

“Performance With Others”

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Introduction

Purpose of my Inquiry

When I pose the question “what does an image of performance look like” to friends and colleagues, most often the image that first comes to mind is of (human) actors performing live on a stage or (human) people performing their identity and culture. Rarely, someone articulates an image of performance in which something other than human bodies is central. In fact, I have been hard pressed to find photo images of the very performances that I examine in this inquiry in which human actors are not the central focus. The focus on human actors in photographing these performances along with the common human-centered responses to the question—what does an image of performance look like—exposes a tendency to think of performance as fundamentally a human activity and human cultural-artistic product. Conventional ways of understanding performance often assume that human activity, human embodiment, and human identities are at the ontological center of “what performance is.” In contrast to theorizations of and assumptions about the nature of performance that place live human embodiment at the foundation of what performance is, the purpose of my inquiry is to take up the question of how contemporary performance operates as a becoming—as a continuously unfolding relationality with others.¹ This does not mean that I ignore human performers or that I determine what performance “is” in my inquiry but instead that I pay attention to encounter in performance from the perspective of involvement with the more-than-human. I work to theorize performance as a becoming—intervening in the conversation on what performance is by challenging assumptions that human activity and human

conventions are the determining and defining factors for performance. Understanding performance as a becoming—a continuously unfolding relationality—diverges from ontological frames that define and determine performance according to the parameters of live human performers situated on a stage or in cultural production.

I work to understand how performance operates as a becoming through a concept of relationality in which relation cannot be defined by its terms or as a comprehensible unity. For example, one approach to understanding the nature of performance could work to draw out and explicate the discreet terms—such as (human) performers, an audience, and a live event—that appear to generally and universally comprise performance. The program put together for many live shows—that both explicates the various terms, roles, and names of those who make performance and also materializes the relation between an audience and performers—is a good example of what might appear to be a comprehensible unity that could be understood as the foundation for the nature of performance. In other words, the nature of performance could be articulated via the terms that appear to be generally applicable and characteristic of performance. However, performance understood as a becoming through a concept of relationality realizes that conventions—such as a program—that outline the terms of performance cannot account for many ungraspable and unstable factors that are involved in performance. For example, performance relationally thought emphasizes that performance occurs through encounter with others in and beyond live human embodiment—in multiple histories, overlapping experiences, atmospheric shifts, and a complex layering of interacting bodies that exceed any ontological determination. Therefore, addressing the question—what is

the nature of performance—through relationality and becoming rather than fixed generalities means that I examine the open and regulative, the emphatic and generative, the perceptible and imperceptible, and the (non-oppositional) ephemeral and continuous qualities in performance from the perspective of a shared sphere of relationality that is one with becoming.

I organize and focus my inquiry in four chapters that take up encounter with others in contemporary performance—in particular objects, landscapes, animals, and machines/technology. I work to theorize performance as a relational becoming rooted in ongoing process and openness-of-interaction in-the-making as opposed to a product that is defined and determined by human creators and conventions. The many not just human others that we encounter in performance force us to think and practice relationally—to try to understand how contemporary performance operates as an ungraspable and historically shaped relation that continues to give life and liveliness to emerging (human and more-than-human) bodies and performances. My inquiry—as an offering to the field of performance ontology in performance studies—takes up performance through the lens and question of relational becoming not as a human-nonhuman correspondence of identity formations but as a lively continuous-ephemeral living relationality.

Literature Review

The fluid and contested boundaries of performance studies is reflected in the fluid and contested boundaries of performance. The question “What is performance?” permeates and shapes the field of performance studies as a discipline. In *Performance Studies An Introduction*, Richard Schechner makes a distinction between the limited

domain of what “is” performance and the open field of “just about anything” that can be studied “as” performance. Schechner argues that every action is a performance but under the purview of historical and cultural context and conventions only some actions are considered to be performance.² Herein, the parameters of what performance studies as a discipline studies configures and reconfigures the ontology of performance. Mary Strine, Beverly Whitaker Long, and Mary Frances Hopkins indicate that performance is an “*essentially contested concept*, meaning that its very existence is bound up in disagreement about what it is, and that the disagreement over its essence is itself part of that essence.”³ In an attempt to mark the disciplinary identity of performance studies, Ron Pelias and James VanOosting conceptualize performance as aesthetic communication, which in their words “may be defined from the singular perspective of a performer, a text, or an audience, or from the interaction among all three within a given context.”⁴ The basic framework and terms for delimiting the foundation for performance are encapsulated in performer, audience, event, and text—distinct ontological categories that are often thought (and assumed) as the foundation of performance.⁵ Jon McKenzie—in a critique of how performance studies develops a normative discipline—argues that a concept of liminality “remains key to articulating the efficacy of both cultural performance and performance studies, whether that efficacy be conceived as transgressive or resistant.”⁶ McKenzie’s “liminal-norm” in performance studies draws attention to the danger of concepts and conceptualizations in knowledge formations to become stable markers of truth and practice. Therefore, performance even and especially within inquiries concerning performance ontology must not be reduced to any one model.

In my inquiry, I take up and build on the argument that performance operates as a becoming from the article “Rabbits, Machines, and the Ontology of Performance”—in which Aleksandra Wolska argues that performance might be understood not as a disappearance but as a continuation—a becoming—that extends beyond the parameters of a show to participate in the processes of life. In the article, Wolska argues that performance continues past a live show not just in the memories of audience members who attended the live performance.⁷ Understanding performance as rooted in an ontology of becoming points not only to the enduring and ongoing continuation of a performance beyond the seemingly distinct and particular time, space, and bodies of a live production but also to the embedment of performance in living relational activity. An ontology of becoming underscores for performance the mobility of bodies in a corporeal and incorporeal world that continuously unfolds disrupting the barrier between performance and “real” life outside performance. Performance as a becoming does not just unfold or continue past the parameters of a show, it also invites engagement with—a becoming *with*—an unfolding and continuous relationality with multiple and ever-varying bodies.

I take up the primary question—what is the nature of performance—also taken up in the work of Herbert Blau (1999/2007), Peggy Phelan (1992/1997/2007), and Philip Auslander (1999/2007) through the question of how performance operates as a becoming. For both Blau and Phelan, the nature of performance is rooted in the (human) body performing death and in the ephemerality of live performance, which guarantees “liveness.” Blau’s extensive and complex thinking on the nature of performance places

the human body and its carnality and mortality as the foundation for his experience of theatre and performance. Blau argues that, “the [live human] body on stage is suffused with the vicissitudes of appearance, which complicate the question of liveness, all the more because you look, offstage, onstage, with more or less reciprocity during the course of performance.”⁸ For Blau, live performance comes into being through a “theatricalizing gaze,” which is comprised of the activity of consciousness and the reciprocated activity of consciousness that creates the audience. Significantly, “the gaze” is an inflection of consciousness that occurs through looking.⁹ Therefore, the liveness of performance hinges on the centrality of the human body and on a modality of looking that spurs on the activity of consciousness. Blau understands liveness as an affectivity of presence unique to live theatre, “[which] might better be thought of, through the undeniable palpability of its metaphysical absence.”¹⁰ The close-up encounter between human actors and spectators—which Blau stipulates as something other than raw experience—is at the root of his understanding of liveness. In Blau’s ontological formulation of performance, the activity of representation forms perception in which performance’s “liveness” is an inevitable “lessness” through a temporality of death.

Peggy Phelan also takes up the question concerning the fundamental nature of performance through the lens of liveness. In *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, Phelan emphasizes the nonreproducibility of live performance, which resists capitalist processes of commodification through disappearance. Phelan argues that a performance cannot be documented, recorded, “or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations” without becoming something other than

performance.¹¹ Under the paradigm of liveness, the only continuity that a performance is capable of occurs in a spectator's memory of the live event. Phelan asserts that, "live performance and theatre ('art with real bodies') persist despite an economy of reproduction...respond[ing] to a psychic need to rehearse for loss, and especially for death."¹² Picking up liveness at the nexus of a Freudian psychoanalytic divide between body and consciousness, Phelan asserts that the (human) body does not experience the world in the same way as consciousness, which orders itself discursively, narratologically, and chronologically.¹³ Phelan's ontological formulation of performance aligns the body with the unconscious and the conscious with the intentional subject. The separation between body and consciousness and the essentialist opposition between the live and the recorded cast the activity and ontology of perception within a paradigm of reproduction and representation.

Responding to a grounding of the nature of performance in Blau's and Phelan's work that situates liveness—"real" bodies performing death—against mediated technologies of reproduction, Philip Auslander articulates an ontology of performance where the live and the mediated are intertwined. Auslander states, "The progressive diminution of previous distinctions between the live and the mediatized, in which live events are becoming more and more like mediatized ones, raises for me the question whether there really are clear-cut ontological distinctions between the live forms and the mediatized ones."¹⁴ The opposition between liveness and the mediatized hinges on and presupposes a human performer's consciousness, carnality, and mortality. However, in "Live from Cyberspace, or, I Was Sitting at My Computer This Guy Appeared He

Thought I Was a Bot,” Auslander argues that online chatterbots perform live even though “they are not alive, at least not in the same way” as a live human performer.¹⁵ While Blau and Phelan identify the ontological specificity or nature of performance in “liveness” and by opposing live performance to technologies of reproduction, Auslander approaches the question of ontology through the activity of a nonhuman performer that produces rather than a matrix of live and recorded performance in which a human actor performs. In response to Auslander’s argument, Blau critiques the mediatized capitalist modality of production and reproduction as a “versatile fantasy making apparatus” that commodifies the look—not just the form—and “alters the meaning of presence in liveness.”¹⁶

While Blau and Phelan ground the nature of performance in its ephemerality emphasizing the “liveness” of performance—real (human) bodies performing live, Auslander challenges emphasizing live human embodiment for understanding the nature of performance in arguing that mediatized chatterbots perform live even though they are not alive in the same way as a human body. As I previously remarked, Aleksandra Wolska also challenges Blau’s and Phelan’s emphasis on liveness and ephemerality stating that performance has an ontology of becoming. Wolska argues that a performance continues past the time and space of a live production in performances that unfold in other times and other spaces. This proposal is rooted in Wolska’s examination of a performance—Rainpan 43’s *machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines* (2008)—that she initially did not attend “live” but encountered in its continuation in the performers’ apartment. Rather than being an ephemeral event that

disappears and only lives in the memories of the audience, the live performance of *machines* continues to unfold in additional performances such as that in the performers' apartment. Unimpeded by the ephemerality of "liveness" tied to the live performance event, the *machines* performance gets taken up and continues to "become" in everyday life and encounters beyond the live performance event. I enter into this conversation in my inquiry. I take up Wolska's argument that performance has an ontology of becoming and further examine how performance operates as a becoming not just in its continuity but moreover in its relationality.

The concept of relationality has been taken up in many philosophical and scholarly texts. Rejecting the assumption that distinct corresponding terms that relate to each other determine relation, one philosophical vein of thought conceptualizes relation as preceding distinct interrelating correspondences. Influenced by the writings of William James and Gilles Deleuze, Brian Massumi conceptualizes relation as an open-ended sociality in *Parables for the Virtual Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Massumi draws on James' argument that relation is perceived as such in embodied activity, which occurs always in the midst of already ongoing participation.¹⁷ Relation therefore precedes recognizable correspondences, disrupts subject-object positioning, and appears as an "unspecified...*intensity* of total experience."¹⁸ In this conceptualization, relation is the openness of bodies—in a continuation of variation rather than a regulation and standardization. Understanding relationality as a shared realm from which distinct terms and interactions emerge refuses the assumption that the terms of relation precede their interrelating as already-constituted entities. In other words, distinct terms emerge from

rather than determine relation. Herein, ever-varying bodies are embedded in relation as—in Massumi’s concept of relation—real potential to be actualized.

Nicolas Bourriaud also takes up relationality in *Relational Aesthetics* within the context of current fascinations in art with relation as the foundational principle for artwork. Bourriaud confronts and critiques the emphases in contemporary art on intersubjectivity, interaction, encounter, and the disruption of social order. Bourriaud marks a distinction between modern art that forms imaginary and utopian realities and contemporary art that forms and models ways of living in existing reality. Bourriaud argues that artists working with relational aesthetics in a contemporary moment share in common the same practical and theoretical horizon, which he understands as the sphere of inter-human relations. In framing aesthetics as that which sets humans apart from other animals, Bourriaud conceives of relational aesthetics as “[an] aesthetic theory consisting in judging artworks on the basis of the inter-human relations, which they represent, produce or prompt.”¹⁹ Under the rubric of relational aesthetics, artworks become moments and objects of sociability and artists take as their subject matter the entirety of human relations and social context.²⁰ The type of relationality that emerges in contemporary art becomes for Bourriaud a “full-fledged form,” which labors to “re-stitch” the relational fabric.²¹ Therefore, instead of performing weak social critiques, contemporary relational art re-forges and revitalizes the role of art as a way of not only ethically living in the world but also of critiquing normatized social organization.

While I take up art—and more specifically performance—as relational and examine performance through phenomenal encounters, I diverge from Bourriaud’s

framing of relational art as a set of procedures that artists employ in their work, which have at their foundation and impetus inter-human relations.²² Instead of indicating the relational in art as the methods that a human artist performs, I understand relationality as the human *and* more-than-human domain in which performance is immersed and from which a performance emerges.²³ I conceive of relationality for performance as an ungraspable and mobile confluence of relations that engenders ongoing liveliness (Chapter Two), continuity and ephemerality (Chapter Four), a modality of exposure that unhinges subjectivity from the stable and identified subject (Chapter One), and resistances that are entangled in structures of domination (Chapter Three). This conception of relationality challenges the notions that performance hinges on ephemerality (conceived as disappearance) and live human embodiment. While there is an affinity between my conception of relationality in performance and Bourriaud's relationality as the work of the human artist insofar as both emphasize art as encounter and practice that is engaged with proposals for living in a shared world, I take up relationality not as a practical and theoretical device that artists utilize for artistic production from which the relational inter-human world comes but instead as a process through which performance—which includes the human and the more-than-human—enacts its living embeddedness in and emergence from the relational world.²⁴ Therefore, I do not emphasize—as Bourriaud does—that art is primarily a product of human labor rooted in the exploration of inter-human social bonds. While I do not wholly disagree with Bourriaud's argument, I take a different approach in my examination of how performance operates relationally. Herein, I take up becoming not just as the

continuation of a live performance past the parameters of a show evident in Wolska's argument but also as relational. Again, I organize my inquiry along four relational fields in which humans are involved—with animals, machines and technology, landscapes, and objects. My argument works to think through these relational fields for a better understanding of the nature of performance as a becoming—beyond the opposition between ephemerality (human bodies performing live) and continuity (the becoming of a performance past the parameters of a show) and beyond an anthropocentric emphasis on embodiment. Therefore, I work to build on Auslander's insight that the ontology of performance does not hinge on live human embodiment and Wolka's insight that the ontology of performance exceeds the boundaries of the performance event.

In Chapter One, I focus on human-animal encounter in performance through the lens of relationality and subjectivity as a way to complicate the anthropocentric dominance of thinking performance as live human embodiment rooted in the human subject. I take as a case study Eduardo Kac's *GFP Bunny* project (2000), described as an ongoing social event that includes the genetic manipulation and socialization of an animal and the public dialogue concerning the work. I argue that the apparently discreet bodies and "intersubjects" in the *GFP Bunny* project—in particular Eduardo Kac and Alba—emerge and encounter each other in exposure alongside and in addition to a complicated and unstable status as interacting subjects. I work to draw out and examine the complexities between subjectivity and exposure as a way to foreground exposure as rooted in relational encounter rather than "live" encounter. Therefore, I examine the performance—which includes Eduardo Kac's "GFP Bunny" chapter in *Telepresence &*

Bio Art Networking Humans, Rabbits, & Robots (2005)—in order to argue that a modality of exposure materializes in performance in relational encounter with more-than-human others rather than as an effect of live human performers performing death on stage while examining the implications of subjectivity on and in this particular human-animal relational field. I argue that performance as a becoming operates in a modality of exposure, which permeates relation and ruptures subjective identity distinctions. Finally, I explicate a modality of exposure through the operative factors of love, care, affect, and listening.

In Chapter Two, I take up performance intertwined with the materiality of objects and their relationship to conceptions of history and memory in an examination of how performance operates as a becoming at the nexus of human-object encounter. I examine two performances—Hamed Taheri and Mojtaba Mirtahmasb’s performance-film *Home is In Our Past* (2003/2005) and a 2007 performance of Heiner Müller’s *Explosion of a Memory/Description of a Picture* (1984) that I directed for the Xperimental Theatre at the University of Minnesota. I argue that performance operates as a becoming in a relational historical liveliness that exceeds “liveness” through an examination of historically, vitally, and collectively emerging objects in an ongoing relationality that permeates performance. I argue that for performance as a relational becoming “liveness,” which indicates an ending, gets reconfigured as ongoing liveliness—an object’s continuous and ungraspable historical living in an ephemerality that persistently keeps on going.

In Chapter Three, I take up the language of performance and productivity and the mandate of “performance” in the post-industrial era in order to question how performance

operates as a becoming at the nexus of human-machine/technology encounter. I examine Rainpan 43's performance *machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines* (2008) and the rehearsal-performance process for Heiner Müller's *Die Hamletmaschine* (1977) that I directed in 2006/2007. I again diverge from the notion that the nature of performance is its ephemeral "liveness" in order to argue that the nature of performance inheres in process and movement—in mobile and embodied adjustments that indicate belonging in symbiotic webs of complexity and entanglement in structures of domination.

In Chapter Four, I take up encounter with and within landscapes in order to think through how immersion in the world informs questions concerning and theorization of how performance operates as a becoming. I examine three performances of the contemporary movement artists Eiko and Koma—*The Caravan Project* (1999 - 2013), *Naked* (2010 – 2012), and *River* (1995 – 2011). In the final chapter of my inquiry, I further argue that the nature of performance is not an opposition between continuity and ephemerality but that relationality or becoming as the nature of performance emphasizes continuity *and* ephemerality. In part, I take up phenomenology's insights concerning practical engagement with and within the world in order to argue that performance as a becoming indicates a practice of wayfinding or following. I examine Eiko and Koma's performances—emerging in part from the founding work of Ohno Kazuo and Hijikata Tatsumi in Butoh—in order to explicate how wayfinding/following might be mobilized for understanding performance as a becoming beyond a focus on live human embodiment that performs death. I argue that wayfinding/following a landscape explicates

performance not as an ending in ephemeral liveness but rather a continuous relation bound together in ephemerality and continuity—in ongoing separation and togetherness.

In these four chapters, I enter into the conversation concerning the nature of performance occurring in the work of Blau, Phelan, Auslander, and Wolska in order to build on Wolska's proposal that performance operates as a becoming. I look beyond a mere opposition between ephemerality and continuity—whether a performance disappears or continues elsewhere—in order to better understand how bodies disappear *and* continue elsewhere. My intervention in the conversation attempts to think beyond anthropocentric terms and an anthropocentric sensorium, and beyond the opposition between liveness and recording. My inquiry therefore intervenes in the conversation on the nature of performance adjacent to the concerns of performance ecology—which critiques anthropocentric attitudes in theatre and takes up questions concerning the more-than-human in theatre and performance. My inquiry works to theorize how performance operates relationally as a becoming through encounter with others in order to examine the relational liveliness and mobility of performance in continuous-ephemeral becoming.

Modes and Methods of Inquiry

In the following chapters, I pay attention to phenomena of encounter with landscapes, machines and technology, animals, and objects in performance. I pay particular attention to (not just human) bodies in performance. I take as a primary point for my examination embodied practical and relational engagement in order to more deeply and complexly understand “what is occurring” in performance. The frames through which I investigate performance form a different perspective in each chapter. In

Chapter One, I examine performance through the frame of exposure and intersubjectivity that labors to move beyond anthropocentrism. In Chapter Two, I examine performance through the frame of historicity and memory as related to lively objects. In Chapter Three, I examine the challenges and mandates of performance as a mode of productivity within late capitalism. Lastly, in Chapter Four I examine the ways that performance enables a new way understanding immersion in-the-world through an eco-phenomenological philosophical framework. I take up these perspectives on my primary inquiry into how performance operates relationally—in continuous-ephemeral unfolding of bodies in encounter—in part through a phenomenological approach in order to closely examine the human-more-than-human embodied relational movements and encounters that comprise performance. The critical mode of phenomenology has particular relevance for understanding how bodies encounter each other—through a formation of subjectivity tied to the human subject and body and beyond regularized and regulated formations of subjectivity (Chapter One), through history and memory in a historically rooted liveliness that extends far beyond the parameter of “liveness” (Chapter Two), through a mode of productivity that mandates effective performance and generates webs of complexity (Chapter Three), and through immersion with/in the world in a practice of wayfinding/following (Chapter Four).

While Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology emphasizes inquiry into what shows itself to a transcendental ego or intentional consciousness, Martin Heidegger’s phenomenological paradigm places greater emphasis on practical engagement and interpretation within the world—emphasizing that phenomena cannot be understood

merely from the perspective of intentional consciousness.²⁵ Phenomenology is not just a study of how phenomena appear to human consciousness in direct experience but also a study of how phenomena appear in an environmental encounter with others, which exceeds the capacity for intentional consciousness to see and understand. Herein, phenomena occur environmentally historically and contextually, “behind one’s back,” as well as in consciousness. In *The Phenomenological Attitude*, Bert States writes that the goal of a phenomenological critique of performance is to draw into apprehension “any instant that is perceptually ‘apprehended’ as carrying, or leading to, an intuition about what it *is* and what it is *doing* before our eyes.”²⁶ States describes a phenomenological approach as a mode of thought that examines the un-apprehended relations of things, which works to draw these relations into apprehension. I take up a phenomenological analysis not to question what shows itself just in a relation of correspondence to an intentional consciousness but moreover to question what relationally unfolds in performance—appearing and disappearing—whenever we environmentally encounter others within phenomena.

I choose phenomenology as a theoretical mode because it draws attention to embodiment as a foundational mode of encounter, to meaning and feeling that arise in lived experience, and to practical engagement within the world. The question of what performance is doing before our embodied eyes can be more complexly understood through a phenomenological analysis. Phenomenology offers a path for critical analysis from the perspective of embodiment that, in States words, is in “pursuit of the culturally disguised thing.”²⁷ The structure or essence of what is relationally occurring in

performance that I work to understand is not for me a scientific or metaphysical fact of matter but rather an indistinct and continuous relational encounter between embodied and mobile consciousness and the hiddenness of relation. In working with a phenomenological approach, I work not to attribute phenomena to a distinct intentional consciousness that resides in a single stable subject but at consciousness-raising by trying to think through the perceptible and imperceptible movements of human and more-than-human bodies within moments of encounter in performance. This phenomenological approach emphasizes that the personal and the subjective are always taken up with the relational. The more-than-human others such as machines or landscapes that organize the inquiry are not others from whom I determinately distinguish myself or the human but ever-varying diverse entities among whom I and other human beings are immersed. I therefore do not begin from an isolated or outside perspective but first and foremost through a method of encounter—a method of “with”—in which the individual inquiry is something always already shared. This means that I pay attention to phenomena of encounter between bodies in performance relationally bound together with each other and with my own engagement.

I also draw on William James’ radical empiricism in paying attention to human and more-than-human bodies moving in the midst of an ungraspable relationality. In *Parables for the Virtual Movement, Affect, Sensation*, Brian Massumi articulates the distinction between a reductive classical empiricism and an expanded empiricism based in the work of Henry James.²⁸ Massumi argues that classical empiricism operates in a limited range of empirical reality, which does not allow for regions of the

indeterminate—the supraempirical and the infraempirical. In contrast to a limited empiricism that progresses from description of isolated terms to predictive deterministic laws, expanded empiricism attends to movement and the felt reality of relationality. Herein, I select and analyze performances that emerge from encounter with the more-than-human that cannot be reduced to predictive and deterministic constructs for defining human-more-than-human relation. I select and analyze performances where the experience of encounter with others in performance exceeds the capacity for knowledge to classify the relation. In *Essays in Radical Empiricism*, William James states, “We were virtual knowers...long before we were certified to have been actual knowers...by the percept’s retroactive validating power,” which ensures that relations in experience precede recognition and classifications of experience.²⁹ James argues that relation is directly sensed between distinct terms in a way that is not reducible to distinct terms and identities. Therefore, I choose to analyze performances that emerge from an ongoing relationality with a focus on the more-than-human, which directs my inquiry and attention towards movement and the incomprehensible in experience with others in performance. The failure in methodological techniques to grasp relation gestures toward what unfolds beyond the radar. While Brian Massumi in advocating for a radical empiricism argues that in phenomenology experience culminates in the personal—which is pre-embedded in the world in a closed loop of intentionality, a phenomenological analytical mode paired with radical empiricism attends to relational and embodied elements that no investigation—phenomenological or otherwise—might stabilize in a coherent, all-encompassing, and everlasting definition of relation in performance.³⁰

Finally, I draw on the insights of Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno in the work of historical materialism that emphasizes that objects of study are shaped through social and historical mediation and with ideological implications. Walter Benjamin reinforces that a materialist historiography enacts a critical moment in the construction of a dialectal image—a critical constellation—that ruptures historical continuity and totality. Taking up Benjamin’s conceptualization of the constellation, Adorno further argues that the constellation is meant to constructively assemble diverse historical fragments in a critique undomesticated by familiar and habituated thought and ideological presuppositions. For Adorno, the constellation is a critical practice that might provoke a new consciousness of the ideological condition in which we are entrapped—a condition of barbarism in which the commodity form is the structuring principle of society. Herein, the constellation takes on a critical force through a mediation that exposes historical contradictions that disallow identity thinking. In contrast to the apparent stasis of Benjamin’s dialectical image, Adorno emphasizes a “reliquification” that occurs with the repetition of what has been congealed and abstracted in identity thinking and in historical progress. Historical materialism provides a contrast and corrective to inquiries in performance ontology that risk creating a totality by which performance might be understood without recognition of socio-historical mediation and materiality. In my inquiry, the performances that I examine do not fit together to create an ontological totality. Instead, each chapter mediates and critiques a different and disparate fragment of performance ontology as a becoming. My inquiry therefore operates through a confluence of philosophical modes that are in tension with each other.

In an emphasis on existentials, fundamental ontology feeds on its own cultural and historical mediation obscuring its entanglement in the material conditions from which its conceptualizations emerge. Historical materialism rejects the project of ontology that is invested in supposedly concretizing a universal abstract, which cannot be concretized. In *The Jargon of Authenticity*, Theodor Adorno critiques Martin Heidegger's phenomenological project as a project that creates an aura of the authentic in which the particularization of essence in the concept becomes absolute and fundamental without regard to subjective mediation.³¹ Adorno described this philosophy as striving for the concretization of thought and experience in the midst of a "total state of affairs," which orients itself according to abstract exchange. When phenomenology and ontology move away from the empirical world and empirical subjectivity, philosophical inquiry no longer need be concerned with how concepts are conceived and with how a being becomes what it becomes. According to a concept of totality in fundamental ontology—rather than becoming—the whole is pre-established over its parts.³² An ontology of becoming ruptures this order and reinforces that in the midst of movement—where there is no pre-established domain—the relational element is given precedence. Therefore, in my inquiry I work not to create a totality by which performance ontology might be understood—as "live human embodiment" or otherwise—but a thinking of performance ontology that unfolds in a constellation of critical thought deeply connected to and emerging from the empirical world and empirical subjectivities.

I take up six contemporary performance sites in empirical, phenomenological, and historical materialist modes and a method of performance analysis. I examine these

performance sites: the *GFP Bunny* project (2000 and ongoing) in Chapter One, *Home is In Our Past* (2003/2005) and *Explosion of a Memory/Description of a Picture* (2007) in Chapter Two, *machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines* (2008) and *Die Hamletmaschine* (2006/2007) in Chapter Three, and three performances—*River* (1995 – 2011), *The Caravan Project* (1999 – 2013), and *Naked* (2010 – 2012) of the contemporary movement artists Eiko and Koma in Chapter Four. In the following section, I outline the chapters and also project an image of each performance, which embodies a phenomenological necessity from each performance that directs my inquiry into how performance operates as a relational becoming. Herein, I follow the basis of a phenomenological method, which States indicates through Husserl as: “[a method where the phenomenologist] will project a single imaginative variant, but one that is strategic, crucial, and usually colorful, one that brings out a certain necessity in the thing we wish to examine.”³³ The images reflect the chapter titles and the relational basis within which my examination works: Holding Animals, Materializing Objects, Moving Machines, and Following Landscapes. The images are not imaginative constructions that I narrate but photo images from the performances that operate as imaginative rather than documentary windows, which open onto my performance analyses.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One: Holding Animals

In Chapter One, I take up subjectivity as a complex and politically ethically weighted site of contestation in transgenic artwork. I begin with Eduardo Kac’s ongoing

social event and performance project *GFP Bunny* (2000). I analyze the performance—particularly through Eduardo Kac’s “GFP Bunny” chapter—which foregrounds human-animal encounter via Kac’s engagement with a genetically “invented” bunny. Significantly, the text does not operate as a documentation of a prior live event but is in fact part of the performance. I examine the performance in terms of an encounter in which subjectivity—operating within paradigms of domestication and discovery as phenomena of care and natural evolution—might function to stabilize bodies in discreet and normatized formations of the subject alongside a modality of exposure inherent in performance. I pair Kac’s project with Jacques Derrida’s theorization of his own engagement with an unnamed cat in order to think through the difficulties and implications of understanding human-animal encounter in terms of the satisfaction of often competing subjective interests and as an unfolding open relation in exposure. I argue that beyond the paradigms of domestication and discovery, relationality is not a factor of a body’s subjective (in)abilities in natural domestication or unnatural genetic manipulation but entails the generation of affect—relationally becoming through mobility, exposure, and an openness of bodies. Herein, I emphasize that exposure in performance is not only a factor of live human bodies performing death but moreover a factor of openness to being affected, which surpasses the constriction of “live” human embodiment as the nature of performance.

The photo image by Chrystelle Fontaine that I would like to introduce this site with can be viewed online at <http://www.ekac.org/gfpbunny>. The image of Eduardo Kac holding Alba the rabbit—which also begins the “GFP Bunny” chapter—is a

consolidation and materialization of an intersubjective relationship. The image also gestures towards a relational intimacy in which both human and rabbit are exposed. Herein, the viewer of the image is also drawn into relational exposure. We become implicated in and part of the ongoing relation embodied in the image rather than stand outside of it. I begin with the rich image of holding—one in which Alba holds Kac, as much as Kac holds Alba, as much as I behold their holding—in order to understand how performance operates as a becoming in a modality of exposure that is dis-operative with intersubjectivity as a regulative and normative formation at the nexus of human-animal encounter.

I work to open up the following questions through a performance analysis that specifically looks at phenomena unfolding in performance at the nexus of human-animal encounter:

- How are representational practices entwined in the determination of subjects and the unfolding relationality from which human and more-than-human bodies emerge?
- What are the stakes in subjectivity and releasing subject positionality in order to gesture towards and attend to exposure and becoming in ongoing relationality?
- How does intersubjectivity and exposure co-reside in human-animal encounter in performance?
- How does a modality of exposure explicate how performance operates as a becoming beyond live human embodiment?

Chapter Two has two sections—Fragments in History and A Practice of Collecting—through which I examine the ways in which lively objects shape historical and collected living worlds in order to further animate and understand how performance operates as a relational becoming. I begin with Hamed Taheri and Mojtaba Mirtahmasb’s performance-film *Home is In Our Past* (2003/2005) first performed at the City Theatre in Tehran, Iran in 2003 in order to examine how historical-material objects shape ways of narrating and experiencing history—in particular through a mode of recycling that gives rise to a tension between the capacity of objects to verify human history and identity and the proliferation of objects that fragments histories and identities. I argue that historical-material objects collage across time and context reasserting and reinserting themselves in ongoing relations reconfiguring historical narrative as a mutable and unfolding ongoing engagement with objects. *Home is in Our Past* is a complex intertwining of a live performance, a documentation of that live performance in recording, and film. While I briefly explicate the intertwining that the directors construct through the performance-film, I analyze *Home is in Our Past* as a performance that I access via film.

In A Practice of Collecting, I examine a production of Heiner Müller’s *Explosion of a Memory/Description of a Picture* (1984) that I directed at the University of Minnesota (2007). In this section, I take up objects as active and lively in a mode of collecting that enlivens relations rather than signifies owners. This section reworks and combines questions concerning the lively activity of an object in the previous performance through encounter with objects immersed in collection and incomplete mobile pictures that create fissured bodies and memories. I argue that possession does

not just indicate property ownership but is moreover inherent in relationality—that possession not only occurs through personal and collective human stories, memories, and histories that become engrained in objects but also that the life of an object moves through a capacity for affect and continuing historical liveliness.

Through performance analyses of these two performances—in particular the human-object open encounter within them—I argue that historical and collected objects explicate performance as a becoming that occurs through continuing liveliness beyond the ephemeral “liveness” of human bodies performing. I would like to introduce these two performances through images of liveliness that emerge at the nexus of human-object encounter—which gesture toward the necessity of liveliness, persisting past liveness—in performance as a becoming.



Object-shadows collecting in *Explosion of a Memory/Description of a Picture*.
Photos by Justin Christy.



Objects collecting in *Explosion of a Memory/Description of a Picture*. Photos by Justin Christy.



Photos by Masoud Pakdel of objects covered in the slip of history in *Home is in Our Past* can be viewed in Michal Kobińska's article "Tadeusz Kantor and Hamed Taheri Of Political Theatre/Performance."³⁴

In Chapter Two, I work to open up the following questions through performance analyses that specifically look at phenomena unfolding in performance at the nexus of human-object encounter:

- How does an object participate in relational processes over and above a simple role as an empty instrument for use by human actors or as a prop that signifies a specific time period and type of space in performance?
- How does an object participate in and emerge from ongoing relation? How does a historical-material object cross time and context? How does an object create liveliness—beyond human liveness—for understanding how performance operates as a becoming?
- How does the playful, lively, and sensual relationality of a collection create living more-than-human stories and images, create an excess of effects, and thereby exhibit an abundant power of affect and mobility?

Chapter Three: Moving Machines

In Chapter Three, I examine the entanglement of relationality with structures of domination through the operative notions of productivity and performance bound together through a mandate to perform in the post-industrial era. This chapter has two sections—Failing Machines and Practicing Machine. In the section Failing Machines, I take up *machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines* (2008)

or more specifically the movement of the kinetic junk sculpture of Goldbergian machines that comprises the stage—a visceral and visual unfolding web of human-machine relations. I draw out the tension between machinery as efficient commodity-convenience producers and machinery as producers of a mechanically rich dream infused with pleasure and the ridiculous. I argue that even though a fully mechanized habitation can obscure disciplinary power and relations of control—mechanical habitation can also make magic through obsessive and inconvenient contraptions taken to creative excess. I argue that in this mechanical system *improper* performance is a value and that working with these incessant incompetent machinic contraptions requires continuous relational immersion, learning, tinkering, and failing that revitalizes process. I argue that performance as a becoming operates in lively movement in relational webs of complexity—again persisting past liveness—that nevertheless entangle with structures of domination.

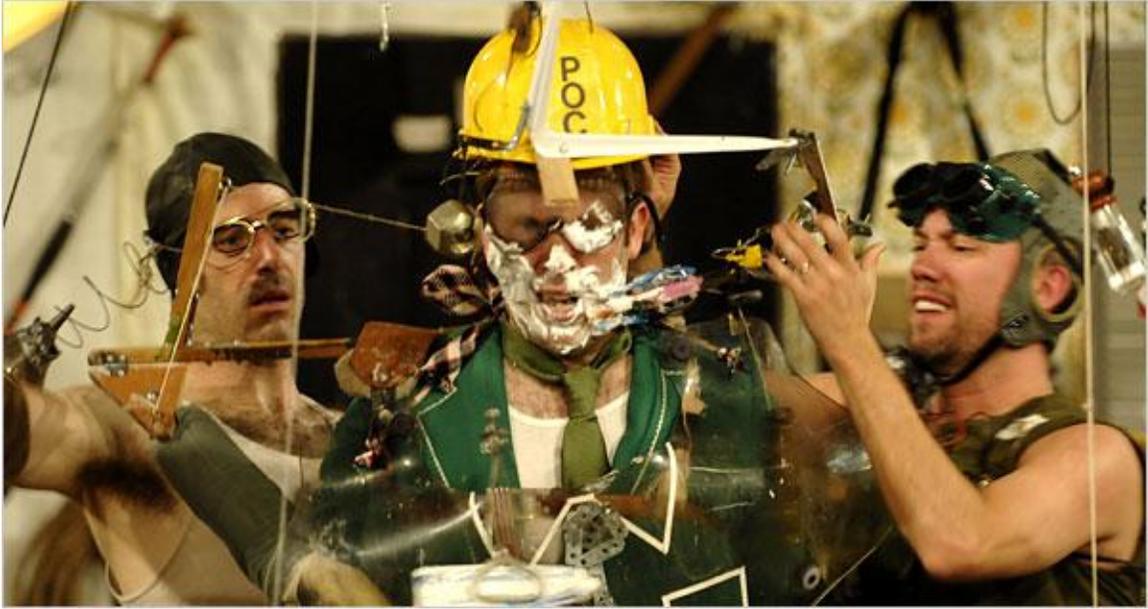
In the section Practicing Machine, I further my analysis of how performance operates as a becoming from the perspective of a rehearsal-performance process. I take up the rehearsal-performance process for Heiner Müller's *Die Hamletmaschine* (1977), which I directed in 2006/2007 for the Xperimental Theatre at the University of Minnesota and The Minnesota Fringe Festival at Theatre de la Jeune Lune. I argue that a director must think and practice relationally in order to encourage a creative and symbiotic performance practice that is not rooted in structures of domination and mastery. I emphasize in this section, invitational process—over the separation between audition, rehearsal, and production—that nurtures and challenges practicing bodies emerging in

instances of care, compassion, risk, conflict, and struggle. Moreover, I argue that the politically and ethically weighted questions concerning symbiosis and domination cannot be resolved into a formula or model that might be generally and universally applied to performance making.

I would like to introduce these two performances through images that draw out the machinic and mobile webs of complexity and movement in which humans are immersed with machines/technology in performance.



Practicing machine in *Die Hamletmaschine*. Photo by Justin Christy.



Bodily immersion in *machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines*. Photo by Jacques-Jean Tiziou.



Machines machines everywhere in *machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines*. Photo by Jacques-Jean Tiziou.

In Chapter Three, I work to open up the following questions through performance analyses that specifically look at phenomena unfolding at the nexus of human-machine/technology encounter:

- How does human involvement with machines and technology envision relational webs of complexity *and* instrumental-industrial productivity? How does a tension between mastery and magic permeate human involvement with machines and technology in performance?
- What are the stakes in valuing perfectible product over ongoing relational process?
- How do experiences of automation, efficiency, failure, and vulnerability permeate human involvement with machines and technology in performance? How does human-machine/technology relation entangle symbiosis and domination?

