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Between Theater and Anthropology. "Restoration of Behavior".

* Notes on reading this text: --> is to be read as an arrow sign, and italized numbers signify endnotes.

Chapter 2

RESTORATION OF BEHAVIOR

Restored behavior is living behavior treated as a film director treats a strip of film. These strips of behavior(I) can be rearranged or reconstructed; they are independent of the causal systems (social, psychological, technological) that brought them into existence. They have a life of their own. The original “truth” or “source” of the behavior may be lost, ignored, or contradicted—even while this truth or source is apparently being honored and observed. How the strip of behavior was made, found, or developed may be unknown or concealed; elaborated; distorted by myth and tradition. Originating as a process, used in the process of rehearsal to make a new process, a performance, the strips of behavior are not themselves process but things, items, “material.” Restored behavior can be of long duration as in some dramas and rituals or of short duration as in some gestures, dances, and mantras.

Restored behavior is used in all kinds of performances from shamanism and exorcism to trance, from ritual to aesthetic dance and theater, from initiation rites to social dramas, from psychoanalysis to psychodrama and transactional analysis. In fact, restored behavior is the main characteristic of performance. The practitioners of all these arts, rites, and healings assume that some behaviors—organized sequences of events, scripted actions, known

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texts, scored movements—exist separate from the performers who “do” these behaviors. Because the behavior is separate from those who are behaving, the behavior can be stored, transmitted, manipulated, transformed. The performers get in touch with, recover, remember, or even invent these
strips of behavior and then rebehave according to these strips, either by being absorbed into them (playing the role, going into trance) or by existing side by side with them (Brecht’s _Verfremdungseffekt_). The work of restoration is carried on in rehearsals and/or in the transmission of behavior from master to novice. Understanding what happens during training, rehearsals, and workshops—investigating the subjunctive mood that is the medium of these operations—is the surest way to link aesthetic and ritual performance.

Restored behavior is “out there,” distant from “me.” It is separate and therefore can be “worked on,” changed, even though it has “already happened.” Restored behavior includes a vast range of actions. It can be “me” at another time/psychological state as in the psychoanalytic abreaction; or it can exist in a nonordinary sphere of sociocultural reality as does the Passion of Christ or the reenactment in Bali of the struggle between Rangda and Barong; or it can be marked off by aesthetic convention as in drama and dance; or it can be the special kind of behavior “expected” of someone participating in a traditional ritual—the bravery, for example, of a Gahuku boy in Papua New Guinea during his initiation, shedding no tears when jagged leaves slice the inside of his nostrils; or the shyness of an American “blushing bride” at her wedding, even though she and her groom have lived together for two years.

Restored behavior is symbolic and reflexive: not empty but loaded behavior multivocally broadcasting significances. These difficult terms express a single principle: The self can act in/as another; the social or transindividual self is a role or set of roles. Symbolic and reflexive behavior is the hardening into theater of social, religious, aesthetic, medical, and educational process. Performance means: never for the first time. It means: for the second to the nth time. Performance is “twice-behaved behavior.”

Neither painting, sculpting, nor writing shows actual behavior as it is being behaved. But thousands of years before movies rituals were made from strips of restored behavior: action and stasis coexisted in the same event. What comfort flowed from ritual performances. People, ancestors, and gods participated in simultaneously having been, being, and becoming. These strips of behavior were replayed many times. Mnemonic devices insured that the performances were “right”—transmitted across many generations with few accidental variations. Even now, the terror of the first night is not the presence of the public but knowing that mistakes are no longer forgiven.
This constancy of transmission is all the more astonishing because

restored behavior involves choices. Animals repeat themselves, and so do the cycles of the moon. But an actor can say no to any action. This question of choice is not easy. Some ethologists and brain specialists argue that there is no significant difference—no difference of any kind—between animal and human behavior. But at least there is an “illusion of choice,” a feeling that one has a choice. And this is enough. Even the shaman who is called, the trancer falling into trance, and the wholly trained performer whose performance text is second nature give over or resist, and there is suspicion of the ones who too easily say yes or prematurely say no. There is a continuum from the not-much-choice of ritual to the lots-of-choice of aesthetic theater. It is the function of rehearsals in aesthetic theater to narrow the choices or at least to make clear the rules of improvisation. Rehearsals function to build a score, and this score is a “ritual by contract”: fixed behavior that everyone participating agrees to do.

Restored behavior can be put on the way a mask or costume is. Its shape can be seen from the outside, and changed. That’s what theater directors, councils of bishops, master performers, and great shamans do: change performance scores. A score can change because it is not a “natural event” but a model of individual and collective human choice. A score exists, as Turner says (1982a, 82—84), in the subjunctive mood, in what Stanislavski called the “as if.” Existing as “second nature,” restored behavior is always subject to revision. This “secondness” combines negativity and subjunctivity.

Put in personal terms, restored behavior is “me behaving as if I am someone else” or “as if I am ‘beside myself,’ or ‘not myself,’” as when in trance. But this “someone else” may also be “me in another state of feeling/being,” as if there were multiple “me’s” in each person. The difference between performing myself—acting out a dream, reexperiencing a childhood trauma, showing you what I did yesterday—and more formal “presentations of self” (see Goffman 1959)—is a difference of degree, not kind. There is also a continuum linking the ways of presenting the self to the ways of presenting others: acting in dramas, dances, and rituals. The same can be said for “social actions” and “cultural performances”: events whose origins can’t be
located hi individuals, if they can be located at all. These events when acted out are hiked in a feedback loop with the actions of individuals. Thus, what people in northern Hindi-speaking India see acted out in Ramlila tells them how to act in their daily lives; and how they act in their daily lives affects the staging of the Ramlila. Mythic enactments are often regarded as exemplary models. But the ordinary life of the people is expressed in the staging, gestures, details of costume, and scenic structures of Ramlila (and other folk performances).

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Sometimes collective events are attributed to “persons” whose existence is somewhere between history and fiction: the Books of Moses, the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer, the Mahabharata of Vyas. Sometimes these actions and stories belong anonymously to folklore, legend, myth. And sometimes they are “original,” or at least attributable to individuals: the Hamlet of Shakespeare, the Ramcharitmanas of Tulsidas, the Oedipus of Sophocles. But what these authors really authored was not the tale itself but a version of something. It’s hard to say exactly what qualifies a work to belong to, and come from, a collective. Restored behavior offers to both individuals and groups the chance to rebecome what they once were—or even, and most often, to rebecome what they never were but wish to have been or wish to become.

Figures 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 are four versions of my fundamental thesis: Performance behavior is restored behavior. Figure 2.1 shows restored behavior as either a projection of “my particular self” (1---> 2), or a restoration of a historically verifiable past (1---> 3---> 4), or—most often—a restoration of a past that never was (1---> 5a ---> 5b). For example, interesting as the data may be, the “historical Richard III” is not as important to someone preparing a production of Shakespeare’s play as the logic of Shakespeare’s
the Richard of Shakespeare’s imagination. Figures 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4 elaborate the basic idea; I will discuss these elaborations later. A corollary to the basic thesis is that most performances—even those that apparently are simple 1 --> 2 displacements or 1 --> 3 --> 4 re-creations—are, or swiftly become, 1 --> 5a --> 5b. For it is this “performative bundle”—where the project-to-be, 5b, governs what from the past is selected or invented (and projected backward into the past), 5a—that is the most stable and prevalent performative circumstance. In a very real way the future—the project coming into existence through the process of rehearsal—determines the past: what will be kept from earlier rehearsals or from the “source materials.” This situation is as true for ritual performances as for aesthetic theater. Even where there are no rehearsals in the Euro-American sense, analogous processes occur.

Figure 2.1 is drawn from the temporal perspective of rehearsal and from the psychological perspective of an individual performer. “Me” (1) is a person rehearsing for a performance to be: 2, 4, or 5b. What precedes the performance—both temporally and conceptually—is either nothing that can be definitely identified, as when a person gets into a mood, or some definite antecedent event(s). This event will either be historically verifiable (3), or not (5a). If it is not, it can be either a legendary event, a fiction (as in many
plays), or—as will be explained—the projection backward in time of the proposed event-to-be. Or, to put it another way, rehearsals make it necessary to think of the future in such a way as to create a past. Figure 2.1 is divided into quadrants in order to indicate mood as well as temporality. The upper left quadrant contains mythic, legendary, or fictional events. The mood is subjunctive. In Turner’s words:

Here cognitive schemata that give sense and order to everyday life no longer apply, but are, as it were, suspended—in ritual symbolism perhaps even shown as destroyed or dissolved. . . . Clearly, the liminal space-time “pod” created by ritual action, or today by certain kinds of reflexively ritualized theatre, is potentially perilous. [1982a, 84]

This past is one that is always in the process of transformation, just as a papal council can redefine Christ’s actions or a great twentieth-century Noh performer can introduce new variations into a fifteenth-century mise-en-scène of Zeami’s.

The lower left quadrant—that of the actual/indicative past—is history understood as an arrangement of facts. Of course, any arrangement is conventionalized and conditioned by particular world and/or political views. Events are always rising from the lower left to the upper left: today’s indicaú
tive becomes tomorrow’s subjunctive. That’s one of the ways human experience is recycled.

The lower right quadrant—the future/indicative—is the actual performance-to-be-enacted. It is indicative because it actually happens. It is in the future because the figure is conceived from the temporal perspective of a sequence of rehearsals in progress: in figures 2.2 and 2.3, “me” is moving along with rehearsals from the left to the right.

There is nothing in the upper right quadrant—the future/subjunctive—because performances are always actually performed. But one might place some workshops and Grotowski’s paratheater there, as a sequence 1 --> 5a --> 5c. Paratheater and workshops are preparations and process implying performances that never-will-be. The paratheatrical work goes along “as if” there might be a performance, an end to the process; but the process doesn’t end, it has no logical finality, it simply stops. There is no performance at point 5c.
In 1--> 2 I become someone else, or myself in another state of being, or mood, so “unlike me” that I appear to be “beside myself” or “possessed by another.” There is little rehearsal for this kind of performance, sometimes none. From birth, people are immersed in the kind of social performative actions that are sufficient preparations for entering trance. Watching children, infants even, at a black church or in Bali reveals a continuous training by osmosis. The displacement of 1--> 2 may be slight, as in some mood changes, or very strong, as in some trances. But in either case there is little appeal to either an actual or a subjunctive past. “Something happens” and the person (performer) is no longer himself. This kind of performance, because it is so close to “natural behavior” (maybe extraordinary from the outside but expected from within the culture)—either by surrender to strong outside forces, as in possession, or by giving in to moods within oneself—can be very powerful. It can happen to anyone, suddenly, and such instant performative behavior is regarded as evidence of the strength of the force possessing the subject. The performer does not seem to be “acting.” A genuine if temporary transformation (a transportation) takes place. Most 1--> 2 performances are solos, even if these solos happen simultaneously in the same space. The astonishing thing about Balinese sanghyang trance dancing is that each dancer has by her/himself so incarnated the collective score that solo dances cohere into group performances. Upon recovering from the trance, dancers are often unaware that others were dancing; sometimes they don’t remember their own dancing. I’ve seen similar meshing of solo performing into an ensemble several times at the Institutional Church in Brooklyn. As the gospel singing reached a climax more than a dozen women, men, and children “fell out”

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into the aisles. People watched them closely, grabbing them if they became too violent, preventing them from knocking against the chairs, calming them down when the singing subsided. The same kind of assistance is offered to trance dancers in Bali and elsewhere. The event in Brooklyn is very neatly organized. The singers whose gospel fired the trance dancing were definitely not in trance. They were the “transporters” propelling the dancers into trance. The dancers depended upon their friends to keep the dancing safe. The others in the church—potentially trance dancers but for the time being either more or less involved in the action—filled out a continuum from cool spectators to nearly wholly entranced clappers, foot stompers, and shouters. Each trance dancer was dancing in trance alone, but the whole group was dancing together, the whole church was rocking with collective performative
energy. Peter Adair’s film of a snake-handling, white, fundamentalist Christian sect in West Virginia, The Holy Ghost People, shows the same thing.

In 1-->3 --> 4 an event from some other place or past is restored—a “living newspaper” or a diorama at the American Museum of Natural History. Strictly speaking, dioramas are restored environments, not behaviors. But increasingly action is being added to the environments. Later I will discuss “restored villages” and “theme parks” where fact and fancy are freely mixed. Some zoos, however, try their best to make their displays genuine replicas of the wild. Reacting to the vanishing wilderness, zoo keepers are creating “breeding parks.”

In the breeding park near Front Royal, Virginia, the attempt to keep an authentic and pristine environment is such that all visitors except breeders, veterinarians, and ethologists are excluded. At the San Diego Wild Animal Park in the lovely hills thirty miles northeast of the city, there is a combination of authenticity and local cultural values (shtick). Those tiding the monorail around the 600-acre display are repeatedly reminded by the tour guide of the authenticity of the park. The brochure all visitors get begins:

Join us here...to contemplate the wild animals of the world and nature's wilderness...to strengthen a commitment to wildlife conservation throughout the world...and to strive toward man's own survival through the preservation of nature.

Of course, there are adjacent to the monorail “wild preserve” a number of food stands, souvenir stores, and theaters offering animal shows (trained birds, a petting pen, etc.). Also, the park features nightly concerts of jazz, bluegrass, calypso, and “big band sounds.” There is a McDonald’s. This same brochure invites the more spendy visitors to “Join us for a tempting 10-ounce Delmonico steak dinner at Thorn Tree Terrace each evening, and take a new

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Caravan Tour into the preserve.” Oh, well. But what interested me most was when I asked the monorail guide what the lions “roaming free” ate? Special food pellets packed with everything nutritious. Why not some of the wildeúbeest running across the fence from the lions? Well, I was told,
although there is no shortage of wildebeests and lions do hunt them back in Africa, it would take too much space and, maybe, it wouldn’t be so nice for the monorail visitors to witness such suppers. In this way, 1 --> 3 --> 4 is transformed by specific cultural values into 1 --> 5a --> 5b. The whole tone of the Wild Animal Park is of peaceful cohabitation. The hunting behavior of carnivores, though known, is not seen. The 5a that the park restores is consistent with current California notions of how best “to contemplate ... nature’s wilderness.”

Many traditional performances are 1 --> 3 --> 4. So are performances that are kept in repertory according to a strict adherence to the original score. When the Moscow Art Theatre visited New York in the mid-sixties, it claimed to present Chekhov according to Stanislavski’s original mise-en-scènes. When I saw several plays of Brecht at the Berlin Ensemble in 1969 I was told that Brecht’s Modelbuchs—his detailed photo accounts of his mise-en-úscènes—were followed. Classical ballets have been passed on through generations of dancers. But even the strictest attempts at 1 --> 3 --> 4 frequently are in fact examples of 1 --> 5a --> 5b. 1 --> 3 --> 4 is very unstable, simply because even if human memory can be improved upon by the use of film or exact notation a performance always happens within several contexts, and these are not easily controllable. The social circumstances change—as is obvious when you think of Stanislavski’s productions at the turn of the century and the Moscow Art Theater today. Even the bodies of performers—what they are supposed to look like, how they are supposed to move, what they think and believe—change radically over relatively brief periods of time, not to mention the reactions, feelings, and moods of the audience. Performances that were once current, even avant-garde, soon become period pieces. These kinds of contextual changes are not measurable by Labanotation.(2) The difference between 1 --> 3 --> 4 and 1 --> 5a --> 5b is shown in figure 2.2. In 1 --> 3 --> 4 there is an event (3) that is always referred back to. This event serves as model and corrective. If during a rehearsal of one of Brecht’s plays, according to his authorized mise-en-scène, it is suspected that some gesture is not being performed as Brecht intended it, the gesture is checked back against the Modelbuch (and other documentary evidence). What the Modelbuch says goes. It is the authority. All details are checked against an “authorized original.” Many rituals follow this pattern. This is not to say that rituals—and Brecht’s mise-en-scènes—do not change. They change in two ways: first, by a slow slippage made inevitable by changing historical circumstances;
second, through “official revisions” made by the owners-heirs of the “authorized original.” In either case, it is my view that 1 --> 3 --> 4 is very unstable: it is always becoming 1 --> 5a --> 5b.

Noh drama is a very good example of a performance genre that is both 1 --> 3 --> 4 and 1 --> 5a --> 5b simultaneously and consciously. The whole score of a Noh play—its mise-en-scène, music, text, costuming, masking—is transmitted within several schools or families from one generation to the next with only minor variations. In this sense, Noh—at least since the Meiji Restoration of the nineteenth century—is a clear example of 1 --> 3 --> 4. During his lifetime a Noh shite (the main actor, literally the “doer,” the one who wears the mask) moves from one role to another in a progression; the accumulation of roles equals a full career. He accepts the score of the role he approaches and leaves behind the score of the role he has just played. Only the greatest masters of Noh dare change a score. These changes are taught by the shite to his disciples: the changes become part of the score. The roles, and their place within the total performance text, and the performance texts themselves as steps along the progression of Noh plays that compose a lifetime of performing make up a complicated but decipherable system. But each individual Noh performance also includes surprises. The groups who come together to do a Noh play are made of members of different families, each with its own traditions, its own “secrets.” The shite and chorus work together; the waki, kyogen, flutist, and drummers work separately. That is, if a Noh play is done according to the tradition the ensemble does not gather until a few days before the performance. Then no rehearsals occur; instead, the shite outlines his plans. True to its Zen aspect, a Noh drama staged traditionally occurs only once, finding in the absolute immediacy of the meeting among all its constituent players its essence. Like the Zen archer, the shite and his colleagues either hit the mark or they don’t.

During the performance—through subtle signals issued by the shite to the musicians and others—variations occur: routines are repeated or cut, emphases changed, tempos accelerated or slowed. Even the selection of what costume and mask to wear sometimes depends on the shite’s opinion regarding the mood of this audience assembled now. The shite gauges the mood of the audience by watching them assemble or by seeing how they react to the first plays of a full Noh program that may include five Noh and four comic kyogen plays and take seven hours or more. Those Noh
performers made into a “company” for foreign tours, where they repeat the same plays over and over, performing with the same players, complain of boredom and the lack of creative opportunity. Optimally, then, each performance of Noh, and every variation during a performance, is the leading edge of a long tradition formed during Kanami’s and Zeami’s time in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, almost extinguished by the mid-nineteenth, and flourishing again now. This leading edge is both 1--3--4 and 1--5a--5b.

Some contemporary experimental theater in New York also combines 1--3--4 and 1--5a--5b, but in a way that suggests the configuration 1--3--5b: the restoration in a subjunctive mood of a past that is demonstrably factual. In *Rumstick Road* of the Wooster Group, actual sound tapes of Spalding Gray interviewing his father, grandmother, and mother’s psychiatrist are played as part of a reminiscence that presents Gray’s state of mind regarding his mother’s life and suicide. Techniques used in *Rumstick Road*—dancelike movements, direct address to the audience, a progression of events organized according to associational rather than linear narrative conventions, performers sometimes playing themselves and sometimes playing characters—all are well established in experimental Euro-American theater. But the core documents used in *Rumstick Road*—the audiotapes, letters and photographs that Gray found in his father’s house—are used “raw,” as is. Robert Wilson in his work with Raymond Andrews, a deaf boy, and Christopher Knowles, a brain-damaged boy (or one unusually tuned to experience, depending on one’s view of the matter), similarly introduces “raw” material and behaviors into highly “artified” performances. Squat Theatre—with the back wall of its stage actually being a window directly facing busy Twenty-third Street in Manhattan—also combines the raw, the unrehearsed or untreated, with the highly refined (or processed). Of course, what’s raw from one perspective may be refined from another. How can Twenty-third Street be raw nature, or maybe it is raw human nature—or is that a contradiction in terms? (For more on this problem, see chapter 7 and Schechner 1982b.)

