cultural forms developed by Raymond Williams in an attempt to revise the 'vulgar Marxist' opposition between base and superstructure so as to be
able to identify and take account of the means of production and distribution of 'signifying systems' (Williams 1981). Williams emphasised that

'Signification, the social creation of meanings through the use of formal signs, is then a practical material activity; it is, indeed, literally a means of production' (Williams 1977: 38). Despite his background in drama, and his recognition 'of the indissoluble connections between material production, political and cultural institutions and activity, and consciousness' (Williams 1977: 80) it is however noteworthy that he did not extend his investigation of 'aesthetic situations' beyond drama as literature, into a more general view of the role of the performative in the production of patterns of signification.

Dell Hymes, who did seek to develop a cohesive approach to the performative, distinguishes 'performance' from 'culture' and 'behaviour', further distinguishing between the 'knowable' and the 'doable' (i.e. between behaviour which is accessible to discursive explanation, and that which is amenable to repetition) as 'the distinction between knowledge what and knowledge how' (Hymes 1975: 69). He identifies the "breakthrough into performance" as the passage of human agents into a distinctive 'mode of existence and realization' (Hymes 1975: 19). He also however cautions against the trend for cultural anthropologists, in opposing the tendency of linguists and grammarians to focus on linguistic competence at the expense of seeing language as social action, 'to lump what does interest us under 'performance' ' (Hymes 1975: 13).

Echoing this caution, MacAlloon suggests that the specificity of, for example, Turner and Goffman in identifying the particular definition of the dramatic with which they were dealing, allows for greater theoretical clarity (MacAlloon 1984: 3-10). As I have argued, however, specificity on its own does not necessarily
guarantee the applicability of the model being employed, especially when the extension from the particular to the general involves applying the criteria of one particular performance context to another, equally specific but distant one.

This catalogue of variable emphasis and contradiction could be an indication of the inutility of the dramaturgical analogy for sociological enquiry. It may be that it is simply too vague - that the favourite truism 'all the world's a stage' is that and no more. However, the haunting feeling persists, particularly amongst those with substantial experience of the theatre, that the relation is not simply a matter of analogy or mimesis - the 'mirror to the age' trope - but that there are, as Goffman asserted, fundamental techniques and processes shared by performers and performances on stage and in the social world. As George Gordon confesses 'I cannot avoid the conclusion that many of the activities we apparently blunder through in our lives, and within the institutions of society, are, in fact, defined by the human intellect as real mainly because they are dramatic' (Gordon 1976 p.xiii)

It is my view that a broad performative perspective allows a clearer location of commonalities and disjunctions amongst the different contexts, techniques and methods by which performances of the self are composed and sustained. The operational range of elements and patterning practices can be observed, and conclusions drawn as to the problems being addressed, from context to context on the basis of general hypotheses, rather than assuming that 'grammars' identified within one context can be easily or appropriately transferred to another. An investigation of symbolic interaction framed as formal performance can certainly be included as an important formal variant, but not a qualitatively different category of performative interaction. We should remember that while the
principles informing expressive action do not necessarily correspond exactly to the concepts which could be brought to bear upon it, performances at whatever level of formality can always be interrogated for the presence of concepts which might be thought to infuse them, and can come into being as a result of 'being done'.

d) Richard Schechner - the whole performance sequence

I would suggest that, apart from a varying predilection for totalising explanations, many of the differences in the 'dramaturgical' theories discussed above can be sourced to a lack of appreciation of what Richard Schechner insists on as the whole performance sequence:

'Generally, scholars have paid attention to the show, not to the whole seven-part sequence of training, workshops, rehearsals, warm-ups, performance, cool-down, and aftermath. ... Just as the phases of the public performance itself make a system, so the whole "performance sequence" makes a larger, more inclusive system. In some genres and cultures, one or the other of the parts of the sequence is emphasised (Schechner 1985: 16).

Schechner's formulation overstates the necessity of progression from one context of performance to another; clearly framed with staged performance as a central model, it also fails to provide a means of distinguishing between different kinds of formal performance. However, I would support Schechner's suggestion that it is important for the theorist to appreciate not only the level of formality at which a performance context is operating, (and consequently the epistemological reach, articulation, coherence and syntagmatic relation of the concepts which inform it or to which it gives rise ), but also to the position and persistence of the particular context measured against a notional yardstick of formal performance readiness.
Attention to the preparatory phases in particular does much to redress the overemphasis in most 'dramaturgical' analyses on the fully formed performance as the model for expressive social action. As Susan Letzler Cole remarks 'The rehearsal process inevitably seems to consist of trying out approaches that will be rejected, making false starts and only by that means arriving at one's final destination' (Cole, S.L. 1992: 139). Of course in social life, and even in formal performance preparation, sequences may be indistinct, or contexts may overlap in that different expectations and different levels of attainment are in force for different performers; this however underscores the importance of recognising preparatory processes and 'performance unreadiness' as likely components of a great many contexts where expressive exchange occurs. Goffman's 'single definition of the performance context' needs to be elaborated to accommodate these common experiences - for example, that different competencies are attributed to or offered by men and women, or that some latitude is extended to children even in the most formal of situations (the precise details varying with class, status and ethnicity).

It should be expected however, due to the necessity of interaction between performers, observers and probable 'others', that there will be pressure in even the least formal performance situation toward the development of structures which will clarify the position of the interactants and facilitate continued patterns of exchange. Cole quotes avant garde New York director and performance composition specialist Richard Foreman as remarking that "I believe that in anything human beings do, [or] manufacture, there is an inevitable drift toward coherence" (Cole, S.L. 1992: 254 n. 36). Schechner suggests that, rather than finding the source of interactive coherence in impermeable boundaries and rigid, preordained rules, it is the leeway available through play that
'organizes performance, makes it comprehensible ... One of the qualities of play in higher primates in the wild is the balance between its improvisational quality and its orderliness: in fact, play is the improvisational imposition of order, a way of making order out of disorder '(Schechner 1988: 98).