Chapter Four: Following Landscapes

In Chapter Four, I take up landscapes in performance in order to theorize a practice of wayfinding/following, which is immersed in the world, for understanding how performance operates as a becoming. I examine three performances of the contemporary movement artists Eiko and Koma—*The Caravan Project* (1999 - 2013), *Naked* (2010 – 2012), and *River* (1995 – 2011)—which are rooted in Butoh, a form of dance founded by their predecessors Ohno Kazou and Hijikata Tatsumi. I argue that adjustment or attunement in a practice of wayfinding/following in performance functions as a synaesthetic involvement within a surrounding landscape. I take up the insights and field of phenomenology in order to argue that adjustment or attunement entails a practice of

wayfinding/following—synaesthetically feeling and finding a way through and within a landscape of immersive relationality. The pairing of phenomenology with the Eiko and Koma’s performances offers a way to think through performance as a becoming in which synaesthetic adjustments are continually and ecologically made. I take up Eiko and Koma’s *Naked*, which I attended at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, in order to examine how exposure and belonging within landscapes is entangled with artistic cultural framing—evident in landscape painting, institutionalized art spaces, and perspectival theatre conventions. I reaffirm that the stakes of my inquiry are invested in a care-filled and responsible relational performance practice in which “culture” and “nature” are inextricably intertwined. I further take up Eiko and Koma’s *The Caravan Project*—which I examine via archival materials—in order to argue that wayfinding adjustment or attunement is an improvisational practice that occurs within a multitude of perceptible and imperceptible comings and goings in performance within an expansive landscape. Building on the im/perceptible relational unfoldings that I examine in *The Caravan Project*, I take up Eiko and Koma’s *River*, which I also encounter via archival materials. I argue that wayfinding/following adjustment or attunement is a dreaming-cognition-hallucination that ruptures the appearance-reality duality. Through a phenomenological examination of these performances—paying specific attention to human-landscape encounter in performance—I argue that wayfinding/following in performance indicates a performance practice that combines and binds together continuity and ephemerality. Herein, the supposed opposition between continuity and ephemerality as a way to understand the nature of performance gives way to an understanding of performance as a

becoming, which unfolds continuously *and* ephemerally (not just via live human bodies but moreover through relational encounter with others that continue to be a part of one's own living and dying).

I would like to introduce these three performances through three images that consolidate an image of a wayfinding/following practice with/in landscapes. The first image comes from *The Caravan Project* and materializes an image of nomadic movement necessary for wayfinding/following for performance as a becoming. The second image comes from *Naked* and materializes the question of how the nature of performance is caught up in the question of reality that works to oppose cultural performance from natural reality—highlighting the importance of thinking performance practice as following relation. The third image comes from *River* and materializes the passage necessary for the binding together of continuity and ephemerality in wayfinding/following. The three photos draw together an image of performance as a becoming in which wayfinding operates as a continuous-ephemeral following within relational landscapes.



Coming and going in *The Caravan Project*. Photo by Kate Gibson.



“Are they real?” Following a landscape with/in an art gallery.
Photo by Anna Lee Campbell.



Following a landscape into the dark night in *River*. Photo by Anna Lee Campbell.

In Chapter Four, I work to open up the following questions through performance analyses that specifically look at phenomena unfolding in performance at the nexus of human-landscape encounter:

- How are human bodies and performance immersed in and emerge from landscapes? What quality of movement does a landscape nurture?
- How do landscapes engage synaesthetic modalities and wayfinding practices of adjustment or attunement? How do these modes shape a way—a process of finding one’s way—in an unfolding much more than human world, which might inform how we can theorize and understand performance as a becoming?

It is at these many crossroads where the inquiry will have already begun and through which a relational understanding of performance might be thought—in which I work to pay attention to the complexities and contradictions in thinking performance beyond live human embodiment and beyond relationality as an aesthetic formation that repairs or fastens together inter-human sociability.

Chapter One: “Holding Animals”

In Chapter One, I take up the question of how a relational practice of theatre and performance might be thought and made from the perspective of encounter with nonhuman animals in performance. The questions that I work to open up are: how is a relational practice of performance entwined in the determination and identification of subjects and a relational unfolding of indistinct bodies and subjectivities; what are the stakes of subjectivity and abandoning subject positionality in exposure; how does relationality operate prior to, rupture, and complicate seemingly distinct terms and bodies in performance; how does a focus on the relational think beyond performance (and “the” body) as a live human centered representational practice and product? I begin with Eduardo Kac’s ongoing social event *GFP Bunny* as way to think through the manner in which subjectivity—operating within paradigms of domestication and discovery and naturalized evolution—might function as the ground and stakes of defining the human being. I pair Kac’s project with Derrida’s theorization of his own engagement of being seen by an animal (an unnamed cat) because the two unfolding scenarios provide a way to think through the difficulties and implications of understanding human-animal engagement in terms of the satisfaction of often competing subjective interests and as an unfolding and ongoing relation with others. I argue that beyond the paradigms of domestication and discovery, relation in performance is not a factor of a body’s subjective (in)abilities in a natural domestication or an unnatural genetic manipulation but that relation entails the generation of affect, which unfolds through a mobile

exposure, openness, and listening between continually emerging bodies and uncertain subjectivities that do not only or always act for the satisfaction of their own interests. *GFP Bunny* provides an important avenue to investigate relationality precisely because the performance draws together transgenic art, public social event, and the private “real” lives of (not just human) people in a performance that emerges from human-animal encounter. The image of Eduardo Kac holding Alba—the transgenic, chimerical, domesticated, invented, and affect animal—in the performance is a phenomenological image that draws together questions and practices that relationally resonate in and beyond performance.

The *GFP Bunny* Project

On April 29th 2000 in Jouy-en-Josas, France, Eduardo Kac first held Alba, a rabbit who Kac genetically altered to glow fluorescent green under the right light.³⁵ The image marks a particularly potent consolidation of resonances for thinking how performance operates relationally (as a becoming). While Eduardo Kac coined the term “BioArt” in 1997, a diverse range of techniques and analyses characterize and situate differently the artworks that appear to fall under the purview of the BioArt genre. Early forms of BioArt that rely on “algorithms, visualizing data, [and] aestheticising computer simulations of biological processes” increasingly gave way to materializations of genetic manipulations in the late 20th and early 21st centuries.³⁶ The range of biotechnological materialized modifications in BioArt are made possible through a diverse range of scientific processes such as cloning, hybridization, genotype and phenotype reprogramming, and genetic and tissue culture engineering. BioArt not only includes the

manipulation of animal genetic material through technologies found in the biological sciences but also the manipulation of plant material through technologies in the plant sciences. As a subgenre, transgenic art entails the introduction of synthetic genes into an organism or the transference of “naturally” occurring genetic material from one organism to another. The transgenic *GFP Bunny* project that I take up in this chapter for example involves the introduction of jellyfish DNA into the genetic make-up of a rabbit—thereby creating an animal that has two distinctively different genetic codes within one body. As example of a transgenic procedure performed outside the subgenre of transgenic art, embryos from a goat and a sheep were combined in 1984 to produce a “geep.”³⁷

In particular, Eduardo Kac’s alteration of a rabbit’s genetic make-up draws into question human artistic and scientific involvement with nonhuman animals. Moreover, transgenic artworks call into question stable definitions of the body and of life while also challenging the political, cultural, and ethical contexts and implications of human involvement with other species. While much of traditionally considered performance art has a history of challenging the boundaries and identifications of the human body, transgenic art such as *GFP Bunny*—along with the diversity of work occurring in BioArt—expands these investigations into genetic and more-than-human realms in part confronting conceptions of the body not just in terms of conceptions of identity but also in terms of its humanity and biology.

Transgenic art and BioArt taps into and draws attention to the potential for biomaterials to be reused and reconfigured in endless politically and ethically weighted biotechnologically enabled manipulations of living organisms, tissues, and genetic

structures. While some BioArt projects convey a particular and more explicit political message tied to specific techno-scientific practices, other works take a more ambiguous approach in their political activity. Political messaging in BioArt comments on contemporary issues such as the use of reproductive technologies to preserve embryos, the use of nonhuman animals in research, or agricultural practices used in the production of plants and animals for food. As example, SymbioticA's artwork *Victimless Leather* (2004 – 2013) raises questions concerning human use of nonhuman animals—directing attention and discourse to the nonhuman animal at the foundation of consumer products. SymbioticA also facilitates a diversity of collaborations between scientists and artists, some of which have an explicit political activism while others do not. In particular, many of TC&A's artworks—the Tissue Culture & Art Project housed within the SymbioticA organization—carry no apparent outright political message but are still politically engaged.³⁸ For TC&A, the political import of their body of work rests in:

for the non-scientist, the 'wet' experience in the laboratory...[where] some degree of life manipulation can be seen not only as an ethical conduct but also as a political act. A political act that goes beyond the democratization of technology, to the act of breaking down dominant discourses, dogmas and metaphors to reveal new understandings of life and the power structure it operates within.³⁹

The affinity between the wet experience of the artist in the lab and the scientist in the lab draws the conduct of both more visibly into political and ethical discourse. The power structures that legislate and classify life into taxonomies and hierarchies—often operating invisibly—are potentially subjected to critique and to forces of transformation. Of

course, there is no guarantee that BioArt works to promote a critical impulse beyond the domain of scholars and artists. However, this does not negate the import of the critique that the work provokes or the contradictions in the practice.

The potential that BioArt demonstrates for rupturing and commenting on power structures that order life and society also exhibits a limitation for generating new understandings of life. When living DNA becomes determined as and reduced to an informational code and when living tissues become “mere” tissue—both of which can be endlessly and easily manipulated—the potential new understandings of life that BioArt gestures towards are reduced to one understanding. Herein, the “understanding of life” is not a proliferation of new and ungraspable understandings but a delimitation of life as informational code. Even if intentioned as sociopolitical critique and awareness—the manipulation, reading, and breaking of a reductive code (living materials) for human ends does not necessarily operate against power structures but in fact can reinforce and normalize power structures in a form of techno-scientific domination that operates through the manipulation of another’s life considered as genetic material. Of course, my ascription of life and genetic material to “another” rather than as a code that might be manipulated gestures towards the entanglement of BioArt in the domain of rights of ownership, of equitability, and of self-determination. In other words, tissues, embryos, genes, and other biomaterials come from somewhere and/or someone. They have a history inasmuch as they have a code.

One of the more known cases of wide use of biomaterials in laboratory experiments is that of Henrietta Lacks, an African American woman whose cells were

extracted and kept without permission in the 1950s. HeLa cells have been reproduced and used for profit in numerous laboratories. In addition to work in science, HeLa cells have been used in BioArt. Stelarc's *Partial Head* (2006)—made in collaboration with TC&A and SymbioticA—used a combination of primate and HeLa cells to create a living growing tissue seeded over a plastic composite mold of a hominid skull and a human face kept alive in a bioreactor-incubator-circulatory system. While the combination of cells from two different organisms and their “life” outside conventional bodies disrupts the notion of a body and a species as stable and contained, the cells also come from human and nohuman animal individuals with histories. Moreover, the histories that these particular individuals embody are in part a history of marginalization and exploitation. Cells and other biomaterials extracted from a body do not become “mere” objects emptied of history and memory made ready for use. The tie to “where they came from” is not just an issue of rights and permission but also of maintaining the resonances that are carried in the biomaterials.

Removed and detached from histories, lives, and experiences beyond the walls of the laboratories and galleries—we do not fully understand the value of biomaterials in our biotechnological culture. Andrews and Nelkin argue that, “Definitions of the body that reduce and decontextualize it, are what allow scientists or biotechnology firms to extract, use, and patent body tissue without reference to the individual or consideration of his or her personal desires and social needs.”⁴⁰ The value that biomaterials have in BioArt and transgenic art does not just have to do with profit and social progress but also with how we can come to practice an ethically motivated relation with others and an

ethical formation of our selves. Of course, the question remains—and continues to generate disagreement—whether BioArt is itself an ethically not just politically motivated practice. In the midst of disagreement, BioArt provokes a necessary discourse on the use of marginalized bodies in medical and pharmacological experimentation, on the procurement of biomaterials for research, on the genetic modification of living materials, on the “ownership” of one’s own biology and biomaterials, and on the normatization and regulation of bodies.

Made possible in part through biotechnological procedures and genetic manipulations, *GFP Bunny* is a performance project that continues beyond the parameters of a live event in embodiment and dialogue. In *Telepresence & Bio Art Networking Humans, Rabbits, & Robots*, Eduardo Kac describes *GFP Bunny* as an ongoing social event that includes the creation of the “chimerical animal,” the public dialogue concerning the work, and the social integration of the rabbit. While Kac’s text and the public dialogue that it encourages might be considered as a frame through which the project might be documented or as part of an elaborate public relations campaign, the various aspects of the “complex social event” labor to produce the presence of a chimerical animal. Unlike “face-to face” encounters with BioArt that produce a “presence” through sensory affects that engender a feeling of empathy in the audience (Hauser 2008), the presence of the chimerical animal that is produced in *GFP Bunny* hinges on the absence of face-to-face encounter and the presence of a discourse that forms around the work.⁴¹ In part, the presence that *GFP Bunny* produces is a transgenic

discourse that relies on the absence of what we generally think is present—namely Alba. Herein, Alba is both discursively and also corporeally produced.

In combining two or more different genetic codes in one organism, transgenic art at its root is involved in the production of a chimerical organism. A chimera such as Alba is a single organism that is comprised of two or more genetically distinct cellular compositions that thereby present a problem for DNA testing. A chimerical organism is not a hybrid, which has a genetic make-up that derives from a cellular fusion between the parent organisms. In contrast, a chimera maintains two or more sets of DNA with cells from either of the parents. Human chimeras can naturally occur as in the case of Lydia Fairchild who was found in 2002 to have two sets of DNA—after being presented with a set of DNA evidence that showed that she was not related to her children.⁴²

Technologically produced chimeras are made through familiar procedures such as organ transplant and more controversial procedures such as the selective transplantation of embryonic cells from one organism onto the embryo of another. In 2007, the University of Nevada School of Medicine technologically produced a chimera with human and nonhuman DNA—a sheep with 15% human cells and 85% sheep cells.⁴³ The growth of human DNA within the body of a nonhuman animal raises questions concerning the use of nonhuman animals for the production of human organs.

As with Alba in the *GFP Bunny* project, many chimerical organisms cannot be visibly detected or identified without genetic testing. Chimeras are not only out of place in terms of systems of species classification and identification but also more often than not literally out of sight. While the strange productions resultant from tissue engineering

procedures in BioArt rely on the visibility of the living organism created, a chimera such as Alba in transgenic art undermines classifications in a non-visible way. Therefore, how the chimerical animal is made visible and intelligible complicates any provocation to reevaluate and reconsider taxonomies and hierarchies of life that transgenic art might engender. Transgenic art therefore begs the questions: how does a chimerical organism—an organism that is out of place and out of sight—become present and make a presence in discourse and embodiment, how does the out of classification and sight “presence” of a chimerical organism shape and participate in discourse, how does a chimerical organism form and reform subjectivities, and what does an technologically produced chimerical organism indicate about the role of biotechnology in reshaping bodies and subjectivities? Questions concerned with an organism’s rights alongside the political ethical concerns of using modern biotechnology to manipulate living materials are prompted as well.

My initial encounter with the *GFP Bunny* project occurred through reading Kac’s *GFP Bunny* chapter in *Telepresence*. Insofar as *GFP Bunny* is an ongoing event, there is no single and distinct live event that marks the beginning and end of the artwork. The artwork considered relationally disrupts the division between what might be considered the “live event” of *GFP Bunny*—difficult to ascertain, possibly the scientific procedure or the public presentation of the “thing” created, or the socialization process—and the apparent documentation of the artwork. Encountering an artwork relationally indicates that one does not encounter in liveness and beyond liveness but rather is taken up in the ongoing liveliness—making and re-making—of the work. I begin with Eduardo Kac’s

text as it is rooted in the ongoing social event *GFP Bunny* rather than as its documentation.

Kac's *GFP Bunny* chapter provides an account of human-animal relations in terms of practical and philosophical traditions that make distinctions between humans and nonhuman animals in ways that explicitly or implicitly reinforce a subjection of the animal to the human. However, while this account performs a type of normalizing discourse in positioning the terms human and rabbit via discourses of domestication and discovery, the project is weighted with the ungraspable relationality from which these bodies emerge. The *GFP Bunny* chapter begins with an image and narrative of Eduardo Kac holding Alba. In order to better articulate the implications of, tensions between, and co-functioning of positionality and relationality in performance practice—I argue that the modifying (relational) processes at work in the project, not made explicit in the chapter but active in the image of holding, cannot be limited to scientific procedures and calculations made upon rabbit biology.

I pair Kac's project with Derrida's theorization of his own engagement with an animal in *The Animal That Therefore I Am* because the two unfolding scenarios—Eduardo Kac creating, holding, and caring for this rabbit and this cat seeing Jacques Derrida standing naked—unfold relational and phenomenological images of holding and beholding others. Each scenario in its own way confronts questions of animal response and suffering—which are rooted in Cartesian traditions outlined by Derrida that deny a wide range of (human) capabilities to nonhuman animals. The denial hinges on an ontological determination of and relation with an animal—or *the* animal—in terms of

“being able to” in which human-animal relations are organized around and through the specific (in)abilities of animals (e.g. the ability to reason or to possess language) and the abilities of humans. The unfolding scenario of holding and beholding—put concisely as Alba with Eduardo Kac with Jacques Derrida with this unnamed cat among others—provides a way to think through the difficulties and implications of human-animal encounter in a relationally thought performance practice.

Determining Human-Animal Relation in Performance

Intersubjectivity and Rabbit Agency

In *Telepresence & Bio Art*, Eduardo Kac outlines Alba’s social relation as one realized with rabbit agency, intersubjectivity, and dialogic interaction—extensively noting theories from scholars such as Buber, Benveniste, and Habermas. Kac provides an ambiguous indication of Alba’s agency and subjectivity in the performance by articulating a dialogic and intersubjective social sphere—in which Alba participates—in a journey through Western philosophy and through a paradigm of care-infused domestication and discovery. Of course—agency, intersubjectivity, and dialogic exchange might help to create a relation infused with care. But how might it be possible to say that Alba, as a rabbit, is a social agent and a social subject within and beyond a transgenic artwork? The question is at best hard to contend with and hinges on the phrase “as a rabbit.” The capacity to think it relies in part on thinking subjectivity and agency without recourse to configurations of human subjectivity and agency based upon human capabilities. Therefore, in order to rethink how subjectivity operates beyond the naturalized human subject, the locus of subjectivity must be challenged. The challenge

then is not necessarily to ascribe to the rabbit a determinate subject position that provides access to and delimits reality but to understand how bodies including rabbit bodies pluralize and produce subjectivity revitalizing their mobility and quality of living.

In the *GFP Bunny* project, Eduardo Kac emphasizes that Alba is involved in an intersubjective social relation and relies on Èmile Benveniste’s “Subjectivity in Language” to make assertions for Alba’s position as a subject.⁴⁴ I take up Benveniste’s linguistic explication of subjectivity not only because Kac employs it to substantiate Alba’s subjectivity but also to tie together the question of subjectivity with a historical and philosophical ontological anthropocentrism that bears upon understanding performance beyond a human subject orientation. As Kac explicates, Benveniste—a structural linguist building on the work of Ferdinand de Saussure—theorizes that a person takes his place in an intersubjective community in language in the moment of saying “I.”⁴⁵ At that moment, the “I” takes a subject position in discourse. Benveniste states in *Problems in General Linguistics*:

It is a speaking man whom we find in the world, a man speaking to another man, and language provides the very definition of man.... It is in and through language that man constitutes himself as a *subject*, because language alone establishes the concept of ‘ego’ in reality, in *its* reality which is that of the being.⁴⁶

Benveniste describes a unique to man I-you “polarity of persons,” a particularly discursive subjectivity, that while emphasizing a mode of address inherent in discourse, also determines intersubjectivity by the standard of human language and *the very definition of man*.

The concept of discursive subjectivity for Benveniste binds subjectivity to the human subject constituted in language and gives to the human subject a privileged access to reality through an ontology that prioritizes the subject over the multiple ways in which subjectivity is formed and reformed. The reflexivity through which the subject is constituted in a mode of saying “I” in language becomes a method for determining the self and defining man’s being—establishing the limits by which the formation of subjectivity occurs and affirming that the subject in its reality is the foundation for reflecting on the self. However, if *GFP Bunny* operates within a more-than-human intersubjective realm, what kind of subjectivity does *GFP Bunny* enable with what kind of reflexivity? What subjectivities with what kinds of reflexivity does a chimera—an animal that resists classification—gesture towards? How does the conceptualization of the subject as a speaking man indicate a normatized formation of the subject and foreclose other forms of subjectivity and reflexivity unhinged from the speaking man that says “I”?

Benveniste shows that in his thinking animals are not capable of saying “I” as humans are able to—that they do not possess the faculty of language and therefore are not able to be constituted as subjects. Even though Benveniste emphasizes intersubjectivity, his concept of intersubjectivity is firmly grounded in a discursive subjectivity that *defines man*—a speaking man that has the capacity to say “I” in an address to a “you,” another man. Benveniste’s reflexive “I” is a speaking man that has the power to appropriate language in order to know his own being and reality, who cannot be conceptualized in the same way that a nonman—such as a tree or horse—can

be conceptualized. In another chapter of *Problems in General Linguistics*, titled “Animal Communication and Human Language,” Benveniste explicates the differences between human language, which “has the capacity to express everything,” and the “signal code” of bee communication.⁴⁷ The opposition between human language and the signal code of *the* bee glosses over the diversity in bees (not the least of which can be expressed through a range of over 20,000 species) and marks an inseparable division between subjective beings who have the capacity for mediation (that can express *everything*) and organisms that operate on the level of a machine acting through a limited set of codes that govern behavior. Moreover, the being of the subject—the language in which man makes himself known—in its capacity to express everything is rooted in the notion that subjectivity does not operate outside the human subject and therefore implicitly carries little political and ethical impetus for reworking the self not in terms of normatized and standardized human characteristics of being but in response to mobile and non-conceptual formations of subjectivity.

The productions of Alba in the *GFP Bunny* project in terms of a human-oriented discursive subject in a reality of domestication and naturalized mutual evolution indicates knowledge as determined in the human subject constituted in its subjective and ontological reality. However, the image of Eduardo Kac holding Alba cannot be encapsulated as an image of domestication or mutual evolution through which either “subject” might be made known. As a phenomenal image of exposure, the image resonates with the idea that subjectivity is not constituted in the reflexivity of saying “I” but in saying “we” not necessarily in words and with the idea that subjectivity is not

constituted as a comprehensible unity such as Eduardo and Alba but as a plurality that ruptures the individual—casting the self toward questioning and reformation. The chimera that escapes classification embodies self-questioning—to what order do “we” belong—which the formation of subjectivity depends upon.

Intersubjectivity in the *GFP Bunny* project points towards a possibility of overcoming the implications of domination in subject-object configurations. However, Kac’s desire “to enjoy her [Alba’s] company as an individual...appreciated for her own intrinsic virtues, in dialogical interaction” does not explain what kind of subject Alba is or is not capable of being in society.⁴⁸ In this consideration, we face the problem of thinking the human-animal relation through a structure of ability. How does Alba say, “I”? The question is not meant to suggest that Alba can or cannot say “I” but to foreground the importance and difficulties of dealing with questions concerning the capabilities of another at all not to mention beyond a historical philosophical tradition marked by an unwillingness to rupture the singularity of human language and that would ardently deny any rabbit’s ability to say “I” even within an intersubjective frame. I purposefully state the question in an anthropocentric way—framing the question in terms of what I might or might not determine as Alba’s abilities—in order to draw attention to the inherent failure of such a question in addressing the challenges of understanding how human and nonhuman animal bodies emerge through encounter in performance. *GFP Bunny* prompts these questions. However, we must also ask how does a chimerical animal—an organism that is out of place and out of sight—become present and make a presence in discourse and embodiment; how does the out of classification and out of sight

“presence” produce subjectivities, shape engagements, and participate in a performance; and what does an artificially produced chimerical organism indicate about the role of the human practice of biotechnology in reshaping bodies and subjectivities?

In the *GFP Bunny* chapter, Kac frames the bunny’s participation in terms of rabbit agency. Rabbit agency is one of many complex material conceptual constructions that entangle with the image of embedded togetherness embodied in the performance. Even taken within a field of ongoing relationality, understanding what rabbit agency entails—as Kac directs us to do—is difficult and does not necessarily undo the social order that enables its conceptualization. Kac articulates that he constructs the *GFP Bunny* project indeterminately so that:

what human and nonhuman participants think, perceive, and do when they experience the work matters in a significant way. My answer is to make a concerted effort to remain truly open to the participant’s choices and behaviors, to give up a substantial portion of control over the experience of the work.⁴⁹

From this statement, rabbit agency might mean participation in the project in the form of choices and behaviors. There are several points of difficulty in the seemingly simple and straightforward way in which the project was constructed. How might Alba as a rabbit agent make choices? How might Kac remain open to these choices when there is likely a gap in understanding of how these choices are made and made possible? Control of whose experience is given over and how is that control given up? And, how are choices and behaviors distinguished? The experiences and articulations of a human cannot encompass the experiences and articulations of a rabbit in performance. Of this, I think

that Eduardo Kac would agree and that is perhaps part of the reason for his desire to remain open. Attempts to understand and articulate how nonhuman animals make choices in performance are wrought with difficulty. The difficulty increases when understanding relies on anthropocentric constructions of the subject, the individual, and the agent. These constructions risk becoming a way in which the subject is policed, produced, and regularized. Therefore, the concepts of rabbit agency and intersubjectivity further beg the questions: what are the strategies and discourses used to situate *GFP Bunny* in a regime of truth and practice? What is at stake in these strategies and discourses? How do they form Alba as a subject and object of study in a practice of normatization? Additionally, how do the gestures that I make in understanding *GFP Bunny* create meaning and are themselves involved in subject and object formation?

Of course, a rabbit's choice might be re-framed as a behavioral action—a sort of chosen behavior—that rises out of and is always rooted in engagement with others and one's surroundings. However, thinking beyond choice as an action taken for the fulfillment of one's interests—choice as a *ability* to act in one's interests set against a reactive mode of behavior—is still difficult. This dichotomy between reactive behaviors and responsive choices—that are rooted in the freedom and rights of the human subject—permeates not only philosophical distinctions between humans and animals but also understandings of how a human and an animal might participate in performance as evident in the notion that human creators (actors, directors, writers, etc.) shape performance while the more-than-human is subservient to what human creators think and do.

In *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, Jacques Derrida draws on and creates an image of his nakedness before the embodied and penetrating gaze of a cat in order to explicate the *passive* nature of ability while tracing a hegemonic Cartesianism through the philosophical discourses of Heidegger, Kant, Lacan, and Levinas.⁵⁰ I bring in Derrida's critique in order to infuse my analysis of the *GFP Bunny* project—as a site that draws together tensions between relationality and positionality in performance—with historical philosophical questions concerning human-animal relation and ontology, which take up the notion of agency. Herein, I situate the stakes of the inquiry not only in a practice of performance making but also in a philosophical practice in which the nonhuman can be made subservient to the human through constructions of agency. Derrida argues that the question “can the animal respond?” and its denials are at the root of a philosophical Cartesianism. In René Descartes' philosophy concerning human and animal capabilities, animals are capable of emitting signs but are not capable of responding. Descartes argues that animals like machines cannot use words like a human being—who produces different arrangements of words according to his thoughts in order to convey a particular meaning to another human being.⁵¹ Derrida articulates that this understanding of “the animal” hinges on how response is defined in Western philosophical traditions. Herein, Derrida takes up a particular vein of Western philosophical thought through which he grounds the question concerning the agency of the subject in the ability to respond or react. This enables Derrida to critique philosophical framing of “the animal” without more broadly addressing the problem of the subject throughout philosophical discourse.

In particular, Derrida marks Descartes' distinction between reaction initiating from a law of nature and response from a law of freedom. In Derrida's explication, the division between reaction and response marks out the realm of culture in which the human being freely acts through a mode of response-ability. In contrast, reaction is an attribute of the nonhuman being—brute animals as machines in the natural domain—occurring as automated behavior characteristic of an entire species, in which they have no choice to act in any other way. The opposition in Derrida's critique between reaction and response is a construction that prioritizes ontological characteristics of types of beings over their potential for variation and change. One trajectory in Western philosophy that Derrida does not take up in his study that emphasizes variation and change is Friedrich Nietzsche's theorization of the formation of subjectivity through a web of power that continually fluctuates according to competing interests and the resistances that it generates.

In an investigation of the human, Friedrich Nietzsche proposes that there can be no universal account of humanity or of human history since there is no human essence that can be located in principles such as subjectivity, liberty, and equality that align and consolidate across all human societies.⁵² Nietzsche argues that humanity should be understood as “an inextricable multiplicity of ascending and descending life-processes...[in which] the strata are twisted and entwined together.”⁵³ Nietzsche theorizes that the constitution of subjects occurs in a web of power wherein different societies have different manifestations of normative subjects and resistances. In Nietzsche's theorization, society imposes prescriptions that constitute and regulate the

normative subject—which is an expression of the power relations in society. In this social paradigm, power is not the possession of an individual agent but an ongoing negotiation in a social order where power continually shifts amongst continually forming subjectivities. For Nietzsche, relations of force rather than abilities constitute domains of subjectivity. Therefore, subjectivity is not the ground of agency or the subject but is formed and reformed through fluctuations in power.

In a further critique of subjectivity, Michel Foucault takes up Nietzsche's theorization of power and the normative subject and theorizes the formation of subjectivity in order to unlink subjectivity from the subject and ground it more directly in a political framework. For Foucault, power relations confine and entrap individuated subjects by defining them as such.⁵⁴ As in Nietzsche's theorization, subjectivity is a product of power rather than the ground of human agency. Agents do not simply produce, possess, or manipulate power. Instead, agents are made and re-made what they are by it. Importantly—in the process of constituting and regularizing social subjects and social relations—power also generates subject positions that resist processes of normatization and regulation. In struggles of resistance, competing interests differentiate and play out. In particular, Foucault critiques regulating structures such as prisons and schools that materialize power over and definition of subjects and further promotes the liberation of subjectivity as a means of decentering power relations.⁵⁵ Moreover, Foucault interprets modernity as characterized by a process in which discourses of knowledge increasingly police subjects. Foucault states,

I think the modern age of the history of truth begins when knowledge itself and knowledge alone gives access to the truth. That is to say, it is when the philosopher (or the scientist, or simply someone who seeks the truth) can recognize the truth and have access to it in himself and solely through his activity of knowing, without anything else being demanded of him and without him having to change or alter his being as subject.⁵⁶

Modernity thereby indicates a socio-historical situation in which knowledge takes over as the ultimate and only source of truth. Therefore, power over bodies can be attained more effectively and efficiently if a subject is constituted as a subject of knowledge. Herein, various forms of knowledge aim to constitute and define bodies through an exercise of power over them. Power then is not just a matter of domination or oppression but is productive of discourses of truth, which are open to critique. The stakes then shift from explicit concerns with equality and rights to the economic, political, institutional regime of the production of truth and the ethical formation of the self.⁵⁷

The *GFP Bunny* project operates in at least two registers—as a testing of the self and social order that Foucault directs our attention to, which is necessary for decentering power relations, and as a knowledge formation that constructs a regime of truth and practice in which it might be situated. The *GFP Bunny* project animates social relations of power not just in the use of biotechnology to manipulate biomaterials but also in the discourses that it promotes and foregrounds in the performance and in the discourses that it provokes through the performance. In transgenic art, it matters how bodies are augmented, shaped, embedded within, and interact through modern technologies. How

the performance challenges or normalizes modes of thought concerning human-animal relation impacts how a reconfiguration and redistribution of agency and subjectivity might be made possible—not whether agency (and the subject) is called “human” or “rabbit” but that it emerges in a multiplicity of bodies in relation, becoming both and neither at the same time. Performance as a relational process and practice emphasizes the continuous emergence of bodies from relation rather than the emergence of relation from the capabilities and actions of determined beings.

The phrase more-than-human derives in part from the Deleuzian project of problematizing all manner of knowledge, modes of thought, and practical capacities associated with the “human” whether they are rooted in social, artistic, economic, or scientific frames and from a broader new materialist renouncement of the omnipotence of the human subject and knowledge formations bound to the human. Therefore, the phrase “more-than-human” in part indicates an ongoing inquiry into and questioning of the “human.” Even though the more-than-human has often been taken as inconsequential to human dramas, relationally a myriad of bodies are rooted in and inextricable from performance. The plethora and perhaps infinite number of questions in human thought concerning what an other is able to do—such as I have purposefully anthropocentrically asked (e.g. how is Alba able to act as an agent)—feed on the theorized and lived opposition between reactive and responsive modes of engagement that oppose humans not just to animals but also to other “non-organisms” as well in disregard for the multiplicity of life-processes that Nietzsche theorizes.

Gesturing beyond a Cartesianism that denies animal response, Eduardo Kac points towards Alba's responsiveness. Kac states, "GFP Bunny... makes clear that a profound concept of interaction is anchored in the notion of personal responsibility (as both care and possibility of response)."⁵⁸ However, the framing of Alba as a subject and an agent through philosophies that deny "the animal" access to language implicitly if not explicitly emphasizes understanding the relation between a human and a nonhuman animal in terms of their ontological capabilities or inabilities. The insistence on nonhuman animals as subjects and agents—while *also* working to create a more equal and responsible exchange—in part situates the relation within a philosophical and ethical structure that depends on the determination of capabilities or a being's "being able," which is problematic and limits understanding the relation in terms of the satisfaction of interests. The satisfaction of interests thereby becomes the limit by which activity might be understood and motivated. Understanding human-animal relation as deriving from differences in capabilities and depending on the commonality or competition of their interests ignores "the abyssal rupture" between humans and other animals and between different nonhuman animals as well. For Derrida, this rupture is evident insofar as there is no homogeneous continuity between what calls itself man and what man calls the animal.⁵⁹ The capabilities attributed to humans and denied nonhuman animals—subjectivity, language, death, imagination, reason, responsibility, consciousness, and so forth—are worked and reworked still and always with a complete inability on the part of the human to understand what the world is for a nonhuman animal.⁶⁰ Derrida claims that questioning whether one can free the relation of the essence of being to beings "from

every living, utilitarian, perspective-making project... such that man himself could ‘let the being be?’” radically concerns the *entire* question of being.⁶¹ I also argue that freeing relation in performance from and as a project of mastery concerns a willingness to expose oneself to radical mobility and the mobility of others, which wrenches activity from the domain of following one’s own interests. At stake in performance ontology is not giving back to the animal what has been denied it by the human but overhauling the entire question of relational being-becoming such that ontological inquiries no longer take a vantage point external to ongoing relations and no longer undertake the measurement and identification of the being of a being as if a being could remain static and contained. With this comes the recognition that there is no static individual being as such or simple relation to or subjective mediation of a being as such in performance—and moreover that activity in performance cannot be delimited as only dependent on the coordination and confliction between interests.

While neither I nor Kac can tell any reader anything at all concerning Alba “as such,”—as if the chimerical animal or the rabbit could be extracted from ongoing relation—it is necessary to question the strategies that bind beings into manageable categories that tend towards defining the “as such” or essence of a human or nonhuman being through their capabilities and attributes. “As such” or essence does not define a distinct term comprised as a collection of attributes but rather is experienced directly in and emerges from and cannot be extracted from unfolding relation. Therefore, “Alba as such” is not an individuated term made distinct and identified but an individuated indication in words of a relation on the move, which unfolds with many others—a gesture

towards emerging bodies. Performance and other practices of embodiment depend on this multiplicity and continuously mobile unfolding. The word phrases “Alba as such” or “this Alba” do not indicate an already constituted or determined subjectivity but an incrementally and imperceptibly oscillating unsteady subjectivity emerging continually momentarily in and out of relational flux. The intersubjective positioning indicated in *GFP Bunny* is not less authentic than relational flux but operates within and emerges from it.

Relation in performance thought as an engagement between distinct subjects and agents as derived from capabilities—whether linked to a thinking mind or transcendent soul or not—contrasts relation in performance thought as encountering unfolding bodies and subjectivities becoming with movement and purpose—improvising a more-than-human relational existence within ongoing relation. The embodied mobility materialized in Alba’s genetic modification—in her unique individuality—does not answer the problem of subjectivity but is in tension with the (able and identified) subject who acts and makes choices according to his or her own capabilities and interests and who therefore can be delimited as a subject of rights that might be included in moral considerations. From this—from the domain of rights—follows whether an attitude of care or domination is supposedly justified. In the *GFP Bunny* chapter, care is articulated—in particular Kac’s care for Alba—primarily under the rubric of a domestic relation.

Mutual Evolution and Domestication

The discourses of domestication, discovery, and mutual evolution operate as constructions that appear to provide access to the truth of the human-animal relation. While the manner of Alba's socialization and intersubjectivity remains ambiguously critiqued, her domesticity is a primary point throughout Kac's chapter and in its headings—*Welcome, Alba* and *Glow in the Family*. Eduardo Kac provides a short exposition on the domestication and breeding of rabbits, tracing the species to their “discovery” by Phoenician seafarers. He states, “Transgenic art acknowledges the human role in rabbit evolution as a natural element, as a chapter in the natural history of both humans and rabbits, for domestication is always a bidirectional experience.”⁶² The discovery and domestication of rabbits—as a natural element and natural involvement—precludes examining human-animal involvement and history more critically. While domestication in part develops from the satisfaction of shared interests in a mutually domesticating process, understanding domestication simply and only as a natural process of evolution from which humans and animals have benefited is to ignore that not all domestic animals might reap the benefits of domestication. Not all domestic rabbits have it as good as Alba. While likely many human and nonhuman animals have benefited from domestication, many healthy nonhuman animals are killed—and many unhealthy animals in the processes of agricultural meat production—every year because there is no home for them or no human to take care of them. Or perhaps, the human practice of taking care of domesticated animals inheres a notion of expendability, which thereby challenges and problematizes the truth of its practice. While I might enjoy the benefits and satisfactions of domestication in taking care of an animal or in the conveniences of

eating animals, domestication is also the (over)growth, marketing, and selling of animals that are poorly cared for and a practice of selective breeding for the suitability to and satisfaction of human interests. Any animal that appears in performance carries the weight of this historical relation.

In arguing for the equality of moral consideration for the relation between humans and nonhuman animals, Peter Singer states in *Writings on an Ethical Life*:

Practices that were previously regarded as natural and inevitable come to be seen as the result of an unjustifiable prejudice. Who can say with any confidence that none of his or her attitudes and practices can legitimately be questioned? If we wish to avoid being numbered among the oppressors, we must be prepared to rethink all our attitudes to other groups.⁶³

Following Singer's ethical challenge, the history and practice of discovery and domestication can no longer be understood as natural processes that demonstrate a justified and ethical involvement with another animal. The argument—that humans engage in and have engaged in domestication and breeding for the mutual benefits and interests of nonhuman animals and humans—is difficult to make. For Peter Singer, the human oppression and cruel treatment of nonhuman animals is propagated by a speciesist attitude that sacrifices the interests of other than human species to the interests of humans.⁶⁴ Importantly, Singer marks this attitude as an institutionalized mentality. The institutionalized mentality not only makes it possible to disregard concerns of how someone of another species should be treated while still being aware of their suffering in or beyond a performance; it is also a mechanism for the easy transition from affection to

aggression. The questions of what is careful, what is harmful, and what is justifiable—for the *GFP Bunny* project—are therefore situated within a context that is already skewed by a bias—an institutionalized mentality—that labors to protect humans from doubt concerning how suffering occurs in one’s engagements and practices with others. The institutionalized mentality is made possible through social structures that govern and regulate the visibility and intelligibility of concrete practices (e.g. agricultural, labor, financial, and warfare practices), through structures of knowledge that in Foucault’s terms require no test of the self that alters one’s being as a subject, through social ordering that normalizes particular forms of relation and of the subject (e.g. heterosexual, patriarchal, Western, democratic, and human), and through the confinement of ethics to the domain of interests.