Just as interesting as Noh or experimental performance in regard to the relationship between 1--3--4 and 1--5a--5b types of restored behavior is Shaker dancing. Carol Martin in her 1979 paper, “The Shakers:
Sources and Restoration,” introduced me to the complexities of the Shaker story. The Shakers were a religious sect who migrated from England to America 1774. Since Shakers do not marry, their numbers depend entirely on conversions. As of 1983 there were only six surviving Shakers, all of them aged. But around the time of the Civil War there were about six thousand. Shaker ritual included song and dance (plate 7). Originally these were done by and for the Shakers themselves. But according to Suzanne Youngerman:

as Shakerism grew, the religion and the social organization it engendered became less ecstatic and more rigid and institutionalized. The dances and songs, which were the main form of worship, also changed from involuntary ecstatic and convulsive movements with glossolalia occurring during spells of altered states of consciousness to disciplined choreographed marches with symbolic steps, gestures, and floor plans.

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These rituals became elaborate and fixed dance “exercises.” A steady stream of tourists came to the Shaker communities to watch these spectacles. [1978, 95]

The Shakers had stopped dancing by 1931 when Doris Humphrey, one of the pioneers of American modern dance, choreographed *The Shakers* (plate 8). Working from pictures and research materials but never having seen any Shakers dancing, Humphrey in her dance was able to actualize something of Shaker culture. Youngerman says: “Humphrey’s choreography embodies a wide range of Shaker culture incorporating many direct references to actual Shaker dances” (1978, 96). Dance scholar Marcia Siegal told me that after *The Shakers* people regarded Humphrey as an authority on Shakers; she received letters concerning them and her advice was solicited. But it wasn’t until 1955 that Humphrey even met a Shaker.

Humphrey’s dance is still in the repertory of the José Limon Dance Company (where Humphrey danced). I saw it there in 1979 and again in 1981. The dance is also Labanotated, which means other companies can
dance Humphrey’s dance much the way orchestras can play a Beethoven symphony. In fact, in 1979 the Humphrey dance was performed by the Louisville Ballet at Shakertown, a reconstructed Shaker village at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky. This is certainly not the only example of an aesthetic dance being a main way of physically re/membering (= putting back together what time has dis/membered) an extinct behavior. Shakers dancing is 1 --> 3 --> 4; Humphrey’s Shakers is 1 --> 5a --> 5b.

Dance scholar Dorothy Rubin suggests another “route” around the model depicted in figure 2.1. I have shown Rubin’s route in figure 2.4. Rubin worked on what she calls “recreating” seventeenth-century English masque dances. Data concerning these dances are incomplete, yet there is some information available. What the “recreations” do is use what historical information there is (3), to build a model of what the masque dances might have been (5a), and then to perform these (5b).

Since we are recreating and not merely reconstructing or restoring. I propose that the continuum start at the “me,” move through the primary sources
concerning the actual event, 3, progress to the “reconstruction”—i.e., primary sources + educated guesses to fill in the gaps, 5, flow through the “me,” 1, (all decisions made both in reconstructing and rehearsing), and culminate at the “recreation,” 5b [Rubin 1982. 10].

I like Rubin’s variation of the model. Not only does it yield important procedural information, but it demonstrates the flexibility of the model itself.

The Shaker story continues. Figures 2.1 and 2.4 illuminate it. Robin Evanchuk visited a few surviving Shakers in 1962 and again in 1975. These people had long since stopped dancing. By using their memories and the memories of people who knew Shakers and by drawing on the research of Edward Deming Andrews, (3) Evanchuk reconstructed the “authentic” dances. As of 1977 three groups had “learned and presented this reconstruction,” including her own group, the Liberty Assembly (plate 9). Evanchuk is always bringing in new dancers. This requires orientation and rehearsal.

During the teaching sessions, the dancers must overcome their fear of appearing ridiculous due to the strangeness of movements and the intense emotion. In addition to a strong orientation. I find that constant repetition of the movements, which allows the dancers to gradually become familiar with them, tends to lessen their embarrassment and moves the emphasis from how the dancers feel to concern for how the Shakers themselves felt when they were involved in the exercises. [Evanchuk 1977-78, 22]

Thus we have three different but related performance traditions: the Shakers themselves (now gone), an art dance choreographed by Humphrey that is still performed by the Limon company and others, and an “authentic” reconstruction of Shaker dancing by Evanchuk. Of the first of these traditions—Shaker dancing in the nineteenth century—I can say nothing, but I guess

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that it was of the 1--> 2 or 1--> 3 --> 4 type, soon becoming 1--> 5a --> 5b, as tourists visited the Shakers to watch them dance. This same conversion of a performance genre from something focused inward on a community to something broadcast outward to tourists is widespread; I’ve seen it in India and Bali. Clearly Humphrey’s *Shakers* is 1 --> 5a, --> 5b. But Evanchuk
always refers back to 3, an “authorized original.” If after some rehearsals she finds her dancers departing from the original, she corrects them. Still it is hard to categorize the Evanchuk restoration as 1 --> 3 --> 4. She works by referring back to an authorized original, but she also states that it is her wish to restore not just Shaker dances but Shaker feelings as well: the fervor, joy and ecstasy that go with the dancing. Humphrey doesn’t call her dance an ethnographic reconstruction, and Evanchuk doesn’t call her work art. But Humphrey achieved something other than fiction; anthropologist Youngerman thinks Humphrey’s dance comes close to expressing the heart of the sect. Youngerman reports that

one of the last two Shaker brothers, Ricardo Belden, then 87 years old, saw the 1955 reconstruction of The Shakers at Connecticut College and reportedly was “enthralled” by the performance. He later wrote to Humphrey offering to come to New London the following summer to teach Shaker dances. What greater tribute could there be? [1978, 106]

Evanchuk used the notes of this same Ricardo Belden. It would seem to me that Evanchuk’s reconstructions are actually evolving out of 1 --> 3 --> 4 or Rubin’s 1 --> 3 --> 5a --> 5b. The determining factor is whether or not a performance is based on previous performances. In cultures where performances are transmitted orally, is not the process of transmission very much like Humphrey’s process in making The Shakers? The authority in such cultures rests not with “data” or “documented” earlier performances but with “respected persons” who themselves, in their very bodies, carry the necessary performance knowledge. The original is not fixed, as in Evanchuk’s notes (or, ironically enough, in the Labanotated Shakers), nor is it in quasi-literary texts; it is in bodies that pass on not only the “original” but their own particular incarnation/interpretation of that original.

1 --> 5a --> 5b is a performance based on previous performances. The totality of all those previous performances as incorporated in the oral tradition may be called the “original.” The people possessing the latest version of the original often presume (falsely) that it has come down unchanged over many generations. Unlike a specific performance text of Brecht’s or a particular Labanotated dance of Humphrey, the Evanchuk reconstruction of Shaker dancing is founded on her own construction of what Shaker dancing was. This Construction is based on several sources, including the memories of
surviving Shakers. Evanchuk says she is restoring “authentic” Shaker dances. I ask: Which dances, performed on which occasions, before what audiences, with what dancers? Humphrey’s original Shakers is 1 --> 5a --> 5b while new productions following the Labanotated score of that original are 1 --> 3 --> 4. The Evanchuk “authentic” Shaker dancing is more likely to be 1 --> 5a --> 5b, for the original Evanchuk is looking at is not “an” original at all but a bundle of performances—and nonperformances (documents, memories, etc.)—conventionally labeled “an” original.

But even where there is “an” original—as in Brecht, the Moscow Art Theatre Chekhovs, and Humphrey’s Shakers—contextual and historical circumstances make even the exact replication of a scored/notated original different than the original. Hard as it may be for some scholars to swallow, performance originals disappear as fast as they are made. No notation, no reconstruction, no film or videotape recording can keep them. What they lose first and most importantly is their immediacy, their existence in a specific space and context. Media recording abolishes these almost totally. Restorations are immediate, and they exist in time/space as wholes; but the occasion is different, the world view is different, the audience is different, and the performers are different. One of the chief jobs challenging performance scholars is the making of a vocabulary and methodology that deal with performance in its immediacy and evanescence. Even now, most discourse on the subject has been adapted from considerations of literature—where the argument can be made that originals exist and persist. Not so with performances, where the closest one can get to an original is the “most recent performance of” Technically the Moscow Art Theatre productions of Chekhov, the Berlin Ensemble productions of Brecht, and the Limon company’s production of The Shakers are 1 --> 3 --> 4. But in actuality—in the immediacy of their being performed now—all these performances are 1 --> 5a --> 5b.

Other examples of 1 --> 5a --> 5b are theater when the mise-en-scène is developed during rehearsals; ethnographic films shot in the field and edited at home; modem versions of “ancient forms,” whether or not labeled “neoclassical” or “restorations” or “recreations”; and rituals that actualize, (4) commemorate, or dramatize myths or old stories (though probably it’s
the other way around; myths follow, are word versions of, elaborations based on, rituals). In 1 -->5a -->5b the event to be restored either has been forgotten, never was, or is overlaid with so much secondary stuff that its actuality-in-history is lost. History so-called is not “what happened” but what has been constructed out of events, memories, records: all shaped by the world view of whoever—individually or collectively—is encoding (and performing)

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history. To “make history” is not to do something but to do something with what has been done.

History is not what happened but what is encoded and transmitted. Performance is not merely a selection from data arranged and interpreted; it is behavior itself and carries in itself kernels of originality, making it the subject for further interpretation, the source of further study.

1--> 3 --> 4 is unstable due to the difficulty of “fit.” It is not possible to “get back to” what was. 4 can never match 3. As I noted, performers’ bodies are different, audiences are different, performative contexts are different. 1--->5a --> 5b, replaces 1--> 3 --> 4 because rehearsals (or whatever preparatory steps are followed) conflate the past, present, and future. The work of rehearsals is to “re-present” a past for the future (performance-to-be). Performers repeat yesterday’s work at today’s rehearsal on behalf of the future “presentation.” This synchronic aspect of 1--->5a --> 5b is shown in figure 2.3, suggested to me by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. Figure 2.3 shows that the pastness of 5a is focused through the prism of “today’s rehearsals” and projected forward to the project-to-be, 5b. It is always this project-to-be that sets up the rules or conditions for selecting material from 5a. 5a and 5b cannot function independent of each other.

Carol Martin and Sally Harrison both examined figure 2.1 and suggested using the upper right quadrant, the future/subjunctive. They pointed out that a route 1--> 5a --> 5c would describe the process of Grotowski’s paratheater, some of Allan Kaprow’s more recent happenings where there is no public, and the many workshops that use theatrical and dance techniques with no view toward public performance at all. Some of these workshops are therapeutical (dance therapy and psychodrama). But others fall into the category of aesthetics, or workshops run for “personal growth.” This last is hard to pin down beyond saying that therapeutic techniques are used not to
“cure” people but to extend their range of self-expression, to help them relate to each other, and simply as a source of pleasure. Thus some workshops use the performance process but not in the service of generating public performances. Sometimes not only are performances forbidden but workshopers are told to keep what happened in workshops secret.

The model of the performative process shown in figures 2.1—2.4 is drawn from a Euro-American perspective. I will apply it to events that are not Euro-American. In doing so, I am not saying that the performances of many different cultures are equivalent. But I do think that performances in all cultures share the particular quality of twiceness that the model depicts, that performances everywhere are restored behavior. And I think restored behavior can best be understood processually by examining the rehearsal process: how the single behaved behaviors of ordinary living are made into the twice-behaved behaviors of art, ritual, and the other performative genres.

I’m aware of the opinion of Goffman and others that “ordinary living” includes a lot of performing. Insofar as it does, the model applies. Maybe it is that art and ritual are more than “twice-behaved.” Or maybe ordinary living is more artful than ordinarily supposed.

It is the work of rehearsals to prepare the strips of behavior so that when expressed by performers these strips seem spontaneous, authentic, unrehearsed. I don’t mean unrehearsed only in the ways familiar to Western naturalism. Authenticity is a display of harmony/mastery of whatever style is being played, Chekhov or Chikamatsu. For the Brechtian actor to show that he is acting is no less difficult than for the Stanislavskian actor not to show he is acting. During rehearsals a past is assembled out of bits of actual experience, fantasies, historical research, past performances. Or a known score is recalled and replayed. Earlier rehearsals and/or performances quickly become the reference points, the building blocks of performances. Useful recollections are not of “how it was” but of “how we used to do it.” The “it” is not the event but earlier rehearsals or performances. Soon reference back to the original—if there was an original—is irrelevant. How Christ offered his disciples wine and matzo at the Last Supper (a seder) is irrelevant to the performance of the Eucharist. The Roman Catholic church ceremony has its own performance history. The language of church ceremony has never been the language Christ spoke,
Aramaic-Hebrew. Nor are the gestures or costumes of the priests modeled on Christ’s. And if the church had chosen another of Christ’s gestures as the keystone of the Mass—say, the laying on of hands to heal the sick—this would have developed its own traditional scripts. Indeed, in some Pentecostal churches the laying on of hands is the key representation of Christ, the demonstration of His presence. Or it may be speaking in tongues, dancing, or taking up serpents. Each of these scripts has developed its own way of being performed. What happens over years and centuries to the various church services happens much more quickly during rehearsals.

This is not just a thing of the West. John Emigh reports an example of 1--->5a --> 5b from the Sepik River area of Papua New Guinea. In the village of Magendo, sometime before the performance Emigh saw, an uninitiated boy named Wok wandered into the men’s House Tamboran (forbidden to the uninitiated) and died. The story goes that a bird came to the boy’s mother in a dream and told her what had happened and where to find Wok’s body. The mother accused her brother of causing Wok’s death. She said her brother had painted a dangerous spirit image in the House Tamboran. The brother accepted the blame, the house was torn down, a new one built, and the spirit

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of Wok resided in the new house. Wok is also credited by the villagers with teaching them how to build better canoes, how to catch fish, and how to plant crops. Emigh goes on:

Now there are several things about this story and its preparation for the event at hand that I find fascinating. First is the immediate and physical sense of relationship between past and present. The old House Tamboran stood there across the swamp. The reeds the child was found in were over here—people are very specific about the geography involved, and also about improvements in village life made possible by the intervention of Wok’s spirit. Performing the dance at this time would be an act of renewal, of reconnection of past and present. (5)

But what’s rehearsal at Magendo like? How does it use the material of Wok’s story?
As the rehearsal proceeded an old man would stop the singing from time to time to make suggestions on style or phrasing, or, just as often, just as much a part of the event being rehearsed, he would comment on the meaning of the song words, on the details of the story. The rehearsal was at once remarkably informal and absolutely effective.

Questions of performing style are combined with interpretations of the story. The historical-legendary Wok is being transformed into his dance. A virtual or nonevent in the past—which, I grant, may have been itself based on something that happened, a dead child—is made into a concrete, actual present. But this is rehearsal: the present is something being made “for tomorrow,” for the future when the dance will be danced.

As the rehearsal proceeded men and women would occasionally drift by. The assembled singers, drummers, and witnesses practiced the movements of the dance that accompanies the mother’s lament. Lawrence, a school-teacher who spoke English, explained that this was an “imitative” dance, a dance in which both men and women imitated the movements of birds performing activities that loosely correlated to the events described in the mother’s lament.

Wok is represented by his mother’s lament—and the lament is represented by dancers, both men and women—and they are dancing as birds.

The dancers imitate birds because the clan the story is significant to is a bird clan, has a bird as its totem. The story is at once distanced—put at an artistic remove—by the translation of the woman’s lament into gestures performed by both men and women acting as birds and made more immediate in its impact on all the people of the village by this artistic displacement.

“More immediate” because the bird clan exists now. A woman’s lament for a murdered son is transformed into a dance of men and women imitating birds. A nonevent of the past, the killing of Wok (by a spirit?), is used as the jumping-off place for a theatrical event of the future: a bird dance commemorating a mother’s Lament. I say “nonevent” because the killing
of Wok, however it happened, even if it happened, is not what makes him significant to Magendo. It’s as if the role of hero/culture-bearer was there waiting for someone to play it, and Wok was selected. Wok’s spirit taught the people how to fish, plant, build ceremonial houses. We don’t know whether Wok’s murder was the precipitating event or whether his role as culture bearer meant that he had to be killed (in myth, if not in fact). It doesn’t much matter. It can’t be found out. And the Wok who is the hero bears no necessary relationship to that other Wok who died or was murdered—except that by now they are both part of the same script, the same strip of behavior. The important event—the event that Magendo needs—is not Wok’s death or his skills or his mother’s lament but the performance of the dance that is none of these yet brings them all together.

The rehearsal Emigh saw works time as a single fabric of several strands, to be rewoven according to needs uncovered during rehearsals. The attention during rehearsal is focused as much on the technique of the dance as it is on what the dance signifies. The rehearsal looks backward to Wok and forward to a finished performance. Wok’s dance, like rituals everywhere, disguises itself as a restoration of actual events when in fact it is a restoration of earlier performances. The ritual process is a shuttling back and forth between the nonevent and the restored event to be performed, between the significance of the event (as story, obligatory act, prayer, etc.) and the details of technique that make up the performance as performance. The rehearsals create the nonevent even as the nonevent is apparently creating the rehearsals. It is not because of Wok that the people of Magendo dance; it is because of their dance that Wok (still) lives. Their rehearsing, 1, re-collects what they “know” of Wok and his “work,” 5a, and this knowledge is combined with their ways of dancing to prepare the performance, 5b.

Look again at figure 2.1. The fetch, or distance traveled, is more for 1 --> 5a --> 5b than for either 1 --> 2 or 1 --> 3 --> 4. This greater distance is in the scope of time as well as the scope of mood. 1 --> 5a --> 5b, links rehearsal time, past, and performance time in both the subjunctive and indicative moods. I use “5a --> 5b” because the nonevent and the restored nonevent are versions of one another, not independent occurrences. Doing a known score is 1 --> 3 --> 4, but even this known score has behind it a 1 --> 5a --> 5b and is best expressed as 1 --> 3 --> 5a --> 5b, figure 2.4.

The model offers ways of comparing performances—and from comparisons the means of developing a theory that includes both aesthetic and ritual
performances. The repetition of individual or social facts in the future indicative,

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These differentiations of performance types occur along a continuum. There is no need to specify a given performance as all this or that. A performance can be between modes: to be between 1--> 3--> 4 and 1--> 5a --> 5b as is Noh drama or Evanchuk’s Shaker dancing—is to be 1-->3-->5a -->5b.

The model is meant to provide guideposts in a dynamic system. Performances of the type 1 -->5a -->5b, may seem to be recollections of the past, but they are actually conjunctions whose center can be located not in any single time or mood but only in the whole bundle, the full and complex interrelaútions among times and moods. As performances, 1 --> 5a -->5b are played in the indicative mood, but as performances of something they are in the subjunctive mood. “I am performing” is indicative; “I am performing Hamlet” is subjunctive. The difference between animal and human ritual is that animals are always performing what they are, while humans can choose to perform what/who they are not.