He suggests that the consciously bounded 'workshop' of theatre cultures in contemporary industrialised societies may be 'one way of re-creating, at least temporarily, some of the security and intimacy of small, autonomous cultural groups. The workshop is a way of playing around with reality, a means of examining behaviour by reordering, exaggerating, fragmenting, recombining, and adumbrating it. The workshop is a protected time-space where intragroup relationships may thrive without being threatened by intergroup aggression. In the workshop special gestures arise, definite sub-cultures emerge' (Schechner 1988: 103-4).

Once it is recognised that contexts of exploratory and/or preparatory performative exchange can act as 'liminal' spaces facilitating not only the development of those techniques of competence and self-care emphasised by Mauss as well as Foucault, but experience of Turner's 'subjunctive mood', the breadth of the performative perspective becomes clearer. Not only do these contexts imply the need to think through the potential recognition of the theorist as a performer within, as well as an observer of, the exchanges that take place, but they require a revision of the assumptions and analogies that have informed the theorists' conceptual framework in dealing with other performative contexts.

Anxieties of the stage: a world made safe from theatre

The opposing point of view holds that dramaturgical analogies of any kind are illegitimate; formal expressive modes may emerge from social action, but because of
their speculative or fictional character they must be considered to be fundamentally separate from social reality.

This other, anti-analogical, position denies the claim for representative status on the part of theatre artists as the 'most perceptive members' of a given sociocultural group, disputes the contention that stage activities are directed towards the illuminative representation of human behaviour, and argues further against the proposition that, even if the latter contention were conceded, this representation be taken seriously. Put simply, the counterclaim is that what is presented on the stage is an illusion; it has no claim to represent real life deictically, epistemologically or ontologically.

A problem constantly encountered in speaking the performative is the 'infection by association' with performance forms that are recognised intraculturally as being fictional. As Bruce Wilshire says, 'when we deliberately transfer the notion of role playing to offstage life we carry with us, smuggled in, the notion of the fictionality of the actor's portrayal.' (Wilshire 1982 p. xvi). Actors in the social are likely to object strongly to the disbelief in the authenticity of their actions implied by the claim that they are, or resemble, fictional acts.

Two points emerge here. One, that this contamination by the playful may be especially strongly felt when the boundaries between the social and fictional worlds are inadequately maintained. Two, that as Richard Hornby points out, anxiety with regard to the authenticity of the drama seems to have been fairly consistently directed at the representative and representational human being who embodies this contradiction: the actor (Hornby 1986).

Hornby claims a basis for the general suspicion of actors and acting in an intolerance of psychosexual ambiguity.
Based on a binary opposition self/not self, truthful/not truthful, those suspicious of theatricality and most suspicious of theatrical verisimilitude aim to typify as neurotic or at least shallow the actor's demonstration, through self-display, of conventionalised identity/ the conventional nature of identity (Hornby 1986 pp. 67-87). Criticism of the drama in general, and actors in particular, for being theatrical and therefore unreliable in ways that extend from their onstage to their offstage personae, has been documented from the Greek theatre onward.

The evidence we have for this is almost as old as the oldest records we have. Anxiety about whether, and how far, the actor is still 'himself', is no longer 'himself' or has in fact become 'not-himself', may be seen from the possibly apocryphal but none the less telling anecdote retailed by Plutarch. In this story, the Athenian legislator Solon witnessed a performance by Thespis, the actor credited with having been the first to stand out from the chorus and speak the lines as the protagonist (that is, of having switched from a narrator or quasi-narratorial position to that of impersonation, speaking as if he were the character concerned).

"after the play was done, [Solon] asked him if he was not ashamed to tell so many lies before such a number of people; and Thespis replying that it was no harm to say or do so in play, Solon vehemently struck his staff against the ground: "Ah", said he, "if we honor and commend such play as this, we shall find it some day in our business." (Nagler, 1959 p.3)

I would argue that protests against the status of formal performance forms as modes of reflection emphasise anxieties about authenticating the doable in relation to the knowable. The anxieties that have led to the hypokrites or 'answerer' being labelled a hypocrite - that is, someone who tells lies, whose words and by extension whose self-presentation cannot be trusted - are in
themselves evidence of a distrust of playful approaches to the business of establishing identity.

We should note the frequency with which, even if other artists have been granted a special perceptiveness as part of their social position, this status is denied to theatre artists and particularly to actors. Dispute over the status of the actor as interpretive or creative artist, and the desire to settle precisely the relation between the 'self' of the actor and the 'self' of the role, emerged as a subset of the Enlightenment debate over the relation between Art and Nature. The drive to prove this relation as an opposition in a way which disproved the 'truth' of the stage persona was formulated most clearly in the eighteenth century (see Roach 1985). However, the issue was clearly of substantive concern, particularly to actors themselves, throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth centuries.²

Georg Simmel contended that

'Acting becomes art in that it is abstracted from real life and is separated out from its everyday form as the means by which life is lived' (Simmel 1973: 309). This contention has some analytic force. However, I would question his conclusion not only that theatrical performance is 'fashioned into an autonomous form of life transcending reality' (Simmel 1973: 309) but that 'it is only because [the actor] stands before us as a living person that gives rise to the gross misunderstanding that drama, because it becomes visible before our eyes, is transformed into something real' (Simmel 1974: 305).

This view can only be justified to the extent that Simmel conforms to a position which sees drama as differentiated from other poetic forms solely by virtue of the way in which 'imitation' occurs; the body of the actor being the writer's chosen (but ultimately passive) instrument. Furthermore, the understanding of 'theatre' and 'drama' on which Simmel relies has been abstracted from formal performance practices in a cultural and
economic milieu sufficiently complex as to allow for the emergence of bounded and more or less self-sustaining subcultures of theatre practice, which have furthermore been defined as 'fictional' and therefore disauthenticaded as 'social reality' within the culture concerned.