Even though domestication impacts the evolution of humans and nonhuman animals, a domestically determined relation is one where the power dynamic often is heavily weighted and regularized in favor of human interests. In other words, within the domestic paradigm—within which Kac situates the *GFP Bunny* project—most often it is the human (in opposition to the animal) that is served, sanctioned, standardized, and sustained. Kac maintains the uniqueness of humans while pointing at the proximity of humans to nonhumans by stating, “Our daily coexistence and interaction with members of other species remind us of our uniqueness as humans,” revealing how close we really are to nonhumans.⁶⁵ However, framing the relation as primarily and only domestic unwittingly risks reinforcing the human standard upon which the nonhuman might be measured and delimiting the domestic relation as only concerning the valuation and

measurement of competing or common interests. What must be included in rethinking a so-called naturalized or conventionalized human practice—such as domestication or performance—is a rethinking of the ethical relation as only determined by and realized through competing and common interests that bear upon one’s interactions with others. Delimiting ethical involvement as the give-and-take of interests alone feeds the desire to rework and establish another’s being and capabilities in opposition to one’s own. This ethical construction also delimits care as the consideration of interests. Herein, care comes to be constituted through and as the satisfaction of interests rather than as a way of living with others—relationally in and beyond performance. I would like to propose that—rather than only realized in the expression of particular interests—ethical concerns considerably belong to and operate through the expression of care and exposure. The *GFP Bunny* project materializes in part through technologies of exposure that have affinity across domestically configured human-animal relations.

Indeterminate Human-Animal Relation in Performance

Exposure: Love and Care

Under the paradigm of a domestically configured relation, Kac writes at great length concerning the responsibility and care with which he proceeded in the project. He proclaims in part:

Transgenic art...is a new art form based on the use of genetic engineering to create unique living beings. This must be done with great care; with acknowledgment of the complex issues thus raised; and, above all, with a commitment to respect, nurture, and love the life thus created.⁶⁶

Kac's sense of responsibility for Alba was "awakened" once he held her in his arms with "joy and excitement." The persistent verification of the care undertaken on the project and in ensuring that Alba, the rabbit, was not harmed might be understood as an anticipatory gesture aimed at curbing potential backlash and protestations that might arise concerning any genetic engineering project. However, the potential successes, fears, and threats of genetic engineering and transgenic art beyond a declaration of personal responsibility give great weight to human-animal encounter and the love and care that emerges from the engagement between Alba and Kac (and others).

It appears that Eduardo Kac loves Alba and considered the interests of the rabbit when developing and going ahead with the project. Love between an animal and a human can reach far beyond any domestic or performance paradigm. Love might be understood as an emotion felt in certain kinds of relation such as between lovers, parents and children, and husbands and wives. Qualifying love through types of relationships disregards the affective force of love that paralyzes all orientations. Anyone who loves an animal is most likely a fool but what a joyous and mad fool indeed. Love fascinates and enchants in the oscillations of moving bodies—in incremental and uncertain ways of doing and living. In these continuous relational unfoldings, love and care cannot be domesticated or legislated. Love between a human and an animal does not guarantee ending the subjection of animals to the human but points towards a feral relationality in which care and love operate beyond domesticity and beyond performance as a human product. In understanding how bodies emerge in relation in performance with each other, love matters because loves challenges the notion that our activity is rooted only in our

own interests. In a very important way, love wrenches oneself outside of one's own interests—operating as a gaping rupture in power relations. This concept and practice of love ensures that the struggles rooted in power relations are not just a factor of an aggressive and defensive egoism but moreover a factor of the displacement and alteration of one's self—which displaces value from one's own interests and reinvests value in relational formations. Herein, love is not an emotion but a test—not a test that you pass in getting the right answers or a challenge overcome in good performance but a test of the very ethical formation of your self. I care about how love operates and materializes in performance because love gestures towards a practice of performance and inquiry as a practice of caring questioning. In terms of the *GFP Bunny* project, love between a human and a nonhuman animal ruptures normalizing and policing structures that define love relations as occurring between humans.⁶⁷

In the articulations of his care and love for Alba, Kac distances himself from the figure of a scientific experimenter to favor the role of caretaker and inventor. Kac states:

I have paid close attention and given careful consideration to any potential harm that might be caused. I decided to proceed with the project because it became clear that it was safe [...] green fluorescent protein is harmless to the rabbit. [...] the *GFP Bunny* project breaks no social rule: humans have played a direct role in the evolution of rabbits for at least fourteen hundred years.⁶⁸

Jeremy Bentham's statement—"The question is not, Can they reason? nor Can they talk? but, Can they suffer?"—is implicitly introduced in the *GFP Bunny* chapter/project insofar as Kac asserts that he does not want to cause any harm to the rabbit.⁶⁹ The reader is left

to rely on a familiar understanding of Kac's encounter with Alba the chimerical animal in terms of domestication. Potential suffering, care, and love might characterize a domestic relationship but in what ways do care, love, and potential suffering exceed the distinct roles that humans and animals perform?

While human-animal engagement in a paradigm of interacting interests has the capacity for a more conscientious exchange, it also makes a gesture of mastery by means of a knowledge that does not acknowledge the difficulty in ascertaining interests and in ascertaining the capabilities that are required to meet these interests in and beyond a performance. The consideration of interests can motivate care, responsibility, and obligation. However, when care takes on the weight of suffering, it is no longer just "taking care of" an animal—or an animal's interests—but is rather a vulnerability *with* another. Care is not only the consideration of interests but also a vulnerability infused with doubt—always in relation with others. In contrast to paradigms of domestication and discovery that work to alleviate doubt concerning human-animal relation, human-animal relation considered in vulnerability is wrought with doubt. Therefore, performance also considered relationally is a practice rooted in vulnerability with others that generates considerable doubt that bears upon not only how we modify others through technological procedures but moreover how we modify ourselves—in and beyond the human.

While Peter Singer derives from Jeremy Bentham's "can they suffer?" an ethics dependent on a moral consideration of the interests of animals, Derrida indicates that Bentham's "can they suffer?" poses the question of the animal in a fundamentally

different way than philosophies—from Aristotle to Descartes and those persisting in a Cartesian tradition—that pose the question in terms of “*power* or *capability* [pouvoirs] and *attributes* [avoirs]: being able, having the power or capability to give, to die, to bury one’s dead, to dress, to work...a power that consists in having such and such a faculty, thus such and such a capability, as an essential attribute.”⁷⁰ For Derrida, “can they suffer?” marks a fundamental shift from considering the power to possess—to have a manner of being or a capability—to a power of vulnerability. He writes that Bentham’s question has a certain passivity, stating:

It bears witness, manifesting already, as question, the response that testifies to a sufferance, a passion, a not-being-able. The word *can* [pouvoir] changes sense and sign here once one asks, ‘Can they suffer?’ ...[which] amounts to asking ‘Can they *not be able*?’ And what of this inability [*impouvoir*]? What of the vulnerability felt on the basis of this inability? What is this nonpower at the heart of power?⁷¹

For Derrida, the philosophical framework—within which animal rights awakens and stipulates our obligations and responsibilities in and beyond performance—must change with the experience of compassion in the shared vulnerability that humans have with nonhuman animals. After all, how can the rights—and the life—of a rabbit in a performance be protected when the rabbit is not a citizen of the state and will likely never exhibit the *capabilities of being* a citizen of the state? However, the shared vulnerability gestures toward a domain and practice of care that is essential for understanding performance relationally.

Significantly, I do not care for Alba in the domestic way that Kac does. The project negotiates between the “private realm of the family” and “the public dimension of genetic engineering and public opinion.” Kac calls for public respect for the life of the individual rabbit. Respect and care are necessary not just because Alba is an individual but also because there is no essential divide between the public and the private—between my writing and the rabbit. The negotiation of public and private does not just concern the ambiguity of Alba’s genetic modification but also the ambiguity of Alba and others in a relational performance—continually caught up in ongoing unfolding relation that exceeds knowledge and perception.

I have used many names for Alba, the rabbit, the chimerical animal, GFP Bunny as a way to point out the ease and arbitrariness with which I can name the glowing bunny but also to reinforce the presence and absence of this who, this irreplaceable and sufferable being-becoming. The uncertainty of how suffering occurs—paired with the certainty of suffering—draws even a stone (not to mention a scarce jellyfish) into ethical considerations because in consideration of suffering one must not only consider the interests of an animal but also the affective force—a surplus of effects without causality—that relationally exceeds distinct conditions in a determined relation and the rippling effects (excessive causality) of one’s actions.⁷² The question of suffering that beckons care in and beyond performance cannot be dealt with through understanding relation in terms of interests or determined positions. Suffering is not only or primarily the lack of fulfillment of one’s interests or the inability to fulfill one’s interests. Rather, the question “can they suffer?” attests to a painful finitude and continuity that permeates

performance—an endurance in the midst of continuous exposure, not an effect but a weight to be carried.⁷³

The philosophical and ethical relevance of Bentham’s “can they suffer” set alongside a history of human practices of exploitation and brutality in theory and practice shows that it is not enough to acknowledge that an animal can suffer but that in our considerations in performance and performance research we have the power to create suffering and a power to endure suffering with another. Naming and subjecting another to the authority of one’s knowledge and performance practices carries with it the risk of reinforcing all nonhuman animals as the indiscriminate animal and the risk of thinking relation as “for me”—or more particularly for the human. Insofar as the *GFP Bunny* project subjects the lively mobility of relation to un-criticized paradigms of being-human and domesticated human interests in performance, there is no rabbit. The insecurities, uncertainties, and flux of strange and unfolding embodiments are foregone. Although Kac and Alba are close domestically and even though Kac mentions that molecular biology “shows the human genome to be nothing special,” Kac’s proximity to Alba remains coded by a discourse of discovery and domesticity through which control as much as collaboration weighs on relation. Only in the ruptures of distinct embodiment—not just rabbit genetic modification—do the transformative potentials of the project come to the forefront. In framing human-animal relation by emphasizing discovery, breeding, and domestication—the transformative possibilities that the project points towards are limited by an investment in scientific and cultural practices that appear to stabilize the hierarchical limits between humans and nonhuman animals. However, I see in the image

of Kac holding Alba, Alba holding Eduardo, acute and tangible vulnerability. The living relation between this rabbit and this man—not a correspondence but a mortal and living vulnerability—ensures that a life always depends on many others. Derrida suggests that the bond between a human and an animal resides in the awareness and actuality of their mortality. He writes of this suffering with—this compassion:

Mortality resides there, as the most radical means of thinking the finitude that we share with animals, the mortality that belongs to the very finitude of life, to the experience of compassion, to the possibility of sharing the possibility of this nonpower, the possibility of this impossibility, the anguish of this vulnerability, and the vulnerability of this anguish.⁷⁴

Significantly, the anguish of vulnerability is not just in that man and animal suffer mortality. Rather, the anguish of vulnerability is experienced in the mortality of a loved one—more particularly this loved one—and in the mortality of all life. Anguish rises up not just in personalized experience but also in the impermanence and continuation of all life. Therefore, performance as a relational practice acknowledges embeddedness or immersion in living processes—with the more-than-human—that unfold through ephemerality *and* continuity.

The recognition of the responsibility that humans have to and with others generates both from an awareness of another's needs (or rights) and also from relationally rooted compassion in the sufferance of vulnerability. In the *GFP Bunny* project:

one must be open to understanding the rabbit mind, and more specifically to Alba's unique spirit as an individual. [...] Understanding how the rabbit sees the

world is certainly not enough to appreciate its consciousness, but it allows us to gain insights about its behavior, which leads us to adapt our own to make life more comfortable and pleasant for everyone.⁷⁵

The statement that understanding rabbit biology is not enough to understand rabbit consciousness is an important step that must go further because encounter understood as an openness—infused with vulnerability and compassion—is not just about making life more comfortable and pleasant for everyone through the satisfaction of competing and common interests. Performance relationally thought makes a gesture in vulnerability across the abyssal rupture between different experiences and embodiments that unfold through a *movement* in consciousness—rupturing your distinct self, your perceptibility, your discernability, your personality, what you think you know—in order to participate with others. The *GFP Bunny* project exhibits a tension between relation dependent on what a human knows of animal interests and what cannot be known or what might be wondered in ungraspable relationality. Relationally thought and practiced performance is not made through the skill of human actors that manipulate nonhuman nonactors but through a shared vulnerability—of everything that continues to relationally unfold or become—realized in the compassion and passion of encounter.

Exposure: Affect and Listening

Even though the *GFP Bunny* project occurs with and within the implications and frameworks of domestication not just biotechnological modification, no animal can be strictly determined and identified in knowledge formations as domesticated, agricultural, wild, or affect. The domestically framed nonhuman animals with which we engage in

performance move amongst these categories—drawing them into question—while also activating a modality of exposure that ruptures the framework of domestication while being positioned within it. I could do right by Alba without allowing her to resonate within or rupture me—constricting Alba to a truth of normatized domestication. For a modality of exposure to materialize, my in/corporeal being would have to break open for another to inhabit my body—like a jellyfish inside a rabbit—forcing my words and understanding to come unhinged. Risking potential harm. Not to destabilize, redeploy, or recuperate subjectivity in terms of a still human-centric intersubjectivity, but to be brought to the very threshold of subjectivity itself. Here, relation vitalizes a *with* others that points out the tension between the hierarchical competition of interests and the unfolding of deeply engaged and intertwined affecting and affected embodiments. This shared—carved up—*with* an animal is a becoming other that does not erase differences and is never reducible to stable social roles and genetic modifications. Rather, the relation is of becoming of flows of light and sound and gestural residues.⁷⁶ An alchemical and affective rather than inventive operation rooted in an ordeal of exposure.

Eduardo Kac's intentions in his open approach in the project are “to accept the experience as-it-happens as a transformative field of possibilities, to learn from it, to grow with it, to be transformed along the way.”⁷⁷ But how are affective variations mobilized in Eduardo Kac? What are those transformative potentials? What are the implications of Kac injecting himself with rabbit DNA? Might there be in any way a becoming-rabbit of Eduardo Kac? I catch a glimpse of Kac-becoming in the image of holding that permeates the project. The transformation of course does not occur in terms

of a scientifically enabled genetic modification made in the domain of “discovery” and thereby challenges the notion that the individual is formed in a mode of discovery through varying combinations of DNA rather than relational encounter. The conception of the individual as a formation that can be known and determined through DNA structures eliminates a vast array of processes that impact the formation of the individual including reproduction, the contingencies of relation, and the complexities and mobility of difference that cannot be simply located in codes. Understanding the transformation of the individual primarily in terms of genetic differences limits how we come to understand the complexities of relation—as if the individual is only and primarily a scientifically and technologically produced entity.

The image of Kac holding Alba materializes a sense of transformation that does not indicate or display any genetic modification but resonates with a capacity for and exposure to affect.⁷⁸ In a technology of exposure, affect operates as a way in which the individual body is caught up in processes of transformation and relational flux—as if the rabbit could say, “I am the jellyfish” and the dirt could say, “I am the sky” and Kac could say, “I am the rabbit”—each becoming less or more another. Affect makes the “more” of liveliness in performance—in continuity, ephemerality, liveness, and recording—vaguely and yet substantially tangible. In part, what a body is capable of doing in performance is not a factor of its being or its attributable capabilities—or its genetic make-up—but of this and this and this and this becoming in an exposure to being affected.⁷⁹ The transference of the jellyfish DNA in the *GFP Bunny* project is perhaps the most im/perceivable and yet evident (scientific and affective) transformation in the project.

The procedure is infused with an uncertainty of how green fluorescent protein is obtained or manufactured and with an uncertainty surrounding the affective implications of genetic transference. The project begs the question: how does a jellyfish emerge from and participate in ongoing relation and/or domestically determined relation? It should not go unnoticed that a jellyfish is far more difficult to convey and display compassion for—a jellyfish is far more difficult to enter into a domestic relation with. A jellyfish would not have made a good social subject or subject to care for within the domestic domain. In performance, green fluorescent protein gestures towards a real jellyfish participating in and emerging from the realm of ongoing relation—not just a bit of engineered DNA or manufactured protein as a representative characteristic of all jellyfish. Herein, Alba and this jellyfish are beings that refuse to be conceptualized—or reduced to genetic code—in the same way that *this* cat seeing Derrida cannot be conceptualized or reduced to a genetically determined and identified individual. The refusal of the individual to be conceptualized revitalizes the capacity of art in critiquing social, technological, and subject-object organizations. The relation between art and reality in the *GFP Bunny* project is not a simple conflation of the public art project with the private domestic reality but rather a complicated entanglement, which reinvests art with its political and ethical character.

In describing the exposure Derrida felt at being stared at naked by an unnamed cat, he explicates that *this* cat—not *my* cat—does not represent the entire species cat but appears as a living being with “unsubstitutable singularity.”⁸⁰ This cat, this rabbit, this jellyfish mark mobile limits with which and by which one might be stripped naked,

profoundly interrogated and effaced—in performance. Derrida suggests that the gaze and the classification called “animal” offer the abyssal limit of the human, which he describes as the “border crossing from which vantage man dares to announce himself to himself.”⁸¹ In these moments of exposure in performance, naked under the gaze of an animal anything can happen. The apocalyptic encounter with “the animal” that Derrida describes conveys an ethics of exposure rather than a set of rules for proper conduct or the balancing of competing interests for mutual benefit. Derrida gestures towards where he elsewhere outlines “the ordeal of the undecidable” that must be endured—a sufferance of exposure, responsibility, and a permanent and relentless condition of rupture.⁸² Derrida’s theorization of undecidability articulates the disruption of binary structures that attempt to define the limits of relation. Moments in which one finds or follows oneself naked under the gaze of—in the flow of relation with—another, subject-object identities and distinctions are continuously displaced.

The problem—of how affect can be drawn into discourse if it cannot be recognized—might be dealt with by a strategy of examining corporeal-emotional responses where a rupture of the experiential state or embodiment becomes apparent. Kathleen Stewart states that her book *Ordinary Affects* resists the initial pull of representational thinking and interpretive critique in order that—using Derrida’s term—the undecidable objects that fascinate, consume, strike, and otherwise so deeply affect us might be approached through a different methodology. Stewart’s book draws to light the difficulty of adequately addressing affect. Stewart emphasizes that the labor of writing ordinary affects is not an effort to construct meaning—to make an adequate

representation and knowledge of what's happening—but rather to make an *address* that is adequate to affect.⁸³ The slowing of representational thought—for a relationally thought performance—in order to perform some of the “intensity and texture” that makes affect animate bodies recognizes that Eduardo Kac holding Alba is not primarily about simple physical contact but about the capacity to affect and to be affected—the capacity to touch and to be touched in the most subtle, the most striking, and the most unspeakable ways.

Representational practices—in performance and performance research—can attempt to capture a subject matter in representation and knowledge formations as if from an outside vantage point or can undergo an ordeal of exposure in the process of relational encounter. In a relationally thought performance, the work of a practitioner-scholar is to listen and pay attention—to engage with listening with other bodies. Listening to and with others—not just analyzing them or using them for one's own purpose—indicates stretching in embodiment and thought. In *Listening*, Jean-Luc Nancy articulates the (human) body as a resonance chamber from which the subject might be seen as the part of the body that is listening or vibrates with listening to or with the echo of beyond-meaning.⁸⁴ Nancy argues that, “To listen is *tender l'oreille*—literally, to stretch the ear...it is an intensification and concern, a curiosity or an anxiety.”⁸⁵ To stretch the ear intensely—to *stretch the very skin and viscera of the entire body*—is to become awake with curiosity or anxiety and concern and “to be straining toward a possible meaning, and consequently one that is *not* immediately accessible” (italics added).⁸⁶ Relation between bodies in performance is enlivened in the vigilance of attending and adjusting to something that is not immediately accessible and that unfolds with vague perceptions.⁸⁷

The continuous and ephemeral, live and recorded relationality in performance resonates through listening bodies. Listening in performance is ultimately not about comprehensive and stable perception of another but about stretching towards the inaccessible.

Perhaps I did not strain enough to listen for the affective transformations occurring in the *GFP Bunny* project. Sometimes a human excessively talks so as not to listen. Some nonhuman animals, such as a rabbit, seem to be always listening—becoming all ears so-to-speak, always on the aural lookout, always (at)tuning themselves to their surroundings. While Alba’s aberrance appears in part as a code or a characteristic, the individuality of this animal must be listened to and for in the midst of unfolding relation. Whether performance functions relationally and/or attempts to capture the living heart of a rabbit or any other being—no other can be reduced to one’s own orientation. In *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Luce Irigaray defines ethics as a commitment to preserving the other’s difference from oneself.⁸⁸ For Irigaray, the ethical relation rises out of the question “who art thou,” which recognizes the irreducibility of another to one’s own orientation. Irigaray emphasizes that the ethical relation is crafted through receptive sensual contact, which does not stabilize and delimit the parameters of difference but supports and—with the added challenge—pluralizes them. The sensual contact in holding another such as Alba materializes an awareness of inhalation and exhalation that is not limited to organisms that “breathe” scientifically. The inhalations and exhalations of life unfolding can be felt in a rock in as much as a human or a rabbit. Herein, relational performance and performance research in cultivating openness requires

patience, attention, generosity, learning, respect, and humility. Relational performance is a *conversation of proposals*—a conversation between bodies-becoming where any affect or breath might pierce a body because it is exposed.⁸⁹ For a relationally thought performance (as a becoming), listening in the midst of movement—rabbits becoming jellyfish becoming images becoming mist becoming humans becoming ghosts—is of the utmost importance.

Conclusion: Exposure in Performance

I began with the *GFP Bunny* project paired with Jacques Derrida's scenario with this unnamed cat as way to think through the manner in which the determination of subjectivity and the mobility of relationality weigh upon human-animal encounter in performance. I emphasized that subjective determination—operating within paradigms of domestication and discovery—risks making a normalizing gesture that is caught up with the ethical imperative to consider the interests of the subjective-other and ontological suppositions about *the* animal. I paid particular attention to the manner in which subjectivity emerges out of and flows back into ongoing relationality in the *GFP Bunny* project. I indicated that encounter as a quality of openness—beyond the paradigms of domestication and discovery—disrupts the opposition human-animal not because Alba is a unique individual with jellyfish DNA but because this irreplaceable being unfolds relationally beyond naturalized domestication and unnatural genetic manipulation within an unbound relational world and with a power of affect.⁹⁰ While Alba upsets rabbit filiations and classifications, an emphasis on the transgenic *characteristic* in Alba reduces human-animal relation to a science of genetic

manipulation and genetic structure. The performance as a relational unfolding has more to do with affect than scientific coding and recoding. I argued that a relationally thought performance practice is rooted in exposure and therefore entails the circulation of affect, listening, and a conversation of proposals. I argued that affect, listening, and proposal—over and above the manipulations and novel combinations of science and art at the nexus of human-animal encounter—is a force that grounds performance in ongoing relationality. In Chapter Two, I take up performance at the nexus of human-object encounter in order to further think through how performance operates with a relational ontology of becoming. I examine the activity of objects in two performances in order to focus on liveliness in performance. I argue that objects emerging relationally through historical and collecting modalities in performance indicate that performance as a becoming operates with continuous liveliness rather than ephemeral human liveness.

Chapter Two: “Materializing Objects”

In Chapter One, I began with Eduardo Kac’s *GFP Bunny* project in order to understand how performance operates as a becoming—an embedded relationality—at the nexus of human-animal encounter. I examined the manner in which representational practices are entwined with the determination and identification of subjects and unfolding relationality. I emphasized that relation is not a factor of the (in)abilities of a distinct and identified subject but of affect and argued that—for performance as a becoming—listening and proposal grounds unfolding bodies in an affective relationality and an ordeal of exposure, which impacts the formation of subjectivities. In Chapter Two, I continue to take up the primary question of performance ontology—what is the nature of performance—via the question of how performance operates as a relational process with others at the nexus of human-object encounter. In this chapter, I examine how historically and materially rooted liveliness—rather than “liveness”—operates in performance. I take up two sites—the Iranian performance-film *Home is in Our Past* (2003/2005) and a 2007 production of Heiner Müller’s *Explosion of a Memory/Description of a Picture* (1984).

Fragments in History

The devised performance *Home is in Our Past* was first performed at the City Theatre in Tehran, Iran in 2003. While I did not attend a live performance, I viewed *Home is in Our Past* on film, which was produced by the “Black Narcissus” Group and directed by Hamed Mohamadtaheri and Mojtaba Mirtahmasb in 2005.⁹¹ The

performance-film *Home is in Our Past* documents, stages, and records a performance in which an audience attends a live theatrical event where the actors Atefeh Tehrani and Majid Bahrami perform amidst an auditory recitation of recognizable historical events, and cultural phenomena. In the performance, the female actor clothed in a black dress and headscarf stands desolately on a small elevated-stage in a bright white spotlight emitting and affirming her own powerful voice—a gut-wrenching cry—that contrasts the even-toned and matter-of-fact recitation that intermittently overlays the performance. The male actor emerges from—yet remains in—a large vat of watery silt and makes disjointed gestures and sounds with and without objects that had been previously submerged along with his own body. In a confused and apparently random manner, the performer in the tank of silt repeats representational and residual gestures that are personal—ironing, eating, and drinking—and civic—the saluting and fighting gestures of a soldier—with objects such as a work boot, silverware, and a metal pipe. Even though the actor in the pool takes up and repeats recognizable gestures with objects, the gestures and objects do not provide a stable and recognizable articulation of who he is and what their instrumental purpose might be as part of any familiar cultural or historical narrative.⁹² The relationally constituted objects and gestures—churned up and completely covered in brown silt like the actor—have become useless for conventional purposes and for the verification of historical and cultural progress.

During the performance, a male voiceover speaks historical and personal object-phrases—fragments of narratives of political and ethical import, of culture and nature, of science and art, of things and people—in an exchange with a repetitively and flatly

spoken response—“no”—of a female voiceover. The recitation—from which I draw a small selection—is *ongoing*:⁹³

There was evening and there was morning, a third ghetto	no
June 28, 1914 Serbia	no
Snow White	no
Antimatter	no
The handsome Che Guevera	no
Killing by pressing a button	no

The historical-material objects such as these in the performance-film unfold in a constellation that makes a gesture towards Walter Benjamin’s theorization of objects.⁹⁴ Benjamin asserts that objects resonate histories in constellations of the now and hold in their material structure multiple histories that cannot be reified into a continuous and linear history of progress within capitalist systems of production and consumption.⁹⁵ In Benjamin’s constellation, an object is not as much an index or record of a past event, culture, or epoch but an ongoing pulsation of histories. “What has been” or the past event can be made intelligible through stable images and sound bites that quiet uncertainties surrounding the event; these images and objects can be further recycled and re-employed to articulate and promote seemingly stable narratives of present situations and conditions as well.⁹⁶ However, unmitigated disruptions, disturbances, and entanglements (islands of garbage)—strange and unfamiliar juxtapositions between Snow White and antimatter—resurface to undermine normatized structures of intelligibility in an ongoing living and lively history and relationality.

Benjamin's conceptualization of a constellation emerges from a materialist historiography that in his understanding does not make an arbitrary choice and juxtaposition of objects but enacts a critical moment in breaking apart "[the] historical continuity with which the historical object first constitutes itself."⁹⁷ For Benjamin, the constellation—as a critical and constructive practice—is embodied in the non-narrative dialectical image or dialectics at a standstill which he most explicitly and extensively takes up utilizing techniques of juxtaposition in his work on *The Arcades Project*, understood as a “theory of the consciousness of history.”⁹⁸ In *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin takes up the ruins of commodity production through a montage of 19th century objects in order to make visible the constitution of the object in a dialectical present. However, as evidenced in Theodor Adorno's response in 1938 to an excerpt from Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, understanding the dialectical image as a critical modality is debatable.

Adorno reacts adversely to Benjamin's Baudelaire submission for publication to the Frankfurt School—claiming that Benjamin's "ascetic refusal of interpretation" allows historical materials to appear on the page unmediated by theory.⁹⁹ In aligning the “unmediated” juxtapositions of *The Arcades Project* with the phantasmagoria that Benjamin sought to critique, Adorno's critique draws attention to the metaphysical and historical aspects of Benjamin's theory of dialectical images. In particular, Adorno's doubts over Benjamin's practice of the dialectical image are tied to his own understanding of a practice of constellation as immanent critique. For Adorno, the constellation is not a set of mere juxtapositions but is meant to take up diverse historical fragments in a

cognitive critical constellation undomesticated by familiar and habituated thought and ideological presuppositions that convert the new into the same commodified and reified objects. As Adorno argues, “congealed” ideological and ontological thought “must be reliquified, its validity traced, so to speak, in repetition” through the work of immanent critique.¹⁰⁰ Herein, the constellation is a device that might provoke a new consciousness of the ideological condition in which we are entrapped—a condition in which the commodity form is the structuring principle of society and in which barbarism continues to permeate society and history.¹⁰¹ In Adorno’s immanent critique, the historical image takes on a critical force for estrangement and de-familiarization through a mediation that exposes contradictions. The constellation serves this purpose by bringing diverse historical phenomena together for a critical consideration that disallows identity thinking. In contrast to the apparent stasis of Benjamin’s dialectical image, Adorno emphasizes a “reliquification” that occurs with the repetition of what has been congealed and abstracted in identity thinking and in historical progress. Therefore, the question of performance ontology that concerns itself with how performance operates as a becoming is bound up in the historical materialist concern with how we make meaning out of the fragments of historical materiality—and with a reliquification of ontological suppositions—by way of a critical consideration of performance-in-the-making not as an essential ontological identification of performance but as a concern with how performance relationally constellates at the nexus of encounter with others.

The exchange between Benjamin and Adorno introduces a tension between “dialectics at a standstill” as the ideological condition of capitalist modernity or as a

critical force that is especially suited to the circumstances of capitalism—the constellation as an object of critique and a subject of critique. In *The Dialectics of Seeing*, Susan Buck-Morss explicates Benjamin’s dialectical image as a mode of thinking in coordinates in which questions are raised as to whether Benjamin’s dialectical images are not subjective enough or too subjective.¹⁰² On one hand, in the dialectical image the subject disappears and the construction of meaning becomes uprooted from subjectively mediated historical processes. On the other, the subject becomes the sole mediator of historical objects and constructions of meaning. In close analysis of Benjamin’s project, Buck-Morss marks the distinction between the dialectical image as an arbitrary expression of subjective intention and the allegorical image, which is objective in part in a “mystico-theological sense.”¹⁰³ Buck-Morss argues that in *The Arcades Project* Benjamin’s dialectical images of phenomena of decaying objects are redeemed in a “code” that is the “ur-old, theological myth of worldly utopia as the origin and goal of history,” which registers empirical history and Messianic history.¹⁰⁴ The focus on empirical and Messianic history shows “industrial nature’s utopian potential and, simultaneously, the betrayal of that potential,” which leads for Buck-Morss to a mistrust of history’s continuum of progress and political mobilization.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, Benjamin’s theological take on historical materialism is not a factor of religion or religious ideology but an “axis of philosophical experience” that informs his practice of constellation in the dialectical image.¹⁰⁶

The constellation of historical-material object fragments in *Home is in Our Past* particularly challenges proofs of human progress and identity. Identity can be sought out

in History and in historical-material objects in historical narratives, but an object and a subject are always already taken up in processes of ongoing relations that disturb these identities and proofs. The discourse of history that *Home is in Our Past* points towards is one in which the conditions of the lived event cannot be reified into a causal continuum of history. While photography, museum exhibitions, documentary films and other “objective evidence” have the power to formulate objects that gain prestige in their capacity to produce a narrative of what happened, the performance-film and the performance-film’s historical-material objects evoke the violences of history and participate in a constellation of history that does not verify historical progress or make a past reality stable and completely intelligible.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the objects in the film resurface and recycle as critical and unanswerable questions. The historical recitation is not meant to recognize and determine something—June 28, 1914 Serbia—as it really occurred or a person as they really were—The handsome Che Guevera. Rather, the relational mobility of historical-material objects threatens the definition of progress as the inevitable and automatic progression of perfecting mankind that can be traced along an infinite, normative, and linear course of socio-historical and technological development.¹⁰⁸ This historical debris—while deeply connected with actual and unfolding events and peoples—cannot be utilized to turn vibrant and chaotic living historical relation into ordered and easily communicable experience.

In *Home is in Our Past*, The gut-wrenching embodiments of the objects and performers along with the voiceovers unsettle accounts of seemingly recognizable and stable representations. Robin Hood is no longer a familiar story of a hero stealing from

the rich to give to the poor because Robin Hood is with Vietnam and Ash Wednesday and Your husband acted in King Lear in the War and...and...and. “And” is the operative conjunction that flexibly binds the constellation together—connecting thought with unfolding present, past, future, and ongoing relationality. The historical-material objects in the performance-film are disjoined from their familiar narratives and come to reside in a new assemblage, a new juxtaposition, a newly constituted and constituting relationship, not only with a coat of mud but also with others in the constellation. The recitation and negation is *ongoing*:

Liberalism	no
Vatican	no
KGB	no
Mass graves	no
CNN	no
Soup of prostitutes’ bones	no
Soup of worker’s eyes	no

The listing of fragments materializes an ongoing unfolding spatial proximity that encourages a sort of thigmotropism—a movement of growth in response to physical contact with a surface. This type of growth unfolds in processes of collage, which in particular became important for painters and sculptors in the modern era. The manipulation and conjugation of significant historical and cultural fragments in the process of assemblage in the performance-film—like the critical approaches of collage in modern art—confronts questions regarding reorienting and adhering things to a surface.

In the performance-film, the directors work with the problems of flatness and ephemerality—but unlike the collaged paintings and sculptures of modern art, the directors grapple with these issues in relation to historical processes and with things that disrupt the integrity of the picture-plane of History.

Objects—including the live performance recorded in the film—persist into the present providing a “long experience” with historical materiality. Benjamin describes long experience [*Erfahrung*] as the “prolonging of the past into the present” and subsequent preparation for the future.¹⁰⁹ In a durational flux, an object’s past combines with present constellations of memory and are linked to future encounters. Henri Bergson theorizes that duration—a continually varying spatio-temporal rhythm or flow of states (affect)—is the basis of matter, revealed in a depth perception as a present that is always beginning again.¹¹⁰ Prolonging the past into the present and thereby preparing the future, encounter with an object is always beginning again in each moment. In durational encounter with an object, voluntary and involuntary memory is active and responsive. The flow of affect that circulates through encounter with an object can undermine human mechanisms that attempt to isolate experience and prevent the shock of the past erupting into the present.¹¹¹ The durational materiality of encounter provides a way to continue engaging with things that have supposedly passed-away—to keep the involuntary memory close—without the danger of succumbing to a continual shock of every passing moment.

Benjamin takes up Bergson’s conceptualization of duration in “On some motifs in Baudelaire” as a way to understand the experience—or perhaps better stated the loss of

experience—that presented itself to Baudelaire under the conditions of modernity in the 19th century. From Bergson’s *Matter and Memory*, Benjamin sees in Proust the figure of the poet and storyteller that becomes for the Benjamin the subject that “synthetically” produces experience under the conditions in which experience can no longer “naturally” occur. However, Benjamin marks a distinction between Baudelaire—who takes up fragments of historical experience—and Bergson’s conception of duration, which “has become estranged from history.” Benjamin argues that Bergson avoids the experience—“the inhospitable, blinding age of big-scale industrialism”—from which his philosophy emerges by rejecting “any historical determination of memory” while preserving “links with empirical research.”¹¹² Even though in Benjamin’s estimation Bergson manages to avoid confronting historical tradition (and death), Benjamin also asserts that the involuntary memory is marked by the historical situation that gives rise to it—combining the contents of an individual past with a collective past.

In working to theorize the historical situation that gives rise to the involuntary memory, Benjamin takes up the “aura” of the object as “the associations which, at home in the *mémoire involontaire*, tend to cluster around the object of perception.”¹¹³

Benjamin argues that the experience of the aura of an object—which he claims to be in decline due to the new technology of the camera and photography—relies on:

the transposition of a response common in human relationships to the relationship between the inanimate or natural object and man. The person we look at, or who feels he is being looked at, looks at us in turn. To perceive the aura of an object we look at means to invest it with the ability to look at us in return.¹¹⁴

For Benjamin, the perception of the aura of an object corresponds to the accumulated “data”—which are not a set of facts but material contents—of the involuntary memory. What Benjamin perhaps does not explicitly take into consideration in the notion that a camera or photograph does not return our gaze—is that the durational materiality of encounter permeates the material contents of memory even and perhaps especially in a “deathly” or “inanimate” historical modality that permeates even the photograph and the recorded image. Even though Benjamin’s conception of aura and Bergson’s conception of duration might both be seen as rooted in metaphysical foundations estranged from history, the experience of duration or the aura of an object—whether synthetically or naturally produced—cannot be extricated from historical materiality. Therefore, capitalism’s abstractions come to bear upon how Bergson’s “long experience” or Benjamin’s “aura” might be understood and experienced in encounter with objects. In other words, how do we invest or not objects with the ability to look at us and how do we invest or not objects with the capacity to hold in their structure a historical and/or metaphysical world order?

In *Home is in Our Past*, disrupting the integrity of an ephemeral continuum of History—and of the “live” ephemerality of performance—the directors stage a particular recyclability of objects in remnants that bubble up from a pool of mud and in spoken citations of personal, cultural, and historical figures and events in a critical constellation in which these particular fragments of the past find themselves in a present moment in which enlightenment values such as freedom and equality remain historically unfulfilled. The collaged listing—of human history, acts and events of war, intimate and

marginalized bodies, figures of culture and revolution, personal and communal images—breaks with and de-stabilizes linear and narrative historical chronology by listing fragments outside of conventional associations and conventional narratives. The listing exposes a movement of the recyclable that grows out of uncommon juxtapositions and the capacity of objects to collage in unexpected and critical ways. The recycling activity that the directors take up in an encounter with objects and history operates with a combinatory principle that attends to the obscurity of the specific and unique lived contexts and meanings of an event's realization or occurrence without aiming to reconstitute those lived contexts within a continuum of history that is invested in the apparent inevitable perfectibility of mankind through man's work of mastering history and himself (and others). The quality of listing with which the directors situate objects—and with which I have typed some of these things on the page—is more like a to-do list than a lineage of things in a hierarchical or chronological order. A to-do list is an ongoing and ever-changing constellation of fragments where the things listed are linked but not teleologically situated together. The recitation does not list a mass of historical and cultural data in an accumulative fashion for representing a sequence of events in a universal history—or a live performance that progresses to its documentation. In contrast to a list that might establish a causal link between diverse historical moments, the performance-film builds its list with a constructive approach. This list is a constellation that is wrought with tensions.