A very clear example of a restoration of behavior of the 1 --> 5a -->5b or 1 --> 3 --> 5a --> 5b type is the agnicayana that Frits Staal and Robert Gardner filmed in 1975 in Panjal, Kerala, India (plates 10, 11, and 12). Staal writes:

The Agnicayana, a 3000-year-old Vedic ritual, was performed in 1975 in southwest India by Nambudiri Brahmans. This event, which lasted twelve days, was filmed, photographed, recorded and extensively documented.
From twenty hours of rough footage, Robert Gardner and I produced a 45-minute film, *Altar of Fire*. Two records are planned with selections from the eighty hours of recorded recitation and chant. Photographs of the ceremonies were taken by Adelaide de Menil. In collaboration with the chief Nambudiri ritualists and other scholars, I am preparing a definite account of the ceremonies, which will appear in two illustrated volumes entitled: “Agni—The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar.” ...Vedic ritual is not only the oldest surviving ritual of mankind; it also provides the best source material for a theory of ritual . . . Hubert and Mauss... used the Vedic animal sacrifice as source material for a construction of a ritual paradigm. However, they did not know that these rituals are still performed, so that many data were inaccessible to them. [1978, 1—2]

By now (1983) Staal’s ambitious program has been achieved. Note that he uses the 1975 agnicayana as the basis for his construction of a ritual paradigm. I am not concerned with that theory because of an irony: were it
not being filmed, photographed, and tape recorded, the 1975 agnicayana would not have been performed. The impetus for the 1975 agnicayana was in America, not India: most of the money and much of the scholarly interest came from outside Kerala. Kerala was the 1975 agnicayana’s location (as in ordinary films) but not its generative center. I doubt that American agencies would have responded with cash to an appeal from Nambudiri Brahmaris to mount a ritual were it not to be filmed and studied. It was the threat of extinction—the sense that “this is the last chance to record this event”—that created the 1975 agnicayana. Actually, the 1975 agnicayana was either the one after the last of a series generated from within Kerala or the first of a new series generated by intercultural circumstances.

There are two related versions of the origins of the 1975 agnicayana. In the material accompanying the film, *Altar of Fire*, “a 16 mm color film on the world’s oldest surviving ritual,” a University of California publicist writes:

The background and problems of making *Altar of Fire* are perhaps as interesting as the ritual itself. The film’s co-producer, Frits Staal, Professor of Philosophy and South Asian Languages at UC Berkeley, began studying Vedic recitation in southern India while a student in the 195Os. Later he discovered that the Nambudiri Brahmaris not only transmitted the oral tradition through recitation but also continued to perform
11. Agnicayana: priests mark on a cloth the number of rounds of soma sequences they have chanted. Photo by Adelaïde de Menil.

12. Agnicayana: the end of the ritual—and climax of the film—is the burning of the ritual enclosures. After the fire only the eagle-shaped altar remains. Photo by Adelaïde de Menil.
some of the larger Vedic rituals, the largest of which, the Agnicayana, had never been witnessed by outsiders.

Western scholars had reconstructed this ritual from texts, but nobody had thought it possible that the ceremony survived. Yet it has. There are only a few Nambudiri families, however, whose members are entitled and able to carry out such a ceremony. It is expensive and requires years of training. Further, the tradition is rapidly dying because young people no longer believe in the efficacy of the ritual. As some Nambudiris became concerned about the disappearance of their tradition, Dr. Staal began to urge that the ceremony should be performed one last time so that it could be filmed and recorded.

After years of intermittent discussion, the Nambudiris agreed. They asked only that in exchange for being given the privilege of attending, filming, and recording the performance, the scholars help defray the cost of the ritual. . . . Finally, by the end of 1974, almost $90,000 was raised from grants and donations by institutions throughout the world. Robert Gardner, the noted ethnographic filmmaker (*Dead Birds, Rivers of Sand*) and professor at Harvard, was secured to direct the film. The Agnicayana was performed from April 12 to 24, 1975. [Extension Media Center, University of California]

The blurb goes on to describe the struggle involved in the filming itself. “There was a tendency to transform the sacrificial enclosure into a place of pilgrimage.” Scuffles broke out between pilgrims and sightseers on the one hand and “scholars, Nambudiri youths, and six policemen” on the other. But despite all efforts,

At times, outsiders entered the sacrificial enclosure (a taboo place avoided scrupulously by the visiting scholars) and imperiled the filming—and indeed the ritual proceedings themselves. Some film footage was spoiled or its use made impossible by these fully dressed people who contrasted sadly with the Nambudiris in their white loincloths, themselves disfigured only by an occasional wristwatch.

The University of California brochure describes a drama not shown in *Altar of Fire*. An endangered species—in this case, a rare, ancient ritual—is saved by the timely intervention of dedicated conservationists from the outside
who know both how to raise cash and how to behave on location. But the locals divide into two camps. The bad ones transform the event into something very postmodern: a combination media show and ad hoc pilgrimage center. These uncooperative locals dress according to their own mid-1970s codes—not as “natives”—and thereby “spoil” some footage. By contrast, and definitely in costume, the main actors—Nambudiri Brahmins—are “disfigured only by an occasional wristwatch.” Scholarship plus media can turn the clock back three thousand years. Naturally enough, given the cinematic conventions of this kind of thing, the film itself shows very little of the struggle to make an “accurate” document of the agnicayana. The account of that struggle is reserved for the book, *Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar* (Staal 1983; two volumes, $250 for the set). Staal also gives the budgets for the project—a total of $127,207, of which $20,884 was spent in rupees on local expenses. That leaves more than $106,000 spent on the movie and all other non-Indian, non-local expenses. The agnicayana itself is probably out of financial reach for the Kerala Nambudiris. Certainly the filming is. The narrator of *Altar of Fire* makes no mention of the amount of money spent; credits at the film’s end specify who, not how much. There is only the barest hint of the fierce local disagreements that surrounded the project. The UC press release makes a big thing out of these struggles because that underlines the heroic work of the filmmakers who were able to “overcome” all such difficulties.

But the UC brochure and the account in *Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar* are not the only “official” versions of what happened. Staal was attacked by Robert A. Paul (1978) for staging the agnicayana. In defending himself, Staal quotes the UC brochure. Then he adds:

The Adhvaryu, the main priest, and several of the other priests who officiated in 1975 had earlier officiated in 1955 or 1956, or both [the most recent Kerala-generated performances of agnicayana]. All our films and recordings had to be made from the outside. Under such circumstances, without two decades of experience and several years of careful planning, it would not have been possible to film and record this event, which was quite possibly the last performance of the world’s oldest surviving ritual. All those
who were present realized that this was not a humdrum affair, but a historical event. [1979, 346—47]

But what kind of historical event? Is a ritual “surviving” if the filmed version of it is also a document of its “last [that is, final] performance”? Before 1975, the agnicayana was previously performed in the 1950s. In Agni, Staal lists 103 performances including 22 that occurred in Kerala over the past one hundred years. In a letter to me (15 June 1983) disputing whether the agnicayana of the Altar of Fire is an event of the 1 -->5a -->5b type, Staal states that “such performances took place for almost three thousand years, and are well documented for many periods.” He says that a reader can compare the 1975 performance step by step with “the ritual as it was before 600 B.C.”

What I am saying is that no matter what textual documentation exists we do not know what agnicayana was. The transmission of the ritual is a very complicated interaction among elements of the oral tradition and written texts and formulas. The transmission of the ritual itself—as a performance text (not a description, not a literary text, but as a thing done)—was largely oral, from man to boy, older Brahman priest to younger, employing a number of mnemonic devices used by Vedic reciters. Will Altar of Fire, Agni, and the eighty hours of sound tape, twenty hours of raw footage, and “thousands of Color slides” now freeze the agnicayana texts? Freeze them in a way very different than the Sanskrit texts and memories of living persons charged with keeping and transmitting the oral tradition freeze things? In what way is the 1975 agnicayana a continuation of the oral tradition, and in what way is it a 1 -->5a -->5b or a 1 -->3 -->5a -->5b?

The agnicayana is very expensive by Kerala standards. That’s why money had to be raised outside the community. Many priests are employed, a ritual enclosure built, an altar of firebrick constructed, food and shelter provided, and so on. The rite itself is archaic: long ago Vedic ritual gave way to later forms of Hinduism. Brahman priests reconstructed the 1975 agnicayana from a variety of sources: memory of previous performances, local opinion, Sanskrit texts. Also, and decisively for both the ritual itself and its filming, agnicayana requires animal sacrifice, a practice repugnant to many Kerala
residents. Staal says, “Although discussion on the presence, dollars, and motives of foreign scholars and cameramen were relatively few, the outpouring of sentiment over the goats was practically unbounded” (1983, 2: 464). But it was the issue of the goats that was a magnet for discussions about dollars and foreign scholars. The controversy raged in the press, and because of Kerala’s high literacy rate, 80 percent, almost everyone knew about the goats. In 1975 Kerala had a Marxist government, the Left is strong in the state, and animal sacrifice at the American-sponsored agnicayana became a prime political issue pitting old-fashioned entrenched interests, symbolized by the Nambudiri Brahman high-caste agnicayana, against more “proletarian” and “modern” interests. Finally, in Staal’s words, “for the first time in the history of the Nambudiri tradition, the animals would be represented by rice flour folded in banana leaf” (1983, 2: 465). The heated politics of Kerala is absent from *Altar of Fire*.

The contextual situation of the 1975 agnicayana is extremely complex. The agnicayana is between an original event—the continuation of the oral tradition—and a social, political, and media event. In restoring agnicayana, considerations of how best to document the Vedic ritual—not the social or media event, certainly not the political controversy raging over the goats—were always first in the minds of Staal and Gardner. This intention to make a film of the agnicayana, as their texts and their Nambudiri Brahman priests said it was, rather than to make a film of what took place in 1975 is what makes *Altar of Fire* a 1--5a--5b. For *Altar of Fire* is what Staal and Gardner intended it to become—and to achieve their intention they had to shoot around the situation they found themselves in.

Their shooting script shows this—not that the passive recording of events is possible, even with the notebook and pencil. Like many rituals, agnicayana involves a great deal of simultaneous action over a wide range of spaces. But the camera and microphone are instruments of focus; and finished movies and sound cassettes are the outcomes of rigorous selective editing. As performed in 1975, the agnicayana took 120 hours, plus many more hours of preparations—not to count the hours negotiating the fate of the goats. Staal and Gardner could shoot only twenty hours, and their script says that for “numerous episodes filming depends on remaining quantity of raw stock.” (6) The twenty hours of raw footage were edited into a forty-five-minute film. The shooting script breaks the twelve-day ceremony into numerous
episodes convenient to the camera. The script is very specific about who the main performers are and what is of interest:

Adhvaryu 1 [chief priest]: as stage manager he performs most of the rites and commands the others. He is where the action is.... The final killing of the goat within the Camitra will not be filmed on this occasion [day 1] since this would upset many people; but hopefully on a later occasion....[For day 2] No more than thirty minutes of filming for the entire day.

These procedures are only faintly reflected in Altar of Fire. On 11 April, the day before the agnicayana began, a statement was issued jointly in Malayúalam and English by Muttathukkattil Mamunna Itti Ravi Nambudiri and Staal, explaining that a committee had been formed, government aid acquired, and a lot of money raised to “make it possible to film and record the [agnicayana] rituals so that a permanent record would be available to scholars all over the world.” The statement ends by declaring that “inanimate substances” would be used instead of goats. “The organizers hereby assure the public that no animal sacrifice will take place. We request the cooperation of the public for the successful conduct of the Yagna [agnicayana]” (Staal 1983, 2: 467—68). The shooting script had to be revised.

On camera, Edmund Carpenter, one of the visiting scholars invited to comment, says that there are three kinds of events going on simultaneously: the agnicayana, the social event surrounding the ritual, and the media event. He does not mention the political event. Altar of Fire focuses its attention on the agnicayana, all but forgetting social, media, and political events. But in India even noncontroversial ritual performances attract onlookers, merchants, beggars, entertainers, and crowds of curious. Media events are relatively rare, making the filming of the agnicayana a doubly powerful attraction for rural Panjal. On the last day, when the sacred enclosure was burned, a crowd of ten to fifteen thousand gathered. But Altar of Fire is carefully nonreflexive. The book, Agni, is more inclusive of these contextual events, but Staal still insists that the 1975 agnicayana is in no sense a reconstruction or restoration. The film he and Gardner made presents itself in such a way as to suggest that the filmmakers just happened to arrive and catch this ritual in time. But the film is actually at the convergence of two great
streams of events: one to raise the money and gather the people necessary to perform and film agnicayana; the other the controversy, media, and social events that accumulated around the doing and filming of the ritual.

We need no new educating to the idea that the instruments and means of observing and recording things deeply affect what’s being observed. The substantial financial-logistical energies that made *Altar of Fire* possible also made the 1975 agnicayana possible and also brought into existence much of the turmoil surrounding the project. These bundles of events have to be considered in relation to each other; and they need to be understood as parts of one complicated meta-event. We are also used to questioning the authenticity of performances like the 1975 agnicayana. But it is not authenticity that needs to be questioned. Rather, we want ways of understanding the whole bundle of relations that joins Sanskrit scholars, filmmakers, Nambudiri priests, the press, Marxists, curious and agitated crowds, and performance theorists. If the discussion stops shy of considering this whole bundle, we miss the chance to recognize in the Staal-Gardner project another harbinger of an important shift toward the theatricalization of anthropology—and maybe not just anthropology. By replacing the notebook with the tape recorder, the still camera with the movie camera, the monograph with the film, a shift occurs whereby we understand social life as narrative, image, crisis and crisis resolution, drama, person-to-person interaction, display behavior, and so on. Theatrical techniques blur temporal and causal systems, creating in their stead bundles of relations that attain only relative clarity and independence from each other—and those only within contexts or frames that themselves need definition. For example, in film an effect may precede its cause. Something that happened later—in the shooting of a film, in the rehearsal of a performance—may be used earlier in the finished product. Only 1-->5a-->5b shows this kind of performative circumstance.

If I fault Staal and Gardner at all it is because they did not make a second film, “On Filming *Altar of Fire,*” that dealt fully with all the contextual events—dramas, arrangements, rehearsals, struggles, negotiations—that truly characterize late-twentieth-century social life, a social life that delights in on-location intensity and focus—as at Panjal—but that also extends around the globe and involves hundreds of persons who collectively decide whether or not an agnicayana gets performed without necessarily knowing what agnicayana is.
People may believe the 1975 agnicayana to be a 1 --> 3 -- >4. But actually it is a 1 --> 5a --> 5b. It was restored in order to be filmed. Its “future as a film,” 5b, created its “past as a ritual,” 5a. When events like the fight over the goats erupted at time 1, threatening the agnicayana’s future as a film, these events were thought also to threaten its past as a ritual. To keep the ritual “accurate”

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and “genuine” the fight had to be excluded from Altar of Fire. The camera and narrator had to glide lightly over those packets of rice wrapped in leaves. An event of the 1 --> 5a --> 5b type can get away with not sacrificing goats while being proclaimed by Staal as an example of “animal sacrifice... still performed.”

Altar of Fire ends with the narrator announcing that the viewer has seen what is probably the last performance of agnicayana. Not true. The viewer has seen the first of a new series of performances, a series where the event will never change because it is “on film.” When people want to “see” the agnicayana they will not go to Kerala (where it may or may not be performed again), they will rent Altar of Fire. Funding agencies will not put up enough money to film agnicayana all over again; that would be redundant. Scholars using agnicayana will base their findings not on the series that ended in the 1950s—about which little is known—but on the material gathered by Staal and Gardner. And few, if any, scholars will examine all of the raw footage, listen to the full set of tapes, look at every one of the thousands of photographs. They will instead look at the movie, listen to the recordings, read the writings that came out of the Staal-Gardner project. Theories will be built on items extrapolated from strips of restored behavior.

Is this any different than building theories on writings? Writings are more easily recognized as interpretations than are restorations of behavior. Theories are presented in the same bundle as the data on which these theories rest. References are freely made to earlier interpretations and theories. Often writing is clearly reflexive. I don’t ‘prefer writings to restorations of behavior as a way of scholarship, but restorations are not yet understood as thoroughly as writing. Therefore, at present, restorations leave
more mess than writing. People use restorations and consider them 1--> 2 or 1 --> 3 --> 4 when actually they are 1--> 5a--> 5b or 1--> 3 --> 5a --> 5b.

Figure 2.5 shows the full range of events flowing into and from the 1975 agnicayana. The movie becomes “now” for persons who in the future experience agnicayana through this medium. As Staal says, it is likely that most people will know agnicayana this way. Even if agnicayana is performed in Kerala again, it is possible that the Nambudiris will view the film and measure their ritual against it. The filming itself—as distinct from the finished film—is the core generative event. Before the filming comes planning, fund raising, consultations with ritual specialists, assembling people, material, and animals; and after the filming comes the work of archiving and editing raw goods and, ultimately, items of Euro-American culture such as movies, cassettes, books. There are also items shared among Indians and Euro-Americans: theories of ritual, data on the agnicayana “then,” “now,” and “later.” Most of the events shown in figure 2.5 are “betwixt and between.” They

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happen between original events and media events and between media events and scholarship. The original series of agnicayanas was liminal, an old-fashioned ritual; but from 1975 on the agnicayana has become liminoid, a voluntary performative event. Insofar as the agnicayana is liminoid it serves interests far beyond and different than those the old-fashioned agnicayana served when it belonged solely to Kerala. In terms of the “whole performance
sequence” discussed in chapter 1, the emphasis of Staal’s work on agnicayana is strongly, and increasingly as time passes, on the “aftermath.”

Why not think of Staal and Gardner as film directors? Their work in India is more easily understood when seen in performative terms. An earlier event is “researched” and/or “remembered”—actions equivalent to rehearsals. A performance is arranged that presumably duplicates this earlier event, or selects from a series of earlier events what is most “essential,” “typical,” or “authentic.” An event created in the future (the film, Altar of Fire, 5b) is projected backward in time (the “original” agnicayana, 5a) and restored “now” in order to be filmed (what happened in Kerala in 1975, 1). The items in this bundle cannot be separated; they must be considered as a unit. The so-called prior event (the “original” agnicayana is not strictly prior) certainly
doesn’t “cause” the 1975 performance. The 1975 performance is caused by the project of making a film. So in a sense the future is causing the present which, in turn, makes it necessary to research, remember—rehearse—restore the past. But this past—what is turned up by the rehearsal process—determines what is done in 1975, and those events are used to make the movie. The movie then replaces the “original” event. The movie is what we have of the past.

Restorations need not be exploitations. Sometimes they are arranged with such care that after a while the restored behavior heals into its presumptive past and its present cultural context like well-grafted skin. In these cases a “tradition” is rapidly established and judgments about authenticity are hard to make. Let me give examples from India, Bali, and Papua New Guinea.