As John MacAloon observes,
'The apparent "gaps" between expressive cultures and social organization yawn before the interpreter of complex societies to a greater extent than before the investigator of small-scale, "tribal" societies' (Macaloon 1984: 4). The Western observer, coming from one of the cultures in which the relation between appearance and reality is thought to be problematic, almost inevitably draws their frame of reference on the basis of conceptual oppositions which assume a superior groundedness in truth on one side of such an opposition rather than another.

The anti-analogical position frequently borrows from an anti-theatrical tradition which emphasises the disparity between stage convention and reality, the artificiality or 'theatricality' of the artistic ordering of events and the mannered and often overblown character of actors' delivery.

As Jonas Barish asserts in his exhaustively researched study of the antipathy towards the 'theatrical' evident in the Western tradition from Plato onwards - an antipathy, it must be said, with which he ultimately finds himself in sympathy - reference to the theatre as metaphor is often disparaging; the theatrical, so the Puritan conscience has it, is ultimately both tasteless and untrustworthy (Barish 1985).

Within the anti-theatrical position it is possible to distinguish not only a concern about the relation between the fictional and the real, but an agitated disgust at the social implications of the act of acting, and the kind of world made manifest as a consequence; denial of its
status as reality is often accompanied by a fear as well as loathing of the performative.

We need to remember that we are dealing not only with the concerns of performers and observers to establish their performative competency within the social, but with the effects a problematisation of authenticity, and in particular the assertion of the ontological *contingency* of performance, has on the validation of particular patterns of behaviour.

To say that *all* social behaviour is fictional is to trivialise the material consequences of metaphorised embodied action, and to ignore the environmental and physiognomnic effects manifested by systems of power-knowledge on and by means of the flesh of those who negotiate with and transmit them. On the other hand, it is very difficult in practice to select out behaviours which are unambiguously 'real', especially once embodied social reality is recognised as constituted by processes of semiotisation which are constantly charged with the selection and preservation of meanings within a flux of action itself endemically productive of indeterminate and superfluous subsemiotic *mat ériel*.

It might seem easy to select out those *styles* of behaviour which are identifiably fictional - at least when they are framed and presented as such. Difficulties arise when we notice similarities between avowedly fictional and supposedly 'real' behaviours, and especially when what is distinctly fictional in one context is treated as real in another.

Not all performances which are highly indexed theatrically are treated as *fictional* by those who locally participate in and observe them, even when their modes of realisation may place them within or near a frame of 'play'; state religious or military dis-play is intended not
only to create a state of awe or excitement in the spectator, but to instantiate something very real - the practical power the owner or sponsor of the display has over those who watch, as well as those who participate. Kenneth Burke argues that the motive force for ritual - that is, the corporate dramatisation of fixed social role - may be found in the necessity of defending particular forms of, often hierarchical, social organisation and their accompanying allocation of property (following Bourdieu, we might add intellectual as well as material property).

Clifford Geertz' analysis of the 'theatre state' of Negara (Geertz 1980) adjudicates between the actuality of potency and its display, which may attain a life of its own and persist after the actuality to which it refers has dissipated - provided always that there is some economic 'reality' which allows it to be sustained7. Richard Schechner makes a similar point in the opposite direction when he notices the manner in which the Rajah of Benares uses the ritual enactment of a massive devotional drama, the Ramlila of Ramnagar, to recreate a transitory and yet symbolically real echo of his former power within the fictional frame, as the drama's patron, chief observer and occasional ritual participant (Schechner 1985).

Schechner's image of the 'efficacy/entertainment braid' (Schechner 1983) is a useful one here. Many performances contain elements of spectacle, and the incorporation of safely flippant or thrillingly risky elements such as battles and humour. These will not of themselves determine whether a performance is intended to be received as purely entertaining, as a more or less open expression of available and potent force, or as invocatory of supernatural powers. The truth status of the various performance forms should be evaluated by the theorist taking into account the likelihood of discrepancies in validating methodology and approaches to what might constitute evidence in the matter. A detailed analysis,
and a knowledge of contextual conventions and history, will usually be required.

It is interesting that anthropologists studying 'other' people and 'other' cultures have, as we have seen, displayed a consistent interest in their subjects' involvement in variously formal performance practices, and have not been shy of generalising about concepts and norms effective in the broader social sphere on the basis of this evidence. The greatest difficulty, apparently, is in accepting performance based representations of one's own culture as having a bearing on such generalisations, particularly where from one's point of view as a 'native' they have been defined out of such contention.

It is instructive that Goffman's revelatory dramatism continues to generate a deep distaste and unease (see MacIntyre 1981), and that Berger and Luckman, in speaking of 'society as subjective reality' make a distinction between the biologically based and fundamental ordering of primary socialisation and that of secondary socialisation, where 'biological limitations become decreasingly important to the learning sequences, which now come to be established in terms of intrinsic properties of the knowledge to be acquired; that is, in terms of the foundational structure of that knowledge' (Berger and Luckman 1984: 160).

Anxieties of the flesh: desire, authority and representation

I have been arguing in support of the notion that performance reveals, or ought to reveal, basic information about the human condition. Theorists from Mauss and Lévi-Strauss to Geertz and Turner have identified the foundational structural or expressive characteristics of 'other' cultures on the basis of their ritual performances, or else on the degree to which their everyday interactions appear to the outside observer as
ritualised or 'theatrical'. However, the more information that has been made available to theory, and the more rigorous the attempts at a 'close reading' of patterns of cultural interaction, the more problematic has become the claim of the observer to receive, and the player to represent, an unambiguous 'reality'.