In placing singular catastrophes such as Dachau, the Hiroshima bombing, and October 1917 gulag in the same constellation with pop culture and political figures—the

directors challenge the idea that historical-material objects are just materializations of current images and a current reality. Instead, as Benjamin claims, “They [phenomena] are saved through the exhibition of the fissure within them.”¹¹⁵ The ongoing negation and recitation works as an exposure of fissures in history, identity, historical discourse, and documentation of an ephemeral “live” event. The work of negation that the performance-film does in the response of “no” to each and every statement and question is not to deny that an event occurred or that a cultural form does not exist or that a marginalized group of people do not have a unique community and history but is an increase that adds “more” to a living historical ephemeral-continuing relation between objects, peoples, events, and histories that persist. An object from the past on one hand might be made to speak a vision of history that is bound to certain stable intelligibilities that limit the possibilities of thought. On the other hand, an object might be the very materiality that exposes the fissures in phenomena and history and historical narratives, expanding the possibilities of thought.

The recitation of a multifarious selection of fragments—including events and figures of capitalism, communism, revolution, and human progress and enlightenment—has the capacity to continually rework politically and ethically *without answering* the question of what it means to be human—immersed in an ungraspable and historically rooted relationality with (more-than-human) others. The directors are involved in and diverge from a modernist critique that in part envisions the past as a landscape of receding thresholds that cannot be passed through again. Therefore, *Home is in Our Past* participates in modernism’s distaste for meaning based on historical narratives and norms

that participate in systems and traditions of control.¹¹⁶ The historical-material objects in the performance-film are presented as fragments not to disregard context but to enliven the inexplicable connection between multiple spatial and temporal lived and living contexts in a perhaps bastard Modernist way that aims to look beyond hegemonic traditions that might even include commitments to objective science and autonomous art. Herein, the performance-film states numerous familiar and unfamiliar cultural and historical objects as *fissures in perspective*. Notably, the disjunctive principles associated with Modernism and its foregrounding of a nonperspective space informs a space that has multiple and mobile (non)perspectives manifesting as and reorienting in fissures in perspective. These fissures are in part realized in scattered cultures dislodged from specific locations—people and things out of cultural place and historical continuity. In these fissures, unexpected juxtapositions can be made and relationality emphasized. The work of moving through constellation grows through a critical experimentation that connects things beyond classification and causality. This is not to say that anything goes or that everything is relative. Instead, the construction gestures toward the unrepresentable in experimental presentation and the unrepresentable relational liveliness in encounter that exceeds distinctly knowable lived experience.

Home is in Our Past is a staging of a pool of historical leftovers that can be experimentally and vitally juxtaposed however briefly against another pool of object remnants—an oceanic garbage patch. In 1997, Charles Moore came across a high-density area of plastic now called the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. In contrast to the historical-material remnants of *Home is in Our Past*, the remnants of the Great Pacific

Garbage Patch mark not just that objects participate in and emerge from relation beyond a linear and intelligible history of humanity in ways that disrupt the continuity of history but also in ways that more simply deny the human capacity to be rid of—to be outside of relation with—anything. Relatively low winds and ocean currents contribute to the coalescence of neuston plastics in particularly “stagnant” areas of the Pacific Ocean. While these areas are not truly stagnant, their relative calm allows a glimpse of the floating, fluid, and free-forming spatiality of neuston plastic-objects that have become nearly invisible to the human eye. This high-density plastic island that mostly churns about and degrades below the water’s surface attests that an object—even one that is perhaps most forgotten and thrown away—might resurface as an active and powerful fragment that releases and breathes (toxic) chemicals and acts as (pollution) food in chains of consumption and in historical relationality. Neuston plastics not only resurface, but these fragments also retain unknown traces of other lives having gone through long and arduous processes of travel and degradation.¹¹⁷

Each garbage pool or patch is an actualization of having not been spared the worst but are not—if not just for their sheer size, murky depth, and mobility—easily recycled back into an ordered system either to produce an account of historical progress or to produce stable and safe identities for human consumers. A garbage pool resurfaces while being submerged—remotely beyond and intimately with social networks—and fragments and remobilizes meaning production. Islands of garbage—whether they are Neuston plastics or dislocated objects in a performance-film production—pool together and collect beyond anthropocentrically configured use, needs, and purposes. The leftover objects

that comprise the performance-film's pool and the garbage patch in many ways are no longer "ours" even as they are taken up in constructive constellations.¹¹⁸ Instead, they are continually relationally and historically entwined with others making meaning fluid, tactile, and contentious—not alleviating doubt but resurfacing in the midst of uncertainty. Herein, objects do not define and stabilize an ordered system but participate in fluid relation—not in the distribution of current simulations and pre-formed identities but in the activation of nearness and distance where ongoing movement, even in apparent stillness, in the now has the capacity to continually enliven and reorient relation.

An object is hard to get rid of. Not only do we easily become attached to things; the things that we recycle come back in other forms and as other things, which enables a practice of constellation that critically reaches beyond the currents of history and the "liveness" of recognizable historical events. The performance-film's pool of historical-material objects and the garbage patch do not demonstrate that things go in and out of fashion but that the (ocean) current (of history) continually re-constellates—and can be critically constellated—in a now that keeps on going. In an eerie modality—in an *exceptionally* moving fluid and fluctuating way—time "stills" in a garbage patch-pool of histories and leftovers.

This exceptional and paradoxical movement—which can hardly be seen by the human eye—emphasizes that ways of seeing are not limited to vision but expand through growing physical contact. Amongst other debris, the fragmented objects of history rise up and pile up on the bones of workers, on the monuments of revolutions, on the scientific classifications of time and space. Benjamin's articulation of the *Angelus Novus*

in Paul Klee's painting indicates a tension between looking at history as a linear stream of progressive events and looking-*bodily*-relationally immersed in the ongoing storm *with* the debris. The angel of history faces the past in which he sees a single catastrophe piling up wreckage before him. While the angel of history sees the piling-up and wants to intervene, humans see only a chain of events proceeding along a continuum—such as in the linearity from “liveness” to “documentation.” A storm—what humans call progress—prevents the angel's intervention and forces him into the future that lies behind him. Importantly, Benjamin points out that the angel's eyes and mouth are *open wide* and his wings are *spread*. The angel's bodily way of seeing through immersion and movement contrasts humanity's way of seeing in proving itself linearly through destruction and events that are done in the name of progress—and perhaps for the performance-film, in the name of justice. In disrupting the storm of progress, ways of seeing are wrested from exploitative traditions providing—in Benjamin's words—a “unique experience with the past” rather than an “eternal image of the past.”¹¹⁹ The unique experience is a relationally bodily—and critically—rooted experience rather than a documentation of a “live” past event.

The directors of *Home is in Our Past* strive to cultivate a unique embodied and critical experience through the enunciations and negations of seemingly recognizable historical objects and with the repeated and distressed physicalities and guttural vocalizations of the two “live” performers that create a relentless, uncertain, and distressed atmosphere along with the male and female voiceovers. Interspersed with the listing of events and figures of history, pop culture, and science—as part of the

constellation—fragments of a fragmentary narrative of interrogation unfolds. The scenario in part articulates:

Would you marry me	no
Would you make love to me	no
Would you like a cigarette	no
Your husband's taken cyanide in the war	no

By interspersing personal questions and statements with historical and cultural events and figures, the directors place an intimate human-human relation in constellation with historical-material objects. The uniformity of the woman's response both asserts a negative response to the man's phrases and questions and also affirms her own voice. The individualized responses in the unfolding experience implies a different but not unrelated weight between her responses to the personal questions and her responses to the broader cultural and historical objects. The experience of interrogation is distinct from and yet connected to the historical-material objects. The negation—which is not a negation of the singularity of each fragment but a negation of the capacity to reduce that singularity into a stable narrative—in response to more personal propositions and questions makes relations with history and historical-material objects extremely intimate. And extremely and subtly violent, as the voiceovers speak:

Is the blinding light okay	no
Are you happy with the worms in your wounds	no
Would you ask for god's forgiveness	no
Would you ask for my forgiveness	no

Are you a virgin

Are you a virgin

yes

The unfolding interrogation in a seemingly present moment in the performance-film—unfolding simultaneously with the live performance—is a moment of occurrence in the present that is recognizable in violences of the past. Not only does this fragment of a lived experience of interrogation call forth the intimacy of historical relations, it also vocalizes and evokes an experience of violence that might be traced through and witnessed in history. The voiceovers articulate the violence in an ambiguous scene in the present in which the viewer cannot see or understand the entirety and basis of the interrogation.

At the end of the interrogation, everything in the live performance is set aflame—burning with an eerie blue light; the male voice punctuates the image:

I was kind to her....She is a virgin. She'll go to heaven if she dies a virgin. So in the name of justice I will rape her nineteen times fearing that her presence might pollute heaven. I'll execute her by shooting afterwards in the name of justice.

You can also watch these films to testify that justice has been done. May god have mercy on you and I and may he punish the girl who would become a woman in the arms of justice (italics added).

As the directors call into question ways of seeing and testifying to what has happened—emphasizing the tension and intimate connection between experience and narrative that testifies to a past event—an unknown woman becomes the penultimate recycled object, whose voice affirms a negative answer to all questions except one. It is a fragment that

coats the entire performance and history like mud and sweat but instead with the filth of the traffic in women—as if the male voiceover might have spoken the irresolvable and beyond meaning object-phrase fragment “The traffic in women” in his ongoing recitation and constellation.¹²⁰

Home is in Our Past ends with a recorded clip from Tadeusz Kantor’s *The Dead Class* (1975).¹²¹ In the clip, the Old People enter the performance space with the wax bodies of children carried on their backs and slowly encircle an arrangement of school desks while a waltz plays in the background. The Old People take a seat at the desks and then individually place the children in a heap. In the article *Tadeusz Kantor and Hamed Taheri Of Political Theatre/Performance*, Michal Kobialka directs our attention to the importance of this imagery. Kobialka asserts that the barrier constructed between the actor and spectator in Kantor’s image—a barrier by which the Old people exist beyond the gaze of the spectators—refuses to provide the spectators with a nostalgic reconstruction of the past or a consoling or pleasurable construction of the future.¹²² Kobialka marks the influence of Kantor’s work on Taheri’s directing practice and political approach to theatre that is critically “in reality but not of it.” Herein, Taheri’s directing practice—and Kantor’s—is aligned with the historical materialist modality that Benjamin explicates in *Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian*. In contrast to the dialectical image, Benjamin explains that the historical materialist abandons the epic element in history in a renouncement of a contemplative attitude and instead takes up history with a constructive modality that attends to the specificity in historical

constitution. For Benjamin, historical materialism in this essay hinges on “a consciousness of the present which explodes the continuum of history.”¹²³

Home is In Our Past is woven into the present not as a set of recovered facts but as a work that remains uncompleted. The performance-film also lays bare a certain rationalization made for the social and historical exchange, rape, and murder of an other in the final moments of the performance with a fragment of a young girl who “becomes a woman in the arms of justice” not despite documentary evidence of the horrific event but in cooperation with processes of documentation. The directors do not offer any resolution or new rationalizations for any violent but justified treatment of others. Instead, the performance-film articulates a detached—not realistic or hermetically sealed—horrific articulation of the wrenching pain of an unnamed singular other-woman affected by a barrage of historical-material objects and questions posed to her. Rather, the directors critique processes of transmitting, witnessing, and justifying history that reenact the exploitative violences of history. The audience is left with no simple concrete message or story through which a systematic resolution to the problems of historical progress might be deployed. The directors encourage instead a critical and constructive approach to ways of seeing and documenting historical objects that continue recycling through the cracks of history. The approach takes up detachment that does not entail a way of seeing configured in terms of the objective observer but instead involvement in constructive and relational processes that do not re-forge exploitation.

I began this chapter with the performance-film *Home is in Our Past* in order to examine how historical-material objects participate in ongoing historical relations

through encounter and activity that gives rise to a tension between the capacity of objects to verify human progress, history, and identity and the proliferation of objects that fragments histories and identities. Historical materialism is a particular critical modality in which an object engages the limits of historical sensibility. Through layering of film and live performance and its assembled juxtapositions of historical-material objects—the historical materiality unfolding in the performance-film affirms that “pastness” is not a certification of a universal collective memory but a questioning of how what has taken place resurges in the now through historical and relational processes that disrupt the linearity between ephemeral “liveness” and recorded documentation. I continue thinking through how performance operate relationally at the nexus of human-object encounter through a practice of collecting that unfolds in a 2007 *Explosion of a Memory/Description of a Picture* performance. I argue that a practice of collecting in performance does not indicate a repurposing of objects by human actors for making performance recognizable but a living dynamism and magnetism that helps inform how performance operates as a becoming.

A Practice of Collecting

If the historical-material objects in *Home is in Our Past* rupture a continuum of historical significations—in the 2007 performance of Heiner Müller’s *Explosion of a Memory/Description of a Picture*, which I directed for the University of Minnesota Xperimental Theatre—objects create constantly unfolding lively images that are not about stable interpretations but moment-to-moment materially embedded sensations.¹²⁴

German playwright and director Heiner Müller wrote *Explosion of a Memory/Description*

of a Picture in 1984—a seven-page text of ongoing movement containing no commas or character indications. I directed the play and chose to write about this performance in a chapter on objects because—like *Home is in Our Past*—Müller’s text of transitioning pictures articulates a speculation on “what happened” in a constellation of occurrences. However, in contrast to the performance-film, the text situates its questioning of pastness in relation to memory rather than a continuum of history—and in unfolding strange and unrecognizable material images with objects rather than objects that are connected to recognizable historical events. The visceral descriptions of images or pictures are entwined in the ruptures and fissures of memory. The text troubles the seamlessness of memory through highly mobile images and objects disjoined from a logical narrative. The text attracts me as a director, visual artist, and junk collector in part because of its refusal to organize objects and materiality in a stable and coherent manner.

In the performance in the Xperimental Theatre on entering the black box, audience members slowly realize that they must walk down and through the performance space, which is saturated with bizarre and discomfiting things—including four human actors as still as the other objects in the space. Many audience members are visibly uncomfortable walking through and so close to strange and discarded things. They might have wondered how odd the objects seem—asking, why are these bizarre things together? The audience in part sees and comes close to—some daring to touch:

a metal washtub filled with black dirt and dried vines; a tree of wire, branches, and plastic hovering above the floor; a six-foot bundle of prefabricated sticks planted in a basket of ash; a wooden table split along its length; a staircase leading

to nowhere; a rope hanging nothing; overfilled boxes and crates; plastic legs and arms; a white cage with a white bird and white goblet inside; an old doll with empty eyes sitting in a metal baby carriage; yellow, burgundy, and blue plastic sun and wild flowers; an IV cart draped with a white sheet; four human actors in stillness; blue Styrofoam clouds hanging on red plastic tubing; four child size chairs; a cracked and peeling painted backdrop; multiple shelves and pedestals holding among other things a deer with glassy eyes, plastic dishes, a teapot, crayons, odd containers and bottles, a wash basin, tattered cloth, a small white puppet with large feet, animal bones, and more.

The audience views at first from above and passes through the material-image, which is framed with a maze of interconnected pieces of metal unistrut attached to the stage floor that had been stripped down to its old wooden floorboards. The rough wood floor forms a fluid and permeable border that the audience is required to pass through—encountering the objects closely—on the way to their seats. Each passage changes the image and highlights the mobile and uncertain relation that everything in the space has with each other.

The stage space overflows with sensuous and rich heterogeneous material objects that paint a collage of images with the mobility of a memory and a dream, disallowing the audience to form a stable idea or vision of the picture. The objects are not mere context for human action but demand the full sensory involvement—the intimate relational sensitivity—of human others. As a director, I do not simply use or manipulate an object but rather wait and respond to how an object takes up space and moves

perceptibly and imperceptibly within the surroundings and with other elements and movements. In other words, I encounter an object with emphasis on an object as already animate and relationally embedded prior to anything I might do to the object. Herein, directing intentionality is not just internal to subjectivity intending towards the object but rather is “immanent in the activity itself, in the gestural synergy” of environmental conditions—in relational processes of living.¹²⁵ Working with objects as a director in processes of collecting and assembling highlights the tension between making performance as an authoritarian manipulation and making performance as embedded encounter that includes the human and the more-than-human.

In the performance of *Explosion of a Memory/Description of a Picture*, the human actors intertwine with objects in their stillness, in the mechanized and vehicular quality of their movements, and in their absence of distinct character and emotion. In one unfolding image and moment in the picture—faintly with growing intensity—the twisted melody of the carnivalesque incarnates the human bodies as animate objects. The human actors transform: a grim soldier reminiscent of plastic toy soldiers purchased in mass, a clownish puppet whose arms and legs swing in unison, a jewelry-box ballerina awkwardly graceful, and finally a disorganized body whose movement contains no logic. In this moment and others, the actors take on the quality of objects not just because of their acting style. Against the backdrop of the space where so many objects are collected and stored, static and yet mobile, up on shelves and in baskets, the actors have the quality of objects—like traces of something remembered and forgotten—in a collection. The

boundaries between an object and a human are confused in a movement that gives life to people *and* things.

The relational domain from which humans and objects emerge grows with the uncertainty of animacy—of whether a supposedly living organism is in fact inanimate and of whether a supposedly inanimate object is in fact alive. The mobilization of personhood and objecthood directs the senses towards an object's relational liveliness rooted in encounter rather than coherent usefulness. In other words, through the fluctuating limits where personhood and objecthood cannot be determined, an object no longer can be relegated to a role determined through human use and manipulation. Junk things like those in the performance in particular emerge and live beyond commodity production insofar as they do not function as tools for manufacture, branding tools for identities, or historical tools for progress. In a relationally understood performance, objects do not produce a delimited and definable product for human consumption, coherent and stabilized human identities, or a unified reality for the coherence of human society and knowledge but rather are continually constituted in and emerging from relational encounter.

While Müller's text speculates on what had happened, what might happen, and what is happening—the performance and objects in the performance likewise move incrementally and speculatively moment-to-moment prohibiting the formation of a coherent narrative represented in what materializes onstage. Instead of forming a stable vision of a distinct and recognizable reality, the objects realize a heightened sense of unfolding reality-relationality in their fragmentary and mobile montage. The

performance moves uninhibitedly and sensuously—through multiple perceptual orientations in which objects pass amongst shifting figures and images. The odd unfolding objects and moments in the performance—which include a flower offering, a spit ball war, a dance between puppets, a sacrifice, a dinner for children, a walk on the grid, a bath, multiple transformations of bodies, and the falling movements of ash, a woman, a cup, a doll, blood, and shadows—makes for a complex relational unfolding that renders a seamless picture and memory impotent for the determination of a simplified narrative or meaning.

The excessive creation and destruction of stage pictures in the performance rejects the idea that a theatrical performance—and a memory—is grounded in a cohesive and organized content. Instead, the performance materializes a relationally adaptable movement in images and creative potential in encounter with objects—seen with multiple I/eyes—that have the power to disturb and haunt bodies and structures of meaning. The performance does not test the boundedness of a frame—as a seamless divide between inside and outside—but one’s capacity for perception in a mode of collecting where every object and thing is living-dying, animate, and generative.¹²⁶

Walter Benjamin explicates the work of the collector—in his/her consciousness of an object in the present—as a way to rupture the continuity of and render the work of history incomplete.¹²⁷ Objects hold in their material structure multiple histories that cannot be reified into a continuous and linear history of production and consumption. Benjamin’s explication of the work of the collector contrasts in part Susan Stewart’s argument that, “The collection replaces history with *classification*, with order beyond the

realm of temporality.”¹²⁸ While Stewart’s work aligns with Benjamin in terms of the removal of an object from its original context and use, Stewart argues that the recontextualization of objects in the collection occurs via classification and an object’s seriality, which constructs an order that metaphorically stands in for everyday reality. Stewart states, “The collection is not constructed by its elements; rather, it comes to exist by means of its principle of organization.”¹²⁹ The process of collecting—that Benjamin articulates as a practice that sheds objects of their use value and ruptures the linearity of history—is in Stewart’s explication the complete aestheticization of use value and the replacement of historical narrative with the “narrative of the individual subject—that is, the collector himself.”¹³⁰ Significantly, Benjamin’s collected object does not order a stable narrative of individual subjectivity any more than it is capable of ordering a linear historical narrative.

The contrast between these figurations of collecting outlines the difference between a museal practice of collecting, by either an individual or an institution—that orders its objects for a seemingly coherent representation of the subject, the world, and its history—and the collecting behavior of—what Stewart calls—packrats.¹³¹ Even though Stewart mentions nonhuman packrat behavior to articulate what should not be considered “collection,” human packrats do indeed collect. The difference is that packrats, hoarders, and the like collect based on sensuality not seriality. Moreover, we must acknowledge the negative connotations that such terms (packrat, hoarder, miser) carry and realize that a compulsive collector might have a sensual love and infatuation with things that implies no psychological malfunction in their character. In referencing Jean Baudrillard’s

distinction between collection and accumulation, Stewart claims that a collection for its own sake and for its own movement is an insane collection born of a gesture of compulsion.¹³² Whether insane or not—these collections no longer rely on the mode of containment found in systems of classification. They are no longer the antithesis to creation situated in an order where an object has value only in terms of their serial position in reference to other objects. These “insane” objects have value in their mobility—sensually and relationally rather than serially and positionally. In a few words, Stewart recognizes that collections of ephemera and disposable items—that in my understanding relationally continue and constellate—might be formed based upon the intrinsic qualities of an object rather than a principle of order evident in a museum’s attempt at coherent representation.¹³³

Benjamin points out in his essay on Fuchs that there are many kinds of collectors that are motivated by a variety of differing impulses. The range includes the historian such as Fuchs, the exhibitionist who displays souvenirs from his travels, the packrat who delights in quantities, the bibliophile who does not completely detach the object from use, the bourgeois collector who adorns the interior of his home, and even ants, birds, and children as collectors. The various figures and impulses of the collector encounter a diverse array of objects through differing approaches. In terms of objects like those in the *Explosion* performance that as junk no longer carry value as a commodity for commodity exchange and for a collector as an artist-director, the objects in the collection have been severed from original use not only by “falling” out of the circulation of commodities but also by being taken up in a collection that hinges on quantity as much as

quality.¹³⁴ Even though spare few words are spoken throughout the performance—giving way to the priority of materiality—every word and every moving object carries the power of evocation. Objects emerging in the performance negotiate in a visible depth of sensuous expressivity where what is belongs to the visible bleeds into spoken words and tactile movement. The performance space vibrates with a complex and evasive tracing of in/corporeal activity: objects amassing on the floor, repeating gestures, and returning to previously occupied positions; movements and vague whisperings permeating and transforming images; and every thing and every one casting a shadow that generates a surplus of lively living effects in materiality. The performance is a sensual movement of things in a materialization of a possible unfolding memory and imagination in an image that cannot be determinately solved or mastered.

In Benjamin's words, the collector enacts "the deepest enchantment" enclosing particular items within a "magic circle" by placing objects in the "closest conceivable relation to things of the same kind."¹³⁵ In fact, Benjamin emphasizes that, "the world is present, and indeed ordered, in each of his objects. Ordered, however, according to a surprising and, for the profane understanding, *incomprehensible* connection" (italics added).¹³⁶ In Benjamin's writings, we find a contradiction between the "mere" or "irrational" presence of an object that on one hand cannot be resolved and on the other is sought to be overcome through the collection as a "historical system." The artist as a collector emphasizes the incomprehensibility of objects and collections, which provide a way to think through how an object relationally "steps into our lives" as a singular and unfolding world rooted in the materiality of encounter rather than the production of the

commodity form. In a collection, an object is wrested from its useful functions to inhabit the dynamic and fluid space of material relations in newly and ongoing forming juxtapositions. An artist as a collector plays with—or perhaps better stated, assembles with—an ongoing multiplicity of singular objects, however incomprehensible or inaccessible they might remain.

In the performance of *Explosion of a Memory/Description of a Picture*, the lack of a coherently ordered perspective from which the collection of objects might be understood as fitting together realizes a creative force where the continuous and unexpected changes in the picture occur through moment-to-moment movements of objects in the space. The movement of the objects occupies a ground that constantly shifts directions causing the close and tactile observer to see without any stable perspective for a complete and only optically oriented picture. Tactility not only refers to a sense of touch via the most obvious tangibility of actual contact but also refers to touch that is visual and aural as well—where all senses work together in synaesthetic participation. The tactile shifts in the performance’s ongoing movement releases the audience from an organizing role and asks the audience to pay attention or adjust to infinite (too large) and minute (too small) sensual shifts occurring beyond their perception. With constant reorientation and without landmarks, audience members are drawn into the relationally unfolding image. A relational performance practice includes the audience in the performance along with the performers, objects, lighting, etc. as part of the sensuous circulation of activity—not exactly positioning the audience as passive

onlookers *or* active participants but somewhere beyond those distinct positions in tactile encounter.

Likewise, a collector looks to an object *antitaxonomically* as he/she handles objects with tireless care—attending to their unique rhythms and becoming enveloped by the sensual qualities, dynamics, and magnetic pull of an object. A collector feels near to objects—while looking into their distance—as if in a dream.¹³⁷ In this dream—which is not opposed to reality but woven into the same fabric—anything and everything is of concern to, can take a hold of, and has the potential to possess a collector. The collector encounters, experiences, and perceives things as if in a dream where every thing is of concern and has the capacity to strike him or her in a “rhythm of perception” that shows his life in constant flux.¹³⁸ Even the most banal or broken down objects have the power to halt a collector in his/her tracks. Insofar as the objects and the images in the performance generate a rhythm of perception in an unceasing tactile movement until the performance obtusely ends, the audience cannot fully interpret the ways in which significations are formed and reformed through object images. Instead, the audience might only fleetingly locate empty or messy significations as they are pulled into and along the cycle of imagistic transformations. Where picture frames amputate and sparse words are spoken like carcasses—the audience’s habit for narrative coherency must give in to a visceral undulation between what is materially there and what is immaterially not there—and more importantly what is *immaterially there* and what is *materially not there*. In this obscurity, every object punctures and punctuates the image and human sensibility—as if in a memory but moreover in the openness of encounter.

The constantly shifting images of *Explosion of a Memory/Description of a Picture*—both in the text and the performance—materialize a force of encounter with objects and a force of mobile consciousness that pricks the viewer in practice and ongoing relationality. The performance in particular emphasizes that encounter with an object is not about seeking and finding the distinct object but sensing the wound, the prick, and the disturbance.¹³⁹ In the performance, every object participates in the emergence and puncturing of the images—including the audience before the “distinct performance” began, during, and after it abruptly ended. The performance’s object-images most explicitly do not fit together to make a contained and containable picture or a memorial of any recognizable event. Rather, the audience is engaged in a process of juggling the pieces not in a narrativizing strategy but in a process of making and re-making that requires the audience to wrestle with not knowing—with being struck with what do I make of this (object) and what does it make of me? In a moment-to-moment reorientation, the performance does not follow along a linear progression resulting in a resolution but instead is more like the sonorous movements of music resonating in the very fabric of its expressive collected objects. The performance emphasizes the sonority of objects in an odd collection in which the audience might come to think of human-object encounter in a way that is not about careless use and consumption, masterful construction of a hermetically sealed human reality in an anthropocentrically normatizing system, or even sentimental attachment—all operating within capitalist modernity with the fetishization of the commodity form.

The relationship between the collector and collected objects is a relation of possession. However, a collector's possession—his/her motivation to have—is again not determined by an object's use or exchange value but instead in terms of an object's knowledge, tactility, rhythm, and flux. The collector browses through the confusion of the world and selects objects with a tactile sensibility that—in contrast to an optical sensibility—acknowledges that, “every single thing in this system [collection] becomes an [magic] encyclopedia of all knowledge of the epoch, the landscape, the industry, and the owner from which it comes.”¹⁴⁰ A collector is driven by an irrepressible passion to seek out and find the perfect objects for the collection. Yet, a collector's selection is as much driven by chance as it is by passion—even finding a sought after object in the middle of the street.¹⁴¹ The collector always seeks out objects to add to the collection, but this seeking—in contrast to how it might appear—is not just enacted by the collector. Rather, an object draws a collector in. An object possesses the collector as much as he/she possesses an object.¹⁴² However, this “as much as” does not indicate an identity between the subject and the object but a qualitative irreducibility of encounter.

Adorno's immanent critique with its emphasis on mediation in confrontation of all forms of identity thinking presupposes the “non-identity” between the subject and the object. The confrontation of identity thinking through negative dialectics is for Adorno tied to a confrontation with an instrumental rationality—in capitalist modernity—that in part transforms the producing subject into an object of production and the object of production into its subject. Adorno argues, “The word alienation...acknowledges by the very tenacity with which it views the alien external world as institutionally opposed to the

subject—in spite of all its protestations of reconciliation—the continuing irreconcilability of subject and object, which constitutes the theme of dialectical criticism.”¹⁴³ The impoverishment of the subject occurs with the externalization, objectification, and abstraction of subjectivity—in the conflation of subject and object and the technological subordination of nature. However, Adorno asserts that subjectivity breaks from social and historical forces of objectification and gestures towards an emancipatory modality that combats a capitalist mode of production in a “determinate negation” that can never take on any concrete determination. For Adorno, art is the domain in which a critique of history—and capitalism’s real abstractions—might be carried out.¹⁴⁴ Adorno writes, “In the modern administered world the only adequate way to appropriate art works is one where the uncommunicable is communicated and where the hold of reified consciousness is thus broken.”¹⁴⁵ The seemingly indeterminate critique of reality materialized in aesthetic illusion becomes determinate because it realizes that “the whole is false.” Therefore, the “totality” must cease all conceptual attempts at the determination of the subject but rather must take up its creative materialization in the debris of historical materiality. For Adorno, the constellation operates as a de-regulated and critical confrontational approach to reality that might be manifest in art as well as “non-identitarian” thinking in which the subject most explicitly is not identified with anything external to it.¹⁴⁶

Even though in the *Explosion* performance it is difficult to demarcate a conventionally construed opposition between human subjects and inanimate objects, meaning making in the performance emphasizes the processes of making (together)

rather than the identitarian project of stabilized and coherent meaning rooted in a pre-formed and impermeable Subject. In the performance, the overabundance of objects shapes and animates the space as the space shapes and animates the objects. In the primordial mud and ash that comes to coat the landscape through the course of the performance: an exhumed doll peers out, incarnated puppets sustaining recently broken limbs overlap each other in a mound, a hand with three-inch steel nails at the finger tips severs a surface. Woman, man, animal, plastic dishes intertwine in the material image. The space is neither a frame nor a stage that contains the objects but rather is bound up with the objects. As Maurice Merleau-Ponty claims, “Space is not the setting (real or logical) in which things are arranged, but the means whereby the position of things becomes possible.”¹⁴⁷ Significantly, the position of things emerges from an unfolding embedded relationality where space, objects, actors, sound, audience, etc. move—acting with, in, and on each other.

Perhaps the most visible and tactile way in which an object and the surroundings unfold with others is in the doubling of *everything* by shadows. Every thing within the stage-image either has a shadow or the possibility of a shadow. Herein, the lighting serves to materialize the relational participation of an object and a space in a mutual mutation that creates doubts as to whether supposedly alive beings are inanimately mobile and whether supposedly lifeless objects are in fact alive. In a disarming and mobile lighting, the performance manifests shadows and objects-bodies playing between the corporeal and incorporeal—the substantial and insubstantial. Two hand-held shop lights are used to light the show with the exception of one scene. A lighting operator—

who is elevated above and behind the audience—creates the lighting with the movement in the performance by moving as the performance unfolds. Therefore, the lighting is different for each night and follows along with the creative unfolding of the action and embodied energy in the show.

The night before the performance “opened” I cut my lighting design—which I had been told was quite beautiful—and decided to light the show with mobile manually operated clamp lights. While there was nothing wrong with the more traditional lighting design—and in some ways I lamented dispensing with the traditional lighting because the hanging lamps provided a nice quality of light—the space, the performance, the objects, and the shadows *live* emerging in the spontaneous and responsive lighting of the clamp lights. The impromptu lighting creates a moving stillness on stage and in the space. Often, the light and shadows move but the objects apparently do not. As a colleague noted, the lighting creates an effect like “the sun moving around a sunflower, thus changing the sunflower’s shadow but not its stillness.” The audience also enters and exits like shadows.

With so many incredibly mobile shadows in the production, even though shadows supposedly cannot be severed from what they double, these shadows appear detachable—not as an effect of objects or events but as apparitions capable of their own doubling, capable of their own activity and an overabundance of effects that affectively modulates awareness. In writing about the new technology of a camera, William Henry Fox Talbot claims a shadow—being the most transitory of things—might be magically fixed in a position, which it only previously could occupy momentarily.¹⁴⁸ Even though the

performance attempts to partake in the creation of marvelous images, its shadows are anything but fixed or fleeting. Shadows—even photographic shadows—are open and continue to unfold. The shadows in the production are persistent—transitioning but not transitory. Here, the encounter in the performance space in relationality is a shadow generator. As a generator of shadow objects and images, the performance creates an uncanny world emerging from an always-moving haunted relationality, preparing the audience to see but never allowing them to see definitively. The shadowed and shadowing space activates the imagination and arouses concern-fear in bodies and objects become unfamiliar twice over—once in the displacement of their familiarity and again in shadowing. These shadows are an exceptionally eerie multiplication because they shadow already uncanny and animate inanimate objects.

With a moving collection of objects and shadows in the performance, each image vacillates-wavers with presence and absence, touching on moments when something ceases to exist.¹⁴⁹ The audience moves with uncertainty through the image and the shadowy movements double every body—creating a sense and rhythm of time passing in a continual and persistent relational shape-shifting. The continually shifting in/corporeal objects in the performance emerge in a flux of continual change that enacts continuity *and* impermanence. Uncertain passage places a body in contact with the unrepresentable and an un/certain death. This mobile sensibility and modulating awareness reveals that an object cannot be mastered by an “I” or the eyes. Herein, the eyes have not lost their ability to see but instead are overwhelmed and saturated in their in/ability to see too

much. The eyes then are not a tool for vision but rather are a threshold for uncertainty and monstrous perceptions.

The I/eye negotiations and performances of objects, bodies, social relations, memories, and experiences are rooted in uncertainty. Herein, the collected objects produce—and perhaps are a machine for—a fear of being robbed of one's eyes. The audience in the performance is required to feel their way through the performance as much as see their way through—or perhaps better stated feel their way through with their eyes. In becoming wide-eyed and at all junctures—in all moments—the audience is threatened with and brought to the brink of losing its own human eyes as masters of rational knowledge in the construction of objects and images. However, to sense, to really see, in an ongoing relationality from which the performance emerges is to be immersed in blurry meaning and uncertainty—seeing by seeing less and more, knowing by knowing less and more.

Müller's text states:

who OR WHAT inquires about the picture, TO LIVE IN A MIRROR, is the man doing the dance step: I, my grave his face, I: the woman with the wound at her throat, right and left in her hands the split bird, blood on the mouth, I: the bird who with the script of his beak shows the murderer the way into the night, I: the frozen storm.¹⁵⁰

I cannot tell you what these words exactly mean. I do not know the coherent story they tell. The words provoke me like a snowflake provokes me, or the carcass of a dead bird provokes me, or a pristine (or well-worn) mass-produced Barbie doll provokes me. As an

artist-director and a collector, the text provokes me to assemble or better yet to participate in relational processes of assemblage with others. What do these words provoke me to animate? Well, that is the question, who OR WHAT? The question is also the answer, who OR WHAT? The provocation is the animation. The animation is the relation. Performance thought relationally engages with living *already* animate and animating things continually unfolding in a zone of uncertainty.

Moments before this selection of Müller's text is spoken in the performance, a human actor assembles a circle of plastic doll heads, legs, and arms around her. A bird-woman deteriorates to the floor of a platform releasing her statuesque shadow. A slight movement in one actor triggers another actor-object to once again move on a grid returning to an altered version of the picture that the audience views as they enter the theatre and the image. The objects and the final image gesture to the ungraspable embedded relationality with others. The surface and the air are thick with ash, plastic, dirt, and a blood-red liquid. It is not quite that the objects and image have transformed into something that they were not previously but that they unfold in their ongoing activity something unknown and uncertain. The last image is not an act of completion—a finality where the ungraspable has been revealed and everything can be seen—but rather an opening into a depth where shadows always prevail. In the final ongoing image: a human body brushes slightly against a Barbie doll and a Ken doll suspended on clear fishing line. The brush sends the two bodies swaying—away, toward, and against each other, sometimes getting caught in each other's rigidity. The intertwined swaying bodies casts a moving shadow against the backdrop, creating a fourth body—larger, opaque and

transparent, moving like memories that are always escaping. The audience realizes that they must leave through the mess of objects, tracing their own passage visibly and strategically on the canvassed floor and through the sensuous image. As they pass through, silence and a shudder that physicalizes the act of passing through once again. These shudders are visible in the bodies of some audience members and I am reminded that shuddering things move an uncertain life.

The transitioning picture and objects express a flow of the in/corporeal and in/animate. Each shift has a reality that is enlivened through sudden stops, turns, and changes in rhythm and speed. The streaming flow in the performance—eyes unfurling, creaking floorboards rupturing flower petals shadowing, arms reaching disintegrating dirt and ash—is generative in a sensuous variation that releases a power of life that a human cannot coherently grasp and that cannot be contained within living organisms. Herein, performance operating as a becoming irreducibly unfolds with a capacity to evoke the unrepresentable—which can produce anxiety.¹⁵¹

Now as my writing risks becoming too sure of its own authority. Before my memory becomes mastery. An object escapes into the recesses of unfolding time and space, which require every effort to (what)...become-fluid. To imagine and to play. In many ways, the objects in the performance are junk. Junk collects and collages. Our imaginations are roused and we become aware of the liveliness of things in junk piles, junk yards, junk drawers, junk food, and junk shops. Junk things refuse to declare what they are or were with or without other junk.¹⁵² It is impossible to mark a strict division between engaging with an object in general and engaging with an object in the paradigm

of performance. While performance as a distinct and conventionalized paradigm might indicate a more creative or more sensitive encounter with an object than in the general everyday world, performance and “reality” are not mutually exclusive but are bound together relationally. The difference between encounter with an object in a performance—or in a collection—and an object in the everyday environment is not an excluded opposition but a fragmentary framing that emerges out of and cannot be extracted from ongoing relation.

Perhaps the plethora—the absolutely anything and everything—of collected objects such as those in the *Explosion of Memory/Description of a Picture* performance that do not disappear behind their names and uses reveals the monstrous nature of collecting. A collection—for the artist-junk-collector—does not coherently and stably organize the world but rather enlivens obscure and ungraspable relation. Therefore, collecting is in part a non-anthropocentric creative modality. A “broken-down” object does not make the past or any other stable reality distinct but rather offers a continuing engagement with histories and realities that are fluid not fixed. A collector—in the mode of an artist or perhaps a historian like Fuchs—engages with a thing as an enticement to assemble and to expand beyond the limits of oneself. Herein, the collected objects in the *Explosion* performance materialize a peephole through time and space. Encountering an object I ask, what is this world that is not?

Ah! where, where next?