Indian scholars trace Bharatanatyam (plate 13), the classical Indian dance, back not only to the ancient text on theater, Natyasastra (ca. second century B.C.—second century A.D.), which describes dance poses, but also to centuries-old temple sculptings that show these poses. The best known of these sculptings is the group at the fourteenth-century temple of Nataraja (Shiva, the king of dancers) at Cidambaram, south of Madras (plate 14). Most writings assume a continuous tradition connecting Natyasastra, temple sculptings, and today’s dancing. According to Kapila Vatsyayan, India’s leading dance theorist and historian,

Bharatanatyam is perhaps the oldest among the contemporary classical dance forms of India. . . . Whether the dancer was the devadasi of the temple or the court-dancer of the Maratha kings of Tanjore, her technique followed strictly the patterns which had been used for ages. [1974, 15—161]

Whenever the contemporary forms of Bharatanatyam and Manipuri and Odissi evolved, two things are clear: first, that they were broadly following the tradition of

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the *Natyasastra* and were practicing similar principles of technique from their inception, and, second, that the stylization of movement began as far back as the 8th and 9th century. ... Some contemporary styles preserve the characteristic features of this tradition more rigorously than others: Bharatanatyam uses the basic adhamandali [postures] most rigorously. [1968, 325, 365]

Vatsyayan’s opinion is shared by virtually all Indian dance scholars. But in fact it’s not known when the “classical” Bharatanatyam died out, or even if it ever existed. The old texts and sculptings surely show that there was some kind of dance, but nothing was remembered of this dance, not even its name, when moves were made in the first decades of the twentieth century to “preserve,” “purify,” and “revive” it.
There was a temple dance called *sadir nac* danced by women of families hereditarily attached to certain temples. According to Milton Singer,

The dancing girls, their teachers, and musicians performed not only on the occasion of temple festivals and ceremonies, but also for private parties, particularly weddings,
and at palace parties. Special troupes of dancing girls and musicians were sometimes permanently attached to the courts. [1972, 172]

Many girls attached to temples were prostitutes. As dance scholar Mohan Khokar says,

the time-honoured tradition of the devadasis, or temple dancing girls, had fallen into such ignominy that the girls, considered sacred, continued to be considered sacred but in a different way—as prostitutes. And with this the dance that they professed—the avowedly divine Bharatanatyam—too promptly got lost to shame. [1983, 1]

From 1912 on a strong campaign was waged by Indian and British reformers to ban the devadasi system. But a countermovement led by E. Krishna Iyer wanted to “eradicate the vice but have the art.” Opinions raged in the Madras press, especially during 1932 as Dr. Muthulakshmi Reddi, the first woman legislator in British India, led the attack on the devadasi system while Iyer and “lawyers, writers, artists, and even the devadasis themselves joined the fray.”
The upshot of the brouhaha was that Krishna Iyer and his confreres emerged triumphant. The anti-nautch [devadasi] movement, which is how Dr. Reddi’s crusade came to be called, was left in the lurch. The dance must survive, even if the dasis don’t, boomed the slogan of the day. [Khokar 1983, 11]

That’s exactly what happened—in a way. At the January 1933 Conference of the Music Academy of Madras, Iyer, for the second time (the first was in 1931, but this earlier show stirred scant interest), presented devadasi dancing not as a temple art or as an advertisement for or adjunct to prostitution but as secular art.

The dasis . . . took the fullest advantage of the sudden, buoyant interest in their art: a number of them—Balasaraswati, Swamasaraswati, Gauri, Muthuratnambal, Bhanuúmathi, Varalkasmi, and Pattu, to name a few—readily quit the house of God for the footlights and in no time became public idols. [Khokar 1981, 1]

Scholar and critic V. Raghavan coined the word “Bharatanatyam” to replace terms associated with temple prostitution. “Bharatanatyam” connects the dance with both Bharata’s Natyasastra and India: natya means dance, bharat means India.

Long before 1947 when Madras state finally outlawed the devadasi system, the dance moved out of the temples. People who were not from devadasi families, even men, danced. Rukmini Devi, “a singularly high placed Brahmin and wife of the International President of the Theosophical Society ---69---

realized how great and lofty an art Bharatanatyam was and how pressing the need was to rescue it from corrupt influences” (Khokar 1983, 1). Not only did Devi dance, she and her associates codified Bharatanatyam. Their way to rescue the dance was to restore it in a 1--> 5a--> 5b way. Devi and her colleagues wanted to use sadir nac but be rid of its bad reputation. They cleaned up the devadasi dance, brought in gestures based on the Natyasastra and temple art, developed standard teaching methods. They claimed that Bharatanatyam was very old. And, of course, a conformity to ancient texts and art could be demonstrated: every move in Bharatanatyam was measured against the sources it presumed to be a living vestige of. The differences between sadir nac and the old sources were attributed to degeneracy. The
new dance, now legitimized by its heritage, not only absorbed sadir nac but attracted the daughters of the most respectable families to practice it. Today, many study Bharatanatyam as a kind of finishing school. It is danced all over India by both amateurs and professionals. It is a major export item.

The “history” and “tradition” of Bharatanatyam—its roots in the ancient texts and art—are actually a restoration of behavior, a construction based on the research of Raghavan, Devi, and others. They saw in sadir nac not a dance in its own right but a faded, distorted remnant of some ancient classical dance. That “ancient classical dance” is a projection backward in time: we know what it looks like because we have Bharatanatyam. Soon people believed that the ancient dance led to Bharatanatyam when, in fact, the Bharatanatyam led to the ancient dance. A dance is created in the past in order to be restored for the present and future. There is no single source for Bharatanatyam, only the whole bundle 1-->5a-->5b or 1-->3 (Natyasastra, temple sculptings) --> 5a (presumed ancient dance) --> 5b (today’s Bharatanatyam).

Purulia Chhau, a masked dance of the arid region of West Bengal adjoining Bihar and Onissa, is an athletic dance-drama featuring many leaps, somersaults, struts, stamps, and ikonographic, poses (plates 15 and 16). Stories usually are drawn from the Indian epics and Puranas and almost always depict duels and battles. Drummers of the Dom caste beat huge kettle-drums and long oblong drums, taunting the dancers into frenzied spinning jumps, screams, and confrontations. Rivalries among villages competing at the annual festival at a hill station, Matha, are fierce. According to Asutosh Bhattacharyya professor of folklore and anthropology at Calcutta University, who has devoted himself entirely to Chhau since 1961, the Purulia region is inhabited by many aboriginal tribes whose religious customs and social festivals show very little resemblance to those of Hinduism . . . But, it is also a fact that the Mura of Purulia are very ardent participants

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in Chhau dance. With practically no education and social advancement the members of this community have been performing this art which is based on
the episodes of the Ramayana and generations. ... Sometimes an entire village, however poor, inhabited exclusively by the Mura, sacrifices its hard-earned resources for the cause of organizing Chhau dance parties. [1972, 141]

This presents a problem for Bhattacharyya.

The system which is followed in Chhau dance today could not have been developed by the aboriginal people who practice the dance. It is indeed a contribution of a higher culture keenly conscious of an aesthetic sense. [1972, 23]

He guesses that the drummers, the Dom, an outcaste group, originated Chhau, for the Dom were at one time a “highly sophisticated community, ...brave soldiers in the infantry of the local feudal Chiefs” (1972, 24). Thrown out of work when the British pacified the region in the eighteenth century, failing to farm because of what Bhattacharyya calls the “vanity of their past tradition of warriors,” they were reduced to their present untouchable status: workers of hides, drummers. But their war dance lives on as Chhau. Revealing biases sparkle from Bhattacharyya’s account. Aboriginal peoples have no developed aesthetic sense; high-caste dancers are transformed into low-caste drummers after passing on their war dance because they are too proud to farm. (Why didn’t they use their swords to steal land and become landlords?)

The annual competition at Matha is not an ancient tradition but a festival initiated in 1967 by Bhattacharyya. It was discontinued in 1980 or 1981. Bhattacharyya recalls:

In April 1961 I visited an interior village in the Purulia District with a batch of students of the Calcutta University and for the first time observed a regular performance of the Chhau dance.... I found that there was a system of this dance and a definitely established method which was well-preserved. But it was on the decline due to lack of patronage from any source whatsoever. I wanted to draw the attention of the world outside to this novel form of dance. [1972, introd., n.p.]
And that he did. All-star parties of Chhau dancers toured Europe in 1972, Australia and North America in 1975, and Iran. They have danced in New Delhi, and as Bhattacharyyya delights,

I attracted the notice of Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi [the government agency established to encourage and preserve traditional performing arts] to this form of dance. It took immediate interest and invited me to give performances of the dance in New Delhi. In June 1969, I visited New Delhi with a batch of 40 village artists for the first time outside their native district. Performances were held there before very distinguished Indian and foreign invitees....

Performances were also shown on TV in Delhi. Only three years later it was also shown on BBC television in London and five years later on NBC in New York, USA. [Program used in 1975 at the University of Michigan, p. 3]

Note how Bhattacharyyya refers to the dances as his: “invited me to give performances of the dance.” This is not bragging but an acknowledgment of the circumstances: without a patron the villagers would have gotten nowhere. And these days a patron needs more than money; he needs knowledge and a wish to devote himself to the form he’s restoring. Government comes up with the cash.

Chhau 1961 and after is a creation of the mixture of what Bhattacharyyya found and what he invented. But his invention is of the 1--> 5a--> 5b type. As a folklorist-anthropologist he dug into the past and constructed a history of Chhau, and a technique, that he then proceeded faithfully to restore. His annual festival at Matha coincided with the Chaitra Parva celebrations common to the area and the occasion of the annual Chhau festivals of Seraikella and Mayurbhanj (related forms of the dance). These festivals—once paid for by maharajas—are now sponsored, less lavishly, by the government. In 1976 I went to Matha. The dances went on there all night for two nights. Villagers, arriving from towns as far away as two days’ journey, set up camp. They roped together charpois (sleeping cots made of wood and twine) and jerry-built a theater. Women and children watched, and slept,
sitting and reclining on the charpois elevated to a height of eight feet or more. Men and boys stood on the ground. A narrow passageway led from the area where performers put on costumes and masks to the roughly circular dancing ground. Parties enter down the passageway, stop, present themselves, then leap into their dancing. All dancing is done with bare feet on bare earth, swept clean of large rocks but still raw, pebbled, with turned-up clods and scrub grass. To me it felt like a rodeo in a backwater town. Torches and Petromax lanterns throw shadowy light, the drums bark and roar, the shehanais (clarinetlike) shriek, as party after party competes. Most parties Consist of five to nine dancers. Some masks adorned with peacock feathers rise three feet over the dancers’ heads. The mask of ten-headed Ravana is more than four feet long. Wearing these masks, dancers make full somersaults and twisting leaps. The dances are vigorous and it’s very hot inside the papier|mâché masks, so each dance lasts less than ten minutes. Every village danced twice. There were no prizes, but there was competition, and everyone knew who danced well, who poorly.

Just in case there were doubts, each afternoon following the night’s dancing, Bhattacharyya critiqued the performances. During the dancing he

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sat behind a desk, where two Petromax lanterns made him the best-lit figure of the event; next to him were his university assistants. All night he watched and wrote. One by one the villages appeared before him on the morrow. I listened to what he said. He warned one party not to use story elements not found in the Hindu classics. He chided another for not wearing the standard basic costume of short skirt over leggings decorated in rings of white, red, and black. Bhattacharyya selected this basic costume from one village and made it general. When I asked him about it he said that the costumes he chose were the most authentic, the least Westernized. In a word, Bhattacharyya oversaw every aspect of Purulia Chhau: training, dance themes, music, costuming, steps.

In January 1983 I attended a non-Bhattacharyya Chhau performance in a town near Calcutta. There I saw energetic dancing of stories from the Mahabharata. This same group of village dancers, while performing for performers and scholars assembled for a conference in Calcutta, sang at least one song that Bhattacharyya would have disapproved of. In English translation:
We will not stay in India,
We will go to England.
We will not eat what is here
But we will eat cookies and bread.
We will not sleep on torn rags
But on mattresses and pillows.
And when we go to England
We won’t have to speak Bengali
But we will all speak Hindi.

The villagers assumed that in England the “national language” was the same as it was in India: Hindi. The question: Is this village’s Chhau, so full of contemporary longings, to be condemned for not being “classical”? Or is the syncretic mixing of *Mahabharata* and England to be accepted as the “natural development” of the dance?

Bhattacharyya selected individuals from different villages and composed them into all-star touring ensembles. He oversaw rehearsals and went with these “foreign parties” on tour. Dancers and musicians who toured returned to their villages with enhanced reputations. Touring, in fact, has had deep effects on Chhau. Three foreign parties have come into existence since the first tour in 1972: nineteen people went to Europe, sixteen to Iran, eleven to Australia and North America. Because foreigners won’t sit through nine hours of dancing, Bhattacharyya made a program of two hours’ duration. And because he didn’t think that bare chests looked good on the male dancers he designed a jacket based on an old pattern. Both these changes became a

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standard back in Purulia. Many of the people who went abroad formed their own groups at home. Each of these groups are called “foreign parties”—and bill themselves as such; this gives them status, drawing power, and the ability to charge more. There is demand now for performances as performances, outside of the ritual calendar. A performance can be hired for about a thousand rupees, a lot cheaper than Jatra, the most popular entertainment in rural Bengal. But a thousand rupees is still a lot of money. In Bhattacharyya’s opinion, as the financial opportunities have increased the subtlety of the art has declined. John Emigh spoke to Bhattacharyya in the summer of 1980. Reflecting on the tours, Bhattacharyya believes they saved a form otherwise doomed, but at the expense of stirring jealousies and
rivalries and generating irreversible changes. Chhau is a masked dance, and one side effect of its popularity abroad has been the demand by tourists for masks. Many masks are shipped that have never been worn by a dancer.

These changes can be traced back to Bhattacharyya. He is the big Chhau man, and his authority is rarely questioned. He’s a professor, a scholar from Calcutta. When he writes about Chhau he emphasizes its village base and ancient origins; he even suggests a possible link between Chhau and the dances of Bali. (Around the third century B.C. the Kalinga Empire of what is now Orissa and Bengal possibly traded across southeast Asia as far as Bali.) But he hardly mentions his own role in restoring the dance. Rather, he speaks of himself as “discovering” it.

This “discovery”—along with similar discoveries of the other forms of Chhau—will have lasting effects on the form, continuing the process of modernization. Since around 1980 the festival at Matha has been discontinued. Some say that rivalries among villages heated up to such intensity that the festival became dangerous; others say that villagers rebelled against Bhattacharyya. In 1983, when Emigh returned to the Purulia district during the Chhau season (April—June), he saw children practicing steps, spins, and jumps: the dance is alive and well—and probably was even when Bhattacharyya came upon it. But it is also probably much different now because of Bhattacharyya’s influence. Surely these days Chhau in each of its three variations is much more tightly knit into mainstream Indian and world culture than it was twenty years ago.

In February 1977 Suresh Awasthi, Shyamanand Jalan, and I thought of organizing a festival and workshop that would bring all three kinds of Chhau together. Awasthi is the former secretary (administrator) of the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the bureau of the central government in Delhi dedicated to Studying and preserving traditional performing arts. Jalan is a Calcutta theater director and lawyer. His work has been in modern (Westernized) Indian theater. The 1977 Calcutta festival was the first time in many years that dancers from Purulia, Mayurbhanj, and Seraikella could see each others’ dances. For three days dancers and scholars and directors explored the
various ways that the three forms are related—and the possibilities for exchange between traditional and modern performing artists.

In January 1983, Jalan organized a much larger international gathering to look at the relationship, actual and potential, between several Indian classical forms and modern theater and dance. Not only Chhau but Bharatanawarn, Odissi, Kathak, Yakshagana, Manipuri, and Kathakali were presented both in their traditional ways and in uses being made of them by modern Indian and non-Indian theater people. Delegates from a dozen countries attended, including Eugenio Barba, Tadashi Suzuki, and Anna Halprin. The conference revealed the problems as well as the possibilities of “using” traditional forms in modern contexts. But, whatever the problems, such uses are growing—with deep effects both on modern theater and on the traditional genres (see Martin and Schechner 1983). It’s neither possible nor (in my opinion) desirable to keep forms “pure.” The question is how to manage, and whether to limit, the promiscuous mixing of genres.

Sometimes changes in traditional performances are made by insiders. One of the best-known films about non-Western performance is Margaret Mead’s and Gregory Bateson’s *Trance and Dance in Bali* (1938). At a showing of this movie shortly before her death, Mead said that the trance club of Pagutan decided that the visiting foreigners who were making the film would like to see young women go into trance and stab at their breasts with krises. In Bali at that time women often went around with their breasts bare—naked breasts did not mean the same thing in Bali as they do in New York (where, ironically, in a semantic double twist, clubs where dancers are bare-breasted are called “topless”—perhaps a last-ditch puritanical revenge). But also—I suppose to please or at least not offend the foreign filmmakers—the Balinese women covered their breasts for the filming and young women replaced older ones as dancers. Without telling Mead or Bateson, the men of the trance club instructed the young women in proper techniques for entering trance and showed them how to handle the krises. Then the men of the club proudly announced to the filmmakers the changes made for the special filming. The film itself makes no mention of these changes. In *Trance and Dance* there is one old woman who, as the narrator says, announced beforehand that “she wouldn’t go into trance” but who is nevertheless “unexpectedly” possessed. The camera follows her; she is bare-breasted, deep in trance, her kris powerfully turned against her own chest. Later, slowly, she is brought out of trance by an old priest who has her inhale smoke, sprinkles her with holy water, and sacrifices a small chicken on her
of dancing. It seems that members of the trance club were angry at this old woman because they felt that her trance disturbed the aesthetic refinements they had rehearsed for foreign eyes—and foreign lenses. As it turned out, the Mead-Bateson camera crew paid a lot of attention to this old lady: she appeared to be, and was, a very genuine trancer. But, speaking strictly from the Balinese point of view, which is “authentic,” the young women prepared by the Balinese themselves or the solitary old woman doing the traditional thing? Is there not, in Bali, a tradition of modifying things for foreigners? And not only in Bali, Cases abound where, as in Patugan, local performances are adapted to suit foreign tastes. Hula dancers, for example, were traditionally heavy—that is, mature and powerful—middle-aged women. But tourist hula, now traditional in its own tight, features slim-hipped young women. It’s precisely when changes feed back into the traditional forms, actually becoming these forms, that a restoration of behavior occurs.

Sometimes, even, with tourist money in mind, performances are invented and presented as traditional when they are not. In 1972 I was in the Papua New Guinea highlands where I saw the tourist performance of the famous Mudmen of the Asaro River valley (plate 17). Their story is difficult to pin down but sad in any version. These white-clay-covered dancers—with their beautiful, grotesque masks made from hardened mud over an armature of banana tree bark—are, according to Margaret Mead, commemorating “a battle in which their ancestors, driven into the river by a marauding tribe, emerged covered with mud and frightened off the attackers, who thought they were evil spirits” (1970, 31). When photos of these dancers appeared in Western publications a demand was created for their dancing. Locally they danced at great regional shows such as the annual Mount Hagen festival, organized first by the Australian colonial administration and later continued when Papua New Guinea gained independence in 1975. The Mount Hagen festival was supposed to reduce intertribal hostilities while promoting international tourism. And in their own village of Makehuku the Mudmen put on daily displays for tourists minibussed in from nearby Goroka (a regional center). In Makehuku I saw the dancers dancing at midday instead of at dawn; they were nakedly visible in the center of the small village
instead of only when necessary—that is, when threatened by enemies. And, of course, they were exploited: when I saw them they kept 10 percent of the tourists’ dollars.