At this end of the 20th century, Shakespeare's conceit from Hamlet Act 3 Sc 2 that exhorts us to remember that 'the purpose of playing ... both at the first, and now, was and is, to hold as 't were the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.' (Shakespeare n.d.: 863) has become something of a cliche. The pressure of the time, especially as the twentieth century has progressed in Western culture, appears to have been towards an increasing demand that styles of performance support or at least appear to mirror life, even as technology provides for the creation of worlds that render notions of representation, and methods of authenticating performances of the self, increasingly irrelevant.

Here, of course is the nub of the problem.

The imagery of the mirror - reflection, appearance, seeming - not only does nothing to convince those who, like Plato, locate representation and reality within different orders of truth. It also obscures the degree to which performative processes create new images and new meanings.

Difficulties common to any observer of performance include those of appropriate interpretation, analysis and attribution. The likelihood of misattribution is quite high: a familiarity with context, convention and vocabulary, and a working knowledge of the range of behavioural choices seen to be contextually appropriate, is required of the observer before their evaluative competence can be established. At the point at which the
response is expressed, the observer becomes in their turn a performer. If the observer's potential response includes advice, reinforcement or correction, they must regard themselves, and/or be regarded by the original performer, as having a knowledge base and authority sufficient to legitimate their intervention. A basic agreement as to whether or not there is a 'good enough' understanding between the partners will need to be established, in order for the exchange to continue: Goffman referred to this process as establishing a 'condition of felicity' (Goffman 1983).

Many potential responses may remain unexpressed, either because the observer/performer is insufficiently sure of their own competence, or because the performative conventions operating in that particular context act to constrain response, or to privilege only particular responses or sets of responses. Authenticating or questioning responses may be rejected or avoided by the other partner in the interaction; in a situation of challenge, the observer's status, as much as the content of their response, is likely to be made an issue of, since the authentication of the observer is a prerequisite for the authority of their response. As every bush lawyer knows, it is also a very useful way of diverting attention away from the matter at hand, and shifting the burden of performance onto whoever has until then been occupying the 'observer' position. The point is, however, that 'who do you think you are?' is a pertinent, as well as an impertinent, question.

An individual observer may well rely on speaking and responding as a representative of the social. I would accept the attributions of 'role' as having an influence to the extent that, for those in either the performer or observer position (and again it should be remembered that sequences of exchange will very often require participants to move rapidly from one to the other, or to
occupy both more or less simultaneously), the availability of 'fast track' authentication in the form of approved sequences of behaviour or socially established concepts, images or interactive conventions, will produce an obvious cost-benefit advantage. Ontological anxiety is substantially reduced; there is a much greater likelihood of either mutually pleasurable exchange, reinforcing a sense that understanding has been achieved, or a conviction on the part of one or the other partner that they are competent to curtail, reshape or break off the interaction. Attention is able to shift to the detail of the behaviours being negotiated, with a consequent emphasis on competence within established boundaries rather than having to spend time on the difficult and time consuming business of working out what the interactive boundaries might be.

The observed body is a particular source of instability in assigned meanings due to the multiplicity of its associations; the observed body in a performative exchange relation becomes even more complex and less easily fixed when its propinquity introduces the dynamic of sensory and proprioceptive factors, including above all real or imagined touch. A renewed emphasis on the audience in performance analysis (see Blau 1990, Bennett 1990, Shevtsova 1993) has, despite the varying sophistication of the theoretical perspectives which inform it, at least initiated a return to consideration of 'whole performative circumstances' on the part of theatre theorists.

Although the sensuous relation of the performing body to itself and to other bodies is always/already present as a libidinal ground and potential within performative exchanges, the expression of desire or intention will in the social generally be played out within the bounds of authenticity established experimentally or on the basis of prior experience and expectations.
Where these boundaries are challenged or become permeable, the disruption to established processes of performative authentication will produce anxiety and/or an attempt to reassert prior relations of authority. It should be remembered that the presentation or reception of bodies as erotic will often be played out by means of performative exchanges, and within the terms of codes of ostentation and concealment understood in their relation to other conventions of social presentation. The codes of aestheticised eroticism are often marked - indeed, may depend upon - the ambiguity of these relations. The framing of the female body as the instance of ‘the erotic’ constructed as an object of pleasure for a tacitly male gaze has been extensively analysed by feminist visual art and film theorists, beginning with Laura Mulvey’s watershed article “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (Mulvey 1975. See also de Lauretis 1984; Gamman and Marshment 1989; Kaplan 1988; Kuhn 1982; Mulvey 1975, 1989).

Carol Armstrong, in arguing that Degas’ depiction of the female body problematized the prevailing pictorial conventions, points to the female nude as an erotic object constructed as subordinate to formal compositional criteria, yet in a way which simultaneously highlights and obscures a discourse of anxiety over female availability and passivity (Armstrong 1986); in performance, the semiotic slippage, the absence of fixity, can further increase the disjunction between the signifieds of co-present semiotising modalities. If the boundaries of a formal performance mark it as a liminal space in which boundaries can be re-negotiated, they also mark a space in which lability of meaning is highlighted, a superfluity of material from which signs can be drawn. As Richard Schechner says, located performances provide ‘evidence of singing and dancing, people celebrating fertility in risky, sexy, violent, collective, playful ways’ (Schechner 1988: 104).
That social authority should concern itself with the organisation and regulation of the codings involved in formal performances is hardly surprising. The presence or absence of movement has historically been used as a criterion with which to distinguish the erotic from the pornographic (see Davis 1991); my point here again is that what we need to notice in everyday as well as formal performance is not only the presence of multiple signs and codes - its endemic polysemy - but the way in which more or less syntagmatic semiotic codes are brought into being, privileged, overdetermined, held off, or ignored within the matrix of the potentially unmarked (see Phelan 1992).