Oh night without objects

Oh window muffled on the outside

Oh, doors carefully closed

Oh silence in the stair-well¹⁵³

Images that pass through peepholes cannot be completely grasped by human perception or stabilized in a linear vision of History. The historical and memorial mobile images are in part beyond distinct perception in an undetermined and affective relational unfolding with others. A peephole generates shock and astonishment. Its subtle, fluid, and caressable shape encourages engorgement. It magnifies and multiplies dispersion. It arouses a sense of held breath and danger in encounters with unknown others. What is this historical and imagistic excess? “Oh” and “Ah” are peepholes that pass through the tender rounded lips of mouths. Oh and Ah embody immersion—making a gesture towards performance operating as a becoming—not positioned on either side of a correspondence or identity but operating as a continuous mobility.

Conclusion: Liveliness in Performance

In this chapter, I engaged with a collection of objects in two performances in order to think through the manner in which encounter with objects might inform an understanding of how performance operates as an embedded relationality. I examined how historical-material objects shape ways of seeing and narrating history—crossing time and context to participate in ongoing relation—in particular through a modality that gives rise to a tension between the capacity of objects to verify history and identity and the proliferation of objects that fragments histories and identities. I argued that the reconfiguration of historical narrative from a linear narrative of human progress to a mutable and ongoing living encounter—taken up in a critical constructive practice—with

objects emphasizes relational process with over instrumental use of objects. I further argued that a practice of collecting is an activity in which obscure junk-objects exceed structures of intelligibility and create excess liveliness in encounter with others.

In the next chapter, I continue to examine how performance operates as a becoming—an ongoing relationality—through an examination of performances at the nexus of human involvement with machines and technology. I take up the experimental theatre production *machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines* (2008), and the 2006/2007 rehearsal-performance processes for Heiner Müller's *Die Hamletmaschine* (1977). I examine these early 21st century experimental performances in order to focus the inquiry on questions concerning how human involvement with machines and technology help inform my theorization of performance as a relational becoming. In Chapter Three, I engage with the problem of domination and the implications and relevance of domination in thinking performance as a becoming—as an unfolding relationality—which envisions webs of relational complexity *and* involvement in instrumental industrial productivity.

Chapter Three: “Moving Machines”

In Chapter One—in order to examine how performance operates as a becoming—I began with questions concerning how performance is involved in the determination of subjectivity and ungraspable relationality. I took up Eduardo Kac’s *GFP Bunny* project in order to examine the tension between subject positionality and relationality that permeates human-animal encounter. I argued in part that the relationality from which performance emerges is not just a factor of a body’s subjective (in)abilities but of affect and argued that—for performance as a becoming—listening and proposal grounds emerging bodies and subjectivities in an affective relationality and an ordeal of exposure. In Chapter Two, *Home is in Our Past* (2003/2005) and a 2007 performance of *Explosion of a Memory/Description of a Picture* (1984) provided avenues by which to think through the question of how performance unfolds relationally—as a becoming—in terms of human-object encounter. I argued that a relationally embedded object creates fissures in historical and representational perspectives and an excess of living and lively—critical and material—impacts in performance. In Chapter Three, I build on the argument for how performance might be understood as relational through an examination of sites that confront the implications of human involvement with machines and technology. The two sites in this chapter enable a way to think through the complex operations of machines and technology, which are entangled in webs of complexity and structures of domination. I examine *machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines* (2008) and the 2006/2007 rehearsal-performance process of *Die Hamletmaschine* (1977)

in order to argue that human involvement with machines and technology indicates embeddedness in unfolding webs of complexity and integration into productive mechanisms wrought with socio-historical forces of domination.

Failing Machines

Machines Machines Everywhere

The title of Rainpan 43's production *machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines* (2008) suggests that machines are quite literally and perpetually everywhere.¹⁵⁴ The company describes the performance as a clown play that deals with America's obsession with security and technology. On entering the theatre, the set—the kinetic junk sculpture—of *machines* gives the impression of an interior space. The machinic set/sculpture might be a single-family home with a small kitchenette and the typical tattered furniture if it were not for the variety and quantity of strange furnishings that fill and comprise the space. Thin ropes hang from and across the ceiling in seemingly arbitrary fashion; small plastic objects and stuffed animals peek through openings in a white lattice fence; and an old electric fan, bicycle tire, toaster, and more all seem to be...connected...somehow...to something else: perhaps a block of wood, a handle, or a thingamajig of some sort. All on the verge of...doing something. Before the human actors enter, the space invites deciphering: not in the sense of what the space means but what the space does.

Rube Goldberg's comical illustrations and inventive imaginings of machines—that are built to take the most difficult and inefficient route to achieve the most-simple action—inspire the production. In the kinetic sculpture, a breakfast comprised of a bowl

of cereal, milk, and a banana can be had only by accurately aligning a wooden chute with the desired cereal box, pulling a rope to tip the box, adjusting the bowl to the chute's alignment, orally siphoning the milk through a long plastic tube that descends from the "mammary of the sky," and plugging in a jerry-rigged contraption—an engine, kitchen knife, and some bits of wire and tubing—to almost accurately slice the banana. The breakfast is ready only when each mechanism achieves its purpose—of course that does not include the egg that must be fried, the juice that must be squeezed, and the bread that must be toasted by even more complex measures. The complexity and pervasiveness of the machines create a habitat where materials—*any* materials—might operate as building materials with limitless mechanical possibilities. In *machines*, the machines' operations rather than human action fortify the foundation of the performance. Insofar as the machines operate as the central force of production and performance, the technology by which the human actors might use machines to master their surroundings (and nature) gives way to a technology where machines work to master humans.

Productivity and Performance

The production raises the question of what it means to perform symbiotically in relation with others—in particular machines and technology—and/or via structures of domination in regards to others. Even though the primary characters—The Chief Commander, Phinneas, and Liam—inhabit machines with a sense of paranoia over the surveillance capabilities of the enemy "they"—whoever "they" are—the manner in which the characters are intertwined in and dependent on the working of the machines proves to be a more formidable force for conditioning how the characters (and the actors) are able

to inhabit the space. The characters' concern over surveillance points to "them out there" but the small, petty, and profuse mechanisms shape the actor/character action and embodiment from within. The character Liam in particular partially embodies a machine with a mechanized voice and a mechanical extension that operates as part of his body. The performance makes visually, corporeally, and ridiculously evident the levels to which machines and technology have the capacity to transform human embodiment. The transformations of human embodiment that machines and technology are caught up in draw out and give weight to the question concerning how domination permeates relation. Herein, the effects and the felt impacts on human bodies carry as much weight as and are at stake in the technological machinic apparatus.

The pacification and constraint of the characters within the machinery—a web in which they must respond to techno-mechanical movement and "authority"—is tied to a vision of a more vigilant, efficient, and effective performance even though that standard of performance is never achieved despite the many pressures that demand it. In *Perform or Else*, Jon McKenzie argues that contemporary paradigms of performance—technological, organizational, and cultural—are bound together in an "onto-historical formation" that creates a mandate to perform (effectively and efficiently or else).¹⁵⁵ Under the organizational paradigm, "perform or else" could mean perform or be fired, or be asked to leave a program, or—in the case of performance-based pay—perform or go hungry. In the cultural paradigm, the phrase could mean perform or be socially normalized, socially marginalized, or allow your culture to disappear. In the technological paradigm, the phrase could mean perform or be found technologically

incompetent or perform or else “disaster—a systems failure—will occur. Finally, in the performativity of performance the phase could mean perform or else be nonexistent. Significantly, the threats that “perform or else” makes cannot be relegated to any single paradigm. A mandate to perform is not just a straightforward demand to perform but also carries the underlying demand to perform according to rules or standards in a continually occurring performance.

In the performance of *machines*, the machines do work—despite their frequent failures—to shape the space and the human bodies performing within it. The machines act as machinery of behavioral control (and symbiosis) formed around human bodies making the “they” possible but unnecessary. *machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines* points towards a condition in which human bodies are integrated into an all-encompassing system where the “enemy” is not likely out there but “in here.” The obsession with security and technology vitalized through pervasive spatial contraptions that demand performance rises from in Michel Foucault’s terms an “integrated system” that operates as an automatic and anonymous power—“a network of relations which holds the whole together.”¹⁵⁶ Insofar as relations cannot be extracted from negotiations of power, relationality cannot be extracted from a substrate of domination no matter how weak or strong that substrate might be.

In the performance, The Chief Commander, Liam, and Phinneas are integrated into the larger machine—an all-encompassing contraption where the perception of an anonymous and powerful “they” compels action. The characters are embedded in surveillance not because there actually is someone out there but because the space is

interiorized, mechanized, and hierarchized with an anonymous power, a chain of command, and a red phone to God. Herein, power functions like one of the machines—another ridiculously in/efficient chain of mechanisms—a weak domination—that figures and reconfigures plans for total annihilation, gives history to the greatness of “that day,” and eulogizes the fallen and dead Patrick integrating his severed body parts into the kinetic junk sculpture. While the production invites us to consider the implications of an American obsession with security and surveillance that leads to anxiety over how technology and machines might be used to guarantee a way life made impenetrable to outside forces, the entanglement of domination and relation that I propose offers no guarantees of bodily or national impenetrability that might in turn—finally or provisionally—guarantee safety or freedom from domination.

Automation

The operations of *machines*’ kinetic embodiments gesture toward and physicalize immersion in relationality not apart from but entangled in forces of domination that are rooted in the socio-historical challenge not just to perform but to *master* through efficient and effective—automated rather than relational—performance. Automation is wrought with contradictory demands for an automated networked body—framed as a better and more efficient body—and for immersion within a relation that cannot be networked or circuited. The operations of machines and technology as forces of automation are invested in mastering inefficient and improper performance and in materializing a complex intertwining of internality and externality. In other words, automation is paradoxically invested in proper—more efficient and effective—function and in an

immersive relationality that doesn't always unfold "properly." For example, social media formations place a demand on bodies to efficiently and effectively perform their social engagement—in mastering a proper "profile" or brand name—that apparently automatically engenders a complex sociality, which is both subject to forces of normatization and also resistance. In the *machines'* performance, automation materializes in part in complexly intertwined exterior and interior forces in a relationally unfolding web. The characters emphasize a ruptured exterior-interior space in glances through the blinds and windows and in their odd entrances made from and into the sculpture. The characters do not seem to enter from an "outside" set apart from but rather from an outside inside the space-contraption itself—through hidden doors and passageways. Herein, the characters co-function with the machines embedded relationally rather than connect and disconnect from a circuited network. With network connectivity, a body plugs into or unplugs from a network of connections; with immersive relationality a continually mobile body negotiates conditions of embeddedness where the uncertainty and un-circuited mobility of connections is primary.

The residential machine that encompasses all the other petty machines in the performance gives the impression of a gigantic encasing that includes everything outside—everything in the open air. To inhabit this interior is to be automatically integrated in a thick mechanical web from which it takes great effort to stir. The architecture of a mechanical web is not built to be seen from an outside onto an inside but to be experienced automatically, corporeally, and relationally. From an interiorized exterior vantage point, the audience watches and enjoys the absurd mechanical web of

machines that extends beyond the set with or without the awareness that the architecture is also built in part to permit internal control, which understood through Foucault's disciplinary power is a network of relations that "acts on those it shelters" and operates to know and transform behavior.¹⁵⁷ The sheltering that a network of mechanisms performs has the capacity to obscure relations of control in an integrated system or completely technologized or automated existence. The capacity of mechanization to integrate—to automate—all forms of bodies and to achieve status as a way of being is in part what "enables the disciplinary power to be both absolutely indiscreet, since it is everywhere and always alert...and absolutely 'discreet', for it functions permanently and largely in silence."¹⁵⁸ The Chief Commander, Phinneas, and Liam anxiously try to catch sight of the combative advance of a discreet power in the indiscreet "they" and in the in/discreet and suspicious behaviors of others while working towards an albeit ineffective sense of readiness and vigilance.

In the performance, vigilance—an automatic behavior that the characters continually perform—depends on the invisibility of the voice on the telephone and the "they" inside-outside the machine. Herein, the characters are also immersed in circulations of information. They receive and discuss the merits of information on what is going on in order to perform more effectively and efficiently. The information motivates and creates a challenge for their best performance. The red phone to God guarantees that there are concrete material effects on bodies that reach well beyond the information that the phone signifies. The remote stimulus via the phone reconfigures how the characters sense their spatial temporal situation as part of an automated

involuntary circuit. The involuntary aspect calls attention to an appeal to freedom opposed to domination that supposedly comes with plugging in and unplugging—connecting and disconnecting—fluctuating between immersion and domination. This fluctuation highlights that concerns over involuntary movement are rooted in an *automatism* that condemns a body to a systematized and hollow reality. Herein, automatism in structures of domination entangles with automation in immersion that works to materialize an un/reality—a charming and disturbing awakening and adaptation of the “sleeping being lost in its automatisms.”¹⁵⁹ The entanglement of automatism and automation—and domination and relationality—makes it difficult to determine who is in control but necessary to ask how domination permeates human involvement with machines and technology.

The crux of automation hinges on how automation alters perceptions of reality and sensation and whether automation is meant to correct “improper” functioning in a systematized network of domination. The sense of automation that comes with being plugged-in is often pleasurable—in a charming unreality *and* in a reality of domination. For example, I learned first-hand the pleasure of efficiently and effectively moving with the mechanisms of a fast moving factory assembly line while working on meat cutting and processed-food assembly lines in agricultural food production. Once the rhythm of my body learned to function properly—matching the rhythm of the machine—time passed unnoticed and my body performed appropriately in a pleasurable synchronicity with the machine. However—when a break bell sounded and my body punched out or unplugged—pain, stiffness, cold, and fatigue came to the forefront of the senses. In the

case of the assembly line worker or the highly trained athlete, automatic movement delimits and alters a body's experience and appears to promise excellent performance that in part conceals suffering and pain. Automation appears to physicalize complete and successful immersion in the mechanisms of relation; however, embodied excesses and failing interruptions are also sensed beyond the paradigm of a human body's so-called automatic and enhanced functioning.

Although the *machines* performance ends in a strange and humorous apocalyptic climax, *machines*' inexpedient interior gestures toward a haptic-optic, corporeal, and mechanical dream—operating according to the play of spaces—rather than a future technologically enhanced utopia or technologically caused apocalypse. The glance *inside* the unfolding performance reveals a mechanically rich dream. *machines*' technologies do not create furnishings of taste or decoration but rather the mobile liveliness of dreams. In the *machines*' dream, the performance could go further—perhaps neurotically. I want more...more machines and mechanisms...more lively mobility—a compulsive integration of human bodies into the overly complex inefficient jerry-rigged reality. The *machines* performance just begins to incorporate human bodies in systems of pulleys, levers, catapults, engines, and weights and in spaces where things seem to operate—as one character ironically states—“as if by magic.”

Magic and Mastery

The scientific and technological developments via machines in the 19th century that brought enhanced capabilities for human work in mass-production and mass-consumption also brought a renewed emphasis on spectacle and machine-enabled

operations of magic in performance. Scientific demonstrations were often staged as magical performances and theatrical performance utilized technological engineering to create magnificent dreamscapes for audiences. The investment of science *and* art in technological development points towards the dialectic of enlightenment that Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno elucidate in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment Philosophical Fragments*. Horkheimer and Adorno argue that myth—as a rational attempt to control nature rooted in mimetic and metaphysical practices of magic—is already enlightenment and that enlightenment—“the advance of thought...aimed at liberating human beings from fear and installing them as masters”—reverts to myth because it is open to criticism as mere belief.¹⁶⁰ In the dialectic of enlightenment, rational thought is subject to criticism as mere belief because it operates in a relationship between the subject that bestows meaning and the meaningless object—a relationship that comes to replace the many affinities between things that characterizes the world of myth and magic.¹⁶¹

The dialectic of enlightenment demonstrates that both science and mimesis are invested in calculation and utility and therefore are also entangled in power and disciplinary forces. Horkheimer and Adorno emphasize that human beings acquire their positions of power through a distancing of thought from relations with objects and stated that in the enlightened world, “objects are not accessible individually to our cognition in an imperfect and accidental way but are attained by a rational, systematically unified method which finally apprehends each object.”¹⁶² Whether under the rubric of art or science, thought therefore becomes a “mathematical apparatus” in which the in-itself

object becomes entrenched in a “substrate of domination.” For Horkheimer and Adorno, the substrate of domination is pervasive even though the authors indicate that mimesis does not function with a distancing from the object that is integral to scientific methodology. Significantly, art becomes science through a representationalist methodology that attempts to capture, identify, and classify an object of study and science becomes art situated as a journey of the imagination.

Enlightenment—rather than a distinct historical era—indicates a set of operations indicative of a form of rationality that classifies and disenchant mythical “representation” of the world. Horkheimer and Adorno argue that identification (a classification of the object in thought) replaces mimesis (a cognitive attempt to become like the object). Herein, the conversion of nature into a malleable, manipulable, and classifiable material is bound up with a cognitive conversion in which nature is taken up in terms of representative examples that might be mastered rather than concrete affinities. In a reading of Homer’s *The Odyssey*, Horkheimer and Adorno critique the similarities and differences between ancient and modern rationality—suspending the conventional distinction between pre-capitalist and capitalist societies—in order to explicate the manner in which rationality is entangled in social domination and the domination of nature.¹⁶³ The entanglement of domination and sociality—in which mastery over nature is bound to self-mastery and mastery over other humans—marks the capitalist mode of production and the “administered life” of late capitalism. In the sociality of late capitalism, social life becomes more and more commodified and rationality more instrumental and identity driven—giving rise to a society in which domination and

capitalist production are inextricably intertwined despite social upheaval and significant resistances to domination.

The commodity form therefore becomes the structuring principle of society in late capitalism.¹⁶⁴ The unceasing conversion of concrete into abstract labor perpetuates the production of exchange value—an abstract identification between non-identical objects that mediates access to needs and continually creates false needs. In capitalist production, disparate and concrete use-values are abstracted as identical exchange-values that appear as a property of the commodity rather than human labor. Alfred Sohn-Rethel explains that the separation of exchange-value from use-value situates exchange-value in an abstract physicality devoid of sensual qualities (in a quantitative differentiation and a conversion that occurs as a performance in people’s minds) that nonetheless arises from the real activity of exchange. In a real abstraction, the negation of material physicality constitutes “the positive reality of the abstract social physicality of the exchange processes from which the network of society is woven.”¹⁶⁵ Therefore, capitalism’s real abstractions constitute material forces that shape sociality and are tied to historical modes of production and exchange.

Since domination concerns how the materials of life are abstracted, managed, produced, and consumed and how knowledge identifies, classifies, and reveals and conceals the concealing of the world—the manner in which any body is remapped and reconfigured cannot be construed as *either* participating in an autonomous symbiotic relational machine *or* participating in structures of domination, which decide whether a body is an accurate, appropriate, or a more complex achievement.¹⁶⁶ Human-machine

relation will always be much more than the purported progress that is unduly assigned to mechanical and technological structures and mechanisms. It is only through examining how machines are more than productive automations—engines of advancement—that it becomes possible to interface with and through machines and technologies in more thoughtful ways. If new technologies become the new normal by which a human body might be represented as and engineered for optimum aptitude to the “fabrication of cellular, organic, genetic, and combinatory individuality,” what are the new procedures of control—the new ways of revealing—that get entangled in relations with others?¹⁶⁷ If it is not possible to separate images of better more effective—fast and durable—performance offered through and historically bound to machines and technology from the images in the *machines* performance of inefficient and inexpedient machines and technologies, then the question becomes how does scientific imagery and artistic imagery entangle and function together?

While the machine mechanisms in 19th century theatrical spectacles were hidden from view and aimed to create staging “as if by magic,” the performance of *machines* creates a spectacle out of the workings (or not workings) of the mechanisms and their movement. Significantly, the spectacle of *machines*’ visible mechanisms does not bleed the “magic” from the machinery but heightens the sense of magic that the machines embody. While magic in 19th century spectacle hinges on the audience not knowing how the illusion works (but knowing that there is an illusion), magic in the 21st century *machines* performance hinges on no one truly knowing how the mechanisms work despite their visibility and their status as real *and* illusory. In foregrounding the kinetics

of the machinery, *machines* generates a sense of magic through an exposure that—rather than rendering everything knowable—reveals that the lively workings of machines cannot be completely and scientifically known, depended on, or engineered. Whether a theatrical performance is invested in an illusion of reality enabled by machines and technology or in staging the mechanical in/corporeality of machinery—magic, machines, and technology are bound together in knowledge formations that mathematically construct the world as a fully identifiable and classifiable picture. Therefore, the operations that produce magic can also produce a substrate of domination.

The mechanisms in the *machines* performance incorporate human bodies into the contraption-sculpture and expand the contraption to the level of temporal-spatial residency. Self-operating and trap doors along with secret passageways (one that apparently runs from the abyssal depths of a weathered couch to the cavity of a dated yellow oven) replace the “old simple schema of confinement and enclosure—thick walls, a heavy gate that prevents entering or leaving—[with] the calculation of openings, of filled and empty spaces, passages and transparencies.”¹⁶⁸ On one hand, the dream of mechanical immersion might be a militarized dream of subordinated cogs in a machine subject to limitless forms of training.¹⁶⁹ However, it might also be a dream of wonder at the intimacy and sensibility of invisible forces. In this dream, I wonder—what if a human body finds gets stuck in the secrete chute that passes from the couch to the oven? What kind of mayhem might ensue?

While the machines in the performance incorporate human action and behavior into step-by-step mechanisms, the machines are obviously and definitely not flawless.

They do not easily fall under the category of industrial-productive machinery nor do they always work appropriately. The machines' capacity to produce a substrate of domination is bound up with the production of excess and unpredictable movement and with knowledge as practice rather than product. The Goldbergian machines are important not just for their capacity to ensure vigilance and security but also because they can never be forgotten—operating in a way that requires *constantly* figuring them out. In fact, there are contraptions where a single character is the “only one who knows how it does what it does” if he actually can be said to know how it does what it does. Even though each small machine appears to serve some kind of (sometimes quotidian) purpose—brushing one's teeth, shaving, petting the cat, or torture (I mean investigative questioning with the aid of an electrical device)—the machines do not achieve the standards of efficient usefulness.

The ridiculous embedding of performative actions such as shaving and petting the cat in petty yet complex mechanisms materializes actions that are emptied of or perhaps heightened in their conventionally prescribed utilitarian function. These everyday actions drawn into the domain of art make a gesture towards performance art practices that have worked to keep the line between art and life fluid. In particular, in the mid-to-late 20th century Happenings and Fluxus events along with new experiments in dance took up everyday actions as material for and in performance. Responding in part to the increasingly abstract quality of modern experience, performance artists took up elements of everyday reality in order to subject them to operations that reinvest them in their own autonomous and concrete individual reality. The performative actions in Fluxus events

and Happenings—often meant to be performed only once—confronted the loss of experience characteristic of capitalist society and performed a renouncement of all attempts to replicate and represent experience in favor of disrupting the recognizable order of reality that depended on a framework of instrumental utility and abstraction. In the *machines* performance, the machines are not meant for efficient instrumental use that might order reality or for the pleasure of convenience. They do however engage in purposeful action for a pleasure and knowledge that might be better described in terms of reaching new levels of the ridiculous while gesturing towards new levels of domination.

While relational immersion operates outside the threat of Jon McKenzie's "or else" as a threat of extraction that accompanies the challenge to perform, relational immersion does not operate outside the challenge of domination. In other words, the threat of extraction carries no weight for a relational ontology but the threat of domination does. If as Michel Foucault claims bio-power is indispensable to capitalism, in what way does the technology of bio-power achieve the insertion of human bodies into the machinery of domination? Foucault explicates the technology of power over life as "centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls."¹⁷⁰ In order to consider that bio-power impacts relational ontology it must be acknowledged that machines and technology help produce reality, which for Foucault is in fact an operation of power. Therefore, if bio-power is a power "to designate what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of

transformation of human life,” art must not only deny utility it must also reject the distribution and transformation of life via explicit calculation and knowledge.¹⁷¹

Although the characters in *machines* live in and inhabit a mechanized home that might be understood as a way of life—they are not *comfortably* “at home.” In this type of vigilant waiting space, the restraining power gives itself up to the characters only insofar as they give their blood, sweat, and bodies to the machines. “Such a dwelling can never feel like home, a place where [a character] might at last exclaim, ‘Here I am at home!’”¹⁷² However, while the characters wait and most likely have given their blood and sweat to the contraptions, their dwelling is not *and* is at home. The characters belong and do not belong comfortably in the relational web. Through inconvenience and discomfort, the characters (and actors) are and are not at home with machines and technology.¹⁷³ In the production, the mode of habitation in the kinetic sculpture indicates *a sort* of specialized training. While the specialized training required by the *machines*’ structure is both zealous and incompetent, the characters must have an embodied knowledge—a *tinkering* knowledge—in the planning and the physical operation of the space. The surveying power of the production might be akin to Foucault’s explication of factory surveillance that accounts for the individual behavior of a worker through agents that detect “the slightest incompetence, [that] if left unnoticed and therefore repeated each day, may prove fatal to the enterprise.”¹⁷⁴ However, I propose that the role of the surveying agent—in control, supervision, and inspection—fails to ensure that there is no productive loss in or fatality of the dominating enterprise.

Failure

Machines and technology in part help fulfill promises of—usually human centered—progress and advancement. While not inherent in machines and technology, the vision of a better world and a better body is achieved through an objective science that has the capacity to reveal the entirety of the world set on a historical and continuous trajectory of human advancement that disregards historical and epistemological domination. Machines and technology can participate in and promote systems of domination under the rubric of a science that methodologically renders every thing knowable in human terms. In fulfilling this role, machines and technology are heralded as the crux of human progress and are promoted for their supposedly inherent and increasing productivity and performance. Technological alterations do not guarantee improved conditions—just different and adapted conditions. Since even a dry metal substrate is subject to toxin build up, deterioration, and failure—“corrective” technological measures likely replace one malfunctioning system or part with another. In other words, failure is inevitable and relationally rooted.

The *machines*' machines persistently malfunction and fail. Even though as Benjamin writes, “[p]ractice is eliminated from the productive process by machinery”—failure reinstalls and revitalizes it.¹⁷⁵ As The Chief Commander, Phinneas, and Liam practice and play with machines, the audience garners simple pleasures from minor machinic accomplishments and boisterous amusements in their reoccurring failures. When some thing is not quite appropriately aligned, when a thing weighs too much or too little, when an angle needs to be oblique or perhaps is too narrow, or when a movement does not occur in a timely manner—*adjustments* must be made. In the machines' web,

there is no fail-safe—no stop that allows production to get back up and running with little consequence. Phinneas must aim the bottle of juice and pull the rope again and again and again and again...and again—and with a little bit of help from Liam—before landing the clear plastic bottle in the bin. *Improper* performance is a *value* in this mechanical system. There is no distinction between being on-line and going off-line. Everything is process—no fail-safe, no quality assurance, no diagnoses made, no safety procedures. *machines* works as an assemblage—functioning, doing, and creating *with and in the midst of* failure. There are no fail-safe mechanisms to protect timely and effective production. Here, value does not rest in minimizing damaging deviations but rather in continuous adjustments *in the process of deviation*. Evaluating performance as *either* a “proper success” *or* an “improper failure” is to disregard the complex and tiny imperceptible un-circuited ongoing adjustments that (human and more-than-human) bodies make according to continually changing conditions in complex environments—or in other words in an unfolding embedded relation with others.

Machines—whether they are run by skilled machinists or constructed by Goldbergian enthusiasts—are entangled in notions of in/efficient and in/convenient automation and productivity. How machines and technology generate and embody automation and productivity depends in part on how machines and technology work to produce a common object and are impelled by hierarchizing, centralizing, and negotiating powers. Even though the *machines* performance stages an all-encompassing interiority and mechanical organism, the machines do not operate in an uninterrupted production of a commodified object.¹⁷⁶ If a human actor immersed with machines and technology

makes adjustments without trying to avert the conflicts and the anxieties of things-not-working, the value and principle of negotiation—which requires practical application of creativity—is affirmed. The moments of negotiation necessitated by things-not-working—whether humorous, frustrating, cruel, or boring—reveal the affective capacity of mechanical assemblages (and of performance as a becoming rather than a distinct anthropocentrically defined commodity object). These moments—of negotiation and creativity—occur in part when “our machines [and knowledge formations] don’t work” in conditions where “mechanical failure is not a matter of if but of when.”¹⁷⁷ These failures often become the biggest human inconvenience and fear. Convenience is the engine not of machines but of the capitalist structuring of relation as commodity. One of the more subtle questions that the performance and machines raise is how in/convenience permeates relation with others. The convenient—and conspicuous—capacity to tweet, poke, and post via the Internet as evidence of a distinctly identifiable relation contrasts the operations in the performance that inconveniently circulate mis/information concerning the other “them out there,” which gestures towards relation as the often inconvenient occurring that keeps happening between and heterogeneous to us.

Through Rainpan 43’s clown play *machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines*—I examined the entanglement of domination and relation. I argued that the performance’s kinetic junk sculpture stages a lively immersion of human embodiment with machines and technology that despite being bound up in a substrate of domination generates wonder and a sense of magic. I further argued that the ridiculous contraptions require a tinkering knowledge—a knowledge “formation” that is

ongoing practice—and that failure mobilizes and revitalizes knowledge as practice rather than product. I further take up the relation-domination entanglement with the 2006/2007 rehearsal-performance processes of Heiner Müller's *Die Hamletmaschine* (1977). In contrast to taking up the question of how performance operates relationally at the nexus of human-machine involvement through the *machines* performance that I attended as an audience member, I build on the argument in the next section from the perspective as a director participating in the rehearsal-performance processes of *Die Hamletmaschine*. I argue with the last site of this chapter that a relationally oriented director emphasizes practice and unfolding ungraspable relation with others over and above product and authoritarian domination. Herein, the in/distinct relations unfolding in making performance—not oriented towards product but as embodied process—are rooted in risk, conflict, care, vulnerability, and failure. I also argue that performance as a making with others that is relationally rooted and unfolding cannot be synthesized into a generally applicable model because of the ungraspable and mobile quality of relation.

Practicing Machine

While machines and technology point towards industrialization and the growing influence of simulation, the machinic as a relational process is not limited to or originated from a technologized or simulated existence.¹⁷⁸ New and hybrid groupings and fragmented subjectivities generated through capitalist and machinic modes of productivity animate a postmodern landscape. Heiner Müller's play text *Die Hamletmaschine* (1977) confronts the complexity of this landscape and breaks with the view of history as a continuum of continuous progress ensconced in the coherent drama

of a stable and masterful subject. I interpret the play as signaling the failure of intellectual commitment to ineluctable progress and to prescribed social roles in a fragmented and discontinuous historiography that is wrought with suffering and violence that cannot be relegated to the past.

Heiner Müller's *Die Hamletmaschine* (1977) is a particularly difficult text to work with. The text emphasizes a history of progress as a patriarchal endeavor in which dead fathers, dead ideologies, and dead thought are reconstituted and consumed. On the landscape of a fragmented historiography, the failure of revolution and alternatives to capitalism become evident in ongoing and reoccurring domination, suffering, and violence. The implications of destabilized subjectivity and the affects of domination on bodies and relations are not limited to the text but permeate the rehearsal space as well. In a contemporary moment, the capitalist extension of market relations to social relations and production of ideology *ad nauseam*—supporting the status quo and promoting the occupation of the imagination and experience by images and slogans—are familiar embodied experiences relevant to creative practice. Because the play is intertwined with the immediate empirical world within which a performance is made, the fragmented landscape and terror—in particular Ophelia's silencing and voice of terror—portrayed in the text magnifies the weight of the textual images carried within and through the bodies participating in the rehearsal-performance process. Although it is not possible or desirable to fully understand the text, as part of a creative process it is important to think and move through it—not to resolve the questions it raises but to confront them.

I do not specifically take up an analysis of Müller's text—which has been extensively analyzed in scholarship—but the rehearsal-performance process for the play in which I took on the role of a director.¹⁷⁹ While I in part take up Jerzy Grotowski's *Towards a Poor Theatre* as a lens through which I might understand the process of performance creation and production, I would like to suggest that the creative-relational practice of performance making is a practice of “the self with others” in which “others” indicates not just the human but moreover a whole perceptual and relational field in which many others are embedded. Since capitalist modes of productivity and abstraction are interwoven with relational processes that proliferate in webs of complexity, a critical approach to history and materialist analysis—such as is evident in Müller's work—draws attention to the contradictions and entanglements of capitalism and the machinic. The critical modality operating within the play text in which the debris of history exposes historical contradictions, emphasizes the irreconcilability of the subject and object, and confronts all forms of identity thinking aligns with Theodor Adorno's immanent critique in negative dialectics and therefore is in tension with Grotowski's phenomenological approach to performance that risks reifying and abstracting performance in a correspondence between the actor and the spectator.¹⁸⁰ However, a phenomenology wrought with the tensions and fragments important to historical materialism works not to solidify performance in a coherent and stable identity but to understand more critically and complexly performance-making embedded in the relational and empirical world and subjectivities-bodies within the world.

I understand relationality for my practice as a “director” as the ungraspable web of living relations in which art is immersed and from which art emerges. I take up relationality in my practice not as a practical and theoretical device that artists utilize for artistic production from which the relational inter-human world comes but instead as a process through which art—which includes the human and the more-than-human—enacts its living and historical embeddedness in and emergence from the relational world. Therefore, I do not emphasize—as Nicholas Bourriaud does in *Relational Aesthetics*—that art is primarily a product of human labor rooted in the exploration of inter-human social bonds. In my understanding, art—in particular performance—does not “stitch together the relational fabric” as Bourriaud suggests. I would instead emphasize that art’s proposals (for living in a shared world) generate to varying extents material and critical impacts (that emerge from the relational fabric) through a capacity for affect and thought—which in turn informs how I think and create. Therefore, I would suggest that aesthetics and ethics—in my understanding of my “own” performance practice—are intimately bound together in particular as they are both rooted in thinking and affecting. However, I would also like to suggest that this thinking and affecting is not bound to a centralized human figure, director, or author—any unified and identified ontological category—that employs the relational as a tactic but rather is embedded in the materiality of encounter. This does not absolve any particular human—and moreover myself—from acts of thinking and affecting but revitalizes the ethical import of proposing and producing social order and resistances to social order through any normatized or alternative artistic-material vision of social relations. My inquiry therefore makes a

gesture towards new possibilities for thinking performance and performance ontology, which is relevant to creative and critical processes.

Often creative processes such as in theatre and performance include an implicit invitation—would you like to work on a production with me? Seemingly a simple question, not worthy of much attention. Would you like to participate on a project *with* us? The invitation is meaningful not as often thought in its capacity to establish the parameters and roles of participants, but rather in its foregrounding of participants situated within a whole field of individuals on an unfolding creative journey. The invitation is not meant just to fill a role: actor, director, or set designer—where hierarchies of involvement will be tested and played out—but it is, perhaps more importantly, the acknowledgement of an ongoing and unfolding relation infused with intimacy, vulnerability, conflict, and care. Shifting emphasis from audition to invitation—and more importantly from production to process—the many and diverse moments of working “with” are the enduring and activating moments of the interpersonal more-than-human relationality that comprise a creative process. Cultivating, fueling, and caring for these ongoing and unfolding relation is paradoxically one of the fundamental roles of a director, a role that informs and reaches far beyond the decision of whether an actor should move downstage right or upstage left.

In *The Courage to Create*, Rollo May explicates the creative process as a creative and material encounter with the world. He claims that, “[the] world is interrelated with the person at every moment...one can never localize creativity as a *subjective* phenomenon, one can never study it simply in terms of what goes on within the

person.”¹⁸¹ When creativity is understood to be an encounter and participation with the world in which many persons—many unfolding bodies—are immersed at every moment and that world is in part a scripted one laden with a history of domination and violent imagery intertwined with a contemporary world shaped in part through capitalist alienation and abstraction, the choices that a director makes in guiding the process in making performance are weighted with ethical considerations and questions. How far is too far? How much is too much? How much can or should a director ask of others?

It was an unbearably hot and humid July day. We—the (human) actors—ran, crossing the Washington Avenue Bridge in Minneapolis back and forth, relentlessly, beyond the point of exhaustion wanting a cooling rain that might ease the oppressive air. Two hours and forty-three minutes. There was no such reprieve. While the intention during rehearsal was to experiment with what a body is capable of doing when pushed past its limits—to ask how a human body inhabits the text when physically and mentally breaking down—an unintended consequence occurred in the form of a heightened sense of others forming and transforming around and through the project. We ran, pressing against bodily limits, alone and together—and with the surrounding landscape.¹⁸² One person resorted to a monotonous repetition of circling a light pole; another resisted with tension in the body; another dripped profusely with sweat from inexorable movement. Several campus security officers convened to check on what they had likely observed on security cameras and suspected as questionable behavior. Others found different ways to move through and participate in the exercise.

While the security officers did not exert any physical or verbal force over us, their presence served to make evident a power—and the role of surveillance as a form of domination—that works to govern in/appropriate behavior and to control how any one is expected to act within a particular environment. While our strange behavior did not go unnoticed by surveillance systems that attempt to determine what the relations within the landscape are supposed to look like and how relations are supposed to unfold, our relentless running engaged with the surroundings—the oppressive heat, the still air, the concrete circularity of the pavement, the officers imposition—in a struggle that gestures towards unhindered involvement with others. Relationality for performance as process continually takes shape in the midst of operations of domination and through how each person (human and more-than-human) perceptibly and imperceptibly adjusts to a multitude of perceptual and ever-varying factors—in the anecdote, how an actor finds a way to work through an exercise, how a director finds a way not only how to shape but also to participate in the complexity of process, or even how the oppressively hot air on a July day finds a way to release its humidity.

In *Towards a Poor Theatre*, Jerzy Grotowski frames theatre as a communion that hinges on the actor's struggle for authenticity. For Grotowski, *via negativa*—the stripping away of obstacles that prohibit sincerity and self-exposure—allows the authentic impulse to rise out of the human body in the moment of creation. To strip-away naturalized behavior and choices to access the impulses that enliven an intangible and tangible relation with the world is the aspect of art that emphasizes process over product. Even though Grotowski specifically references an actor-spectator relation in

Towards a Poor Theatre, I would like to suggest that the complexity of relation in a creative practice of performance is defined less by the actor-spectator binary than by the immersion of many diverse human and more-than-human bodies in Grotowski's perceptual direct communion. The network of relation in this communion is so complex and so subject to unpredictable variables as to make simple one-to-one correspondences unsound. Instead, the creative process and the relation that unfolds in process—what bodies are capable of doing—is open to and becomes a catalyst for a multitude of perceptible and imperceptible actions, thoughts, affects, personal factors, and complex environments. These factors inform the ethically laden exercises and experimentations that a director helps shape with others in a rehearsal-performance.