Edmund Carpenter challenges Margaret Mead’s account of the origins of the Mudmen. In a letter to me, he said: “These were invented and designed by a TAA travel agent. They have no antiquity, no foundation in New Guinea aesthetics, no parallels elsewhere.” I wanted to resolve the matter. I wrote to the National Library in Boroko, Papua New Guinea. The response did not
help. The reference librarian checked holdings in Boroko and contacted both local anthropologists and theater people. No new data were turned up. Finally, the people in Papua New Guinea referred me to the American Museum of Natural History (where Mead was curator): so the circle closed. My point is: the Mudmen are by now dancing a 1 -->5a -->5b. The origin of their dance is not locatable. It could be an authentic dance turned into a tourist attraction; it could be the invention of tourist agents, or the invention of the local dancers who themselves wanted to attract tourists. And what is “authentic” anyway? Even if “tourist art” is often shoddy and almost always syncretic, does that make it “inauthentic”? 

Nor does the Mudmen story end here. In March 1972 I was photographing not only the Mudmen but tourists disembarking from the minibus at Makehuku. Because I arrived before the ordinary tourists and remained after they left, I was an anomaly. A villager approached me and asked me to come with him to his place, Kenetasarobe, not far from Makehuku. Once there, he showed me his group of dancers, with their spectacular masks (plate 18). They danced, grimaced, and wiggled their hands and fingers, roughly after the pattern of the Mudmen. Their leader (the man who fetched me) put on a display of fire making and pipe smoking. He gave me his wooden pipe as a gift. He made it clear that he had devised this performance. He thought I was from a tourist agency, and he wanted me to bring minibuses of tourists to his
village. I tried to explain to this choreographer that I could not help him market his dance. I paid him some money, accepted the bamboo pipe as a souvenir, took some photographs, and left.

In both Bharatanatyam and Purulia Chhau, a modern version of an old art is born through the intervention/invention of one or a few dedicated persons from outside the class and/or area of those they are leading. Maybe this is a version of the Mosesmyth or the Marxist fact: revolution comes to a group from the outside, typically brought in by a lost member of the tribe who in rediscovering his origins discovers also a responsibility to his now renewed connection. As Indians, Raghavan, Devi, and Bhattarcharyya are not outsiders the way Staal and Gardner are. But Raghavan and Devi were not from Devadasi families, and Bhattacharyya is no tribesman from the Purulia hills.

I see nothing amiss in restorations of behavior like Bharatanatyam and Purulia Chhau. Arts, and rituals too, are always developing, and restoration is one means of change. What happened in Bharatanatyam and Chhau is analogous to what the French dramatists of the seventeenth century did when they conformed to what they thought were ancient rules of Greek tragedy. The dramatists had at hand Aristotle, Horace, the Greek and Latin playtexts, architectural ruins, pottery, but they did not have the actual behaviors of the ancient Athenians. The restorers of Bharatanatyam and Chhau had living arts that they presumed were vestiges of older, more classical arts. They also had ancient texts, sculptings, and their own deep knowledge of Hindu traditions.

“Nativistic movements” want to bring back the “old ways.” I’m talking about something else, something postmodern. Bharatanatyam and Chhau are close to what I mean, the Staal-Gardner agnicayana is even closer; and more restorations are on the way. Already the past fifty years are available on film, tape, and disc. Almost everything we do these days is not only done but kept on film, tape, and disc. We have strong ways of getting, keeping, transmitting, and recalling behavior. From the 1920s onward less and less behavior has been irretrievably lost. Waves of styles return regularly because of the relatively easy access to this behavior information. We live in a time when traditions can die in life, be preserved archivally as behaviors, and later be restored.
Sometimes these restorations take on their own life. Alan Lomax reports the experience of Adrian Gerbrands:

Gerbrands by chance screened a documentary on Eastern New Guinea mask-making for a native group in New Britain. The audience reacted powerfully during and after the screening. They, too, had once known how to make such masks and should, they felt, try their skill again, especially if their art too would be filmed. After Gerbrands had filmed the group’s mask-making, a lone native approached him with the offer to perform a very important and defunct ceremony if he would film it. Naturally again Gerbrands used his camera. On his next trip to New Britain, the other men in the village insisted on seeing the film and were so distressed at the poor quality of the filmed ceremony that they vowed forthwith to reenact the whole ceremony, masks, costumes, ballet, feasting, and all, but at a length suitable for filming. This event and its resultant film were such successes locally that the ceremony is now being celebrated every year just as in former times. [1973, 480]

Celebrated, yes, but “just as in former times”? The intervention of the film as the stimulus for the restored behavior creates a complicated situation. In the Gerbrands case, the film showed the wrong way that made it necessary to do it the right way, “but at a length suitable for filming.” It would take more research to disclose what is “tight” and “wrong” and why.

Some proposed restorations pit outmoded behaviors against new behaviors; the lack of fit is revealing. The Los Angeles Times reported:

In an effort to boost tourism, tribesmen in New Guinea have offered to turn cannibal again. They told committee members of the Mt. Hagan show, the big territorial festival, that they were prepared to eat human flesh at the show in August [1975]. The tribesmen added, however, that they did not want to kill any of their enemies and would do instead with a body from the local hospital morgue. A government officer at the meeting politely but firmly declined the tribesmen’s suggestions.

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The rhetoric of this newspaper story is the key to the cultural contexts in conflict here. To American readers “tribesmen” = savages; “committee members” = Westernized savages; “government officer” = the New Civilized Order. The story is full of sty racist humor delectably alluding to a
taboo appetite. That’s why the item was run in a major American paper. But the local people have logic on their side. If old dances are being restored and the old warrior costumes and decorations worn, why not the cannibal feast that traditionally accompanied such displays? The locals know how far they can go: the body must come from a repository of corpses approved by the New Civilized Order. The Order has its role to play too: it must let it be known far and wide that, well, New Guinea is and isn’t New Guinea anymore. So the story “gets out,” and the sponsors of the Mount Hagen Show have their cake without having to eat it too.

Although restored behavior seems to be founded on past events—“Bharatanatyam is perhaps the oldest among the contemporary dance forms of India,” “Verdic ritual is . . . the oldest surviving ritual of mankind”—it is in fact the synchronic bundle 1 --> 5a -->5b or 1 --> 3 --> 5a -->5b. The past, 5a, is reúcreated in terms not simply of a present, 1, but of a future, 5b. This future is the performance being rehearsed, the “finished thing” to be made graceful through editing, repetition, and invention. Restored behavior is both teleological and eschatological. It joins first causes to what happens at the end of time. It is a model of destiny.

Restorations of behavior are not limited to New Guinea or India: the world of the non-Western other. All over America restorations of behavior are common, popular, and making money for their owners. Maurice J. Moran, Jr., has written an account of theme parks and restored villages (1978). Their diversity is undeniable: Renaissance Pleasure Faires in California and New York, restored villages in almost every state, Disneyland, Disney World and Epcot, safari and wildlife parks, amusement parks organized around single themes, Land of Oz in North Carolina, Storyland in New Hampshire, Frontierland, Ghost Town in the Sky, even Li’l Abner’s Dogpatch. The Marriott Corporation, operators of parks and owners of hotels, describes a theme park as “a family entertainment complex oriented to a particular subject or historical area, combining a continuity of costuming and architecture with entertainment and merchandise to create a fantasy-provoking atmosphere” (Moran, 1978, 25). These places are large environmental theaters. They are related to get-togethers like the Papua New Guinea kaiko, the Amerindian powwow, and the Indian kumbhmela: pilgrimage centers where performances, goods, services, and ideologies are displayed and exchanged.

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I’ll concentrate here on only one kind of theme park, the restored village. As of 1978 there were over sixty of these in the United States and Canada and, it seems, more are coming. Millions of people visit them each year. Typically, they restore the colonial period or the nineteenth century; they reinforce the ideology of rugged individualism as represented by early settlers of the eastern states (Colonial Williamsburg, Plimoth Plantation), or the shoot-‘em-up West (Buckskin Joe and Cripple Creek, Colorado; Cowtown, Kansas; Old Tucson, Arizona), or romanticized “heroic” industries like mining and whaling. Some like Amish Farms and Homes in Pennsylvania offer people actually living their lives; a few like Harper’s Ferry in West Virginia commemorate historical confrontations. The scope of the architectural reconstructions and the behaviors of the persons who work in the villages make these restorations more than museums.

At Columbia Historic Park, California,

the tour of a still functioning gold mine is a major attraction—where would-be spelunkers are warned of the dangers of cave-ins and claim jumping. The miners are two retired men who can actually make a living from the little bit of gold left in the vein. [Moran, 1978, 31]

The twenty-five acres of historic Smithville in New Jersey contain a cluster of thirty-six buildings including a gristmill, schoolhouse, Quaker meetinghouse, cobbler’s shop, and firehouse, “most of which are original structures from the Jersey shore area. ‘Residents’ of the town are dressed in period costume and work at the tasks of the 18th and 19th century citizens” (Moran 1978, 36).

Old Sturbridge Village in Massachusetts was started in 1946. By 1978 there were more than thirty-five buildings on the 200-acre tract. The crafts people are dressed in period costumes. On Sundays

a Quaker meeting is held. There is village dancing on Wednesday evenings. School is actually taught in the little faded schoolhouse two days a week, and there are presentations of plays from the period (The Drunkard, 1840, Ever So Humble, 1836). On July 4th the entire village celebrates as it may have been then. [Moran 1978, 40—411]

At Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, the employees of the village
assume the names of people who actually inhabited the village. The visitor is
stopped at the gate and instructed to proceed only after an informal search,
conducted in French. If you reply in English, a wary eye is kept on you as
you proceed. [Moran 1978, 50]

Given the present temper of relations between English and French speakers
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in Canada, this entrance initiation reverberates across several centuries.
Time is often merrily conflated:

One woman asked this writer if he had met her “husband.” She was referring
in the present tense to the man who had served as the chief engineer in the
original Louisbourg. Her “maid” and “children” (“I had five, you know, but
one died this past winter”) cavort in the kitchen, smiling at the strangely
clothed visitors with their major boxes [cameras]. [Moran 1978, 51]

The performance is carried further at Plimoth Plantation in Massachusetts
(plates 19—24). According to materials sent to me by Judith Ingram,
director of marketing at the Plantation, an attempt is made at a total re-
creation, including the impersonation of actual residents of Plimoth in the
seventeenth century.

Our efforts on this behalf began in the late 1960s. Since that time, visitors to
our Pilgrim Village have been afforded the opportunity for total immersion
in 17th century life. Staff members are trained in what might be termed
“non-programmatic” interpretation which stresses the ability to converse
with visitors naturally while putting in a hard day’s work running the
community in a holistic way. This approach assures that all the senses are
brought to bear in the learning process.... No one who has entered the small,
cluttered houses in our village in July and had to contend with the flies and
dust, who has seen a fire on the hearth on a hot scorching day, or who has
observed the difficulties just keeping the food edible, will come away with
the traditional stereotype of the starched Pilgrim intact.

In 1978 interpretation in the Pilgrim Village took another important step
forward with the introduction of first person interpretation. Within the
palisaded walls of the village no trace of the modern world can be found
[except for special paths and access to several structures for the handicapped]. Now, we have recreated not only the houses and furnishings, but also the residents of 1627 Plymouth. Great care has been taken in replicating the attire, the personalities, and even regional English dialects of the Pilgrims. (8)

The Plimoth staff are careful to point out that the Plantation is not a “restoration” but a “re-creation.” “We have no surviving original houses,” said Ingram in a letter, “we do not know the exact design of the houses and must recreate structures typical of the period.” These “re-creations” are built after much research. The same care goes into building roles—and these are modeled not on “typical” people of the period but on actual residents of the colony.

According to Bob Marten, former cohead of the Plantation’s Interpretation Department, ads are placed each January to fill about thirty roles representing the actual two hundred persons who lived in the colony in 1627. That is, thirty out of two hundred villagers are actually represented by what Marten calls “cultural informants.”

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19-20. Two views of the main street of the Plimoth Plantation. The picture above (19), issued by the Plimoth publicity office, shows the street as it "might have been" in the 1620s. The picture below (20), taken by Richard Schachner in 1982, is the same view of the same street. The tourists populating the street give the scene a very different feeling.
Marten said the Plantation tries to find people who are similar to the characters they will play. “We’re looking for the 20th-century counterparts of 17th-century people. If casting for the part of Elder (William) Brewster, we’ll look for someone of approximately the same age with a gracious manner of expression and ready vocabulary.... John Billington was a rogue, a con man. So we’ll find someone who’s capable of being in this role. He’s usually played by a character actor who could sell a man his own shoes.” (Miller 1981, n.p.)

As in movie acting, a lot of typecasting is done. “A truck driver makes a better yeoman than a teacher,” says Marten.

Interestingly, there is little group rehearsal—for this is not a play the performers are preparing for but a more improvisatorial world of interaction not only among themselves but with the tourists who visit the Plantation.
daily. (The Plantation is open seven days a week, nine to five, from 1 April through 30 November.) Each performer is given a “Documentary Biograph” and a “Personation Biograph” (plate 21). The documentary biograph tells what is known about the character to be portrayed: age in 1627, place of origin, parents, social status, et cetera. Some of these data are noted as “current opinion” (rather than established fact) and some as “learned fabriication,” a category that means invented but according to probability. The
personation biograph includes dialect specimen, signature, names of the character’s friends, some suggested readings, and, very important, a paragraph or two of “notes.” For example, Phineas Pratt, we were told, is thirty-four, comes from Buckinghamshire, arrived in Plimoth aboard the Sparrow in 1622, and is a yeoman. The notes on Phineas’s personation biograph tell the performer, in part:

P. Pratt is a man of Character; he cannot Lie, nor swear, nor suffer one heard—Quicker Master P. would unscabbard his temper a’ his sword than tolerate a falsehood or an dissembling man. Nor ought he, by his own Code of Good Word and Valient Deed. One doesn’t find him continually Defending his or others verity, however, for the same disposition which causeth him to believe in his own Truth Telling, causeth him to trust the truth of Others—unless he find ample cause to Doubt.... He has lived as close to the red men—friends & foes—as anie English Man & accepted—nay, even adopted to his own ways, their customs & believes—but his animated telling of the sagacities & civilities of The Beaver causes some of the more canny & doubtful of the community to wince at “Finyuz’s” acceptance of what they deem heathan apocrypha.
These notes are written in what I suppose is a seventeenth-century hand, in seventeenth-century grammar. The biograph also has a drawing of Phineas in his clothes—or costume, depending on whether you take his point of view or that of the performer playing him. Along with the biographs, a performer is given a cassette tape of talking in the proper dialect. Research is continuous. In 1983 revised documentary and personation biographs of Phineas Pratt (1593—1680) were issued. In the revision much is made of Phineas’s experience with the Indians, especially his “exploits at Wassagusset” and his “deliverance from the Massachusetts who sought his demise.” But the performer is advised that “The excitement of those times is past, however, and Phineas must now adapt to a quieter and less central role in the community.” The writing style of the personation biograph seems less seventeenth-century than before.

Moran visited Plimoth:

In each building a member of the household that would have resided there greets you and asks “How be ye?” Within a few minutes you find yourself responding in a language that was foreign only moments ago. “I be well, thank ye.” One little girl is asked, “Where be ye from?” “New Jersey,” she answers. “I’m afraid I don’t know that place.” A parent intervenes. “You see, Susie, New Jersey isn’t invented yet.”

...As the day proceeds, the villagers go about their work. Food is prepared in black kettles over hot coals, while they explain to their visitors the difference between pottage and ragout.... One young lad is helping building Mr. Allerton’s house. With Irish brogue he explains, “I was in a shipwreck on my way to Virginia colony. When I washed ashore the Indians took me here. I was surprised to find anyone speaking English in these wilds.”... One goat insisted on coming into the Standish household, only to be shooed away by the maid. The houses are all hand-constructed, some with wooden floors, some with clay (damp in the spring thaw). The streets are uneven, rocky.... Many special events continue the theme of historic re-enactment. There is the opening of the Wampanoag Summer Settlement, staffed by native Americans in the style of the 17th century. There is a village barn-raising and a re-enactment of a typical wedding in the
colony and also in the Indian camp. But the classical attraction, and one of the chief fundraisers for the village, is the Harvest Festival in October. Here the villagers renew 17th century harvest customs with cooking and feasting, songs, dances, and a general show of high spirits. Native Americans from the summer settlement join in friendly challenges of skill and chance. [1978, 64—70]

The repartee between centuries is sometimes seasoned with ironies. A visitor to Plimoth apologized for interrupting a craftsperson with questions. “As many as you like, sir,” the performer responded. “I have a few questions meself about your time period.” (9)

When I visited Plimoth in the fall of 1982 I picked up some vibrations that signaled not 1 --> 3 --> 4 but 1 --> 3 --> 5a --> 5b. The place was very crowded, and although official photographs suggest a village full of persons of the seventeenth century, the actual experience is of anachronisms swimming in a sea of twentieth-century tourists (plates 19—20). Still, the reconstruction of the village is extraordinary. From the roof of an armory, looking down the main street to the sea, Plimoth reads perfectly. So much so that an article in Natural History magazine (“The Beautiful Yeoman,” October 1982) concerning the daily life of the Pilgrim settlers is illustrated with photos taken at Plimoth. Natural History is published by the American Museum of Natural History and prides itself on its anthropological accuracy. The photographs give the impression of a backward time capsule. The only reference in the article to Plimoth is a very tiny photo credit. The name of the photographer, Cary Wolinsky, is writ large; the venue is barely visible. I can’t help thinking that the editors wanted to make the readers feel that they were “actually there.” The article is a detailed description of ordinary life in seventeenth Century New England, drawing extensively on documents of the time. The implication is that the illustrations are also “of the time.” Of course, the editor can say that everyone knows there were no cameras back then. Still, a picture does speak a thousand words. And that tiny photo credit says: Forget where these pictures came from; think of what they are of.

Equally instructive, but in a different way, was my visit to the Wampanoag Summer Settlement “staffed by native Americans.” The Settlement Consisted of two small tepees inside which were some (maybe) Indians (plate 24). Although the brochure given to each visitor invites tourists to “meet the Native American people who have lived for centuries along the New England Coast,” I doubt that the Pilgrims and their descendants left a
large stock of Native Americans alive. An avowed aim of the Plantation is to provide “the

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oportunity for members of the Native American community to learn about aspects of their own culture that are in danger of being lost” (Plimoth Plantation 1980, 3). The actors in the tepees are presented by Plantation officials as “Native Americans”—as if that made a difference. There is no attempt to present the Plimoth villagers as “white Anglo-Saxons.” For all I know, some of them were Jews, Poles, or Hungarians. No blacks, though. It is not clear how far historical accuracy delimits theatrical contingency. When I asked to taste the ragout boiling in a stewpot, I was told by a seventeenth-century woman that twentieth-century Massachusetts state health law prohibits visitors from tasting food outside the established restaurant. Would state anti-discrimination laws be a basis for black actors to sue for roles as Pilgrims? Certainly in the Pilgrim village acting ability seems more prized than ethnic authenticity. A drama of the day I visited showed negotiations between the English Plimoth residents and visiting Dutch from New Amsterdam. A staff member bragged that a “Broadway actor” (not necessarily Dutch) had been hired for a key role. The point is that there is noway of avoiding anachronisms and the intrusion of today’s values, political and aesthetic.