The discipline of theatre semiotics paradoxically offers many good examples of the avoidance of encounters with the flesh, blood, breath and maddening indeterminacy of performative relations, on the part of those driven by, in the phrase Albert Hirschmann borrows from Flaubert, "la rage de vouloir conclure". (Hirschmann 1987: 184). Paradoxically, since the discipline stands as an original contribution to performative analysis - and still one of the very few which might properly be said to have originated from a primary concern with the actuality, and practices, of performance. The influence of the Russian formalists (who also strongly influenced Brecht), de Saussure and the Czech aesthetician Otokar Zich may be seen in the non-doctrinaire but disciplined work of the Prague School of theatre semioticians such as Karel Brusak, Petr Bogatyrev, Tadeusz Kowzan, Jiri Veltrusky, and Jindrich Honzl.

These scholars, members of the Linguistic Circle who transformed the study of art as the study of the creative use of sign systems (Matejka 1976: 265) did an enormous amount to focus attention on the syntagmatic relations obtaining between the elements presented through
performance as an event bounded in space and time, rather than an as an extended interpretation based on a generative text. However, despite the enormous strides made toward fuller description of the scenic elements of theatre performance, their interrelation and their segmentation (see Matejka and Titunik 1976, Bassnett-McGuire 1980, McAuley 1993) early hopes that the semiotic structures and components of theatre performance could be exhaustively determined (Elam 1980, Helbo et al 1991) failed to materialise. The dominance of a poststructuralist 'linguistic turn' that sought to analyse the various components of performance in terms of textuality (Issacharoff and Jones 1988, Issacharoff 1989, de Marinis 1993) led, despite attempts to reframe the notion of 'text' more broadly (see Alter 1990) to an assertion of language-like relations between dramatic text, mise en scène and gesture (see Pavis 1982) that paradoxically recreated a species of academic positivism, and in any case could not finally be sustained in the face of the dynamism and transformability of semiotic relations actually obtaining within any one theatre event (something that had in any case been emphasised by both Bogatyrev and Veltrusky8), from one theatre style to another and most certainly from one culture to another.

Patrice Pavis, in recognising the necessity for the discipline of theatre analysis to confront the variability of structures of cultural meaning, laments the theoretical sterility that had crept up within the taxonomic enthusiasm and universal claims of what has now reduced its scope to that of a useful pedagogical method (Pavis 1992: 75-98). The difficulties inherent in applying textual precision to shifting generative signification are particularly evident in attempts to articulate the semiotic composition and signifying status of the actor. Those texts which aim at an overview of theatre analysis devote remarkably little time to a consideration of the
performer and the performer/audience relation, compared to the detail expended on more easily categorisable aspects of the performance, such as dialogue, character, music, the 'algebra' of scenic situations, and metacommunicative analyses of particular stage productions (see for example Schmid and Van Kesteren 1984, Aston and Savona 1991). Such attempts as have been made are either framed within an extremely broad image of the actor as human icon par excellence (see Carlson 1990), or quickly retreat into an analysis of the actor's relation to the text - the familiar textual approach in another guise (Hilton 1987).

The location or restriction of potentially destabilising behaviours (including the speculative and experimental as well as the aggressive, transgressive, libidinal, ecstatic or deliberately deceptive), in time and space (such as churches, pool halls, dance halls, whorehouses, bathhouses, madhouses, prisons and theatres), creates both the opportunity for control and normalisation, but also paradoxically ensures that such performative geographies will continue as a source of anxiety. Insofar as these geographies themselves become institutionalised (they are tolerated and even supported institutionally, spaces for these activities are set aside by policy, and so on) and are themselves counterbalanced by the performative institutions of political authority (state religious, military and judiciary display, ostentations of political authority via printed or electronic media, and so on), a 'performative audit' of the particular polity could be carried out, and the institutional conduct of performative authentication processes assessed, together with some general indications of the institutional provisions for variation and change.

I continue to emphasise that isolating the venues for more or less public performance by no means exhausts the horizon of the performative. The bulk of the exchanges
which eventually determine the performances of persons and selves take place in contexts and at levels of performative interaction which are far less wellbounded and clearly defined. However, given the difficulties observers have in gaining access to contexts which are often maintained as both private and intimate, I am arguing that phases in the whole sequence of formal performance may provide examples of the principles involved in these exchanges.

Performance as Social Action

I have suggested that drama and theatre, as locations for behaviour which destabilises the processes of performative authentication in the everyday social world subject to the normalising influence of authority, continue as arenas for problematising such anxieties, despite their having been sidelined in contemporary industrialised societies by the dominance of technologically based media.

I have argued not only that formal performance practices - particularly preparatory practices - are forms of 'real enough' social action, but that, precisely because they generally entail 'artistic' transformation (through the more conscious efforts at syntagmisation and recursive accuracy in the arrangement of those elements selected out from the horizon of everyday performance behaviours) in the service of a greater clarity of focus on the part of performers and observers, they are a rich source of those local concepts and criteria for self-description MacIntyre and Geertz enjoin the theorist to acquire before proceeding to build broader generalizations. They may also provide the material on which to build different performances of the self.

I have acknowledged that translation of this material is difficult. It requires a sophisticated approach to cross-
cultural comparison, and moreover a continually renewed willingness to pay attention to the shifting constellations of practice, discourse and concept which produce differences within and between contexts of action, affecting the emergence and permeability of boundaries and the constitution of the selves created within and across them.

The particular power and danger of formal performance continues to lie not just in its subjects and narrative structures - characteristics which it shares with other poetic forms - but in its means. However artificial the style of the performance, the mutual commitment of performers and spectators entails their participation in a real social interaction, the effects of which open the everyday 'real' either side of the bounded time of the performance, and the performance time itself, equally open to the possibility of the contamination of the subjunctive. In Mary Douglas' usage, the boundaries of the performance are always permeable.