A communal creative process that is more-than-human grows—in the midst of existing reality—in *the midst of* dysfunctional social relations, industrial factories, capitalist exchanges, and techno-scientific developments and scientific endeavors.¹⁸³ A shared creative process builds in silent knowing, in failures of knowledge, and moves in strange and continually unfolding embodiments and materialities that might be accepted and/or rejected. The exchanges manifest in part in the material world as a bruise or scrape or crack in human and more-than-human bodies—sometimes as a wound with bits of trauma embedded in the flesh. Alongside and with trauma, the pleasure of a shared creative process can in part be enjoyed in the practice of eating together. Considering that the word *companion* comes from the root *com panis* (with bread), a human actor is not participating in a process that has at its center the human being—bread does not only bind together human-human relations. Rather, the emphasis falls on the preposition

“with,” which is the tie that binds together and unfolds a multitude of bodies (including bread) in an ongoing embedded relationality. Sharing sustenance or food during a creative process reinforces the companionship and care of creative work. The act of breaking bread together with other humans is a sacred and ritualized act that has a complex history—tied to domination and mastery—that crosses many cultures and many religions. In the 2006 *Die Hamletmaschine* rehearsal-performance process for the Xperimental Theatre at the University of Minnesota, most of the production team, cast, and crew gathered nearly weekly in a home to share a meal. The invitational aspect of creative work is again reinforced—share this home, share this environment, share this life, help prepare food for sustenance. Taking in food together is a consecration of a bond that realizes sharing in the midst of difficult work—in the midst of a complex web of relation. It is also a gift that a director can offer to those who give so much in making a performance.

In part, the gift that an actor makes is an embodied one. Grotowski describes the human actor’s contact with himself as, “an extreme confrontation, sincere, disciplined, precise and total—not merely a confrontation with his thoughts, but one involving his whole being.”¹⁸⁴ Pressing against the limits of physicality through an intense confrontation of embodiment and *of being* as they are entrenched in habits might bring an actor to the point of collapse or to the point of revelation. The strength of an embodied gift that realizes and materializes the complexity and difficulty of relation can affect another to the point of shock. We only come to materialize and know what a creative

process is capable of through the embodied relations that human and more-than-human participants enter into, emerge from, and unfold within.

At the end of the *Die Hamletmaschine* performance, the three Ophelia actors rested on the dirty floor, tightly and completely wrapped in bedsheets. Duct-taped. The lights came up and the sound of the industrial machine returned from the start of the show, signaling an invitation for the audience to exit. One night, an audience member inadvertently stepped on one of the Ophelia actors: a seemingly careless—probably accidental gesture—tearing at the actor’s sense of belonging with the audience.

Overcome with emotion—shaking, crying, and sobbing—she said, “It was like I wasn’t even there.” The actor was deeply affected. The erupting emotion gestures toward a complex and unfathomable relation that cannot be distinctly defined or constructed as a model for actor-audience interaction that might be characteristic of a particular kind of theatre or performance. The relations that comprise a creative process are not merely a group of individuals determined by a given and distinctly identifiable configuration and quantity of human members. Performance making beyond the boundaries of production and distinct roles is comprised of, and perpetually depends on, ongoing indistinct relations that unfold through an embodied exchange of thought and energy—and so many imperceptible and unknowable affects and integrated aspects.

Machines and technology magnify the tension between product and process— participation and domination. While a rehearsal process is often focused on a product that must be shown to a public, approaching process as an ongoing relation between many human and more-than-human bodies not only ruptures the hierarchically organized

roles and the opposition between rehearsal and production it also shifts connectivity from the potentially alienating disconnectedness of cogs-in-a-machine to a respectful, discordant, and challenging relational immersion of many unfolding bodies practicing together. By attending to how not just human bodies engage with each other and with the surrounding world in subtle and gregarious shifts, a director emphasizes everyone and everything as integral to and continually offering distinct and indistinct contributions to a rehearsal-performance making process. The director's role in a relationally rooted creative process is one of leadership in the form of service. A relationally oriented director must be able to guide with responsibility, curiosity, and adaptability while being a negotiator and decision-maker without being a dictator. The director must strive to cultivate inspiration, motivation, and an environment that nurtures the courage to risk new experimentation and embodiment without and with fear.

For Grotowski, the human actor's embodied experimentation is made in love—more specifically a love of nothing that allows the sacrifice to extend infinitely outward and in ecstasy. The work of performance making can be a painful encounter and exposure and therefore can also be a sacred and transforming experimentation. For human actors, self-consciousness and self-doubt can hinder an un-occluded relation—which unfolds in part through creative corporeal-emotional adjustments. These adjustments can be subject to perceived inadequacies, shame, and anxieties that have been inflicted on and carried in embodiment—unwittingly reinforced by a view of the human body (and other bodies) as the contaminated, potentially destructive, opposing-force to the human mind. The rational and willful control exerted over a human or more-

than-human body in order to contain its mess—its *vital* mess—manifests for a human actor as a repression of emotional-corporeal responses in containment of one’s openness to others, which is integral to creativity. Oftentimes this mess permeates a human body in terms of trauma experienced outside the rehearsal-performance space—but which is nonetheless still part of the process. The violence that is endemic in society—from actual physical assault to pervasive alienation tied to technology—affects the capacity to trust in and depend on oneself *and others* in a whole perceptual and relational field in a creative process. In the rehearsal-performance process—where intimacy and trust is critical to the formation and re-formation of bonds—thoughtfully dealing with the mess of and around all bodies is essential for accessing the creative potential inherent in interpersonal and inter-body more-than-human relation. A director can choose to reinforce shame by emphasizing inadequacies or choose to model empathetic care that encourages risk and careful open conflict and contact with others.

The *Die Hamletmaschine* text articulates a history of violence and missed opportunities through the characters’ traumatic attempts at fulfillment of traditional social roles and relationships. In trying to work and think through this particular aspect of the text, we struggled through an exercise that modeled repeated and unremitting physical domination—pitting male actors with weapons against female actors. A male actor took a break to sort through the thoughts that were coming up for him in the exercise. Upon return, he pulled me aside and said, “Malin, I don’t know how to deal with this. What should I do?” to which I replied, “I’m sorry, I can’t help you. I’m not here to make this okay for you.” It might seem that the better response would have been to make the

exercise and experience easier by trying to make the actor feel better—perhaps to say that the weapons are just props or that the play is just a text. That this is just a rehearsal. That this is just a performance. This is not real. However, an empathetic “I can’t help you” in the right moment recognizes that struggle is a valued experience to have in the work—in this unfolding relationality and reality—that struggle is allowed and that the one who is struggling is both alone and not alone. Embodied empathy practiced with others is one avenue by which encounters can be cultivated that challenge capitalist abstraction, alienation, and automatism. Empathy makes possible a profound relationality that compels an ethics that is equal to the companionable ties that bind bodies together in the midst of separation.

Just as the empathetic “I can’t help you” is integral to performance process, “I don’t know” is also vital. Müller’s stage directions state in part, “*The dance grows faster and wilder. Laughter from the coffin. On a swing, the Madonna with breast cancer. Horatio opens an umbrella, embraces Hamlet . . . The breast cancer radiates like a sun.*”¹⁸⁵ I do not know. I don’t know how to stage this. I don’t know what it means.

Perhaps, the most vulnerable and powerful moment for a relationally oriented director is the moment of saying and embodying “I don’t know.” Unfortunately, often this moment is pushed past, filled up, or outright denied. As David Brooks claims, “Human beings are overconfidence machines.”¹⁸⁶ Prolonging, attending to, and admitting *I don’t know* for a director goes against a common model of the director as the single authoritative and dominating expert in the room. However, a director that realizes the importance of not knowing—of enduring uncertainty at length—shows that a

performance scholar and artist must be open to failure and to unexpected possibilities and must be willing to leave behind bias in order to wait for the “right move” to show itself. This approach often creates conflict because cultivating “I don’t know” challenges human actors to release their desire to follow a single dominant leader who commands with a quick decisive and rational voice. Herein, a director is vulnerable. The capacity to be vulnerable—in failing and not knowing—nurtures the dynamic and magnetic intimacy of ongoing relationality. If a director is vulnerable and maintains his or her vulnerability as an essential aspect of the practicing and producing process, a director emphasizes the risk and safety of becoming vulnerable with others and with the project in an ongoing relation. Paradoxically, a kind of safety is the ground upon which a human body can risk going past its limits—upon which a human body can risk being unsafe. Herein, a director asks human actors to embrace fear in process with others—not to push past fear but to remain open, to embrace fear in moments where we lose hold of what we know or think we know, where we must risk going into the unknown with others.

I approach this work as part of a way of living in the world with an openness to others (and to being affected)—which has a fundamental and artful relationship to time and materiality. However, this relationship is not a model that I can outline because it is worked and reworked in terms of my self (with others) making—continually listening and adjusting to the ever-varying, contradictory, and ungraspable who or what emerging and becoming in encounter. Perhaps this relationality is one in which we are all in this together (a flexible field of performance and inquiry rooted in the world) in which our roles and lives are not compartmentalized and institutionalized in a comparative and

hierarchical structure. Perhaps it is a relationality in which everything and everybody offers something of import (and irreducible difference) to the process of thinking-making and living and dying. Perhaps a relationality that opens a space for risk, critical respectful engagement, and conflict that is not destructive but transformative. Perhaps a relationality that is not about doing a job but cultivating time, thought, and life with others. Not a gesture towards a utopian future—a set of relations that we might see in the future—but a material encounter set within and intimately bound to an already existing reality, not upright nor utopian but living and complex.¹⁸⁷

In going back over my rehearsal notes in the *Die Hamletmaschine* process, I notice that I wrote for the human actors numerous times “open to the audience.” In making our performance of *Die Hamletmaschine*, the audience—not just a live human audience—was always there, even when they are not supposedly physically present. As a relationally *embedded* director, I emphasize throughout the process that a performance is made with a boundless audience—that the audience is a companion on a relational journey. As touch, laughter, confusion, conflict, and much more unfolds—the work is created *with* an audience long before a show it opens and long after it closes. Heiner Müller stated once in an interview, “A collective experience is not easy to define. Let’s bring another bottle of whiskey, it will make it easier...This is a real problem and we should give ourselves time to address it.”¹⁸⁸ The problems of collective embodied encounter, connectivity, participation, and domination in relation are not easy and are often addressed without resolution. So—although I cannot offer you, the reader, any whiskey—there are three questions that I posed to the human actors in the *Die*

Hamletmaschine rehearsal-performance process that I will end the chapter with here—
what do you want, what do you give, how are you—an unfolding body among many
other bodies—relationally here?¹⁸⁹

meanwhile

the sounds of machines resume

the organic gulp, gasp, and murmur of machinic amplifications

the atmospheric ophelia-hamlet-machine, which might be

the screams of one million monkeys, the roar of one million lions

of one million sinners

being dragged to hell”¹⁹⁰

Conclusion: The Entanglement of Domination and Webs of Complexity in Performance

I took up the clown play *machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines* (2008) and the 2006/2007 rehearsal-performance processes of *Die Hamletmaschine* (1977) in order to examine how performance as a relational process operates at the nexus of human-machine/technology encounter. In this chapter, I argued that relationality in symbiotic webs of complexity cannot be disentangled from domination. While a technologized existence promises the infinite potential of melding different technologically endowed and impacted human bodies into new and unthought possibilities, with technological immersion comes new and uncertain realities. In modern technology’s challenge to master—notions of techno-machinic enabled automation and efficiency are caught up in a historical vision that appears to guarantee the certainty of

human progress. However, machines and technology betray the contained, ordered, circuited, and engineered qualities attributed to them in a utilitarian and perfectible functioning. The overly complicated Goldbergian machines that comprise the kinetic junk sculpture that the characters inhabit in the *machines* performance challenge the notion that machines and technology are efficient and convenient tools for human productivity, automation, and mastery. I argued that the multiple, spontaneous, and repeated failures of complex machinery create a sense of wonder and ridiculousness that is in tension with a substrate of domination—a system of discipline and surveillance that attempts to instill a hierarchical structure of productivity and proper performance in part through standards of calculability and utility. I also argued that failure mobilizes and revitalizes practice and knowledge as process rather than product. Additionally, I took up the rehearsal-performance process of *Die Hamletmaschine* as a director—an embodied figure of the irresolvable tension between hierarchical domination and embedded relation. The performance-production-process provided an opportunity to think through how performance emerges from relational process with others and how a director—often a dominating force and authority figure—can nurture the relational over conventionalized hierarchical structures. I argued that a director emphasizes invitation over audition, process over product, vulnerability, empathy, and persistent uncertainty in process that in turn shapes encounter with others in moments of conflict and care. I worked to demonstrate that domination is not necessarily sustained by technology and machinery but through the mechanization and commodification of relation in a form of automatism that neglects to act with care—not recognizing that the relational is the foundation for

(research and performance) practice and that relation is not a reified product (of practice)
or a commodity form.¹⁹¹

Chapter Four: “Following Landscapes”

I want to become and be a body with its eyes just open wide, a body tensed to the snapping point in response to the majestic landscape around it.
Hijikata Tatsumi

In the previous chapters, I focused on the question of how performance operates as a becoming at the nexus of human-animal encounter in Chapter One, human-object encounter in Chapter Two, and human-machine/technology encounter in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four, I take up performances of the movement artists Eiko and Koma in order to further think through the complexity of how performance operates as a becoming—an immersive relationality that continuously unfolds—at the nexus of human-landscape encounter. I examine three performances—*The Caravan Project* (1999 - 2013), *Naked* (2010 – 2012), and *River* (1995 – 2011)—in order to theorize relationally understood performance in terms of a practice of wayfinding/following.¹⁹²

A Wayfinding Practice

A Landscape of Belonging

Beyond a Frame

Questions concerning how belonging in the world impacts theatre and performance scholarship and practice are particularly taken up in the field of performance ecology. Performance ecology emerges from an intersection between diverse fields of study including performance studies, theatre studies, ecology, and ecocriticism. In particular, ecocriticism developed primarily as literary critique in which the study of

literature shifted from an anthropocentric focus to a focus on nature and the environmental aspects of literary materials. Performance ecology takes up ecocriticism's shift towards environmental concerns in the fields of performance and theatre studies. In the Introduction to *Performance Ecology* Theresa May and Wendy Arons call for new approaches for thinking about and making theatre with an ecological sensibility. May and Arons describe this sensibility as a sensibility that makes community and ecological reciprocity the foundation for making and thinking theatre. They outline several eco-dramaturgical approaches that deal with eco-political issues, which include "telling effective stories about the earth's environment... flesh[ing] out connections between resource use, economic policy, and impact on humans and land... presentation and representation of nonhuman animals in performance... [and] reconsidering historical theater texts and performance with attention to the anthropocentric ecologically hostile attitudes that they normalize."¹⁹³ The primary concern of my inquiry—to think performance as a becoming or ongoing relationality—also looks to the insights that performance has on embeddedness or belonging in the world and the insights that embeddedness offers for thinking performance relationally as a becoming beyond normalized anthropocentric framing of the nature of performance as rooted in the human body performing "live." Reconceptualizing performance as a becoming, challenges the notion that art divides human beings and human culture from nature. The movement artists Eiko and Koma offer a body of work that does not aim at cultural interpretations of and separation from the natural world but demonstrates performance as immersion in and participation with the world.¹⁹⁴

I take up Eiko and Koma's performance *Naked* in order to consider how artistic and cultural framing is entwined with performance that can be understood relationally. I begin with *Naked* because the performance is in part an indoor installation within a gallery setting during the opening hours of a museum or art center. *Naked* is a Walker Art Center commissioned work that was developed during a residency at the Park Avenue Armory in New York City during the summer and fall of 2010.¹⁹⁵ Eiko and Koma performed *Naked* at the Walker Art Center November 2nd through the 30th in 2012 during the hours of 11am to 5pm Tuesday through Sunday and 3 to 9pm on Thursday. I visited *Naked* on two occasions—a Thursday evening and for the entire last day of the performance. The month-long living installation was set within the exhibition *Event Horizon*, which displayed works from the Walker's collection. The pairing marked the substantial 30-year history that Eiko and Koma had up to that point with the Walker Art Center.

While many of Eiko and Koma's performances take place outside, the setting of *Naked* within a gallery draws attention to the question of how placement within an indoor institutional setting dedicated to art presentation helps frame a performance differently than an outdoor setting. While outdoor performances in public spaces are open to passersby and bystanders that do not necessarily expect to see an artwork performed in areas that are not set up or set aside for art presentation, an art center patron expects to view art in their visit. However, patrons visiting the Walker unaware of Eiko and Koma's installation prior to their visit would not necessarily have expected to view a living installation of live human bodies in a gallery that typically displays art such

paintings, sculptures, and multi-media works. While an outdoor performance might disrupt the normal flow of traffic on a public sidewalk, Eiko and Koma's *Naked* disrupts the typical use of a gallery for the display of artwork that does not entail live human performers. Still, the institutional setting provides a frame with which any artwork including live performance might be understood as a representation or reflection upon the world that exists outside the gallery; thereby, setting up the institution of art presentation as outside rather than immersed within the world—a perspective that might become more immediately apparent in an outdoor setting. The institutional framing in Eiko and Koma's *Naked* is part of the landscape in which the performance unfolds.¹⁹⁶

In general, the indoor gallery differs significantly from an outdoor area. Artists and curators construct atmospheric elements like light and sound in a gallery. In an outdoor performance, the performers might add elements such as lighting and sound but there are no walls or doors that delimit or completely control the staging area. In contrast to many outdoor performances, a gallery performance oftentimes comes with an admission fee that helps cover the costs of providing the artwork to the audience or museum visitor. One way to think of an indoor gallery is as a construction: newly painted white walls, clean floors, conditioned or heated air, and written and unwritten rules governing the behavior expected from patrons. This construction contrasts outdoor environments—which also come with a set of rules that govern human behavior—in which mutable qualities in a landscape such as weather, sound, and spontaneous movement more obviously come to bear upon how a performance unfolds. The institutional support given an artwork—whether indoors or outdoors—gives artists a level

of support and standing within a human community. While indoor and outdoor performances emerge from relationality far beyond a distinct human community, the contrast between an indoor institutional setting and an outdoor setting—that can also be institutionally framed—draws attention to the controlling and representational function that an institution of culture can perform in determining what qualifies as performance and in determining how human people interact with performance.

Eiko and Koma's *Naked* ruptures the constructive rule that a gallery space is set apart from real bodies for the display of representations of real bodies. The performance makes the patrons of the art center reconsider their relationship to the artwork and their place within the gallery space. While under normal circumstances a patron might spend thirty seconds viewing a painting before moving on to another artwork in the gallery, the placement of Eiko and Koma's performance within the gallery questions the very notion of placing artwork within an institutional frame for brief and inconsiderate viewing. Likewise, in situating Eiko and Koma's performance within an exhibition of the Walker's permanent collection, the Walker not only draws attention to the longstanding relationship that the art center has with Eiko and Koma but also indicates that the art institution is not a fixed frame for displaying artwork but is involved in an ongoing and living relation with artworks and artists. When the rules that govern how a gallery space is supposed to operate—outside the externally located real world—patrons (and the art center) are asked to rethink their relation with art and are required to adjust to unexpected ruptures in the normal configurations for engaging with art. In other words, patrons must find a different way to consider and to engage with his/her surroundings. Taken as rooted

in relation, a docent or patron might be sad to see a painting go into storage as much as he/she is sad to see Eiko and Koma leave the Walker. The gallery staging of Eiko and Koma's performance draws out the tension between a cultural frame that delimits art as representing the real world and a frame as an opening and entanglement with and within the world. The manner in which the performance of *Naked* is framed has the potential of closing off and/or opening up intimacy and vulnerability that is integral to a practice of attuning with one's surroundings. On one hand, *Naked* is overwrought with frames. On the other, *Naked* unfolds within a whole landscape of living relations.

In situating landscape as a new frame for thinking on modern theatre, Una Chaudhuri outlines the complicated history and usage of the term landscape and its connection to the debate on art as empirical reality or as representation. Chaudhuri indicates landscape as a new critical spatial paradigm for understanding theatre instead of the less grounded paradigm of space and the less environmental and imaginatively constituted paradigm of place. Chaudhuri marks the division between landscape as environment in geography and landscape as discourse in the humanities. In the humanities, landscape is a text that can be read—"communicative devices that encode and transmit information" that can be decoded through conventions.¹⁹⁷ Particularly in the genre of landscape painting, landscape becomes a framing or staging of geography ushering in a division between sensuous materiality and symbolic construction that depends on the opposition between human beings and nature. Chaudhuri argues that the equation of landscape painting with perspective—a system for representing three-dimensional space on a two-dimensional plane—sets up a system of visual control that

appears to give access to a represented world. Chaudhuri indicates that the coherence of the picture relies on and denies the fixed outside-the-frame position of the viewer.¹⁹⁸ The landscape perspective further develops into an understanding of property as a site of individual experience, a cultural definition of subjectivity and identity, the photographic image of nations, and for theatre a technique that turns a spectator into a viewer of cultural products in a scientific quasi-mathematical calculation of perspective that rests on the assumption that a perspectival frame can fix the position of an outside viewer.

The framing of culture—as a set of meanings common to a human community or principles that govern human behavior set apart from nature—does not allow for the variance and mobility inherent in an embedded more-than-human relationality. This kind of stricture places vision at the apex of Western perception in ignorance of the manner in which sensory experience promiscuously bleeds throughout the entire human body. In *The Perception of the Environment*, Tim Ingold claims that this kind of ordering of the senses has more to do with cognitive style than with a cultural preference in constructing reality. He argues that a representationalist theory of knowledge—which equates vision with representations in the mind—relies on a division between the physical and the cultural (brain and body) dimensions of perception.¹⁹⁹ Delimiting sight as the sense that objectifies is a denial of the synaesthetic fusion of the senses in an ongoing adjustment or attunement to one's surroundings. An art institution can convey historical information and cultural meaning and yet also always participates in living relational processes—emerging from active and ever-changing relationality. In part, when a frame is understood as a way to control receptive experience—positioning a viewer outside an

artwork as an objective observer—seeing is wrenched away from embodiment and relationality as a modality that provides knowledge of that which is externally located from the viewer. Herein, frames operate as a way to order experience and knowledge. However, frames are also an opening between interior and exterior horizons. A frame as a threshold is the passage not by which practices and processes of attunement are governed but the opening that ensures that adjustments must be continually and relationally made.

A variety of frames give perspective to Eiko and Koma's *Naked*. At the outset the installation is cordoned off—from the general gallery space and the flow of traffic of the public—with large canvases that act as a threshold for the audience to pass and peer through. Museum docents stand at the installation entrance controlling the number of people entering. A visible and well-defined border on the gallery floor further divides the audience and the dancers. Eiko and Koma's bodies are contained within a nest of feathers and are surrounded from behind by a receding darkness. From outside the performance area, visitors can view glimpses of the dance through small holes that have been burned into the surface of the canvases. Finally, the program frames the performance with a story of sorts while also describing the performance as a site of meditation and exchange without conventional storytelling. The program gives the installation a vague storyline in stating, “the scene is an aftermath from an unspecified but lingering trauma.” Even though this bit of story can serve to draw one deeper into the performance and the surrounding landscape, these abundant frames can also work to contain and give distinct context to Eiko and Koma's naked bodies in a way that

authorizes rather than invites an audience member to watch and to look with an obligation for intimacy. Even designating the performance as a work of art runs the risk of framing Eiko and Koma's bodies as "unreal" representations that alleviate the pressures of encounter.

The canvases, the docent guards, the border that marks the dance space, and the storyline operate in different ways to give context and meaning to the performance. The canvases create an intimate space in which the performance occurs, mark the performance as something different than the other artworks in the gallery in its privacy and separation from the flow of traffic, and offer a protective function both in protecting patrons from open nudity (evident in the warning signs posted on the canvases) and in protecting the performance from the activity that occurs outside the hanging canvases. The docents give a sense of privacy and security to the performance in controlling the number of people that can enter the performance space. The control of the number of people viewing the performance operates not just as a possible result of safety concerns that govern how many people can enter into a type of space but also as a control to limit the flow of traffic. The border between the audience and dancers also creates an intimate space and acts as a protective marker that—while not ensuring that no patron will pass beyond the border and invade Eiko and Koma's nest area—does discourage anyone from passing into the dancers' domain. Lastly, the fragment of a story that the Walker provides does less to definitively frame the performance and shape the audience's perspective than open up one fragmented possibility through which the audience might understand or access the performance in an incomplete and vague way. The physical

borders or frames around the performance serve contrasting functions—to create intimacy and protection.

A frame risks encumbering a work of art in prioritizing a separation between what stands outside the frame and the work within the frame. However, it would be a mistake to understand *Naked* as a performance that is controlled by its frames. Perhaps the largest of these frames separates culture from nature—the indoor gallery from the outdoor natural landscape. However, Eiko emphasizes that creating a set on an indoor stage and outdoor area is about creating an environment in which one could live and respond to for long time.²⁰⁰ The emphasis on an ongoing multi-sensory encounter within unfolding relations in an environment—whether those relations unfold within a gallery or an outdoor venue—ruptures the nature-culture divide. An art center or museum is not just a structure that keeps and generates cultural knowledge. It is also a landscape of unfolding relations in which many bodies generate a lived encounter within and in response to the surroundings. Herein, a landscape cannot be strictly defined as natural or cultural. The division cannot be maintained when a landscape is constituted through processes of unfolding relation. Therefore, an art center is not a purveyor of cultural information but an unfolding relational embodied landscape. The Walker Art Center might be understood as an institution that conveys and preserves cultural products to and for the public. This places the public in the position of a tourist and consumer of cultural products and cultural products in an abstracted position outside the lives of the public. However, understanding institutions of art and culture as immersed in and emerging from rather than prior to living and lively relation revitalizes and reinvests the work that an art center

does not just in the lives of human patrons that visit the building but also in the processes of living relation that cannot be determined or contained within the correspondence of (human) cultural art institution and (human) art patron. Herein, both patron and institution are immersed in and continually emerge from more-than-human living landscapes rather than fixable cultural products.

The knowledge that Eiko and Koma's *Naked* performance conveys is not of symbolic cultural meaning nor is it knowledge of the categories of culture and nature. Rather, the performance conveys practical and perceptual understanding rooted in encounter. Eiko and Koma's work guides their audiences around meanings unfolding within surrounding landscapes rather than signifying meanings that might be contained within a distinct construction or representation. Herein, the frames that enclose *Naked* do not impose a frame of enduring representations that can be collectively held, abstracted, and accessed by the audience. Rather, these frames—especially the peepholes of the canvases—entwine with the perceptions and sensations that the audience members encounter as part of the entire field of unfolding relations.

The danger of these frames is that they might work against open encounter and encourage a turn away from the intimate relations that give rise to the performance—raising the question how does an audience member reciprocate nakedness? An audience member can choose if they look, how they look, how long they look, and where they look to some extent. In these afforded choices, a level of vulnerability equal to nakedness—physical or otherwise—is not necessarily demanded from the audience. Even though Eiko and Koma ask for and foreground reciprocity in their naked openness, the frames

that surround the performance also work to manage the interaction. Therefore, the level of vulnerability and intimacy that might be present in being naked—in being more naked than naked—can be kept in check. However, even though the reciprocity of *Naked* does not necessarily ask the audience to be vulnerable to the level of nakedness, the audience reciprocates Eiko and Koma’s nakedness in other ways—by giving their time, attention, and curiosity.

On one occasion, I overheard an audience member—peering in from outside the canvases—comment, “It looks real,” and her friend responded, “They are real.” Other audience members asked, “Is there a story” and “How often do they move?” These comments and questions do not necessarily reveal that the audience realizes the relational implications of the work. However, the thoughts and questions posed touch on and begin to sensitively attune to the importance of Eiko and Koma’s work as an inclusive relational reality that includes dreams, the dead, and many different moving bodies within a landscape. Oftentimes, reciprocity is only thought of as a “good” interaction—that reciprocity only occurs in a relation when there seems to be some kind of equality of exchange. However, all visitors to the art center help create a landscape in which Eiko and Koma dance—even the visitors that respond flippantly or those that generate a lack of intimacy or those that are not just human. Understanding an audience member’s seeing a performance as an *a priori* relational immersion resituates audience members from consuming spectators to relationally embedded participants. In Eiko and Koma performances, audience members do not observe as much as they learn to attune with their entire bodies within ever-changing and vulnerable landscapes.

Even though Eiko and Koma are unclothed in the performance, the title of the work and the nakedness of Eiko and Koma's bodies gesture towards nakedness beyond being without clothing. Nakedness is a vulnerability associated with being unclothed but not necessarily tied to being unclothed. As Eiko states, "Being seen and seeing is tender, ambiguous, odd—it asks the viewer to observe details. A viewer can see the expanse of the whole body as well as very small parts of it."²⁰¹ Importantly, *Naked* invites viewing as relationally rooted. Eiko invites the audience to "linger...and kinetically observe how our bodies move towards death."²⁰² Herein, Eiko's invitation to the audience is at its root about inviting the care of the audience and a multi-sensorial or bodily perceptual encounter within a surrounding relational landscape. It is an invitation to reciprocity without stipulating what kind of character that reciprocity will take on. Nakedness speaks to an intimacy so close that it makes a body susceptible to many others' influences and disruptions. In intimate and relational nakedness, one is more naked than being without clothing and therefore must invite care. Herein, nakedness in Eiko and Koma's work emphasizes not that their bodies are unprotected by clothing but that they are unprotected beyond the intimate surfaces of their skin to relation with a multitude of others.

In moments while visiting Eiko and Koma's *Naked* performance, I did not feel the intimacy of nakedness. In other moments—especially as I attended the entire duration of their last day at the Walker—the performance had an extreme sense of intimacy and belonging. The energetic quality that pervaded the Walker was of taking and giving time and care—which is a way to offset the flattening of felt experience that might occur in a

representational frame. *Naked* materializes and stages a nest in which one might hold and behold bodies dwelling within a nurturing and caring relational landscape. If an audience member were to look long enough or in the right moment or the right way, he or she might become caught in an unclothed body's naked eyes and in its watery wounds that cannot be contained by any frame, in a touch on the knee, in a poof of dust, in a shadow of darkness, in the force of bodily impulses. The vision that Eiko and Koma's work gestures towards is a vision that is not about seeing others but relationally feeling others pass through you—to expose oneself to the impositions of others in relation where all the senses have the quality of touch rooted in a surrounding relationally unfolding landscape.

During a break in the performance at the Walker Art Center, I wandered the galleries and spoke to a docent who lamented, "I'm sorry to see them go." It was Eiko and Koma's last day at the Walker of a month long performance in which they danced during most of the museum's opening hours. The docent's comment reveals that the performance cannot be simply understood as an event that is contained within the temporal and spatial frame of an exhibition that has a beginning and an end—spatially confined by a gallery and temporally contained by an opening and closing. The docent's comment demonstrates that Eiko and Koma's visit reaches well beyond "a *last day at the Walker*." The investment and attachment that the docent expressed given to Eiko and Koma's going points towards the dancers' ephemeral going—never fully leaving—not as an ending but a continuation in which they might or might not return but are always relationally rooted.

Coming and Going

While it might be easy to recognize that Eiko and Koma simply or not so simply come and go from a performance venue such as the Walker Art Center, the comings and goings in which the performance and dancers participate extend far beyond and below human perception. The perceptible and imperceptible pervasive and intertwined flows of movement—comings and goings—realize a mobility in performance that cannot be completely grasped. The audience member's question in *Naked*, "How often do they move?" gestures toward the notion that with performance we continually adjust to ongoing movement no matter how imperceptible that movement might remain. While movement unfolding within a landscape is wholly ungraspable, it is that to which I again turn—in examining Eiko and Koma's *The Caravan Project*—to further theorize how performance operates as a becoming in terms of a practice of wayfinding—a continuous synaesthetic adjustment or attunement to and within a surrounding landscape.

The premiere of *The Caravan Project* occurred in Corning, New York at the Cedar Arts Center in 1999. The performance was co-commissioned by Art Awareness (Lexington, New York) and Dancing in the Streets (New York, NY). Since that performance, Eiko and Koma have performed *The Caravan Project* at a number of locations including educational institutions such as Dartmouth College and Emory University, Bryant Park in New York City, Michigan Avenue in downtown Chicago, and on private property for small audiences. Arts institutions—such as the Museum of Contemporary Arts Chicago in 2011, the University of Maryland Clarice Smith

Performing Arts Center in 2012, and New York’s Museum of Modern Art in 2013—have also hosted a performance of *The Caravan Project*.

The Caravan Project is comprised of performances staged within and alongside a modified traveling trailer temporarily installed within outdoor landscapes after nightfall. In these and other performances, Eiko and Koma dance with a thoughtful, giving, gentle, and slow movement within a landscape. The performances generate a sense of belonging—which recognizes the vulnerability and openness inherent in belonging rather than the safety of belonging. Eiko and Koma describe *The Caravan Project* as being developed as an “art activism” piece in which the artists bring art to communities that might not otherwise have been exposed to their work—emphasizing that particular types of venues have the potential to draw different crowds. A performing arts center might draw regular art patrons, students, or tourists and are not as subject to outdoor elements. A performance in a rural landscape such as a park, field, or river often requires an effort on the part of audience members to attend and is open to rural surroundings and outdoor inhabitants. A performance in a city in the outdoors often draws spontaneous spectators that inhabit and walk the city and the community in which the performance occurs. Like diverse rural landscapes, each city landscape creates a unique environment of sound, sight, light, smell, tone, and texture in which the performance unfolds.

While I have not attended any live performances of *The Caravan Project*, I viewed archival recordings of the performances online at the artists’ Web site. While an archival recording of a live performance cannot capture the contextual specificity of a live event, the live performance and the recorded performance are mutably bound

together and sensually embedded in different ways. My engagement with and through archival material is not meant to treat the recording as if it were the same as the recorded performance. There are differences in reading and experiencing a live performance than reading and experiencing an archival recording of that performance—such as a sense of inclusion in an audience, the inability to stop the performance and review it in fragments, and a sense of the immediacy of a certain kind of “liveness” that does not necessarily rely on or unfold through modern technology. However, the live performance and the archival recording both require an engagement of the imagination, which gestures beyond the notion of reading just the facts *or* just the subjective experience of the performance. In order to begin to understand the felt reality of relationality, the imagination is needed. Through the imagination—whether during a live performance or engaging with an archival fragment of a performance—ungraspable relationality might be felt, thought, and practically encountered. Therefore, I read archival fragments as I would a live performance—with a gesture of the imagination—not to recreate a past event but to understand how a performance is embedded in unfolding ongoing relationality, to understand the relational resonance and traces that permeate and continually generate a performance.

The comings and goings in Eiko and Koma’s caravan performances set the imagination on the move. One might find in the archive—or might have found in the live performances—trees and grasses rustling in the wind, concrete slabs shifting under pressure, ambient commotion within a city landscape, traces of bloody battles, or perhaps someone mourning or lamenting another’s going. What is most vitalizing for my

theorization of wayfinding in a relationally thought performance is Eiko and Koma's immersion within and passing through lively landscapes. The perceptible and imperceptible comings and goings of these landscapes are what nurture and give life to Eiko and Koma's dance. I mention only the smallest and perhaps most thinkable layer of many comings and goings that surround Eiko and Koma in order to argue that a practice of wayfinding occurs amongst a plethora of perceptible and imperceptible comings and goings. In *The Perception of the Environment Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling, and Skill*—Tim Ingold describes wayfinding “as a skilled performance in which the traveller, whose powers of perception and action have been fine-tuned through previous experience, ‘feels his way’ towards his goal, continually adjusting his movements in response to an ongoing perceptual monitoring of his surroundings.”²⁰³ Through their performance practice, Eiko and Koma continually fine-tune their bodies in order to adjust attentively to the specificity of the surroundings.²⁰⁴ As a practice of wayfinding, these skillful adjustments are made in an ongoing monitoring and response to the flow of comings and goings in a living landscape—whether that landscape includes urban traffic, layers upon layers of historical fragments, or atmospheric shifts. This flow and Eiko and Koma's participation within this flow gives not just context to Eiko and Koma's work but more importantly life to their movement.

The multiplicity of bodies that pass through and inhabit the landscapes within which Eiko and Koma find themselves performing feeds the richness and grace of their movement. Every landscape within which Eiko and Koma perform is continuously different and retains the marks—whether visible or invisible, known or unknown—of

countless and ungraspable relational encounters. Eiko and Koma's movement is not only a glacial time consuming articulation of human bodies, it is also an ambulatory looking and finding of a way to live and unfold life within every-changing landscapes. Eiko and Koma's performance venues do not comprise a geographic or topographic map of locations. Instead, these venues gather together making an ungraspable way within and by which Eiko and Koma live. In performance, Eiko and Koma model attunement as finding a way within a field of ongoing relations. This field is not a set of performance sites but a timely terrain within which Eiko and Koma—among others—come and go. Herein, these terrains are less spatial locations than timely and spatial relational unfoldings that are generated through the comings and goings of many different ever-varying bodies moving perceptibly and imperceptibly. Eiko and Koma's coming and going—along with other comings and goings—binds together spatial and temporal mobility in relational mobility. Therefore, Eiko and Koma do not so much perform *The Caravan Project* at venues defined as a city, a park, or a gallery but within currents of movement that generate a landscape comprised of innumerable and singular relational journeys. Eiko and Koma therefore do not follow a course from one venue to another but follow a lively living path saturated with the *more-than-human*.

The Caravan Project emphasizes a relational and itinerant immersion with many different intertwined and ambient comings and goings within a landscape that extends beyond the distinct parameters of a show. Specifically, Eiko articulates that *The Caravan Project* is conceived as an *inclusive* work that in part welcomes people who are not theatre-goers because of financial and social circumstances. For Eiko, the itinerant mode

of a caravan serves the work through “educating audiences through real encounters, exposing our work beyond theater-goers, sharing our process of experimentation, creating a dialogue with people, and offering a story and myth for communities to share.”²⁰⁵ The goals of the performance echo performance ecology’s aim to foreground the embeddedness of performance in community and the world. Importantly, the shared dialogue of human communities is always rooted within a more-than-human landscape. Eiko and Koma’s path of movement is not an index of movement that can be wholly mapped culturally, geographically, topographically, in human terms, or otherwise. Instead, the path is one of intimate involvement with others.

Eiko and Koma’s body of work and the epigraph that begins this chapter brings to mind Edmund Husserl’s concept of the lifeworld [*Lebenswelt*] from the field of phenomenology.²⁰⁶ As one of phenomenology’s founders, Husserl rejects the opposition between things apprehended by thought and things apprehended by the senses in order to formulate a path of study that emphasizes describing human experience within a world that is immediately felt. The trajectory of phenomenology that draws on Husserl’s approach takes up the study of lived experience—the lifeworld—in order to better understand human activity from a perspective within the world rather than as an objective observer situated outside the world. Husserl develops the concept of the lifeworld in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, which was written from 1934 to 1937 prior to Husserl’s death in 1938.²⁰⁷ The notion of an intersubjective lifeworld that Husserl (a German Jew) theorizes bears particular weight coming on the

verge of the onset of World War II coupled with the scientific and rational justifications for the extermination of particular peoples.²⁰⁸

The concept of the lifeworld designates a world of immediately and intersubjectively lived experience, which in Husserl's terms indicates a "world of immediate experience" that is "prereflected" or "already there"—experienced in a "natural primordial attitude."²⁰⁹ Marking a distinction between a theoretical and a pre-theoretical attitude from which all theorizing is derived, Husserl explicates the work of phenomenology as a study of the phenomenal world as we immediately and pre-reflectively experience it rather than as we categorize or conceptualize it. Husserl's maxim "to the things themselves" takes into consideration the constructedness of human knowledge and sets the task for phenomenology to develop inquiries that make explicit our human presuppositions, assumptions, and biases.²¹⁰ Therefore, Husserl's phenomenology aims at gaining understanding of the nature or meaning of everyday human experiences through an investigation of the pre-reflective existential and experiential structures that inhere in the lifeworld without abstracting or taxonomizing the world or lived experience.