Whatever the underlying 1--> 3 --->5a --->5b pattern of things, the “first-person interpretation” technique used at Plimoth is very effective theater. This technique is pushed hard by Plantation officials. According to the information sheet I got from Ingram,

First person interpretation not only encourages the personal involvement of visitors, it also facilitates the discussion of difficult concepts and ideas. Indeed, it has been our experience that since the implementation of this technique in the Pilgrim Village the frequency of questions dealing with matters that can collectively be termed the 17th century world view has risen. There has also been a corresponding decrease in the questions that fall into the “What is that?” category. By speaking in the first person, our staff can respond to questions in personal rather than abstract terms. [Plimoth Plantation 1980, 2]

In fact, the “first-person interpretation” technique has a kind of authenticity that the Plimoth architecture lacks. Nothing architectural survives from the
original colony; the village has been totally re-created. But it is known who was there, and background information has been researched regarding individual inhabitants. Thus, while the buildings and furnishings are “typical” of the period, the people are “actually from” 1627—as much as good acting can make them so. Full “first-person interpretation” was not formalized at Plimoth until 1978. Before that, the interpretations were ad hoc. Performances took place for this or that occasion. After 1978 everyone in the Plantation played a role. Performers who’ve been at it a long time identify closely with their roles. Marten played Myles Standish from 1969 to 1981.

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After living with Myles Standish for all these years, Marten said he’s “more supportive and defensive” in his attitude toward the historical figure than a historian might be. Aside from appreciating Standish’s virtues, Marten has gained an understanding of why the soldier committed some of his more controversial acts. “He killed a number of Indians—not in fair combat, but in ambush,” Marten said. “If he had to knock off a few Indians for the good of the colony, he would do it without question. I don’t think I’d have the stomach to do what he did, but in the context of that time, what Myles did made sense.” [Miller 1981, n.p.]

What happened to Marten happens to all Euro-American actors: they build roles filling in from their own feelings what can’t be located in any background study.

Occasionally the program of stepping back into the seventeenth century is undercut by a wink. The brochure tells visitors that Spanish and French persons, “if unarmed,” are welcome to the Plantation even though England was at war with Spain and/or France for much of the seventeenth century. Actually the managers of the Plantation put great emphasis on separating the seventeenth from the twentieth century. “Unlike places like Sturbridge and Williamsburg” writes Ingram in her letter, “no items whatsoever are sold aboard the Mayflower or in the Pilgrim village.... Our program carefully separates modem element from period element, using the former to prepare the visitor for a suspension of doubt as he steps into the past.” The only difficulty with this is that there are so many visitors stepping into the past that they are as likely to step on each other as into a Pilgrim environment. The concept Ingram celebrates would work if the number of visitors were limited so that they would be but a sprinkle amidst the Pilgrims and Indians.
Try selling that to the Plantation’s managers, who are trying to make ends meet. Economic requirements dictate that the visitors are a mass, and much of what I experienced at Plimoth was a crush of lots of people just like me: eager, camera-toting, question-asking explorers of earlier times. When I went into a less popular exhibit—like a simple home where two women were cleaning up from a lavish lunch—I felt some of what Ingram promised. I sat to the side and watched as they went about their chores. It was a nice piece of environmental theater. Or, when a duel drew most people to an open field, inside a house the negotiations between the Dutch from New Amsterdam and Governor Bradford went on—with neatly improvised dialogue. Still, somehow, I felt more that I was watching a period play than “actually being there” in the seventeenth century.

The attempt to separate out different elements so that distinct thematic areas of the environment are clearly defined is what places like the Disney parks do. Not only is there a sharp separation between the ordinary world—even the mechanics of running the park itself—and the park, but different parts of the park speak different thematic languages: in Disneyland, for example, there are big differences among Frontierland, Tomorrowland, and so on. At Florida’s Disney World and Epcot the backstage is actually underground, and central control areas are several miles distant from where the visitors stroll. All Disney employees enter and leave the area underground and out of sight: they are seen in the Magic Kingdom only in costume and/or character.

But despite—even because of—these attempts to separate realities, or spheres of experience in time/space, spectators enjoy what can best be described as a postmodern thrill at the mix or close coincidence of contradictory categories. At Plimoth hosts are twentieth-century persons trained in seventeenth-century English (more or less); the visitors are tourists who’ve paid to be treated as guests dropping in from another century. A brochure given to each visitor emphasizes the reality of the seventeenth-century world while encouraging the visitors to break that frame:

The people you will meet in the village portray—through dress, speech, manner and attitudes—known residents of the colony in 1627. Their lives follow the seasonal cycle of all farming communities—planting and harvesting crops, tending animals, preparing meals, preserving food—what
you see will depend upon the time of your visit. Busy as they are, the villagers are always eager for conversation. Feel free to ask questions; and remember, the answers you receive will reflect each individual’s 17th century identity.

The giveaway phrase is “Busy as they are.” It’s not true: they are paid to respond to the visitors. I doubt that a villager too busy to talk to the tourists would last long in the seventeenth century, for this preoccupied performer would have violated a rule laid down by his twentieth-century employers. The little one-page map and flyer are also full of the contradictions. The village is entered only after the tourist has gone through both reception and orientation centers. The reception center is where business is done: restaurant, gift shop, bookstore, tickets for the village itself; also telephones, toilets, a picnic area. The orientation center includes a multi-image slide show, which is, the flyer tells us, “an essential part of your visit.” It gives historical background and lays out what’s offered. The orientation to the seventeenth century “lasts about 15 minutes.”

Inside the fence a seventeenth-century village atmosphere is kept up, as it is aboard the Mayflower II and in the Indian settlement. But a visit to the whole complex—reception center, orientation center, re-created environments alive with restored behavior—is a thoroughly postmodern experience, a theatrical experience. Spectators-participants generally go along with the seventeenth-century reality. John S. Boyd, who plays Stephen Hopkins, assistant to Gov. William Bradford and Plimoth’s first tavern keeper, has had the following experiences:

“You are meeting people from all over the world,” Boyd says. “I have met people from five different countries in one day.” ... Most visitors enter into the spirit of the Plantation, Boyd says, but a few are nonplussed when a plantation resident will claim never to have heard of Pennsylvania or ask visitors if they have a “good king.” Most of them, though “really do accept us as from another century.” [Reilly 1981, n.p.]

Plimoth Plantation is more than a theater or an educational facility; it’s also a business. Attendance in 1979 was 590,000; costs were about $1.5 million. Everything is as authentic as possible, but the day ends for visitors at 5:00 P.M. and the actors go home. During the hard New England winter
months—when the real Pilgrims endured their grimmest times—the Plantation is closed. By closed I mean that the performers no longer go about their daily chores. The Plantation is open for special programs; and as a show business the managers are gearing up for their spring opening. Maybe the village is closed during winter because the seventeenth-century ordeals of cold, hunger, and death can’t be accurately portrayed in a way that would suit the tastes of twentieth-century tourists. Or maybe it’s simply that outdoor entertainment in Massachusetts is a loser in winter. Probably it’s both. The contradictions and anachronisms, framed and carefully kept separate, are what gives Plimoth and its sister restored villages their special kick. The contradictions are hidden, almost, to be revealed only at special times and places. Inside the village all is naturalism, but taken as a whole the Plantation is like the theater of Brecht or Foreman. The people who make Plimoth may not say it in these terms, but their creation is restored behavior mixing 1--3--4 and 1--5a--5b; 1--3--5a--5b.

But what of villages that specialize in restoring fantasies? These are pure 1--5a--5b. More than one Old West town features regular High Noon shoot-outs or an attack by “savage” Indians. These events are not taken from history; they are played back from the movies. They are reflexions not reflections of the American experience. Sometimes, curiously, they double back into movies. Buckskin Joe, Colorado, was created by Malcolm F. Brown, former art director at MGM. The town has been the setting for more than one movie, including Cat Ballou, a parody of Westerns. At Buckskin Joe a shoot-out takes place in front of the saloon, and the spectators—who are actual customers at the bar or other stores—duck for cover. At King’s Island in Cincinnati a passenger train is held up, the conductor taken hostage, and passengers asked to intervene to save the day. Audience participation, on the decline in theater, is increasing in theme parks and restored villages.

Considered theoretically, restored villages, even those built on fantasies

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and/or movies, raise hard questions. How are they different than the StaalúGardner agnicayana? Staal and Gardner based their Vedic ritual on a reconstruction of an “old India” as distorted, and as true, as the Old West of America where Amerindians attacked settlers and shoot-outs happened in front of saloons. The Brahman priests went to texts, their own memories, and what old people could recall of the agnicayana, just as architects,
performers, and craftspeople of restored villages research their stuff. And as for things taken from pop mythology, as at Buckskin Joe, there are parallels in Chhau where the stories reenacted are from the Ramayana and Mahabharata, sacred in Sanskrit and very popular in numberless other versions, including movies and comic books. No, the difference between the American restored villages and the agnicayana and Chhau is that the performers and spectators in the restored villages know it’s all make-believe.

In figure 2.6 there is a move from frame $A$ into frame $B$ resulting in a special consciousness, $AB$. $AB$ is another way of stating the subjunctive mood of restored behavior: the overlying of two frames that cannot coexist in the indicative: “being in” the seventeenth and twentieth centuries simultaneously, “doing” a Vedic ritual according to the old ways and before cameras, tape recorders, and media-curious crowds. What happens is that the smaller subjunctive frame temporarily and paradoxically expands, containing the indicative frame. Everything is “make-believe for the time being.” Figure 2.7

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illustrates how the indicative world is temporarily isolated, surrounded, and both permeated and penetrated by the subjunctive: on the outside is the
environment of the performance, on the inside is the special consciousness of performing and witnessing/participating in a performance. The famous “willing suspension of disbelief” is the agreement to let the smaller frame $AB$ become the larger frame $AB'$.

At Plimoth, after a few hours in the village the visitors leave the seventeenth century. At the end of the day the “personators” take off their costumes and go home. In some restored villages a few people live “on location,” but these people know very well about the twentieth century: their workday puts them in contact with hundreds of tourists each hour. But sometimes the choice to live anachronistically is radical. Sadhus in India often live without property, clothes, or contact with the ordinary world. I met people living without electricity and other modern conveniences in the mountains surrounding Santa Cruz, California. But the most studied examples of anachronistic living are performed for the media, like the Celtic encampment near London:

Five young couples and their children lived together in a house made of sticks, grass and mud, lighted only by fire and the daylight that came through two low doors. They grew vegetables, raised boars, cows, chickens and goats, and kept a polecat for catching rabbits. They shaped pottery, forged tools, built cartwheels, wove cloth, cured the skins of animals. They sound like the Celtic tribemen who lived not far from what is now London 2,200 years ago; they are actually 20th century Britons who have been living like Iron Age Celts for almost a year. Their experiment was conceived by John Percival, a BBC producer, to dramatize archeology for a series of 12 television documentaries... Cameramen arrived at the Wiltshire village southwest of London every week to make films. Otherwise the “Celts” were well insulated from the modern world... Kate Rossetti, a Bristol teacher, had a long list of what she missed: “My
family and friends, chocolate, comfy shoes, Bach and Bob Dylan, being able to zoom up to Scotland.” But she said she does not think she will ever live in a city again. [New York Times, 5 March 1978]

This kind of thing is no Arcadian return to nature. Contemporary Arcadians live in the Santa Cruz mountains. The BBC Celtic encampment is like a breeding zoo: a place where actions of bygone life can be bred and then recaptured (in this case on film)—a convergence of archaeology, anthroúpology, and media. It stands between the obvious fakery of a restored village and the not so obvious fakery of the 1975 agnicayana. By fake I mean something unable to live on its own, something that needs a media push or seems out of joint with contemporary life. Of course theater is fake, but it celebrates its fakery while restored villages slyly try to hide theirs. This sly faking is on the increase.

The BBC Celts are a little like the Brahman priests who restored the agnicayana for Staal and Gardner. For the 1975 agnicayana there were two audiences: an immediate one of locals, many of whom treated the ritual as a media event (this happens whenever a film is shot on location, even outside my window on Sullivan Street in Manhattan); and an audience outside Kerala who sees Altar of Fire mainly as a documentary of an actual ritual. But ritual with a difference: ritual for study, for entertainment—a “specimen.” The inversion is ironic. The audience in Kerala sees the agnicayana as media; the audience for the Staal-Gardner film sees the media
(version of agniúcayana) as ritual. Both audiences are alienated from the “pure” agnicayana. But was there ever a pure agnicayana? Isn’t every instance of it 1---> 5a---> 5b? When the narrator of Altar of Fire tells viewers they are seeing probably the last performance ever of agnicayana, more than a little dash of American P.T. Barnum showmanship has been added for flavor. And at Plimoth nothing (new) is going to happen; life there is finished. These restored behaviors are very much like theater in a theater: the script is fixed, the environment is known, the actors play set roles. But Bharatanatyam and Chhau are different. These restorations have healed seamlessly into their cultural surround; they are living arts. As such, these dances will change; their future isn’t predictable, isn’t a repetition of their past. Plimoth Plantation either continues as it is or it ceases to be; its very existence is knotted into its specific historicity. Each production of aesthetic theater is like Plimoth, but “the theater” as a genre is like Bharatanatyam and Chhau. The similarities and differences among various performance systems is summarized in figure 2.8.

One of the big differences among performance systems is the framing made by the physical environments—what contains what. In ordinary

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theater the domain of the spectator, the house, is larger than the domain of the performer, the stage, and distinctly separate from it. In environmental theater (see Schechner 1973b) there is a shift in that the spectator and performer often share the same space, sometimes they exchange spaces, and sometimes the domain of the performer is larger than that of the spectator, enclosing the spectator within the performance. This tendency is taken even further in restored villages and theme parks where the visitor enters an environment that swallows him. Every effort is spent on making the spectator participate. And while the visitor is aware of ordinary time and place, he simultaneously enjoys a temporary transformation of these. He is
transported into another time and place. The 1975 agnicayana combines the qualities of film with those of a restored village. There are two frames working: that of the ritual and that of the film being made of the ritual. The Brahman priests are performers of the agnicayana, but they are also “visitors” absorbed into it (Vedic ritual being older and different than Brahmanic Hindu ritual); the local people watch both the ritual and the filming of it—neither of these events is familiar. If the priests had been totally absorbed into the agnicayana they would have insisted on sacrificing the goats, or they would have stopped the performance because in Vedic terms the goat sacrifice was necessary. But the priests, too, wanted the film to be made. The priests acted in regard to animal sacrifice not as Vedic priests but as modern Indians. More: they acted as performers in a film with a big stake in seeing that the shooting came off. Using their authority as priests, they devised the substitute effigies as a way of making the film, performing the agnicayana, and not offending the values of modern Kerala Indians. Thus the priests played three roles: Vedic ritualists, Brahman priests arbitrating a living tradition, film performers. In a way, the film performers convinced the Brahman priests that it was okay to tamper with the Vedic tradition. Or: as film performers Brahman priests were asked to play the role of Vedic ritualists. This double, or triple, life is typically that of theater actors; it is the theatrical brand of truth. And between the frame of the agnicayana and the frame of the filmmaking stood the local audience, enjoying both spectacles.

But is it fair to say that the priests were playacting? In terms of Euro-American theatrical conventions, “acting” implies make-believe, even lying. The work of the great twentieth-century acting teachers from Stanislavski through Grotowski has been to make acting more “truthful.” (A counterúmovement has been to acknowledge frankly that acting is artifice.) But even Goffman identifies the acting people do in ordinary life with con men and others who maintain a “front” different than their “true” selves. This understanding of acting derives from the Platonic idea of a hierarchy of realities in

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which what is most real is most distant from experience and the Aristotelian idea of art as an imitation and essentialization of life’s experiences. But, from the perspective of Indian theatrical conventions, acting is both false and true because acting is playful illusion—as is the world itself. The boys
who repreúsent/are the gods in Ramlila are both “playing at” and “being” the gods.

I might think the priests officiating in front of rolling cameras at the agnicayana are acting, while Kerala villagers might think they are doing what priests always do, mediating between different orders of experience. Their training has prepared the priests to restore the behavior of the agnicayana; and birth has placed them in a caste enabled to do so. It is not accurate to call them actors, and it is not accurate to not call them actors. They are between not actors” and “not not actors,” a liminal realm of double negativity that precisely locates the process of theatrical characterization.

As for American restored villages, anyone with proper training (whatever his/her birth) can demonstrate colonial crafts and speak English in a seventeenth-century Yankee dialect. At the end of the workday, visitors assume the performers relinquish their roles even if the visitors don’t see this divestiture with their own eyes. At Plimoth and elsewhere some of the conventions of orthodox American theater are dropped. The performers are not on a stage, not rewarded by applause, and they don’t strictly follow a word-by-word script called a drama. In some restored villages and theme parks, actors interact with spectators, making the visitor enter into the world of the village and thereby further blurring the boundary between the performance and its nonacting surround. The performers at Plimoth are acting, but they try to seem like they are not acting. In America we say someone is “only acting” when we detect the seams between the performance and the nonacting surround. We also say someone is acting when they are performing on a stage. We say someone is not acting when they are doing what they ordinarily would do were there no audience. Documentary film imposes an acting frame around a nonacting circumstance. Documentaries like Curtis’s In the Land of the Head Hunters or Flaherty’s Nanook of the North combine people sometimes going about their ordinary tasks, sometimes restoring behaviors of a recent past, and sometimes acting for pay in fictive situations in an “on-location” set wearing costumes and saying lines written for the Occasion.

Some performers at restored villages have become permanent residents, living off the income of their crafts and eating the food they have cooked that day in the presence of visitors. Their “lived lives” mesh with their “performed lives” in so strong a way that it feeds back into their
performances. Their roles become their “ordinary life,” supplying their restored behavior with a new source of authenticity. When this happens the residents of the restored villages can no more comfortably be subsumed under the category of “play-actors” than can the Kerala Brahman priests.

In T. McLuhan’s 1974 film, *The Shadow Catcher*, a few of the original participants in Curtis’s 1914 *Head Hunters* explain how Curtis’s interest in the “old ways” rekindled their own interest—and led to restoring some ceremonies previously abandoned. Thus the values of the new dominant culture encouraged the enactment as fiction of what was previously performed in fact. Other actions—masked dancing, shamanic healing—were done “as usual,” but before the rolling camera. Later, a new cultural whole developed, combining fiction and fact and including performances invented for tourists. Younger Kwakiutls said Curtis’s movie helped them learn about the old life—because seeing something “really being done” is so much more powerful than just hearing about it. But what was “really being done” even the old-timers didn’t do anymore by the time Curtis arrived. Who knows if they ever did it the way he filmed it? Curtis paid performers fifty cents an hour, five dollars when there was danger, like rowing the huge war canoes or hunting sea lions.

Increasingly, American theater of all kinds is like *Head Hunters* (whose title was changed to *in the Land of the War Canoes* because Curtis thought American audiences would find headhunting repulsive; the movie failed commercially anyway), combining documentary, fiction, history; in other words, restored behavior, 1--> 5a--> 5b. Today’s experimental theater puts acting and nonacting side by side, as in the work of Spalding Gray, Leeny Sack, Robert Wilson and Christopher Knowles, and Squat Theatre. On the other side, such strongholds of “facts” as network news programs are anchored by people selected for their ability to perform, not to gather or edit news (see chapter 7 and Schechner 1982b).