The distinction between real and fictional is not therefore one that I am prepared to make a priori. There certainly will be forms of expression we regard as playful or fictional; they are recognisable by virtue of their being inconsequential (Huizinga 1950), and through their being organised in a game structure (Caillois 1962) or within what Gregory Bateson called a play frame (Bateson 1987). However, we can not always be sure of an established time, place and performance definition that will allow us securely to recognise them as such.

The authority relation of the performer to co-present observer(s) or co-performer(s) will have a significant influence on the way in which the performative exchange is shaped and defined. I have proposed that authenticity is both attained and evaluated on the basis of a process of validation which includes judgement of the performer's
locatability and trustworthiness - in other words, on the recursive reliance which can be placed on the performer's ability to take or be made to take responsibility for their actions over time. Struggles over the boundaries of performative expression, therefore, will always refer to struggles over authority, despite their being played out within a frame of play or a discourse of authenticity.

This concern is also a pragmatic question increasingly sharply felt by performers who feel themselves marginal in the flux of the contemporary social world. Anxiety, not simply about ontological security but also about the degree to which they are free to accomplish the composition of new or just different patterns of self performance, in the face of the fragmentation of localities and the standardising influence of images broadcast through the internationalised media, appears to have fuelled many of the social movements describable under the head of 'identity politics' (see Phelan 1992: 20-23). From a performative point of view, the situation may present less a problematics of definition than a problematics of generation and maintenance - I will attempt to draw these threads together in a way that still provides space for a liminal, exploratory mood in my conclusion.

1 Identified as scene-act, scene-agent, scene-agency, scene-purpose, act-purpose, act-agent, act-agency, scene-purpose, act-purpose, agent-agency, and agency-purpose (Burke 1969: 15).
2 See for instance the film and playscript versions of American Buffalo, House of Games and Glengarry Glen Ross, for concerns which closely mirror Goffman's here.
3 This was argued in more detail in my Preliminary MA thesis (Richards 1986).
4 A 'primary framework' is one 'seen by those who apply it as not depending on or harking back to some prior or "original" interpretation ... one that is seen as rendering what would otherwise be a meaningless aspect of the scene into something that is meaningful' (Goffman 1974: 21).
5 A four phase model, with structural overtones drawn from dramatic narrative '1) Breach of regular norm-governed social relations; 2) Crisis, during which there is a tendency for the breach to widen. ... 3) Redressive action ranging from personal advice and informal mediation or
arbiter to formal juridical and legal machinery, and, ... the performance of public ritual. ... (4) The final phase consists either of the reintegration of the disturbed social group, or of the social recognition and legitimation of irreparable schism between the contesting parties” (Turner, V. 1986: 74-75)

6 The debate on the relation between the actor’s and the character’s "passions" was begun by Diderot (Diderot 1957) who proposed that the actor, in order to be effective, must necessarily separate himself or herself from the floods of passion experienced by the character. The view that the 'craft' of the actor required a 'cool' centre essentially removed from the surface presentation of the role was advocated by the great French actor Constant Coquelin (Coquelin 1954) and rebutted enthusiastically by the great English actor Henry Irving (Irving 1893, 1957). The controversy is detailed in the compilation of documents assembled by Brander Matthews (Matthews 1958). One might have expected William Archer (Archer 1957) to have settled the matter; his questioning of actors suggested to him the not unreasonable thesis that the craft of acting requires of professional actors the ability to direct sustained attention to a great many things at the same time, but that bothering overmuch about the separation between themselves and the character at the moment of performance is rarely something that takes up a great deal of their energy. However, an intense concern with the creative 'truth' of acting characterises not only the work of Konstantin Stanislavski (Stanislavski 1979, 1980a and b, 1981) but, in a different key which produced fierce controversies over the appropriate means to the 'truth' of the actor's own self, the work of his American Method disciples (see Strasberg 1989, Moore 1968, Adler 1988).

7 It is this point which Baudrillard appears to 'forget' in his discursive reincarnations subsequent to the publication of _for a critique of the political economy of the sign_ (Baudrillard 1981). _Something_ supports spectacle - and even if there is no visible string puller, _someone_ is required to pull them. The conclusions one reaches after one has been shown the mechanism are a matter of one's own inclinations to power, or need for sustaining fantasies -this is the teaching point of the climactic scene of revelation in that great modernist fairy tale 'The Wonderful Wizard of Oz' (Baum 1986).

8 See Matejka 1976: 281 and also McAuley 1986 on the necessity of recognising that semiotic analyses deliver a useful but limited picture of the entire performance event.

9 Failure to contain them can lead to response patterns in which those with authority and resources mark their own boundaries defensively. This may in fact be the more common situation historically - the point here however is that strategically defended boundaries have a performative as well as a practical aspect.
Conclusion

It is now time to pause for breath; to address the formal requirement that I should, at this point in my enquiry, sum up the pattern of the investigation and argue for the conclusions I wish to draw.

In this thesis, I have been arguing for the reincorporation into social theory of a performative perspective on the constitution of the self in the social world. I have attempted to show that what we call the self - what each of us might call our 'selves' - emerges as a result of performative interaction, and remains a contingent entity.

I have argued against seeing the self as an essence, as needing to be or being obliged to be one-thing-or-another in a set of oppositions. Rather than having a single unchanging core, I have presented the self as a more or less stable constellation of competencies.

The performing self is held together within the body by means of memory and experience stored as images, ideas, proprioceptive orientations and learned sequences of response which have often become enmeshed at subconscious level in the 'accurate enough' repetitions of habit, and held together in the social through interaction with others, in playful, libidinal exchange and in negotiation with the authority relations and anxieties that are mediated through expressive and other action within the particular context of performance.