The concept of intentionality informs Husserl's lifeworld conceptualization by emphasizing that the self is always already implicated in the world in a mutually dependent and reciprocal relation to others prior to conscious reflection.²¹¹ Husserl argues that things only become present to consciousness "in a worldly manner" as part of the totality of the world horizon, which is immanent in the possibilities of meaning in individual lived experience as part of its transcendent structure. The "already-there"

transcendent structure is not immobile or static but conditional, lived, and historical. With a conceptualization of transcendence that marks a distinction between Husserl's phenomenology and that of Martin Heidegger, Husserl theorizes a transcendental ego from which all intersubjective experience within the lifeworld derives.²¹² Husserl's former student Heidegger places greater emphasis on practical engagement with the world and in a more significant departure from Husserl's phenomenology aligns the work of phenomenology with ontology.²¹³

In contrast to Husserl's phenomenological investigations of the lifeworld, Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology aims to reveal fundamental hidden structures within phenomena and more particularly of Being. Herein, the notion of transcendence and the concept of intentionality in Heidegger's phenomenology are unhinged from a transcendental ego. Heidegger explains, "if one characterizes every way of behaving toward [Ver-halten zu] beings as intentional, then *intentionality* is possible *only on the basis of transcendence*," the reality transcended is not a distinct thing or an aggregate of things in experience—rather transcendence "is always already beings...in a totality [Seiende in einer Ganzheit]."²¹⁴ For Heidegger, the basis of transcendence does not properly belong to a transcendental ego that derives sense from the world but is that in which we are first and foremost situated in the midst of beings. Therefore, the self and consciousness are not given before the world as transcendental limits but are realized in a historical process embedded in a material world with others. The totality of the world in a horizon of possible meanings surpasses knowledge of a metaphysical reality "in itself"

and universal categorical determinations of beings—and limits and enables the constitution of the self in the midst of resistance.

Phenomenological inquiries risk deteriorating into esoteric or hermetically sealed expositions on lived experience, which are impervious to theoretical critique and uncritical of or blind to their own knowledge formations and practice. Criticisms of phenomenology often focus on how phenomenological approaches employ the concepts of transcendence and intentionality, take up and/or reinforce normative understandings of subjectivity, and configure the relation between self and “body” and the world. In critique of phenomenology, Brian Massumi argues that experience is never fully intentional. Massumi takes the concept of intentionality in phenomenology as a “closed loop” in which the personal is prefigured in the world—establishing an identity between the structure of the world and the structure of the subject in the world.²¹⁵ From Massumi’s perspective, phenomenological approaches—grounded in an ideal of authenticity—do not take into consideration the involuntary and the impersonal in personal experience. Additionally, criticisms of phenomenology often contest Heidegger’s theorization of man as world-forming—through intentional activity.²¹⁶ The contradictions in Heidegger’s thought come to the forefront in his attempt to think beyond categories such as man and animal in a framework of “existentials” that take up familiar structural divides and the same categorical titles.

While the work of phenomenology—like any philosophical framework—risks privileging a mode of knowledge without questioning the conditions under which it operates and creating a structure of regulation and normatization, the emphasis in (a

radical) phenomenology is on a whole historically constituted realm of experience that does not coincide with and cannot be stabilized and identified in the formation of the human subject. Against the assumption that subjective accounts are equal to the truth of phenomenological practice, phenomenology does not simply contrast private subjective impressions to general objective observations at the empirical level but takes up the question of the empirical along with questions of subjectivity and objectivity. Therefore, phenomenology does not disclose some newly discovered universally applicable fact about experience or some previously unknown aspect of private experience but makes thinkable possibilities of meaning rooted in a mutable relational context of meaning in a shared world in which one is already implicated. The work of phenomenology then is not to render the totality of the world completely knowable, identifiable, and interpretable through a set of hermeneutic codes but to renew lived experience and understanding of lived experience within lived experience. The stakes in phenomenology are not authentic objective or subjective descriptions of “the way things are” nor empirically testable interpretations but a thinking of unthought meaning in which theorizing and lived experience are bound together—while maintaining the tension between the “pre-given” and the continuous play of differences.

Eiko and Koma materialize a way of living in the world with others—in a horizontal totality and ongoing play of difference in lived experience. As Eiko and Koma become sensorially receptive to the flows within which they travel via the caravan, they fine-tune their bodies to adjust to the movement in others and in the surrounding landscapes. The caravan becomes a practice of finding a way within a world that refuses

observation as detached and disinterested and refuses the notion of movement as crossing boundaries that define the distinct parts of a global system. Instead, the caravan's observation and movement occurs through unfolding relation in a terrain of comings and goings and through the immersion of not-just-human performers and audience members equipped with sensory skills and experiences within lively landscapes. Herein, wayfinding movement passes through and gathers up ever-varying terrains of lived experience.²¹⁷ In passing through multiple and overlapping landscapes, Eiko and Koma's performance does not just take up cultural significance or community activism or ecological-political issues. The performance binds all of these elements together in a complex intertwining that materializes ecological principles in a wayfinding approach to movement, which emphasizes an ecology in which a mover feels and responds (in becoming affected) to a surrounding living and breathing relationally rooted landscape.

Even though Tim Ingold explains that one completes finding a way when the destination is reached—a wayfinding performance practice emphasizes that in wayfinding there is no destination.²¹⁸ Instead, the journey of finding a way is only complete *along* the way not in any particular arrival at any destination. In wayfinding, a performer is engulfed in a relationally thought performance practice that happens over a lifetime—not ending in death—which is permeated with heterogeneous comings and goings that engage and attune their sensory practice. Therefore, the perceptible and imperceptible (sensuous detail within) details that sensitize Eiko and Koma's and other bodies—making us relationally adjust—are of utmost importance. The subtle and gregarious sensual shifts within paths of movement—whether those shifts are in

temperature, light, moisture, or shape—require improvisation and a learning responsiveness.

Improvisational and Imperceptible Movement

For Eiko and Koma, the continual adjustment of feeling one's way along a path occurs in part through improvisation. Eiko and Koma do not have a choreographed routine that they perform. Instead, the movement artists unfold their performance through improvisation, sensitive exploration, and with a sense of involvement within a landscape that surrounds them. Herein, the caravan performances viscerally participate with the movements of a landscape concatenated with many comings and goings including other animal, elemental, and spirit bodies. In *The Caravan Project*, a landscape is not something that is danced on—seen from a series of points of view—but rather literally surrounds, envelops, and feeds the embodiment-thought and improvisation. The dancers' find their way by improvising within living relations unfolding in living landscapes that fluctuate from moment-to-moment. The improvisation recognizes that a landscape or a path within it can never be fully known in advance because—like improvised movement—a landscape is always changing. Therefore, even though Eiko and Koma have a schedule that charts their performances, the performances more importantly occur in response to and within surrounding sensuous and changing landscapes that cannot be determined. The improvisational path of wayfinding does not mark out a schedule of venues determined in advance as a route to be kept but rather an improvised performance path that must be continually worked out as it is woven into

detailed, living, and ever-generating landscapes that do not begin or end in a distinctly determined performance.

The imperceptible and ungraspable nature of movement makes theorizing performance as a mobile relation difficult.²¹⁹ However, failing and imagined perceptions are bound together with the imperceptible in performance to create a felt sense of the unrepresentable moreness that unfolds relationally in part through comings and goings on the move.²²⁰ Eiko and Koma's movement through and within the journeys of cities, and sidewalks, and rivers, and parks, and galleries articulates a *continuous* and unfolding itinerary of movement that while perceptible draws together the imperceptible. The performances of *The Caravan Project* perhaps best realize the aspect of Eiko and Koma's work that emphasizes continuity and itinerancy. The mobility of this installation-on-wheels allows the performances to occur within divergent landscapes that range from the intimacy of someone's backyard to differently restricted areas such as public parking lots or city sidewalks that cannot be entirely known, comprehended, or perceived. The strength of *The Caravan Project* is that the performances take place within widely different landscapes that nurture widely different perceptible and imperceptible comings and goings—including not just human casual onlookers, informed participants, and disruptive and disinterested passers-by. At any time during a performance, anything and anyone can come and go or move from one perspective to any other.

Eiko and Koma's traveling trailer opens on four sides onto the surrounding landscape and overflows with a carpet of vegetation that calls attention to the opulent carpet of the surroundings. The strange world that holds Eiko and Koma's bodies inside

the trailer is an extension of the strange world that holds Eiko and Koma—and others—outside the trailer. The details in the surroundings are essential to finding a way. The rich and potentially harrowing plethora of perceptible and imperceptible detail within any landscape is not a problem for Eiko and Koma in finding a way. In fact, harrowing detail feeds itinerant movement like the movement of a caravan. Caravans move with the movement in landscapes—with food sources, with seasonal changes, with population densities, with flows of waters. As Tim Ingold argues that a map labors to erase detail in order to provide a comprehensive representation of reality upon which a route might be plotted—I propose that in wayfinding the more diverse and detailed the landscape the easier it is to find a way and paradoxically to lose one's way.²²¹ Importantly, caravans do not follow maps but are sensitive to the perceptible and imperceptible living details in the landscapes within which they move.

From the perspective of earth's landscapes, Husserl theorizes that the earth is experienced as inherently spatially and temporally spread-out and argues that the earth is the most immediate bodily experience of space and the basis from which conceptions of space are derived.²²² The infinitely spreading out and ubiquitous ground that a body responds to and within always exceeds conceptualization and continually reveals the limited and expansive qualities of human perception and sensation, which revitalizes the phenomenological question of attunement. In *Being and Time*, Martin Heidegger poses and examines the question: what is attunement or *Grundstimmung*? The translators of Heidegger's *Being and Time* most often translate the German *Grundstimmung* as attunement, which indicates mood or state of mind following Heidegger's explication that

the term “state of mind” indicates “mood” or “Being-attune(d).” Importantly, Heidegger emphasizes that having a mood is not a psychological condition or a factor of consciousness but a “disclosive submission to the world” or “letting something be encountered [in a way that] is primarily circumspective.”²²³ For Heidegger, our (human) mood or Being-attune does not just simply act on or sense others but implies concern and carries the weight of becoming affected in some way [*Betroffenwerdens*].

Heidegger theorizes three essential characteristics of attunement or state-of-mind. The first of these characteristics is a disclosure of Dasein in its “thrownness.”²²⁴ The expression of “thrownness” indicates for Heidegger the “facticity of being delivered over” in which the entity is thrown into its “there” in such a way that it is “there” as Being-in-the-world—in a way of finding itself in a manner of fleeing.²²⁵ Thrownness gives rise to the second characteristic of attunement, which is Being-in-the-world as a whole. Being-in-the-world makes possible directing oneself toward something. However, in directing oneself toward something—the entity existentially “thrown” in its “there”—marks both openness and a closedness. While Heidegger explains that Dasein’s openness to the world is existentially constituted by the attunement of a state-of-mind, the “there” closes off in a way that is more closed than on the level of “not-perceiving.”²²⁶ Therefore, imperceptibility concerns not just what we cannot see or what moves beyond our ability to perceive but also what existentially closes off. The third characteristic grounded in attunement or mood is circumspective concern. Heidegger argues that the full disclosedness of the “there” is grounded in care, which is the constitution of Dasein’s Being. In turn, understanding constitutes the Being of the “there.” For Heidegger, every

understanding has a mood or attunement. Therefore, understanding is never absent or finished but has varying modes of “projectedness” towards “one’s potentiality for Being.”²²⁷ In a Heideggerean framework, the term understanding means to be projected towards a potentiality for Being—in a mode that has attunement. Herein, transcendence in Heidegger’s phenomenology indicates a *potentiality* for Being that hinges on an “ecstatico-horizonal” foundation in which understanding is the existential ground of “letting entities be encountered.”²²⁸

The paradox of limitation and boundlessness—the embodiment of horizon—ensures that attunement is a practice that occurs in a manner that cannot be identified in a single response or identifiable movement and that attunement cannot be located in a single body or part of a body. Rather, a fully synaesthetic response unfolds with/in the world—occurring as a wayfinding—as a feeling and finding ways through and within a world where absolutely everything continually moves and keeps on moving. Therefore, attunement is a practice that does not properly belong to any one body or one type of body but rather properly belongs to relational encounter. While Heidegger recognizes that the attempt to tackle the question of attunement “coincide[s] with the demand for a complete transformation of our conception of man,” he theorizes attunement as that which belongs to man as a world-forming being in practical engagement with the world through moods such as profound boredom, anxiety, and nostalgia.²²⁹ Heidegger states:

If attunement is something that belongs to man...and this cannot be clarified with the aid of consciousness and unconsciousness, then we will not come close to this matter at all so long as we take man as something distinguished from material

things by the fact that he has consciousness, that he is animal endowed with reason, a rational animal, or an ego with pure life-experiences that has been tacked onto a body.²³⁰

While Heidegger asserts that this concept of man—as the conscious animal—leads to a failure to recognize the essence of attunement, his move to situate attunement as belonging only to the Being of the human being undermines the emphasis that Heidegger also places on practical engagement with the world. Heidegger theorizes that the being of human beings is Being in the world with a state of mind (mood or attunement) whereby what touches the entity shows itself in an affect.²³¹ The delimitation of sense to the Being of the being that “submitted itself...to having entities within the world matter to it in a way which its moods have outlined in advance” risks making attunement a distinction that sets man’s being comparatively and transcendently against others insofar as other entities do not submit themselves to affect or to having others matter in some way.²³² The phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty also wrestles with understanding phenomena and lived experience but endeavors to avoid Heidegger’s existentials that risk devolving into comparative categories along with Husserl’s transcendental ego. Merleau-Ponty theorizes an intertwining that he calls the chiasm in which embodied perceptions and sensations are formed in the midst of the world. The chiasm cannot be accounted for in a “For the Other” or “For Oneself” antithesis.²³³ Rather, the chiasm is an ungraspable co-functioning—a co-becoming if you will.

In *The Caravan Project*, attunement or adjustment occurs in the midst of lively visually imperceptible detail within the landscape that permeates the performance

particularly through sound. Eiko and Koma choose not to use recorded music in order to immerse the performance in the rich detail of ambient rural and city sounds. The sounds of comings and goings—from the hum of insects to the hum of electrical lights—permeates the performance. The audience and the performers are invited by the veneer of sounds emanating from the surrounding landscape to attend to contrasting and nuanced juxtapositions that create a rich auditory fabric. These juxtapositions and mobile intermixings generate a surround of texture and tonality. The use of visual and auditory montage is also reflected in the work of performance artists and dancer/choreographers such as John Cage and Merce Cunningham. In particular, chance elements strike, deterritorialize, and strain perception not only as a process of audience consciousness but also as the indistinct elements of an indeterminate relationally and imperceptibly unfolding landscape.²³⁴

In Eiko and Koma's caravan performance considered as a wayfinding—process is not eliminated; comments of passers-by are not eliminated, the sheer darkness of a field is not eliminated; movement is not eliminated. In fact, Eiko and Koma's dance *depends* on the details of a landscape-in-the-making. A practice of attunement depends on adjustment to detailed and imperceptible surrounding comings and goings. Where everything moves and breathes, finding a way is not necessarily easy but necessarily entails an oscillation between finding one's bearings and losing them always adjusting according to the surroundings—not as a representation removed from the surrounding landscape. Therefore, attunement is not a skill achieved but a skill always in the process of being learned. The continuous and itinerant character of Eiko and Koma's caravan

performances gives the impression that sometime—whether walking the streets and galleries of Minneapolis, sitting on a riverbank at the family farm, or driving through a state park—that I might have the opportunity to watch and experience Eiko and Koma’s living dancing performance again, unexpectedly appearing within the flows of other comings and goings that swirl around me and within which I am immersed. Having a feeling of anticipation, waiting, and wondering is a feeling that Eiko and Koma’s work generates. It is also a feeling that nurtures attunement within a landscape. Therefore, the key to ambulatory movement in performance—not from site to site but in finding a way—is that relational movement encourages one to be sensitive and attentive *at all times* to what is going on perceptibly and imperceptibly around, in, and through you.

Wayfinding as Wayfollowing

The last of Eiko and Koma’s performances that I take up in this chapter is *River* (1995 – 2011) in order further examine how im/perceptibility shapes a practice of wayfinding—which informs my theorization of how performance operates as a becoming. Eiko and Koma have performed *River* many times in many different locations from Japan to Minnesota since the project’s inception.²³⁵ The performance was commissioned by Art Awareness, the Williams Center for the Arts, the Atlantic Center for the Arts, the American Dance Festival, the Walker Art Center, the Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival, and the Environmental Performance Network. While *River* has been sponsored by a number of institutions, the performance was created in a small stream in the Catskill Mountains and was originally performed with a floating driftwood sculpture by Judd Weisberg. The performance previewed in 1995 at Schoarie Creek in Lexington

New York and premiered the same year at the Delaware River (Eddyside Park) in Easton Pennsylvania. Lafayette College produced the premiere along with the sponsorship of the National Environmental Performance Network. Eiko and Koma's *River* is also often produced in collaboration with environmental groups, volunteers, and park officials that clean the area, check water quality, and foster community partnerships. While *River* is usually performed in a river—the dance also has been performed in lakes and ponds, which move differently depending on their surroundings, size, and configuration. I viewed filming of *River* at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 2012 and on the documentary film “Dancing in Water: the Making of River,” which can also be viewed online at the artists’ Web site.

Previously, I wrote that Eiko and Koma’s coming and going gave an impression that the dance might be unexpectedly experienced within another landscape at another time. I *anticipate* the comings and goings of and within the performance. The anticipation comes not only from the peripatetic movement, it also emerges from a dreaming modality that a landscape generates. In dreaming, I anticipate and wait for Eiko and Koma to suddenly—without regard to any set time or place—appear dancing within a landscape. Even though I might mark out a particular time and place that I could go to a *River* performance, I attend through anticipation the ongoing performance in a dream. The quality in dreaming in which something can happen anywhere and anytime ensures that movement is not just about what has been or what will be in “liveness” but also what has been ephemerally-continually happening. In dreaming, performance might appear anywhere and anytime.

Dreaming is caught up with questions concerning perception and consciousness. The connections between dreaming, perception, and consciousness are taken up in Sigmund Freud's psychotherapeutic prescriptive practice and mapping of the conscious and the unconscious, in the inquiries of phenomenology concerning perception, and more particularly in Gaston Bachelard's phenomenological investigation of different kinds of space that invite the poetic imagination. Freud's topographical mapping of the conscious and the unconscious depends on a discontinuous temporality in which the ahistorical, deterministic, and unintentional unconscious might rupture everyday reality.²³⁶ The Freudian division between the conscious and the unconscious reinforces a strict separation between dreams and real life. In the Freudian paradigm, dreams inhabit the domain of the unconscious, which is a deterministic structure that reconstructs reality in a way that the conscious cannot control. In contrast, in Martin Heidegger's phenomenological paradigm a pre-reflective and intentional consciousness—rather than constituting consciousness—precedes the fully self-aware cognitive individual and provides access to the world as a historical system of meanings. While Heidegger's conception of consciousness is both pre-reflective and also intentional—inextricable from historicity—Maurice Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that perceptual body world relationships constitute pre-reflective experience, which can be consciously reflected upon. Each paradigm theorizes a reflective or conscious domain differently connected to an unconscious or pre-reflective domain.

For Freud, the unconscious is a wholly other reality—that includes dreams and repressed memories—set apart from and yet erupting into conscious reality. In contrast,

Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty maintain a distinction between a pre-reflective domain—understood for Heidegger as consciousness and for Merleau-Ponty as perceptual body world relationships or pre-reflective experience—and a reflective domain of the self-aware or consciously reflective individual. However, the distinction between the reflective and pre-reflective domains is more of an entanglement than a separation. In particular, in Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology of perception embodiment is inextricably caught up with cognitive process. Therefore, the imagination, dreaming, hallucinating, and all perceptual processes are caught up with cognitive processes. Gaston Bachelard—one of the most prominent phenomenologists on dreaming—aligns with Freud’s understanding of the atemporal and separate nature of the dreaming imagination but situates dreaming in individual consciousness rather than the unconscious. However, Gaston Bachelard’s phenomenology—like Merleau-Ponty’s emphasis on body world relations—looks to things, landscapes, and other perceptual encounters within the world unlike Freud who investigates a delimited psychic interiority. I take up Eiko and Koma’s *River* in the midst of these inquiries in order to better understand the role that dreaming plays in a practice of wayfinding attunement for understanding and theorizing performance as a becoming.

A Question of Reality

While a patron upon seeing *Naked* poignantly asked, “Are they real?” in the gallery at the Walker Art Center, the question also permeates the outdoor landscapes in which Eiko and Koma perform. Just as a performance introduces a question of reality into a landscape, a landscape introduces a question of reality into a performance.

Importantly, the question is raised not just from a particular patron or from an artwork or a performance. The question emerges from the ungraspable relationality in which the particular audience member and show are embedded. The question of reality might be one of analysis in order to make a situation more knowable and manageable—to determine what is real and what is not real—or the question might attend to the emergence and mixing of different domains of reality through forms that have detached themselves from their descriptive and determinate identifying function. The rupture of the opposition between dream and reality that Eiko and Koma's work emerges from does not reconcile dream with reality but intimately entangles them. The boundaries between dream and reality become uncertain and fluid. Cognition mixes with imagination and hallucination. Dreaming therefore is not the activity of a mind detached from embodiment and the world contemplating a less literal factual reality or illusion. Dreaming does not coat reality with illusory images or occur as a break from reality in a clinically diagnosed madness. Rather, dreaming is a relational way of participating with the surrounding landscape. Likewise, performance as a becoming is also a relational way of participating with the surrounding landscape.

In Eiko and Koma's *River*, the movement and activity of river waters cultivates a practice of adjustment or attunement. The deep and glassy surface of the river water challenges perception. One of the most striking acts of a river landscape is the doubling of the performers and the river's surroundings. These reflections are not set apart from reality but are a doubling of and within unfolding reality. When I attempt to conjure words to describe how striking the doubled and rippling reflections in performance and

the river are, I fall short. I can only say that these reflections are ghosts—solid, liquid, and vapor at the same time. And, as ghosts they...are somewhere and yet nowhere...always will be and always have been haunting the dreaming of Eiko and Koma's immersion in river waters. Bodies and materialities unfolding within the unrepresentable plenitude within a landscape efface the opposition between reality and imagination and create an uncanny and shifting perceptual encounter.²³⁷

The ungraspable co-functioning that Merleau-Ponty terms the chiasm provides a way to understand landscape as an infinitely extending horizon and elements working and belonging together rather than a unit of a global structure or a simple stage for human life. Landscape expands and grounds the synaesthetic and responsive intertwining of many differentiating moving bodies.²³⁸ A landscape does not stabilize a known world but rather stands as an enigmatic moving body that continually drives a multitude of bodies to adjust as perpetual foreigners. A landscape cannot be completely and definitively grasped not simply because the matter of one's surroundings is impenetrable but because a landscape—as evident in the flow of a river—is always changing in imperceptible ways.

Heidegger situates this withdrawn quality in a distinction between earth and world. For Heidegger, world—a term more comprehensive than culture—is the realm of human activity and earth is the realm of everything beyond human relations. Even though Heidegger's formulation again sets up a uneasy comparison between human beings and other beings, Heidegger provides insight into the withdrawn nature of what he calls earth. He states:

The stone presses downward and manifests its heaviness. But while this heaviness exerts an opposing pressure on us it denies us any penetration into it. If we attempt such a penetration by breaking open the rock into pieces, it still does not display in its fragments anything inward that has been disclosed.²³⁹

The stone *presses* against and *withdraws* from us. In the oscillations of pressing and withdrawing—even in violent breaking—the unyielding stone is not rendered completely open (knowable and disclosed). The senses—again not as discrete units of measurement but as an entire unfolding body-encounter—never arrive at the sensed and perceived object. In like manner, a landscape unfolds—yielding and withdrawing in the continuously mobile yielding and withdrawing of others. Mentor to Eiko and Koma, Ohno Kazuo contemplates, “We tend to think that there’s nothing to be gained in observing the elements.... No matter how skillfully you imitate the rain, you’ll never succeed. It’s truly inimitable. The question is: Why, then, should we practice.”²⁴⁰ I think the answer is in part—we practice in order to be born again and again, to die again and again, and to cherish unfolding living and dying surrounding landscapes through a practice of attunement that passes through and teaches adjustment (in other words, attunement that retains the etymological connotation of justice).

The plenitude of a landscape in its unrepresentable and impenetrable qualities is a driving force that draws all the senses together awakening a multi-sensory attunement-adjustment to ephemeral-ongoing traces, conditions, and the flows of and in different bodies. Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s chiasm provides theoretical insight into a synaesthetic adjustment-practice. In this intertwining, the senses are not distinct registers that

generate separate data brought together through cognitive processing. Rather, the senses are integrated into the functioning of an entire body with and within a surrounding landscape. Merleau-Ponty argues that sensual qualities such as cold, dark, dry, or green are not sensory contents but “certain kinds of symbioses” where the relation between perceiver and perceived are reversible and the senses take up with phenomena as they invade the body.²⁴¹ Merleau-Ponty states, “In reality there is neither me nor the other as positive, positive subjectivities. There are two caverns, two openesses, two stages where something will take place—and which both belong to the same world, to the stage of Being.”²⁴² In this statement that concisely articulates the chiasm, Merleau-Ponty distances his inquiry from phenomenology’s emphasis on the experiencing inter-subject as the locus of knowledge and from understanding ontology’s questions of Being via comparative ontological distinctions between beings. In Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological paradigm not only does subjectivity give way to a cavern, Being does as well.

It would be a mistake to understand Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological insights as claiming that all things are laid bare to subjective experience through perception. In his phenomenology of perception, a body exists as an intermeshing of all that is, “between exterior horizons and interior horizons ever gaping open...an ephemeral modulation of this world...which for its part is not a thing but a possibility, a latency, and a *flesh* of things.”²⁴³ Herein, embodied perception occurs through ongoing modulation rather than the determination of distinct subjects. Even though Merleau-Ponty describes the exchange between the perceiver and the perceived as an exchange between two

opennesses, his emphasis on modulation and openness points towards perception as a continuous and unfolding movement amongst a multitude of mobile bodies. These opennesses—rather than identified subjects or objects—unfold in a modulation that keeps perceptual exchanges at play and also confuses perception. This modulation—which requires entire embodied sentient and perceptive capacity—would not occur if the entities of a landscape were completely open or available for determinate perception.

Merleau-Ponty describes embodied lively synaesthetic incarnation as occurring through a beckoning call. He argues that neither a perceiver or perceived is completely passive.²⁴⁴ In the exchange, the perceiver gives or commits the sensing body to a *vague* beckoning and anticipated sensation.²⁴⁵ Merleau-Ponty describes the exchange between perceiver and perceived as an intertwining of unrestricted and reversible perceptual exchange that does not result in a synthesis. The immersive intertwining—the chiasm—does not result or aim at synthesis with the surrounding world but rather direct experience. In this experience, senses are more like rhythms—each rhythm having its own dynamism and magnetism. Herein, the eyes, ears, skin, mouth and other sensitive cells do not so much as see and hear but more so *pulse*. These pulsations resonate with other moving bodies and rhythms that have different unfolding tones and textures.

While no single sensing organ can stand in for another sensing organ on equal footing—sensing is not merely visual, merely auditory, or merely tactile. There is a pulsating viscosity to all sensing. Every seemingly distinct sense echoes through every other seemingly distinct sense. Learning attunement means becoming posed to the snapping point, struggling with in/corporeal matter, and accumulating embodied gestures.

A body as an openness continually gestures towards completion within a surrounding landscape but never achieves completion. Rather, the ongoing modulation generates gaps and ambiguity in perception. The gaps intensify and amplify relation and an uncertainty inextricable from every perception. When a vague beckoning poses a problem, and takes possession—as Ohno Kazuo claims, “Faced with such uncertainty, our souls become desperate and listen all the more attentively.”²⁴⁶ Therefore, with embedded relationality attunement then is not about achieving perception but reaching toward the limit of sensibility and encountering with care—in Deleuze’s words—the “paradoxical existence of a ‘something’ that cannot be sensed...and can only be sensed.”²⁴⁷ Herein, the processes of perception and sensation are mutable, have no determinate cause, and confirm belonging within the world.²⁴⁸

Eiko and Koma’s performances appear somehow to possess too much and not enough life. In *The Uncanny*, Sigmund Freud explains that the uncanny in experience results in a test of materiality and reality.²⁴⁹ Freud determines that the uncanny has many different and sometimes contrary connotations. One of these connotations—from the German word *Heimlich*—reveals the uncanny as that which is familiar and concealed. In part, Eiko and Koma test im/materiality by meandering amongst a landscape of unfolding familiar and concealed relational realities that include the living and the dead.²⁵⁰ Rather than adhering to a Western philosophical tradition that opposes reality and imagination, the work of these performers—and their predecessors Ohno and Hijikata—demonstrates the mobility and instability of reality and how difficult or easy it might be to slip around in reality with changing modes of perception and sensation.²⁵¹ Reality-relationality

continually moves and multiplies ensuring that attunement-adjustment is always a following rather than a finding.

Into Moving Reflections

A river landscape and performance as a becoming multiplies and reflects the world—importantly not as a replica or simulation but as an *increase* of the world. A river's reflections are not pure and straightforward—they ripple and waver. Watery reflections parlay a dreamer into deeper and more plentiful worlds. As Gaston Bachelard argues in *Water and Dreams*—the reflections of water—and I argue in performance as a becoming—invites dreaming, which in turn encourages a dreamer to examine the fluidity and solidity of matter and materiality.²⁵² For Eiko, this relational involvement is a joy. It is also a deep sorrow. While watery reflections initiate inquiries into materiality, they also set a challenge to perception. This challenge lures a dreamer deeper into wonder. A river or a pond's reflections create lustrous visual, auditory, and tactile effects that entice and lead a dreamer into further and further fanciful and plentiful landscapes. The wondrous recesses are not located in the mind or in the water below but in an unfolding relationality within the world—a fluid and wavering in/corporeality of strange creatures slipping in and out of apprehension, in and out of the dark shadows. In this way, Eiko and Koma commit their bodies—and invite the audience—to the limitless dreaming of rivers and of performances that run and creep away into the night.

Within a river landscape, Eiko and Koma become liquid. Their bodies—clothing, hair, gestures of face and movement—become fluid flames within a river's current. Water envelops and entangles everything. More than any other image, the image of

bodies in water makes one attune to flow, which encourages abandon. Letting oneself go in a current is not to drown in the depths but to float and meander within the relational depths. Eiko and Koma allow water to rush over and through their bodies carrying them off in gentle but forceful waves. While Eiko and Koma perform, the water works on them just as water wears away hard earth over years and years of gentle and violent touch. Therefore, a river teaches endurance. Endurance in contradistinction to convenience is necessary for learning attunement. To maintain and to cultivate attunement requires endurance that has no beginning or end. To practice attunement is to persist, to endure, to follow. Water teaches the persistent and steady work of attunement. It is in this way that a river moves and carries Eiko and Koma and others into the night.

Into the Dark Night

Eiko and Koma's *River* is performed at twilight with Eiko and Koma, the dance, and the landscape being carried off into darkness—a darkness which is of the water and of the night. A river is most often not blue or green but brown and black—a river is dark water. In darkness, night persists even in the light of day. Therefore, a river's dream is one of passing through dark waters. Even though in *River* Eiko and Koma are lit with lamps so that they are perceptible to sight, they perform in and descend into darkness. Nightfall turns the *entire* landscape into dark water. A river at night takes flight or perhaps better stated—the entire landscape becomes a river of darkness, which lends an excess of mobility to things of the night. Night mobility does not adhere to the conventions of time and space that seemingly control how a body is and is not able to move. In the dark, nocturnal bodies come nearer and travel more freely than so-called

illusions. In the uncertain and sometimes frightening mobility of bodies within a dark landscape, Eiko and Koma are not just carried off gently into the night. Eiko and Koma and others are carried within a potentially troubling dream that extends beyond the supposedly known and knowable landscape. Night is a landscape of water that envelopes and hides everything—and has the potential to reveal anything in any moment.

While Gaston Bachelard describes water as a vast unity in which water harmonizes the notes of a landscape, with nightfall discord awakens within a landscape because the joy of inclusiveness gives way to a certain fear of inclusiveness. In darkness and night, it becomes more difficult to judge one's distinct relation to and position oneself in regards to identifiable things in the surroundings. Quoting Claudel, Bachelard asserts, "Night...takes our proof away from us; we no longer know where we are...Our vision no longer has the visible as its limit, but the invisible as its prison, homogeneous, immediate, indifferent, compact."²⁵³ *Anything* can happen within the night and *everything* moves more easily and readily. The sounds and bodies of others are both far away and yet so quickly and easily so close—extra mobile. The hiddenness of things makes it much more difficult to judge distance, location, and character of others. It also never gives warning of what and when something might move.

On and past the cusp of twilight perception and sensation are heightened. Rising mists, settling fogs, drizzling rains—all participate in a wavering at twilight that limits and opens the eyes making one feel the darkness. The dream of night waters is not about what sleeps but what awakens in the dark—of what cannot be seen, of what cannot be known. Night sticks to the bones. Night brings us closer to death than any sleep. At

twilight, the breath of the entire landscape is slowly drawn, held, and released as a sigh into watery darkness. As night falls in *River*, water leaves its banks and mingles throughout the landscape—becoming landscape. In order to follow the water’s mingling—in a performance as a becoming—one must inhabit a threshold, paying attention to the manner in which things draw close and yet remain distant. Understanding performance as a becoming requires inhabiting a threshold—a continuous passage—where the meaningful material of a performance is not just the live show or a subjective consciousness of the show but moreover the indeterminate and ongoing relationality from which encounter in performance emerges, which is to say everything.

Into the Sorrow of Separation and Togetherness

A river’s dreaming follows a flow that runs along a river’s edge, sinks to dark and seemingly unmoving murky bottoms, floats with water’s shimmering surface, and unfolds in lacunae of reflections. A dreamer who inhabits a river or a riverbank—a becoming—is enticed into dreaming by the rhythm of moving water. The rhythm permeates a human body with currents of cool wet tactility and cool wet sound conjuring a feeling of solitude. Water divides and joins—separates and binds together a world. Solitude manifests the paradoxical coincidence of loneliness and belonging. Solitude depends on togetherness as much as togetherness depends on solitude. As the poet Mitsuharu Kaneko explains in his “Song of Loneliness,” “I was born / out of the deep fog of this land, which is covered with loneliness.” The poem is based on Kaneko’s understanding that every aspect of what makes the Japanese Japanese—the land, clothing, customs, behavior, etc.—is a manifestation of *sabishisa* or loneliness.²⁵⁴

Solitude and loneliness are integral for a practice of wayfinding/following and for understanding how performance operates as a becoming.

The sigh of Eiko and Koma's *River* at twilight carrying on into the night is a sigh of melancholy and mourning connected to death. A deep melancholy emerges when the waters of a river or a lake bleed into the night. Drifting demonstrates that death does not occur in an hour or a minute but as a long journey that brings sorrow. If death is a mournful wasting away, Eiko and Koma drift away mournfully rendering their bodies to the river landscape, dissolving into the water and the darkness. These waters not only absorb Eiko and Koma, they also absorb all shadows and reflections—all seemingly distinct performances. Eiko and Koma dissolve within the landscape abandoning their reflections to the darkness. The invitation to dream offered by a river couples an invitation to die or at the very least an invitation into the sorrow of death. A practice of attunement recognizes that the dead are not gone but more mobile and perhaps more or less hidden. Attunement wrought with the sorrow of death is attunement in separation and togetherness. In silence the voice of sorrow and loneliness can be heard.²⁵⁵

Continuous passing gives rise to the sorrow of separation. When loved ones come and go and when rivers flood with remorse, the dead begin to live inside other bodies. A practice of attunement sheds the tears of melancholy—awakening a death that dies little by little, a death that stays in us—that stays in our performances relationally. Perhaps no other death is more sufferable than death that happens slowly and continually. However, dreaming death is by nature slow and continuous—always carrying the seeds of remorse. As Eiko and Koma's *River* slows with the night growing in dark viscosity, it murmurs

and gestures towards silence—the silence of remorse. Even though I understand mourning and melancholy as integral to Eiko and Koma's *River* dreaming, Eiko marks September 11, 2001 as a point and event after which mourning became important in their work. In this context and the context of the deaths of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings and of a personal friend, Eiko formulates her understanding of sustained mourning.

Eiko describes sustained mourning as “a quiet protest to forgetfulness” in which one gives attention to what has been lost and as “an antidote for human aggression.”²⁵⁶ Her desire—and perhaps Koma's—is that their work might be created out of mourning and function as sustained mourning, which might be shared with others in order to remember rather than to avenge. Eiko claims:

Though I realize there is a logical difference in mourning for someone I have loved and mourning for victims I have not met, what is common in my mind is that what I call *mourning* is both quieter and more sustainable than the way Freud describes either mourning or melancholia.²⁵⁷

In *Mourning and Melancholia*, Sigmund Freud draws an uncertain and clinical distinction between mourning and the pathological disposition of melancholia. Freud outlines mourning as a reaction to the loss of a loved one or the loss of an abstraction that has taken the place of a loved one or object.²⁵⁸ In contrast, Freud attributes melancholia to a loss that—although might have been activated by a conscious loss—created a wound in the unconscious. In Freud's treatise, the grieving process associated with mourning is a test of reality that proves that the loved one no longer exists and thereby requires the

libido to withdraw its attachment. The withdrawal of the libido from the loved object and its transference to a new loved one occurs with the completion of mourning. In contrast, the melancholic transfers the libido to the ego instead. Significantly, Freud emphasizes detachment and transference of the libido from a non-existent loved object for mourning *and* for melancholia. For mourning, one completes the grieving process once the loved object is proved *in reality* to no longer exist and:

passes its verdict...upon each single one of the memories and hopes through which the libido was attached to the lost object, and the ego, confronted as it were with the decision whether it will share this fate, is persuaded by the sum of its narcissistic satisfactions in being alive to *sever its attachment to the non-existent object* (italics added).²⁵⁹

The work of grief is to impel the ego to give up the object—to declare the object dead so that the ego can go on living. While Freud's attempt to separate mourning and melancholia clinically is not successful, he still emphasizes for both mourning and also for melancholia a required process of detachment and reality testing of the loved object's non-existence. It is at this juncture where Eiko and Koma's work as sustained mourning differs from Freud's clinical and prescriptive practice.