Restored villages and Curtis’s half-restoring, half-inventing for the sake of his feature film are performances in between that of Brahman priests restoring an archaic ritual for the benefit of the cameras and Olivier playing Lear on the Euro-American stage. Intermediate also are performances like
those of Wilson and Knowles, Gray, and Squat. This kind of theater displays its ambivalence; it is explicitly reflexive. In restored villages as in environmental theater generally, the domain of the performance surrounds and includes the spectator. Looking at becomes harder; being in, easier. Where there is no house, spectators are thrown back on their own resources for whatever assurance they need to maintain who and where they are.

Restoration of behavior as a dynamic system is expressed in figures 2.1—2.4. The core of this system is 1--->5a---> 5b. 1---> 5a --->5b is what happens during

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workshops and rehearsals. Workshops and rehearsals are two parts of a seven-phase performance process: training, workshop, rehearsal, warm-up, performance, cool-down, aftermath. Terminology varies from culture to culture, but the seven phases represent distinct functions that can be identified interculturally. The absence of one or more phases signals not “incompleteness” but an adjustment of the performance process to meet specific needs. For example, in Noh drama training is emphasized, but there is very little rehearsal; in Grotowski’s paratheater there is a great deal of workshop but no performance.

Sense can be made of these differences by asking what it is that each phase in the performance sequence accomplishes. Training is where known skills are transmitted. Workshop is a deconstruction process, where the readyúmades of culture (accepted ways of using the body, accepted texts, accepted feelings) are broken down and prepared to be “inscribed” upon (to use Turner’s word). Workshop is analogous to the liminal-transitional phase of rituals. Rehearsals are the opposite of workshops. In rehearsals longer and longer strips of restored behavior are arranged to make a new unified whole: the performance. This two-phase deconstruction-reconstruction process is exactly what Staal and Gardner did to the agnicayana; what the founders of Bharatanatyam did to sadir nac, the Natyasatra, and temple sculptings; what Bhattacharyya did to Purulia Chhau; and what the creators of Plimoth did to the data they researched regarding the Pilgrims.

Although the workshop-rehearsal process and the ritual process are analogous, the terms used to describe them don’t fit together neatly. This is because scholars have often treated play, art, and religion separately. But the
basic performance process is universal: theater is the art specializing in the concrete techniques of restoring behavior. Preparing to do theater includes memorizing a score of gestures, sounds, and movements and/or achieving a mood where apparently “external” gestures, sounds, and movements “take over” the performer, as in a trance. Behavior that is other is transformed into the performer’s own; alienated or objectified parts of the performer’s self—either his private self or his social self—are assimilated and publicly displayed. It is the assimilation of old and new material—and the transformations this material undergoes—that I have summarized as 1--->5a--->5b. The conclusion of the workshop-rehearsal process is the public performance; this is analogous to what Van Gennep calls “reincorporation” and what Turner calls “reintegration.” Of course, the whole project can collapse, especially in modern and postmodern circumstances where performances are more likely to be voluntary, liminoid, than obligatory, liminal. When things go wrong and people scatter, a “schism” occurs.(10)

By examining the workshop-rehearsal process as it applies to individual

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performers, we will also be able to understand it in wider terms as it applies to performances like agnicayana, restored villages, and other large-scale productions.

How do workshops-rehearsals work? (See also chapters 5 and 6.) There are two basic methods. The first is by “direct acquisition,” where a master uses bodily manipulation, imitation, and repetition to teach the neophyte actual items to be performed. The performance text is whole, and it is transmitted across generations. The second method of workshops-rehearsals is to teach a “basic grammar” that can be used to generate any number of performance texts. There is no one way, nor even any 250 ways, to perform Hamlet. There is continuity in how Hamlet has been performed from the time Shakespeare wrote it in 1604 to now. Training performers to play Hamlet means teaching them how to invent a performance text.

The separation of dramatic texts from performance texts that characterizes modern Euro-American theater leads to the separation of training from workshop and rehearsal. In many Asian forms training, workshop, and rehearsals are one; in Euro-America training is generalized in the sense that
techniques are taught as “tools” that can be used to make any number of different kinds of performances. An actor pants not so that she may pant in performance but in order to strengthen her diaphragm, get in touch with the different ways her voice can resonate, control her breathing so that demanding physical work can be done without losing breath. Or, scenes from plays are practiced not because they will be played this way when the student enters the professional theater but so that the neophyte can learn how to prepare a role, evoke genuine emotions (or feign them), and in other ways acquire the necessary skills to “become an actor.” These skills are eclectic. But how absurd it would be for a traditionally trained Noh shite to claim—or even desire—a similar eclecticism.

Just as there are intermediate or liminal performance styles, so there are some training methods that occupy a position in between these extremes, combining elements of both. Guru Kedar Nath Sahoo, dancer of Seraikella Chhau, teaches first a set of sword and shield exercises that will later be transformed into moves used within the dance drama. These exercises also strengthen the body and familiarize the performers with Chhau’s martial roots. In Kathakali, the massages administered by the guru’s feet literally reshape the student’s body, making possible the wide turnout and arched lower spine used in Kathakali. The massages coincide with rigorous exercises that are later used with only a few variations in the dancing. Neither in Chhau nor in Kathakali are the exercises the basis for invention. The exercises are part of both the “breaking down” and the “building up” process. In themselves, the exercises don’t help performers understand the dances theoretically.

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Such knowledge comes only after years of dancing as performers decipher for themselves what they have been doing. Many fine performers never acquire theoretical knowledge. Some do, and these are the ones most likely to introduce changes.

In situations where a performance text is invented, or a “lost” or “decayed” performance is restored, workshops are where items are discovered and “kept” for use later. The director says, “Keep that.” What the director means is not to do it again right now but to throw it ahead in time—to store it in the “future subjunctive,” 5c. This is the place where material “thrown forward” and “kept” for later use in the performance-to-be is stored. Imaginary or nonevent material, 5a, is combined with material from the personal or
historical past, 3, and thrown forward into 5c. As workshops become rehearsals the performance-to-be “takes shape” as 5b. 5c is emptied as more and more material either finds a place in the performance text or is discarded. The bits kept in 5c provide clues about what the finished performance text might be. In making a film, or restoring a Pilgrim village, 5c is full of images “in the can” and/or items gleaned from research. This process of the development from 1--> (3-5a) -->5c to 1--> 5a-->5b is depicted in figure 2.9.

The workshop-rehearsal process is liminoid. It is “betwixt and between” the fixed world from which material is extracted and the fixed score of the performance text.

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During the past fifty years, since Artaud at least, the two kinds of performance processes—transmission of whole items by direct acquisition and transmission by means of learning a generative grammar—have been linked. This linkage is, in fact, one of the great achievements of experimental theater in this century. Richard Foreman, for example,
transmits to relatively passive performers a complete performance text in a method parallel to that used by the Ramlila vyases (see chapter 4). Foreman writes his plays, makes a schematic of how they are to be staged, designs the setting, and often is present as chief technician at each performance. And the “grammatical” methods of gum Sahoo and the teachers at the Kathakali Kalamandalam may be due to extensive contact with European methods. Also, techniques such as yoga, martial arts, mantra chanting, and so on, transmitted as whole texts in their cultures of origin, are now used in the West as items of training of the generative grammar kind. In 1978, at a meeting outside of Warsaw convened by Grotowski, I saw Kanze Hideo put on a Noh mask, crawl on the floor, and improvise actions having nothing to do with classical Noh. And his friend, director Tadashi Suzuki, in a production of Euripides’ Trojan Women, combined Noh, Kabuki, martial arts, modern Western experimental theater, and ancient Greek tragedy. The play was as much about post-atomic-bomb Japan as about defeated Troy. Examples multiply, bearing witness to exchanges between, especially, Asian and African and Euro-American theater. Three kinds of workshop-rehearsal are now occurring: (1) those used to transmit whole performance texts; (2) those based on grammars that generate new performance texts; (3) those combining 1 and 2. This last, far from being a sterile hybrid, is a most fertile response to postmodern circumstances.

There is another way of looking at the workshop-rehearsal process, one that connects Turner’s ideas of subjunctivity/liminality to Stanislavski’s “magic if.” In An Actor Prepares Stanislavski says:

You know now that our work on a play begins with the use of if as a lever to lift us out of everyday life onto the plane of imagination. ... There is no such thing as actuality on the stage. Art is a product of the imagination. ... The aim of the actor should be to use his technique to turn the play into a theatrical reality. [(1936) 1946, 51]

The use of “if” encourages the actor to be in the “given circumstances” of the character. “What would I do if certain circumstances were true?” (Stanúislavski, 1961, 33). It is during workshops-rehearsals that the “if” is used as a way of researching the physical environment, the affects, the
relationships—everything that will sooner or later be fixed in the performance text.

Figure 2.10 shows how the deep structure of workshop-rehearsal inverts the deep structure of performance.” In workshop-rehearsal real work is being done, work that is serious and problematical: indicative, “is.” But the daily experience of workshop-rehearsal—what a casual observer might feel—is an “as if,” something tentative, subjunctive: “Let’s try that,” “This could work,” “What would happen if?” Workshop especially is playful. There the techniques of “as if” flourish: games, role exchanges, improvisations—participants bring in stuff from all over. Workshops find, reveal, and express material; rehearsals give this stuff performative shape. Despite the fact that deep things are “brought up” during workshop, the feeling of openness, of experimentation, of transition, is maintained. Workshops are liminoid, creating an “as if” scalpel used to cut into the actual lives of those making the performance.

The finished performance text is the inverse of the workshop-rehearsal. The performance text displayed before an audience, or requiring their participation, is “indicative”: 2, 4, or 5a. In Euro-American theater secular rituals such as reviewing by critics, attendance by a paying audience of strangers,
and an opening-night party mark the transition from rehearsal to performance. The performance text is an “is,” the more or less invariable presentation of what’s been found, kept, and organized. But the deep structure under this “is” is a subjunctive “as if.” The tears Ophelia sheds for Hamlet are actual, hot, and salty, but her grief is subjunctive. The cause of that grief may be something wholly unrelated to Hamlet or the actor playing Hamlet. The cause is possibly some intimate association the actress found during workshops or rehearsals. The Balinese dancer in trance may violently thrust a kris against his chest, but the cause of this action is not self-hatred but a manifestation of trance possession by the demon Rangda. The two processes—the American actress who uses her personal life, and the Balinese trance dancer who abandons his—may appear to be opposite, but they are actually identical. In each case the “given circumstances,” the “as
if” of the preparatory phases of performance, sink out of sight but underlie and cause the “is” of the performance text.

Of course, there are variations of this process: to experiment means to “play around” and in so doing to create new situations. Brecht asked his actors to be in character (“is”) most of the time but sometimes to stand beside their characters (“as if”), questioning the very actions they were performing. Thus Brecht introduced into the public performance a quality of the workshop-rehearsal process.

This breaking of frames occurs not only in serious drama but in the circus, nightclub acts, and Broadway musicals, too. There was a scene in Sugar Babies where the star, Mickey Rooney, loses his wig. He laughs, his face turns red, he runs to the edge of the stage and shares a wisecrack with the audience. Then he puts his wig back on and resumes his role. This break is Rooney’s acknowledgment that underneath all the roles he plays there is the person, the star, the “real” Mickey Rooney. Losing the wig looks accidental, but actually it was a set piece of business. Probably Rooney lost his wig “for real” during a rehearsal, and the bit was kept. It helps the audience feel good about paying so much money; for a brief moment each spectator thinks she’s been treated to a special glimpse of the star unmasked. Of course, the unmasking is a trick, not an unmasking at all.

I do not criticize the rehearsedness of such scenes. (12) When I direct I hold “open rehearsals” where the public actually sees a work in process; or, during finished performances, I try to include “raw elements” like having the green room visible during Mother Courage. But almost always the genuine processual nature of workshop-rehearsal is lost. (13) The “as if” wants to submerge itself when the public is present. Only while working with those they can really trust, usually a few comrades who have shared a lot of experiences together, can performers play “as if” with “is” material. When working

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under the eye of a critical public, performers want to show only the “is” of their “as if.”

The last part of rehearsal is practice. Longer and more complicated strips of restored behavior are organized into the actual performance. Music, costumes, lighting, makeup, et cetera, accumulate. Each of these is blended
in with the intention of making an integrated whole. During this final push, gestures are edited so that they send the clearest signals and practiced until they become second nature. Pacing—the relation of the rhythm/tempo of each part to that of the whole—becomes very important. This last phase of rehearsal is comparable to the phase of reintegration in a ritual. Strangers to the theater often think only of this last phase when they hear the word “rehearsal.” But as I have tried to show, reintegration is only the final part of a long process.

Immediately before going on stage, most performers engage in some ritual. The Noh actor contemplates his mask; Jatra performers in Bengal worship the gods of the performance who manifest themselves in the props and images of gods set up on the trunks backstage; Stanislavski advised thirty seconds of silent concentration. Sometimes preparatory “moments” are very long. Tribesmen in Papua New Guinea spend many hours putting on makeup and costumes. I always met The Performance Group at least two hours before a performance to clean up the theater, give notes, and do warm-ups. The main function of these preparations is not to make the performer “look” the role (though this task is accomplished) but to recapitulate and reactivate the training, workshop, and rehearsal process. The audience, too, usually is quieted down and transported across the threshold separating preperformance hubbub from the event itself. The houselights slowly dim; in France a staff is rapped clearly on the stage floor; at sports matches the national anthem is sung; sometimes a prayer is recited or a moment of silence observed.

Seeing what of the ritual process is missing from a performance can be a useful way of understanding what’s going on. Grotowski’s paratheatrical work took participants from cities and brought them to remote areas to perform actions with and under the supervision of Grotowski’s people.(14) These actions varied according to who the participants were and what were the current interests of the Polish Laboratory Theatre. But the actions always involved discovering and revealing hidden personal themes, finding new ways of behaving (alone or with others), and sharing I-Thou relationships. Many of the physical actions—running through the forest at night, sudden immersion in water, dances around fire and the passing of fire from person to person, group chanting, singing, storytelling—are very like those in initiation rites. Maybe initiation rites were a model for Grotowski. When participants
returned home after a few days or weeks they often said that they couldn’t talk about what happened. This silence wasn’t due to a vow of secrecy; it was due to the conviction that words couldn’t do justice to the experience. “It changed my life” was a frequent laconic summary. As performative action Grotowski’s paratheater resembled an initiation rite in which a transformation of self, a change of status, was effected. But exúGrotowskiites have been surprisingly unsuccessful in starting their own theaters or feeding what they’ve done with Grotowski into their own theater work. Paratheater seemed to disable rather than invigorate them. Grotowski did not work out, nor were his clients able to supply, phase 3 of the workshop-rehearsal/ritual process: reintegration. There was no way that the participants in Grotowski’s paratheater could bring it home or do it publicly. Participants were left hanging: they were separated, stripped down, made into tabulae rasa; they had deep experiences, were “written upon,” made new; but these “new selves” were not reintegrated into the ordinary world. Not only did Grotowski’s theater no longer perform publicly, he denied any religious aspect to his paratheatrical work. He intentionally prevented it from knitting in with any social, aesthetic, or religious system.

The absence of reintegration in Grotowski’s paratheater reveals his intentions while he was conducting his paratheatrical experiments (ca. 1969—76). Theater has but two stances in relationship to society at large: either to be tightly woven into broader social patterns, as rituals are, or to serve as an analytical and dialectical instrument for a critique of society, as Brecht’s theater tried to be. Most theater people are not conscious of these stances, their work drifts. But Grotowski is a most conscious individual. He intentionally avoided taking either of these stances while making paratheater. More recently, in his Theatre of Sources, Grotowski gathered masters of performance from different non-Western cultures. In a “transcultural village” (a kind of performative theme park) masters and visitors exchanged techniques. Grotowski has also spent many months in the field, particularly in India and Haiti. Barba has adapted aspects of Theatre of Sources for his “theater anthropology” project. And very recently Grotowski began work on “objective drama”—trying to locate efficacious performance processes regardless of their religious or other ideological bases_CONTEXTS. This work may synthesize Grotowski’s multifaceted career—poor theater, paratheater, theater of sources—into something that includes a reintegrative phase. (For more on Grotowski’s paratheater and related work, see chapter 5.)
Far-fetched as such projects may seem, they signal a very deep attempt to integrate the performative knowledge of several Asian, African, Caribbean, and Native American cultures with the social, political, and aesthetic life of Euro-America. Such an attempt may have enormous consequences for the development of an intercultural theater. And just as theater workers are increasingly interested in anthropological thought and the techniques of fieldwork, so anthropologists find themselves more and more like theater directors.

Staal and Gardner are not alone in entering the field as theatrical producers-directors in the guise of anthropological fieldworkers. Not finding a ritual worthy of being filmed, they arranged one to be performed. They made sure there was enough lead time to get money to make the movie and to import a planeload of important scholars. Their lie, if there is one, comes with the marketing of *Altar of Fire* as a document of a “living ritual” they just happened on in the nick of time. The film’s audience may construe agnicayana as a “living ritual” when in fact it is a complicated kind of playacting. But I think I’ve shown how playacting is a kind of living ritual—though one made reflexive through the use of training, workshop, and/or rehearsal. *Altar of Fire* is more than a film of Vedic ritual. The filming itself ritualizes the action of restoring the agnicayana. But that work of ritualization took place in the out-of-sequence shooting, in the disputes surrounding the sacrifice (or non-sacrifice) of the goats, and in the editing room.

Maybe even today most anthropologists would agree with Turner, who in 1969 said of his stay with the Ndembu, “We never asked for a ritual to be performed solely for our own anthropological benefit; we held no brief for such artificial play-acting” (1969, 10). But the presence of the fieldworker is an invitation to playacting. And what should be done regarding traditions that are near extinction? Old-style patronage is finished. Yesterday patrons wanted performances either as entertainment, as celebration, or for ritual benefit. Today patrons want performances for the archives or as data from which to develop theories. Patrons such as the National Endowment for the Arts sponsor performances to “enrich cultural life”—which means a whole
spectrum of things from paying off the upper middle class to keeping unruly youth in tow.

But what ought our response be to genres doomed by modernization and postmodernization? In Karnataka, South India, not too many miles from where Staal and Gardner filmed, Martha Ashton was “not only the first foreigner to study Yakshagana in detail, but... also the first and only female to perform it.”(16) Ashton joined with her teacher Hiriyadka Gopala Rao in reconstructing old-style Yakshagana. They assembled a company, helped recollect old stories, steps, and songs. Not only did Ashton film the results of this reconstruction, she also wrote a book on Yakshagana (Ashton and Christie 1977) and organized a tour of the Rao-Ashton company to America in 1976—77. Was she wrong in doing all this? When I visited Karnataka in 1976 I saw three kinds of Yakshagana: the popular version; a style for modern audiences developed by K.S. Karanth, a well-known writer; and “classical Yakshagana” restored largely through the efforts of Rao and Ashton. Which style is most or least Indian?

The position of purists who refuse to stage the rituals or performances they are studying and recording (on film, on tape, and in books) is not pure but ambivalent. Their position is analogous to that of experimental theater auteur Richard Foreman who, in many of his productions, sat between his players and the audience, often running a tape recorder broadcasting his own voice interpreting and asking questions and giving instructions. To the society the fieldworker temporarily inhabits, he represents his home culture in one of its most inexplicable aspects: Why send somebody around the world to observe and record how another group lives? And to those of us who see or read the reports of the fieldworker, he is our main link with both fresh aspects of human behavior (fresh to us, that is) and our often asserted, sometimes tested, but never proven assertion that humans are one species culturally, “humanly,” as well as biologically.