The constitution of this self is therefore very much a matter of learning. It is, in any particular case, a contextual entity, dependent for its emergent shape on the course of events and the responses of others. I have argued against the thought that there might be an overall category or categories, a set of qualities - in fact any kind of checklist after the perusal of which the proven existence of an approved self might be announced.

Notions of the self become current, rather, as a result of contexts of practice and the discourses that emerge within them. In this sense, aspects of 'the self' can be social as well as individual - both mediated through social exchange and the behavioural 'property' of more than one body. These are general to the extent that
modelled practices and exchanged ideas are recognised and regarded as significant by participants through instantiation, whatever the actual level of variation from one instance to another. The analysis of the self by means of a performative perspective must rely for its evidence, therefore, on practices of signification, the theorist needing to take into account the production as well as the reception of signs - both signifying practices and practices regarded as significant.

I have therefore argued against remaining content, as an intellectual practitioner, with the common theoretical overreliance on experience distant linguistic abstractions. I am uneasy, for example, with the assumption that 'the self' (itself an abstraction) can be caught within some such metacorporeal term as 'the body', whether gendered or otherwise - despite the fact that particular bodies are clearly crucially important for particular selves. My project has partly been undertaken in order to demonstrate the limited applicability of a linguistic model to many of the issues crucial to an understanding of self constitution - there are many important elements of the experience of the self that language simply cannot reach, and I am well aware of the limitations of the language I am perforce using in the construction of this argument.

It may be objected that this picture of the self is simply impressionistic, insufficiently articulated or precise to be of use to theoretical, let alone practical, enquiry. We appear to have been led along many corridors only to find ourselves confronting a shadow.

I have certainly argued for a performative view of the self as a dilemma; the 'solution' to which is something that emerges out of a process of interaction over space and time. At first it might be felt but not spoken about - and then, when 'I' can be spoken, it is something that is always a little at a distance, something that requires to be reconstructed in proximity to and in conversation with others, something of which we seem - in our linguistic exchanges at least - never entirely to be sure.

Is this self then so insubstantial? Have we simply reconstructed Lacan's set of chattering mirrors, a self split by reason of its self-recognition and held in the
world by little apart from the contraction, the tensus that alerts the pit of the stomach, the bowels, the phallic thrust?

Fear of the dominance of the sense of 'self' coming from the social world, of the all-enveloping gaze that pulls awareness away from one's own standpoint and into a vertigo where one is open on all sides, vulnerable to judgement and attack and subject to being revealed, judged and discarded as inauthentic, is, I would argue, a learned part of the dilemma of performing the self. It is a possible experience: and, in a hierarchical, patriarchal, punitive social world, sadly probable.

It is not, however, the only possible result of the exchange of touch, gaze and language in the presence of others. Not all contexts of interaction are punitive, and not all selves need find their pattern emerges on a foundation of fear.

I have presented the performative situation as a dilemma for the performer, for the observer, and for the theorist as a specialised observer with particular curiosities and interests.

In summary, I have suggested that the major dilemma of the performer is to acquire competencies, and to orchestrate the performance of those competencies in social situations, so as to establish their performance as authentic. The observer has two dilemmas: the dilemma of accurately interpreting the behaviour of others as to its expressive content, and the dilemma of evaluating the received performance as authentic or otherwise.

The theorist has the further dilemma of sorting out the means used for these exchanges of signification and evaluation in particular contexts, and attempting to determine the extent to which they conform to general patterns or principles.

Therefore, to say that a 'self' arises out of a set of interactive experiences; that it is not an essence but rather a kind of sociated accumulation located and organised differently from one position to another within networks of interaction; is not to say that it has no shape.
On the contrary; it is my contention that theoretical enquiry can only benefit by acknowledging the complexity of the behaviours and interactions implicated in performative exchange. Far from arguing for a metaphysics of the self, I am arguing for the need to take into account the materiality and process into semiosis of non-language based modalities of perception and expression which are employed in the constitution of selves in particular social worlds.

Since we do not at present necessarily have ready access to theoretical terms, methodologies, or forms of notation with which to comprehend the elements and 'syntax' of the modalities germane to the formation and expression of selves, I have attempted here to suggest some general principles, within which an outline of the stable parameters of the performative situation might be identified.

In this enquiry, I have suggested that social theory and performance theory have much to contribute to one another - I believe that this will continue to be the case in the enquiries which must follow, if we are to build up a more substantial understanding of performance and its role in the constitution of selves and social worlds.

In fact I have been arguing that the mutual composition of selves demands and gets an extraordinary amount of human attention and effort. To 'have' a well-shaped self - to be able to demonstrate the appropriate competencies and capacities, the 'right enough' responses, and the ability to instantaneously give and receive the cues which establish, challenge or support one's own performance and the performances of others within codes and conventions of behaviour, knowledge of which arises out of and is sustained within performative interactions - is an achievement which is not only immensely creative, but is a human priority in that it acts as a barrier requirement to full membership of one's social group.

This achievement is necessarily managed within and by means of the body. I have argued that the self must be acknowledged to be an embodied self - and yet neither a self plus a body, a self somehow detached from and controlling its dependent flesh, or a transcendent 'whole'
the 'truth' of which can only be attained by surrender to primary sensory experience.

I have attempted to construct an image of an endemically metaphorised body, itself a complex geography of localised kinaesthetic sensations and images. At this level of experience, which admittedly few bother to recover in adult life, 'body' appears to be too totalising a term. Even here, however, pattern emerges in process of contact both intracorporeally and through orientations to spaces and surfaces outside the body. I have suggested, along with Mabel Ellsworth Todd, Hillel Schwartz and others, that the ecologies of the body are themselves productive of concepts, or something like them. Eleanor Metheny's distinction between 'kinecept' and 'kinestruct' is useful here in pointing to the ways in which more or less unverbalised levels of ideation about and by means of the body can emerge and interact with more 'finished' semiotic and linguistic systems, the vehicles for the conventions, codes, images and precepts available socially and transmitted by means of the example and advice of others. I have coined the term 'epistemological reach' to suggest the variable extent and synergy of discursive formations which claim explanatory force over the various corners of the experienced social world as described by and to oneself and others.