The situation precipitated by the fieldworker’s presence is a theatrical one: he is there to see, and he is seen. But what role does the fieldworker play? He is not a performer and not not a performer, not a spectator and not not a spectator. He is in between two roles just as he is in between two cultures. In the field he represents—whether he wants to or not—his culture of origin; and back home he represents the culture he has studied. The fieldworker is
always in a “not . . . not not” situation. And like a performer going through workshops-rehearsals the fieldworker goes through the three-phase performance process isomorphic with the ritual process:

1. The stripping away of his own ethnocentrism. This is often a brutal separation, which in itself is the deepest struggle of fieldwork, and is never complete. What should he eat, how? And his toilet habits, his problems of hygiene. And the dozens of other things that remind the worker of the distance between his own culture and the one he wants to get inside of. But if his work is to succeed, he has to undergo some kind of transformation.

2. The revelation, often coming suddenly like inspiration, of what is “new” in the culture he temporarily inhabits. This discovery is his initiation, his transition, the taking on of a new role in his adoptive society, a role that often includes a new identity, position, or status. The worker “goes native,” even inside himself.

3. The difficult task of using his field notes (or raw footage and sound tapes) to make an acceptable “product”—monograph, film, lectures, whatever: the way he edits and translates what he found into items understood by the world he returns to. In brief, he must make an acceptable performance out of all workshop-rehearsal material. His promotion to full professor ratifies his reintegration into his own society.

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As fieldwork converges on theatrical directing, the third phase of the process includes making films—or, as Victor and Edith Turner did with their students, “performing ethnography” (see chap. 1 and Turner and Turner 1982). It is this third phase of the process that is most problematical. Clearly, monographs are written in the style of the “home culture.” Only recently, with an increase in “life histories,” has there been some effort to make writing speak in the voice of the “away culture.” But even life histories are translations. Films use images drawn directly from the away culture. These images make it seem as if the away culture were speaking for itself. But of course camera angles, methods of shooting, focus, and editing all reflect the world of the filmmaker. If the film maker is from the away culture, the point of view may be more from the inside—but maybe not: technology enforces its own logic. Or the resultant film may not be “ethnographic” in the classic sense. Ethnography demands a double vision, inside and outside simultaneously or alternately. If the fieldworker is able to show all this (maybe using local camerapersons and editors), the third phase of the fieldworker’s progression folds back into phase 1. He tries to show his own
people what the away culture is like in its own terms. It may be too much to ask—or the wrong thing.

In the past anthropologists have fancied themselves siblings of “hard scientists.” But hard science works from models strictly fenced off from ordinary life; and it depends on predictive theory. The soft sciences are actually extensions of the arts and humanities. Ordinary life and performative life are related in the looped way I showed in figure 2.10. Theory in the social sciences is little more than what Geertz calls “thick description” (1973, 3—32). Presently the theater director is leaving the shadowy, out-of-sight offstage and entering the stage not just as another performer but as a unique figure: the embodiment of the workshop-rehearsal process. Fieldworkers now not only watch but learn, participate, and initiate actions. Directors have been, and fieldworkers are becoming, specialists in restored behavior. In this epoch of information and reflexive hyperconsciousness we not only want to know, we also want to know how we know what we know.

D. W. Winnicott’s ideas add an ontogenic level and a new set of categories to my description of what the performer does. Winnicott, a British psychoanalyst, studied the mother-baby relationship, especially how the baby learns to distinguish between “me” and “not me.” Winnicott called certain objects “transitional”.....in between the mother and the baby, belonging to neither the mother nor the baby (the mother’s breasts, a security blanket, certain Special toys). And the circumstances in which these transitional objects were used constituted “transitional phenomena.”

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I am here staking a claim for an intermediate state between a baby’s inability and his growing ability to recognize and accept reality. I am therefore studying the substance of illusion, that which is allowed to the infant, and which in adult life is inherent in art and religion....

I think there is a use for a term for the root of symbolism in time, a term that describes the infant’s journey from the purely subjective to objectivity; and it seems that the transitional object (piece of blanket, etc.) is what we see of this journey of progress toward experiencing....
The transitional object and transitional phenomena start each individual off with what will always be important to them, i.e., a neutral sense of experience which will not be challenged. ...

The important part of this concept is that whereas inner psychic reality has a kind of location in the mind or in the belly or in the head or somewhere within the bounds of the individual’s personality, and whereas what is called external reality is located outside these bounds, playing and cultural experience can be given a location if one uses the concepts of the potential space between the mother and the baby. [1971, 3, 5, 12, 53]

This potential space is workshop-rehearsal, the liminal/liminoid space, the 1-\( \rightarrow \) 5a \( \rightarrow \) 5b bundle.

Winnicott’s ideas mesh nicely with Van Gennep’s, Turner’s, and Bateson’s, in whose “play frame” ([1955] 1972, 177—93) “transitional phenomena” take place. The most dynamic formulation of what Winnicott is describing is that the baby—and later the child at play and the adult at art (and religion)—recognizes some things and situations as “not me... not not me.” During workshops-rehearsals performers play with words, things, and actions, some of which are “me” and some “not me.” By the end of the process the “dance goes into the body.” So Olivier is not Hamlet, but he is also not not Hamlet. The reverse is also true: in this production of the play, Hamlet is not Olivier, but he is also not not Olivier. Within this field or frame of double negativity choice and virtuality remain activated.

In children the movement from “not me” to “not not me” is seen in their relationship to security blankets, favorite toys that cannot be replaced no matter how old, dirty, or broken. Play itself deconstructs actuality in a “not me ... not not me” way. The hierarchies that usually set off actuality as “real” and fantasy as “not real” are dissolved for the “time being,” the play time. These same operations of dissolving ordinary hierarchies, of treasuring things beyond their ordinary worth, of setting aside certain times and places for the manipulation of special things in a world defined nonordinarily: this is also a definition of the workshop-rehearsal process, the ritual process, the performative process.

When such performance actualities are played Out before audiences, the spectators have a role to play. Winnicott puts into his own terms an audience’s “willing suspension of disbelief.”
The essential feature in the concept of transitional objects and phenomena . . . is the paradox, and the acceptance of the paradox: the baby [performer] creates the object but the object was there waiting to be created [performance text]. . . . We will never challenge the baby [performer] to elicit an answer to the question: did you create that or did you find it? [1971, 89]

Olivier will not be interrupted in the middle of “To be or not to be” and asked, “Whose words are those?” And if he were interrupted, what could his reply be? The words belong, or don’t belong, equally to Shakespeare, Hamlet, Olivier. If such an interruption did take place the audience would assume Pirandello or Brecht was at work, building into the performance text
its own reflexive double. But to whom would such an interruption belong? You see, in the theater there is no place that is not make-believe. Even the shot that killed Lincoln, for a split second, must have seemed part of the show.

Restored behaviors of all kinds—rituals, theatrical performances (plate 25), restored villages, agnicayana—are “transitional.” Elements that are “not me” become “me” without losing their “not me-ness.” This is the peculiar but necessary double negativity that characterizes symbolic actions. While

performing, a performer experiences his own self not directly but through the medium of experiencing the others. While performing, he no longer has a “me” but has a “not not me,” and this double negative relationship also shows how restored behavior is simultaneously private and social. A person performing recovers his own self only by going out of himself and meeting the others—by entering a social field. The way in which “me” and “not me,” the performer and the thing to be performed, are transformed into “not me ... not not me” is through the workshop-rehearsal/ritual process. This process takes place in a liminal time/space and in the subjunctive mood. The subjunctive character of the liminal time/space is reflected in the negative, antistructural frame around the whole process. This antistructure could be expressed algebraically: “not (me. . . not me).”

Figure 2.11 portrays this system. Figure 2.11 is a version of --5a--5b. Actions move in time, from the past thrown into the future, from “me” to “not me” and from “not me” to “me.” As they travel they are absorbed into the liminal, subjunctive time/space of “not me ... not not me.” This time/space includes both workshops-rehearsals and performances. Things thrown into the future (“Keep that”) are recalled and used later in rehearsals and performances. During performance, if everything goes right, the experience is
of synchronicity as the flow of ordinary time and the flow of performance time meet and eclipse each other. This eclipse is the “present moment,” the synchronic ecstasy, the autotelic flow, of liminal stasis. Those who are masters at attaining and prolonging this balance are artists, shamans, conmen, acrobats. No one can keep it long.

By integrating the thought of Winnicott, Turner, and Bateson with my own work as a theater director, I propose a theory that includes the ontogenesis of individuals, the social action of ritual, and the symbolic, even fictive, action of art. Clearly these overlap: their underlying process is identical. A performance “takes place” in the “not me . . . not not me” between performers; between performers and texts; between performers, texts, and environment; between performers, texts, environment, and audience. The larger the field of “between,” the stronger the performance. The antistructure that is performance swells until it threatens to burst. The trick is to extend it to the bursting point but no further. It is the ambition of all performances to expand this field until it includes all beings, things, and relations. This can’t happen. The field is precarious because it is subjunctive, liminal,
transitional: it rests not on how things are but on how things are not; its existence depends on agreements kept among all participants, including the audience. The field is the embodiment of potential, of the virtual, the imaginative, the fictive, the negative, the not not. The larger it gets, the more it thrills, but the more doubt and anxiety it evokes, too. Catharsis comes when something happens to the performers and/or characters but not to the performance itself. But when doubt overcomes confidence, the field collapses like popped bubble gum. The result is a mess: stage fright, aloneness, emptiness, and a feeling of terrible inadequacy when facing the bottomless unappeasable appetite of the audience. When confidence—and the skills necessary to achieve what’s promised—prevails, there is nothing performers can’t do. A special empathy/sympathy vibrates between performers and spectators. The spectators do not “willingly suspend disbelief.” They believe and disbelieve at the same time. This is theater’s chief delight. The show is real and not real at the same time. This is true for performers as well as spectators and accounts for that special absorption the stage engenders in those who step onto it or gather around it. Sacred a stage may or may not be, special it always is.

The workshop/rehearsal process is the basic machine for the restoration of behavior. It is no accident that this process is the same in theater as it is in ritual. For the basic function of both theater and ritual is to restore behavior—to make performances of the 1--->5a--->5b type. The meaning of individual rituals is secondary to this primary function, which is a kind of collective memory-in/of-action The first phase breaks down the performer’s resistance,

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makes him a tabula rasa. To do this most effectively the performer has to be removed from familiar surroundings. Thus the need for separation, for “sacred” or special space, and for a use of time different than that prevailing in the ordinary. The second phase is of initiation or transition: developing new or restoring old behavior. But so-called new behavior is really the rearrangement of old behavior or the enactment of old behavior in new settings. In the third phase, reintegration, the restored behavior is practiced until it is second nature. The final part of the third phase is public performance. Public performances in Euro-America are repeated until there are no more customers. In most cultures performances occur according to schedules that ration their availability. What we call new behavior, as I said, is only short strips of behavior rearticulated in novel patterns. Experimental
performance thrives on these rearticulations masquerading as novelties. But the ethological repertory of behaviors, even human behaviors, is limited. In rituals, relatively long strips of behavior are restored, giving the impression of continuity, stasis: tradition. In creative arts, relatively short strips of behavior are rearranged and the whole thing looks new. Thus the sense of change we get from experimental arts may be real at the level of recombination but illusory at the basic structural/processual level. Real change is a very slow evolutionary process.

Many people these days fear a disruption of historical cultural variety brought about by world monoculture. Just as physical well-being depends on a varied gene pool, so social well-being depends on a varied “culture pool.” Restored behavior is one way of preserving a varied culture pool. It is a strategy that fits into, and yet opposes, world monoculture. It is an artificial means of preserving the wild. Usually it is not local people who practice restored behavior in this conscious way. The devadasis were content to dance their sadir nac, even if it was doomed. The Mura and Dom danced and drummed their Chhau before Bhattacharyya arrived in 1961, even if it was “in decay.” The agnicayana would or would not have been enacted again in Kerala without Staal and Gardner. As for Plimoth, the Pilgrims are long since gone. Modern sensibility wants to bring into the postmodern world “authentic cultural items.” Maybe this is just a kind of postimperialist souvenir hunt. Or maybe it is something more and better. Within the frame of postmodern information theory all knowledge is reducible/transformable into bits of information. As such, these bits can be reconstructed in new ways to create new orders of facticity. An illusion of diversity is created backward in time to 5a and forward to 5b. This illusion is artful because it is art itself, pure theater. This illusion may have the status of “reality” as actual as any other order of reality. The underlying idea that information, not things, is the matrix of cultures, and maybe of “nature” itself, is at the root of such recent

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exploration as recombinant DNA, gene splicing, and cloning. What these experiments “create” is a liminal existence between nature and culture. The experiments suggest what the performing arts have long asserted, that “nature” and “culture” may be a false dichotomy, that actually these are not opposing realms but different treatments of identical information bits.
NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. In *Frame Analysis* Goffman used the term “strip of activity”: “The term ‘strip’ will be used to refer to any arbitrary slice or cut from the stream of ongoing activity, including here sequences of happenings, real or fictive, as seen from the perspective of those subjectively involved in sustaining an interest in them. A strip is not meant to reflect a natural division made by the subjects of inquiry or an analytical division made by students who inquire; it will be used only to refer to any raw batch of occurrences (of whatever status in reality) that one wants to draw attention to as a starting point for analysis” (1974, 10). My “strip of behavior” is related to Goffman’s term, but it is also, as will be seen, significantly different.

2. Labanotation, roughly analogous to musical notation, was developed by Rudolf von Laban in 1928. According to an article in the *New York Times* (6 May 1979, “Arts and Leisure” section, p. 19) by Jack Anderson: “The system records dance movement by means of symbols on a page that is read from the bottom up. Three basic vertical lines represent the body’s center, right, and left sides. Where the symbols are placed on the lines indicates what parts of the body are moving. The shape of the symbols indicates the direction of the movement, and their length indicates the movement’s duration.” This, plus other kinds of notation such as “effort-shape,” makes it possible to more or less “keep” a dance or other bodily mise-en-scène long after it has stopped being performed. Such systems are now widely used in dance, less so in theater.

3. Andrews has done more research than anyone on the Shakers’ rituals. See References.

4. “Actual” is a term I adapted in 1970 from Eliade’s “reactualization” (1965). In 1970 I wrote: “A try at explaining actuals involves a survey of anthropological, sociological, psychological and historical material. But these are not organized to promote the search. . . . [In the literature] I find an incipient theory for a special kind of behaving, thinking, relating, and doing. This special way of handling experience and jumping the gaps between past and present, individual and group, inner and outer, I call ‘actualizing’ (perhaps no better than Eliade’s ‘reactualizing,’ but at least shorter)...An actual has five basic qualities, and each is found both in our own actuals and those of primitive [sic, and excuse me] peoples: 1) *process*. something happens here and now; 2) *consequential, irremediable, and irrevocable* acts,
exchanges, or situations; 3) contest, something is at stake for the performers and often for the spectators; 4) initiation, a change in status for participants; 5) space is used concretely and organically” (1977, 8, 18).

5. All Emigh citations are from a letter he distributed to a few persons concerning his 1975 work in West Irian. He has since returned to Asia to continue his researches. Emigh was trying to establish connections relating Balinese performance to performances and ritual practices in West Irian, specifically forms of ancestor worship. Emigh saw a pan-Micronesian aspect to Balinese and West Irian performances. Most of Emigh’s stuff has not yet been published, but I think he is onto relating a stratum of performance including masks, dance styles, and relationships to sacred geography that was/is present across vast areas of the Pacific—at least from Japan to aboriginal Australia, from Papua New Guinea to India, and including many of thousands of islands within this big area. W. H. Rassers (1959) has shown a definite link between Balinese shadow puppetry and Sepik River ceremonies. These connections can still be seen because in styles and techniques of performance people tend to be conservative, maintaining very old practices, some of which are expressed in a Euro-American way in Grotowski’s Towards a Poor Theatre. This keeping of old ways, almost in decipherable archaeological-behavior layers, makes the study of contemporary performance also the study of old performance. The old ways are constantly being worn away and then restored: never the same, never essentially different.

6. The Altar of Fire shooting script (Gardner(?)) 1975) was given to me by someone who worked on the film—a local person. I obtained the script, in 1976. The script also gives detailed instructions to camera people, technicians, etc. It also provides drawings of the site, altars, etc. It includes lots of background material on agnicayana, as well as descriptions of what will happen.

7. Until John Emigh—who heard Mead talk on the subject at the American Museum of Natural History—told me what she said, I thought Trance and Dance wholly “authentic.” My experience proves how easily people can fall into the trap. To many American scholars and students, Trance and Dance—because of its age, and because of the authority of Mead and Bateson—is the most powerful example of what Balinese trance “really is.”
8. From a three-page mimeographed information paper dated “2/80” sent to me by Ingram. (Plimoth Plantation 1980, 1—2).


10. I’m taking a term Turner applies to “social dramas” and applying it to the performance process. But his conception of social drama is performative, and closely related to his understanding of the ritual process. Turner uses key terms like “liminality,” “communitas,” and “process” in laying out his theories of both ritual and social drama. See, especially, Turner 1969, 1974, 1982a.

11. I first used this figure in 1977 when I was relating “social drama” to “aesthetic drama” (1977, 144). Turner used the model a few times (see Turner 1982, 73). In my 1977 use I hypothesized that theatrical techniques are the hidden, implicit underground of social and political action, the dramatic ordering of events; and, conversely, that social and political action underly theatrical works. Thus I was denying the one-way action of Aristotelian mimesis and at the same time denying the proposition that “all the world’s a stage.” I accept both statements as dialectically true: each making the existence of the other necessary. Artistic action creates the rhetorical and/or symbolic possibilities for social drama to “find itself,” and the events of ordinary life provide the raw stuff and conflicts reconstructed in art works. The visual pun on the figure for infinity was not intended—but when I saw it I was pleased.

12. Bouissac (1982) deals with this problem of planned accidents. He asks, provocatively, whether such acts should be analyzed from the point of view of the naive spectator who thinks the accident is “for real” or of the observer who knows what’s “really happening.” In my own theater work I’ve tried to make my intentions as clear as possible—on the principle that whatever is made conscious uncovers a further horizon of unknown potentially emergent stuff and that the work of the artist these days is to demystify.

13. A particular kind of performance has surfaced over the past ten years or so: performances of “the real as real.” Sometimes these are documentary films. But such movies always have the taint of editing (falsification). More
impressive is some of the work of Spalding Gray, Robert Wilson, and various Performance Artists who include unedited slices of their lives as lived. See “The Natural/Artificial Controversy Renewed” in The End of Humanism (Schechner 1982b). For a good survey of this kind of work in California—one of the places it is most popular—see Loeffler, ed., 1980.

14. Grotowski’s paratheatrical work has been written up in a number of places. See Grotowski 1973; Mennen 1975; Kolankiewicz, ed., 1978; Burzynski and Osinski 1979; and Grimes 1982.

15. For information about the Theatre of Sources, see International Theatre Information, winter 1978, and Grimes 1981. For Barba’s “theatre anthrolopolgy,” see Barba 1982a.

16. From a publicity release announcing the Rao-Ashton company’s tour to America.