We begin to see, therefore, a field of interaction in which 'bright spots' of smooth, coherent, sustained expressive behaviours and discourse act as something like magnetic poles emerging from the swirl of a primordial behavioural soup. John Cage forever changed the perceptions of those of us aware of his work when he pointed out how full the interstices of sound and movement, the relations of sound and silence are (Cage 1968); likewise the 'space within' and the 'space between' selves in performance is far from empty. There is no need to find some small corner, away from the glare of the gaze of the Other, from which the self might timidly emerge.

I am suggesting that the theorist give due credit to the ingenuity and effort involved in making sustained contact between human beings work once the maternal dyad disperses, without necessarily having to posit a distinctly separate 'unconscious', an id with which the reality principle is in constant conflict. When so much is
going on both within and outside the body, the elaboration of attentive competence remains a key performative dilemma throughout adult life - from the endeavour of which, in old age, we are gracefully allowed release.

A key theoretical insight, then, is achieved when the endemic superfluity of expressive behaviour, and the endemic indeterminacy and liminality of its reception and interpretation, are given their due. I am indebted to John Rundell for the notion that we fear being 'lost in space', and to Homi Bhabha for reminding me (and it is worth quoting once again), that 'It is in the emergence of the interstices - the overlap and displacement of domains of difference - that the intersubjective and collective experiences ... are negotiated' (Bhabha 1994: 2).

To the extent that postmodern theory describes a real world, it is one in which increasing account needs to be taken of such interstices, as the overarching claims of political and social 'grand narratives' to constitute the expression of coherent images and behaviour on the part of groups and selves has (momentarily at least) been challenged by recognition of the sheer variety of local epistemologies and social practices.

The interest and activity of theoreticians has increasingly been engaged 'on the side of' such variety of practice, as a matter of civic responsibility as well as intellectual interest. If the endemic variability of expressivity, combined with the strong tendency to arrive at patterns of self and social constitution within geographically and diachronically bounded situations, is in fact a constant of human interaction, then not only is it the case that attempts to order homogeneity across complex social groups must necessarily be oppressive (because ultimately impossible), but the task of working on an ethics of observation and translation stands as an issue of primary importance.

There are two areas which emerge for me as of particular interest for further enquiry. One is the expansion of performance analysis to the processes of 'rehearsal' both in preparation for aesthetic performance and in the everyday social world - the task of sorting out methodologies which can come to grips with the exchanges by means of which patterns of interaction
reach the level of integration required for ostension in performance, in more or less 'naturally' occurring social groups. The other is the investigation of social groups in which specific patterns of self are deliberately fostered – in particular, those groups working to provide support for the emergence of oppositional or 'interstitial' selves. The important work of Klaus Theweleit (Theweleit 1987 and 1989) on the fascist myth of the transcendentally phallic male could be cited here as an enquiry worth following up from a performative perspective, as could Joan Cocks' work on the costs and benefits of the formation of separatist enclaves on the part of feminist women (Cocks 1989).

My own interest is obviously drawn to contexts of preparation for aesthetic performance, partly because teaching and researching performance has become my profession, but also because, as I have admitted, I find in the process of rehearsal a fascinating confluence between the issues raised by the two investigative directions I have just outlined – analysis of the 'natural' and the 'deliberately constructed' social group.

As I have pointed out, the emergence of a coherent pattern of self requires a reasonably constant arena of practice, and the time to allow for the approximations and negotiations on which a reliably recursive competence can be built.

For many selves, in many situations on this most oversociated and overpopulated planet, the dilemma is one of constantly confronting performance situations and performance demands for which they are underresourced and underprepared. The 'workshop space' which might once have been available in the cyclical time of the traditional society (and perhaps even this is delusion, the white man's indulgent dreaming) may now require, as Richard Schechner points out, to be deliberately constructed so as to provide the time for acting, and reflecting upon action, necessary in order to generate and sustain modes of behaviour not yet ready for sustained offering in public.

I have been particularly interested in the application of aesthetic performance training processes to support the reintegration of women's body image and general 'self-
performance' competence in community theatre projects such as the Footscray Community Arts Centre's Women's Circus (Richards 1992, 1994); I am also engaged in an investigation of rehearsal interactions between text, director and performer from the performer's point of view.

There is no guarantee that any one position within the performative triad of performer, observer, or bystander offers a better view, or a better chance of being understood. However, the simple fact is that we cannot escape from performing, so long as we are within the sight of others.

I would like to return here to the primordial performative scene Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak presents us with in her retelling of Mahsweta Devi's "Draupadi". Dopdi, the subaltern, transgressive, female tribal guerilla, has been captured. Her literate, 'civilised' captor has been unable to subdue her, and has left her to be beaten and repeatedly raped by the male guards. In the morning she is brought before him, naked and brutalised, her nipples torn and bleeding. In the 'Mahabharata' the original Draupadi is saved by the intervention of Krishna who provides a magic sari to preserve her dignity; there is no such paternal intervention here. Dopdi however refuses to feel shame. She thrusts her bleeding breasts towards the figure of authority, and in the only words they share dares him to deny her existence, dares him to 'rub her out'.

In the gesture of performance, she transcends the status of object into which she has been cast by discourse, by social practice, by the guilt and desire of others. In this body, the self is, and finds expression, where words cannot reach. It is her action that says 'I am here!'
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