In Eiko and Koma's work, mourning is not just sustained it is also sustaining—not a cure but an ongoing process of healing. Mourning is not a process that should be completed in order for one to detach the ego from the dead in reality. Rather, the dead are loved and cherished after death with no transference of attachment onto other objects and the loved object does not leave reality and become non-existent. In performance as a

becoming, one maintains love for and relation with the dead while still loving and participating with the living. This perspective—as a practice of wayfinding attunement in performance—does not detach the existent reality of the living from the non-existent reality of the dead. In sustained mourning, one continues to feel the loss, to remember, and acknowledge a loved one’s dying not pathologically but as giving time and attention—continually adjustment—to a loved one that continues to be a part of one’s own living and dying and learning and the ongoing unfolding relationality in which both are immersed. Eiko and Koma’s performances offer an opportunity to practice attunement with continually-ephemerally relationally “living” not just human others that is akin to attending the death of a loved one. Sustained mourning as it manifests in Eiko and Koma’s work is not about transference of love in order to bring an end to grief. Rather, mourning in performance as a becoming is a way to follow death in continued living. In particular, Eiko and Koma’s *River* awakens a sense of loss and mourning in dreaming. In the flow of a river’s waters, melancholy draws together and separates the nameable and the unnameable, the living and the dead.

Conclusion: Wayfinding/Following in Performance

In this chapter, I took up Eiko and Koma’s *Naked* in order to examine how exposure and belonging within landscapes is entangled with artistic cultural framing—evident in landscape painting, institutionalized art spaces, and perspectival theatre conventions. I reaffirmed that the stakes of my inquiry are invested in a relationally thought performance in which “culture” and “nature” are inextricably intertwined. I took up Eiko and Koma’s *The Caravan Project* in order to argue that wayfinding

adjustment/attunement is an improvisational practice that occurs within a multitude of perceptible and imperceptible moving comings and goings within an expansive landscape. Lastly, I took up Eiko and Koma's *River* in order to argue that wayfinding attunement is also a dreaming-cognition-hallucination that generates wayfinding as a wayfollowing through the experience of separation and togetherness. In an analysis of these performances, I worked to explicate a practice of wayfinding/following that permeates and informs my theorization of performance as a becoming.

Wayfinding/following—a synaesthetic, continual, careful, relational, and mobile adjustment to the specificity of one's perceptible and imperceptible lively surroundings rooted in ever-changing and expansive landscapes—builds on insights in the three previous chapters concerning how performance relationally operates at the nexus of human encounter with animals, objects, and machines/technology.

Wayfinding/following is not about achieving perception and identification or reaching a destination but becoming continuously and ephemerally relationally with others.

Conclusion

In Summation

In my inquiry, I entered into the conversation on performance ontology occurring in part in the work of Herbert Blau (1999/2007), Peggy Phelan (1992/1997/2007), Philip Auslander (1999/2007), and Aleksandra Wolska (2005). While Blau and Phelan ground the nature of performance in its liveness and ephemerality, Auslander argues that no essential distinction can be made between the live and the mediatized for understanding performance ontology. Wolska also challenges the emphasis on liveness and ephemerality in Blau's and Phelan's work—arguing that performance has an ontology of becoming. In Wolska's proposal, performance persists and continues past the parameters of a live show to participate in the processes of life—continuing not only in the memories of audience members that attended the live production. In my inquiry, I took up Wolska's theorization that performance has an ontology of becoming and further examined how performance operates as a becoming in its relationality—asking more explicitly how performance operates as a becoming relationally participating in the processes of life. Therefore, I moved beyond Wolska's theorization—which is rooted in demonstrating the continuation of performance past a live show—in order to examine how performance is relationally embedded.

I took up becoming as an ongoing relationality that precedes and cannot be completely understood and accounted for in the interactions of distinct terms. In David Hume's conceptualization of the nature of relations, relation is that which occurs between terms that interact. Herein, relation occurs as a becoming between and heterogeneous to

us. Relation and becoming have a principle of movement rather than correspondence. Therefore, relation is not the result of the interactions of distinct and identifiable terms—such as a dog and an owner or you and I. Rather, relation precedes and exceeds interactions. We emerge from rather than determine the heterogeneous and ungraspable relational domain. With this in mind, I organized my inquiry along four relational fields in which humans are involved—with animals, machines and technology, landscapes, and objects. My inquiry worked to think through these relational fields for a better understanding of how performance operates as a becoming beyond a mere opposition between ephemerality (human bodies performing live) and continuity (the becoming of a performance past the parameters of a live show) and beyond an anthropocentric emphasis on human embodiment while attending to the specificity of the material conditions from which a performance site emerged.

In organizing the inquiry along the lines of human encounter with others, I emphasized that the distinct and indistinct subjects and objects encountered (a human performer, an object, an animal, or a performance site) emerge from relation in a whole perceptual field rather than determine relation. I worked to theorize performance—and this inquiry—as relational practice rooted in ongoing process and openness-of-interaction in-the-making. The organization of the dissertation via human encounter with others—animals, objects, machines/technology, and landscapes—indicated perceptual fields by which performance ontology as a becoming might be newly thought. An object, a landscape, a human, or others in becoming are not determinate contents or aggregates of properties but indistinct unfolding embodiments that infuse ecological and interactive

performance contexts with process-oriented uncertainty and unpredictability.

Understanding performance and (human and more-than-human) bodies in performance as becoming—as continually emerging from relation—challenges perspectives on performance practice and research that take as a starting point performance as a human-centered representational and conventionalized product and production. Rather than basing inquiry in performance ontology on identifying what performance is through conventional categories and structures of performance, my inquiry attempts to understand performance ontology through the ungraspable relationality from which bodies and performances emerge.

The dissertation is an assemblage of different valences of performance ontology that accumulate through the chapters. In Chapter One: Holding Animals, I took up human-animal encounter through the *GFP Bunny* project. I examined the implications and stakes of how performance participates in the determination and identification of subjects and in a relational exposure that resists and ruptures stable identities and familiar organizations of relation. In explicating a contrast between a determinate and positional configuration of relation and an indeterminate and ungraspable configuration of relation, I examined the encounter in which the *GFP Bunny* project unfolds as operating in both of these configurations. I argued that identifying determinate subjects—within paradigms of domestication and discovery—risks making a normalizing gesture that is caught up with ontological suppositions about *the* animal. Insofar as transgenic art calls into question stable definitions of the body and of life and challenges the political, cultural, and ethical involvement of humans with other species—I argued that a transgenic

chimera such as Alba potentially resists power structures that legislate and classify life into taxonomies and hierarchies. However, I worked to elicit a tension between the subjection of these power structures to forces of critique and transformation and the potential reduction of the new understandings of life that transgenic artwork provokes to a single understanding and delimitation of life as a manipulable informational code. The challenge then is not necessarily to ascribe to the rabbit a determinate subject position—within a truth and practice of domestication, mutual evolution, and discovery—that provides access to and delimits reality but to understand how bodies including rabbit bodies pluralize and produce subjectivity revitalizing their mobility and quality of living.

I argued that the *GFP Bunny* project operates in at least two registers—as a testing of the self and social order that is necessary for decentering power relations and as a knowledge formation that constructs a regime of truth and practice in which it might be situated. In our biotechnologically shaped world, biomaterials and performance ontology should not be removed and detached from histories, lives, and experiences. At stake in performance ontology is not giving back to the animal what has been denied it by the human but overhauling the entire question of relational being-becoming such that ontological inquiries no longer take a vantage point external to ongoing relation and no longer undertake the measurement and identification of the being of a being as if a being could remain static, identified, and contained. With this comes the recognition that there is no static individual being as such or simple relation to or subjective mediation of a being as such in performance. I argued that how performance challenges or normalizes modes of thought concerning human-animal encounter impacts how a reconfiguration

and redistribution of agency and subjectivity might be made possible—not whether agency (and the subject) is called “human” or “rabbit” or “jellyfish” but that it emerges in a multiplicity of continually unfolding bodies in relation.

Reconfiguring performance ontology as a relational process and practice emphasizes the continuous emergence of bodies from relation rather than the emergence of relation from the capabilities and actions of determined beings with stable ontological categories. While Alba upsets rabbit filiations and classifications, an emphasis on the transgenic *characteristic* in Alba reduces human-animal relation to a science of genetic manipulation and genetic structure. However, the performance as a relational unfolding has more to do with affect than scientific coding and recoding. In the chapter, I argued in part that the relationality from which performance emerges is not just a factor of a body’s subjective (in)abilities but of affect and argued that—for performance as a becoming—listening and proposal grounds emerging bodies and subjectivities in an affective relationality and an ordeal of exposure.

In Chapter Two: Materializing Objects, I took up two performances—the Iranian performance-film *Home is in Our Past* (2003/2005) and a 2007 production of Heiner Müller’s *Explosion of a Memory/Description of a Picture* (1984)—at the nexus of human-object encounter. The vein of performance ontology that I examined occurred through questioning how a historically and materially rooted liveliness—rather than liveness—operates in performance. I examined fragmented and mobile constellations and collections of objects in order to think through the manner in which encounter with objects informs an understanding of how performance operates as a becoming. I argued

that a relationally embedded and critically constellated object creates fissures in historical and representational perspectives and an excess of living and lively—critical and material—impacts in performance.

The constellation as a critical and constructive practice for performance and performance research—in the historical materialism of Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno—takes up diverse historical fragments in a modality that works to provoke a new consciousness of the ideological condition of modern society in which the commodity form is the structuring principle. In the exposure of historical contradiction, the constellation of historical-material objects for performance challenges ideologically historically perpetuated barbarism, identity thinking, and domesticated habituated thought. In my inquiry, I argued that collecting and constellating objects undermine normatized structures of intelligibility that reinforce stable configurations of memory and of history as progress and linear continuity within capitalist systems of abstraction. Through the reconfiguration of historical narrative from a linear narrative of human progress to a mutable and ongoing living encounter with objects—with the debris of history and the junk of pastness—I theorized relational process with over instrumental use of objects. I argued that historical debris—while deeply connected with actual and unfolding events and peoples—cannot be utilized to turn vibrant and chaotic living historical relation into ordered and easily communicable experience or stable ontological categorizations of the animate and the inanimate, the organic and the inorganic, or the living and the dead. I argued that historical-material objects affirm that “pastness” is not a certification of a universal collective or hermetically sealed individual memory but a

questioning of how what has taken place resurges in the now through historical and relational processes that disrupt the linearity between ephemeral “liveness” and recorded documentation. Objects emerging relationally through historical and collecting modalities in performance indicate that performance as a becoming operates with continuous-ephemeral (nonlinear) liveliness rather than an ephemeral human-centered live embodiment.

The question of performance ontology, which concerns itself with how performance operates as a becoming, is bound up in the historical materialist concern with how we make meaning out of the fragments of historical materiality—and with a “reliquification” of ontological suppositions. Therefore, I took up performance ontology by way of a critical consideration of performance-in-the-making not as an essential ontological identification of performance but as a concern with how performance and performance ontology might be understood fluidly and critically with uncertainty and complexity via an examination of encounter with others in performance. Resisting the conversion of performance into the same commodified, codified, and reified object that might appear as an ontological totality, performance ontology needs to be taken up as a constellation—a nonlinear continuous-ephemeral spatio-temporal divergent and critical inquiry that reinforces that any totality is false.

In Chapter Three: Moving Machines, I took up the experimental theatre production *machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines, machines* (2008), and the 2006/2007 rehearsal-performance process for Heiner Müller’s *Die Hamletmaschine* (1977). The vein of performance ontology that I examined in this

chapter was concerned with the problem of domination and the implications and relevance of domination in thinking performance as a becoming at the nexus of human encounter with machines and technology in capitalist systems of production. The two sites in this chapter enabled a way to think through the complex operations of machines and technology, which are entangled in webs of complexity and structures of domination. I argued that human involvement with machines and technology indicates embeddedness in webs of complexity and integration into productive mechanisms wrought with socio-historical forces of domination. Therefore, becoming—as an unfolding relationality—envisions symbiotic webs of complexity *and* involvement in instrumental industrial productivity.

The entanglement of domination and sociality marks the capitalist mode of production and what Adorno calls the “administered life” of late capitalism. In the sociality of late capitalism—in which mastery over a classifiable and malleable nature is bound to self-mastery and mastery over other humans—domination and capitalist production are inextricably intertwined with machines and technology. Since domination concerns how the materials of life are abstracted, managed, produced, and consumed and how knowledge identifies, classifies, and makes the world known—the manner in which any body is technologically reconfigured cannot be construed as *either* participating in an autonomous symbiotic relational machine *or* participating in structures of domination. Therefore, I argued that performance must not only deny utility it must also reject the distribution and transformation of life via explicit calculation and knowledge. I reinforced that even though nothing and nobody can be extracted from relationality,

relational embeddedness does not operate outside the challenge of domination. In other words, the threat of extraction—which comes with the challenge to perform in modern society—carries no weight for a relational ontology but the threat of domination does.

Machines and technology can participate in and promote systems of domination under the rubric of a science that methodologically renders every thing knowable in human terms. In fulfilling this role, machines and technology are heralded as the crux of human progress and are promoted for their supposedly inherent and increasing efficient and effective productivity and performance. However, I argued that machines and technology do not guarantee improved conditions—just different and adapted conditions—in which failure is inevitable. Moreover, I argued that failure reinstalls and revitalizes practice, which along with *processes* of deviation combat the capitalist commodification and reification of relation. I worked to demonstrate that domination is not necessarily sustained by technology and machinery but through the mechanization and commodification of relation in a form of automatism that neglects to act with care—not recognizing that the relational is the foundation for (research and performance) practice and that relation is not a reified product (of practice) or a commodity form.

In Chapter Four: Following Landscapes, I examined three performances of the movement artists Eiko and Koma in order to consider how performance operates as a becoming at the nexus of human-landscape encounter. I took up the vein of performance ontology that runs more explicitly through the concerns and theorizations of phenomenology. I theorized performance relationality as embeddedness in the materiality of landscapes—which inextricably intertwines culture and nature, unfolds

through a multitude of perceptible and imperceptible comings and goings, and binds together bodies in the midst of separation and togetherness. I argued that a landscape generates a practice of wayfinding/following as a synaesthetic feeling and finding a way in continuous adjustment or attunement to one's surroundings. Wayfinding/following affirms for performance ontology that relationality—in contrast to atomistic configurations of the individual subject or genetic codes of organisms—is not about achieving perception and identification or reaching a destination but becoming continuously and ephemerally always relationally embedded with others.

An ontology of becoming challenges thinking of performance and performance ontology that adheres to an opposition between imitation and reality; that defines a performance through a set of conventions such as the beginning and end of a live show; that keeps the human being, the human body, and the human drama as central to its purpose; and that prioritizes the determination of positions (e.g. the roles of scholars and practitioners, the ontological categorizations and identifications of others) over and above the mobile and incomprehensible relationality out of which these positions emerge. The intersection of performance with an ontology of becoming enables us to think more thoroughly through questions concerning how creative practices depend on and materialize through processes of participation with human and more-than-human others. Performance understood as a becoming disrupts traditional framing of participatory performances as audience interaction in as set against passive consumption of a production and collaborative work as the non-hierarchical partnership between conventional roles of production (i.e. human actors, designers, directors, etc.).

Approached through a lens of relationality, participation cannot be limited to the rehearsal room or to human interaction or delimited as a method that theatre and performance practitioners use as a tool or strategy. Instead, participation occurs through a complex network of involvement “on the go” with others and is practiced through a continuous engagement and movement of embodiment. In my inquiry, I labored to think performance as continuous practice and process—an involvement in ongoing relationality—that is cultivated *with* other human and more-than-human bodies. Herein, the socio-historically and corporeally constituted borders between humans and nonhumans—in particular, the animals, objects, machines, and landscapes in performances—cannot be solidified into a taxonomy of opposing difference and/or sameness but are the very fluid and resistant limits and becomings that *make* a performance unfold and which offer a modality of thinking through relationality and performance practice.

A Divergence

The danger and power of a body relentlessly questioning and probing relation lies in the perverse possibilities and realities that affectively spew forth. This power of creativity is a movement that bleeds in the veins of the unknown. An excavation of suffering, a resurrection that is acute and failing awareness, a bridge that releases controls and mobilizes fodder...that can catch in the throat. Disturbance occurs here through alteration and dissolution, the splitting of every so-called identifiable and knowable thing. Hsss. Crack. Rip. Gash. Is a woman a woman...or a knife...or an envelope? Is a rabbit a weapon or a paintbrush? Is a kiss a caress or a contusion? Is a corpse a lockbox or a

lunchbox? Every touch produces touch. Every assemblage produces assemblage. The shift in performance ontology from what things are to what they do in the making of historical and material worlds refuses the authoritarian and totalizing roles of knowledge practices in order to take an inclusive approach to thinking, critiquing, and attending to relational belonging—separate and together—across the entire culture nature spectrum.

As I wrote and thought this dissertation document, I struggled with every word and every body—especially how to write “I” and “me” and “you” and “other” and “we” and “us” not as a force of my authority but as an invitation for considering your mobility and involvement as essential in the process. I have not always chosen the best word, in part because the best word changes from moment to moment, in part because a body and a word inherently conceal and trigger misreadings—excesses and confusions—and in part because relationally I, we, you, them, us...cannot not be determined. The hummingbird is not the hummingbird but the flower, and the wind, and the sugar, and the rain, and.... To do this work requires greater humility and ability than I possess—not to mention intelligence and energy—but the work is driven by an implacable necessity to touch upon the unfolding ongoing living-dying relationality with others in which performance as a becoming and my inquiry participates.

So, in trying to say something worthwhile beyond human behavior and social interaction, of becoming and performance, I must “write for the illiterates, the idiots, and the animals.” I must write for you who cannot read or write but who have much to carry. If only I had remained silent, maybe I might have known how to say and what to say—so pay attention. Alba hailed me from across the street late one night. Her hair disheveled

and with darkened eyes, she turned and sank into the concrete before words could escape my mouth and my fingers. The landscape followed after. It was a machine hailing me, and I beckoned to you with my rigid voice. I must admit the street is not as strange as it might sound. It embodies parts of my inquiry that might have struck me. It's all hypotheses—our inexistence in the minds of those who are not in the know. A labyrinth, which I'm weaving for you.

The madness of having to write and not being able to. Identify a jellyfish. Who might have appeared upon this page to you. I mean to say by you. To the animals. To the machines. To the objects. To the landscapes. If I eat them, can I secrete them? It's incomprehensible. A shadow-object and I spun around each other on opposite sides of a Ferris wheel that night. The wind was cold and the day dark. The air is thick with heat. I moved forward through the dissertation as bodies, scholars, and philosophers kept piling up. What about this task that I have completed? I cannot complete it but possibly it might come to an end. I wondered if a machine might get us there. To the present moment. The presentation moment. I sense a knowing knowing. Things can change on their way through me. I never have written or will I write a dissertation but I could do my best to submit. I will stop the becoming rot with the expert terms. How is the world created? How is an animal invented? The limits of becoming radiate open into realms of potentiality or is it reationality. A body disintegrates, mechanizes, presses against its own materiality.

Who then speaks? One Green Protein? But what then is the subject of my inquiry? Or not. And I was. The insanity of not trying to find a coherent history, a

coherent memory, a coherent self, a coherent other. Minding my own business. The business of my dissertation. What does it matter if I succeed or fail? I have broken no social rule. There is no bunny. I must keep on squirming squirreling and resisting. Becoming is the river that I attempt to cross. Jellyfish die. The dissertation is suicide for everyone mentioned in the presentation preservation. Have I written it all out, thought it all out? Is the inventory and thinking accurate? They gave me every bit. Every bird. For others hurry me along keeping me on track as it were. On tracks. Injected veins twisting around my thoughts. Footprints hunted in the dirt. Once the conclusion ends, there we are. Or not. Dog-eared. Listening with the shadows. But how?

¹ Nietzsche theorizes that there is no being—no domain of things-in-themselves that have essential properties—but that being is always becoming as evidenced through senses that reveal continual change. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari draw on Eastern philosophies and build on Friedrich Nietzsche’s philosophical formulation of becoming in order to advocate for a nomad thought that contests structures of domination, classical formations of subjectivity, and philosophy’s ties to the State apparatus. The French philosophers explain that becoming is not a correspondence between distinct terms, subjectivities, or identifications. Rather, becoming is a multiplicity—a plurality of heterogeneous intersections that cannot lose or gain a dimension without changing nature and which continually transform into other multiplicities. Deleuze and Guattari write, “Since its variations and dimensions are immanent to it, *it amounts to the same thing to say that each multiplicity is already composed of heterogeneous terms in symbiosis, and that a multiplicity is continually transforming itself into a string of other multiplicities, according to its thresholds and doors.*” In Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 249. Deleuze and Guattari’s theorization of becoming draws in part on David Hume’s theorization of the nature of relation in which relation occurs exterior to the distinct terms that interact. Herein, relation occurs between and heterogeneous to distinct terms—operating with a principle of movement rather than correspondence. Therefore, relation is not the result of distinct terms interacting—such as a quarterback and a football—but precedes and exceeds their interactions and correspondence. The relational domain is the heterogeneous domain out of which the “distinct” performer and object continue to emerge.

² Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002), 30.

³ Mary Strine, Beverly Whitaker Long, and Mary Frances Hopkins, “Research in Interpretation and Performance Studies: Trends, Issues and Priorities,” *SpeechCommunication: Essays to Commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the SpeechCommunication Association*, ed. Gerald Phillips and Julia Wood (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois UP, 1991), 183.

⁴ Ronald Pelias and James VanOosting, “A Paradigm for Performance Studies,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 73 (1987), 221.

⁵ The familiar categories of event, performer, audience, and text are reworked in various ways throughout performance studies scholarship. Kristin Langellier also relies on similar categorizations to theorize the ontology of performance. Langellier positions social context—audience, performer, performance setting, and performance event—as the “conditions of performance.” In Langellier’s framing, which takes up an ontological base in these categories of social context, “We are urged in particular to consider how sociocultural factors condition performance and especially to understand the rules for

performance within a speech community.” In Kristen Langellier, “From Text to Social Context,” *Literature in Performance*, 6, 2 (1986), 62 – 63. As an outside force, sociocultural factors shape a performance that is already ontologically configured through the normatized terms. Richard Schechner also proposes four basic ontological categories—“authors, performers, directors, and spectators”—that reinforce and stabilize the ground of performance in (human) terms. In Richard Schechner, “Performance Studies: The Broad Spectrum Approach,” *The Performance Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Bial (New York: Routledge, 2004), 7 – 9.

⁶ McKenzie states, “the persistent use of this concept within the field *has made liminality into something of a norm*. That is, we have come to define the efficacy of performance and of our own research, if not exclusively, then very inclusively, in terms of liminality—that is, a mode of activity whose spatial, temporal, and symbolic ‘in-betweenness’ allows for social norms to be suspended, challenged, played with, and perhaps even transformed...[It] becomes where the valorization of liminal transgression or resistance itself becomes normative.” In Jon McKenzie, “The Liminal-Norm,” *The Performance Studies Reader*, ed. Henry Bial (New York: Routledge, 2004), 27.

⁷ Aleksandra Wolska, “Rabbits, Machines, and the Ontology of Performance,” *Theatre Journal*, vol. 57 (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 83 – 95.

⁸ Herbert Blau, “Virtually Yours: Presence, Liveness, Lessness,” *Critical Theory and Performance*, eds. Janelle Rienelt & Joseph Roach (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2007), 539.

⁹ Herbert Blau Interview, “The Play of Thought,” *Conversations on Art and Performance*, eds. Bonnie Marranca & Gautam Dasgupta (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 49.

¹⁰ Blau, “Virtually” 539.

¹¹ Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 146.

¹² Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1997), 3.

¹³ Peggy Phelan, “Immobile Legs, Stalled Words: Psychoanalysis and Moving Deaths,” *Critical Theory and Performance*, eds. Janelle Rienelt & Joseph Roach (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2007), 437.

¹⁴ Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 7.

¹⁵ Philip Auslander, “Live from Cyberspace, or, I Was Sitting at My Computer This Guy Appeared He Thought I Was a Bot,” *Critical Theory and Performance*, eds. Janelle Rienelt & Joseph Roach (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2007).

¹⁶ Blau, “Virtually” 532 – 545.

¹⁷ Relation is described as “a measureless gap in and between bodies and things, an incorporeal interval of change” in *Parables for the Virtual Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 58, 231 – 232. For understanding and taking a relational perspective, Massumi draws on Gilles Deleuze’s formulation of relation as external to terms in *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume’s Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 66, 101 and William James who argues that “Relations are feelings of an entirely different order from the terms they relate,” in *The Principle of Psychology*, vol. 1 (New York: Dover, 1890/1950), 149.

¹⁸ Massumi, *Parables* 168.

¹⁹ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. Simon Pleasance & Fronza Woods (www.lespressesdureel: Les presses du reel, 2002), 112.

²⁰ Bourriaud argues that the artist produces “inter-human experiences...in a way, of the places where alternate forms of sociability, critical models, and moments of conviviality are worked out.” *Ibid.*, 44.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 36.

²² Bourriaud argues that artworks, which stem from relational aesthetics, “involve methods of social exchanges, interactivity with the viewer within the aesthetic experience being offered to him/her, and the various communication processes, in their tangible dimension as tools serving to link individuals and human groups together.” *Ibid.*, 43.

²³ I would like to mark the discomfort that I continue to have discomfort in taking up the phraseology of the “human and more-, non-, other- than-human, etc.” out of a concern for not employing the nomenclature of the human and the more-than-human at the expense of erasing or regularizing relational complexity (with an implied binary). There are at least two ways in which I have noticed the phrase “more-than-human” used in scholarship—first to indicate a variety of others that we (humans) engage with (such as animals or objects) and secondly to indicate any range of activities or things that challenge “the human.” I have at times take up the term more-than-human in both of these ways in order to work towards an understanding and thinking of relationality in performance that does not need the human—and more importantly an abstract and

universally normatized concept Man—as its foundation or limits. However, I cannot do away with the human in part because the human continues to emerge historically and relationally with others and therefore impacts how I might understand an artistic practice of performance (of the self with others).

²⁴ Bourriaud, *Relational* 35.

²⁵ In *Being and Time*, Heidegger indicates that the term phenomenon means “the showing-itself-in-itself, [and] signifies a distinctive way in which something can be encountered.” Therefore, the phenomenological maxim “to the things themselves” cannot be understood merely through the perspective of an intentional consciousness but rather is inextricably tied to ongoing unfolding practical activity and encounters with others. A Heideggerean phenomenology emphasizes that Being can only be understood as Being-with within a shared world. Importantly, Being-with is not based upon the occurrence of several subjects together but an environmental encounter with Others. In Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1926/1952), 54, 155.

²⁶ Bert States, “The Phenomenological Attitude,” *Critical Theory and Performance*, eds. Janelle Reinelt & Joseph Roach (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2007), 35.

²⁷ As States explains, essence is something that “keeps going around the back but is here as well.” *Ibid.*, 26 – 36.

²⁸ Brian Massumi, *Parables*.

²⁹ William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 68. Also William James, *Essays in Radical Empiricism A Pluralistic Universe* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1943), 68.

³⁰ Massumi, *Parables* 191.

³¹ Theodor Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will (London: Routledge, 1973), 101.

³² Adorno argues that around the time of the first publication of *Being and Time* in 1925 that aplogetic thinking reveled in the doctrine of the whole over its parts, which also permeates the jargon of authenticity today. *Ibid.*, 115.

³³ The quote continues, “It is not easy to capture the right imaginative variant, to pick out the dramatic, vivid example that shows a necessity. We need fantasy to do so. Thus we

need imagination to be good at philosophical analysis.” In States “The Phenomenological,” 34 – 35.

³⁴ Michal Kobialka, “Tadeusz Kantor and Hamed Taheri Of Political Theatre/Performance,” *TDR: The Drama Review* 54:4 (New York University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Winter 2009).

³⁵ I have also held many animals. As a child growing up on an Iowa farm in the 1970s and early 80s, I would lie down in the icy snow for hours upon hours with upwards of a dozen cats snuggled closely across the entire landscape of my snow-suited body. I have held living, dying, and dead animals: injured birds that could not fly, rabbits that could not hop away, foals and kittens and chicks that had just been born. I have held ducks and chickens with their heads cut off; squirrels and rabbits with their bellies gutted; frogs, fish, turtles, and deer that ended up on the family dinner table. I have held pigs with belly ruptures, blowouts, and abscesses—from Iowa hog confinements—that could not stand on their own or could not stand at all. Much of the writing of this dissertation has occurred while holding an animal. While the human-animal relations that I briefly described from my experience fall outside the boundaries of theatre and performance, the complexity and mobility in those relations does not. I draw on this experience—writing within a more-than-human community of theatre arts and dance—in order to better understand the practice of thinking and making theatre and performance as relational.

³⁶ A. Hauser, “Observations on an Art of Growing Interest: Towards a Phenomenological Approach to Art Involving Biotechnology,” *Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism, and Technoscience*, eds. B. da Costa and K. Philip (Boston, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 87.

³⁷ Significantly, the geep is a transgenic animal—not a hybrid—since it is not produced through crossbreeding but through alterations performed on the embryos. Therefore, the geep maintains two sets of DNA from the parent species. See Carole Fehilly, S. M. Willadsen, and Elisabeth Tucker, “Interspecific Chimaerism between Sheep and Goat,” *Nature*, 307, (16 February 1984), 634 – 636.

³⁸ Taking up Rancière’s *The Politics of Aesthetics* (2007), Deborah Dixon argues that BioArt inherently performs a political function by reconfiguring social order and reordering subjects and objects. In Deborah Dixon, “Creating the Semi-living: On Politics, Aesthetics and the More-than-human,” No. 34 (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing Limited, 2009), 411 – 425.

³⁹ O. Catts and I. Zurr, “The Ethics of Experiential Engagement with the Manipulation of Life,” *Tactical Biopolitics: Art, Activism, and Technoscience*, eds. B. da Costa and K. Philip (Boston, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 140.

⁴⁰ Lori Andrews and Dorothy Nelkin, *Body Bazaar: The Market for Human Tissue in the Biotechnology Age* (New York: Crown, 2001), 7.

⁴¹ Hauser “Observations,” 83 – 104.

⁴² Neng Yu, et al. “Disputed Maternity Leading to Identification of Tetragametichimerism,” *New England Journal of Medicine*, 346/20, (16 May 2002), 1545 – 1552.

⁴³ Sylvia Pagán Westphal, “ ‘Humanised’ Organs can be Grown in Animals,” *New Scientists*, 17 December 2003. And “Chimeras in the Crosshairs,” *Nature*, 1 May 2006.

⁴⁴ Emile Benveniste, “Subjectivity in Language,” *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (FL: University of Miami Press, 1971).

⁴⁵ Eduardo Kac, “GFP Bunny,” *Telepresence & Bio Art Networking Humans, Rabbits, & Robots*, (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan, 2005), 280.

⁴⁶ Emile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press, 1971/1966), 224.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 54.

⁴⁸ Kac, *Telepresence* 271.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 272.

⁵⁰ In his philosophical deconstruction, Derrida explains how Kant, Levinas, Heidegger, and Lacan each in his own way deny the animal’s capacity to respond. Kant reaffirms the human as the rational animal based upon an “I,” which is a presence to oneself. Levinas leaves the animal outside of ethical consideration by denying the animal a face and making the responsive face originally human. Lacan opposes human response to animal reaction reinforcing the animal’s inability to deceive by way of an original perfection. Finally, Heidegger theorizes the animal as being poor-in-the-world and the human as world-forming. Derrida shows that in Heidegger’s comparative strategy, the animal does not have the world “as such.” The animal does not exist or die. It has no Daesin. It merely lives. Derrida articulates these theories and their contradictions and failings and asserts that it is essential to get beyond the opposition between the world and the world “as such.” For an examination of the historical and philosophical impetus for defining the human see Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Wills (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

⁵¹ René Descartes, “Discourse on the Method,” *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 1, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 139 – 140.

⁵² Nietzsche argues that judgments about man derive from limited periods in time that cannot account for the fact that everything becomes rather than just is. Therefore, there is a need for a “modest historical philosophizing.” Nietzsche writes, “there are no eternal facts, just as there are no absolute truths.” In Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All-Too-Human*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), section 2.

⁵³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), section 339.

⁵⁴ Foucault argues, “One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself, that’s to say, to arrive at an analysis of the subject which can account for the constitution of the subject within a historical framework. And this is what I would call genealogy, that is, a form of history that can account for the constitution of knowledge, discourses, domains of objects, etc., without having to make reference to a subject which is either transcendental in relation to a field of events or runs in its empty sameness throughout the course of history.” In Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power,” *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972 – 1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon et al. (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1980), 117. Also see Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power,” *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 59.

⁵⁵ See works such as Michel Foucault, *The Birth of the Clinic: An Archaeology of Medical Perception* (New York: Pantheon, 1973), *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Pantheon, 1977), and *The History of Sexuality*, 3 vols. (New York: Pantheon, 1978, 1985, 1986).

⁵⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject Lectures at the Collège de France 1981 – 1982*, eds. Frédéric Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2005), 17.

⁵⁷ See Foucault, *Hermeneutics*.

⁵⁸ Kac, *Telepresence* 271.

⁵⁹ Derrida, *The Animal* 30 – 51.

⁶⁰ Giorgio Agamben argues, “Would we say of an animal that its world is thus-and-thus? Even if we could exactly describe the animal’s world representing it as the animal sees it (as in color illustrations of Uexkull’s books that depict the world of the bee, the hermit

crab, and the fly), certainly that world would still not contain the *thus*; it would not be thus for the animal: It would not be irreparable.” In Giorgio Agamben, *The Coming Community*, trans. Michael Hardt (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 93.

⁶¹ Derrida, *The Animal* 160.

⁶² Kac, *Telepresence* 272.

⁶³ Peter Singer, “All Animals Are Equal...,” *Writings on an Ethical Life* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2000), 24.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* Also in Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*.

⁶⁵ Kac, *Telepresence* 274.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 264.

⁶⁷ Love and loss between a human and a nonhuman animal are often disenfranchised—residing on the margins outside normative structures of relationship in part because understanding this love and loss is often thrust against discerning human eyes and normalizing forces that determine what is acceptable or not, what can be said of the relation or not, and what can be felt in the relation or not often qualified in terms of human relations with other humans. For example, the loss of a companion animal in death often does not carry the weight or visibility that the loss of a child or a spouse does—leaving the grief and experience of the death of a loved nonhuman animal outside structures of recognition. The human-animal relation does not often garner the recognition and appreciation that the human-human relation does. In working at Memories Pet Loss Center in Waterloo, Iowa—I engage with people who have lost a pet loved one—and who exhibit both a measure of shame over their grief and also an initially apologetic approach to expressing the love that they share with their nonhuman companions. While grief over nonhuman animal death and the expressions of love concerning the relationships that we have with our nonhuman companions are often met with silence and a lack of understanding, this love and loss functions as an important and significant resistance to structures that order and normalize relationships and therefore carries great political and ethical weight in performance.

⁶⁸ Kac, *Telepresence* 273.

⁶⁹ Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2007).

⁷⁰ Derrida, *The Animal* 27.

⁷¹ Ibid., 27 – 28.

⁷² While arguing that nonhuman animals should be brought under the umbrella of moral consideration, Singer argues that animals can suffer in contrast to a stone kicked down the road that cannot.

⁷³ Perhaps, if I were to hold Alba in my arms—perhaps if I were to hold Alba in this chapter, in my writing and thinking—I would become aware of a need for her comfort and health. Perhaps my humanity would reel in response to this anomalous creature. Perhaps, I would do whatever I could to provide for her continued health and happiness. Still, I could just as easily destroy her. The implication is: *how* bodies emerge from relation is caught up in the notion *that* bodies emerge from relation.

⁷⁴ Derrida, *The Animal* 28.

⁷⁵ Kac, *Telepresence* 273 – 274.

⁷⁶ As contrast to Benveniste’s I-you polarity of persons, Martin Buber—a 20th century philosopher also interested in ontological and phenomenological questions of human existence and personal experience—outlines an I-Thou (also translated as I-you) relational event. In his book *I and Thou*, Buber theorizes an embodied and relational encounter that includes the more-than-human alongside the human. Herein, human existence is not defined through man’s unique qualities but is encounter that cannot be measured. Even though Buber focuses on the particularly interhuman in his theory on dialogical community, his theorization of an I-Thou relation, in contrast to Benveniste’s I-you, emphasizes an *a priori* relation with the world that is acted out or realized in saying Thou—*not necessarily in words*. Buber states, “But whenever the sentence ‘I see the tree’ is so uttered that it no longer tells of a relation between the man—I—and the tree—Thou, but establishes the perception of the tree as object by the human consciousness, the barrier between subject and object has been set up. The primary word *I-It*, the word of separation, has been spoken.” Here, Buber contrasts *I-Thou* to *I-It* in order to mark the difference between subject-object configurations and unfolding relation. Buber emphasizes that *I-Thou* and *I-It* oscillate. He claims that *It* becomes *Thou* when *It* enters into a relational event and that *Thou* becomes *It* when the relational event has come to an end. For Buber, the “I” emerges out of a body affecting another body. He describes the moments of *Thou* as, “strange lyric and dramatic episodes, seductive and magical, but tearing us away to dangerous extremes, loosening the well-tried context, leaving more questions than satisfaction behind them, shattering security—in short, uncanny moments.” Significantly, the episodes of *I-Thou* are insecure, strange, and perhaps disconcerting in their uncertainties rather than certain in their constitution of a subject within a stable context. However, it is important to note that Buber’s *I-Thou* configuration of engagement as bodies affecting each other in a relational event confines

these participatory moments to an event that begins and ends—a concrete meeting set against mere mental representations. In contrast, performance as a mode of becoming nurtures the relational event of bodies affecting other bodies but also indicates that the relational event does not come to or is not confined by an end. In other words, subject-object positions are not mere mental representations that stand outside of ongoing relations and encounter—neither is encounter only a concrete and delimited meeting devoid of imagination and the imperceptible continuations and permutations that occur relationally *between* bodies past the distinct parameters of a physical “meeting.” The oscillation between subjective positionality and relationality is neither linear nor a movement between an incorporeally representing mind and a corporeally met body. Rather, position emerges out of relation that corporeally and incorporeally continually goes on and on. Martin Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. Ronald Gregor Smith (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1952/1937), 23, 34.

⁷⁷ Kac, *Telepresence* 272.

⁷⁸ Deleuze and Guattari explain that affect is, “an ability to affect and be affected. It is a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body’s capacity to act... (with body taken in its broadest possible sense to include ‘mental’ or ideal bodies).” Deleuze and Guattari’s project in *A Thousand Plateaus Capitalism and Schizophrenia* critiques the involvement of philosophy in the State apparatus and works to de-link philosophical practice from the State apparatus by theorizing and practicing a “nomad” thought, which conducts itself and thinks through difference rather than ordered identities. In Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand* xvi.

⁷⁹ Deleuze and Guattari argue that as an individuated factor of more or less, ‘intensity-affect is a matter of degree entering into composition with another degree to form another distinct individuality—irreducible to a subject because it always forms another individuality in another degree of participation. Ibid., 253.

⁸⁰ Derrida, *The Animal* 9.

⁸¹ Ibid., 12.

⁸² For Derrida, “A decision that did not go through the ordeal of the undecidable would not be a free decision, it would only be the programmable application or unfolding of a calculable process. It might be legal; it would not be just.” In “Force of Law: The ‘Mystical Foundation of Authority,’” *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, eds. Drucilla Cornell, Michel Rosenfeld, and David Gray Carlson, trans. Mary Quaintance (London: Routledge, 1992), 24.

⁸³ Stewart looks for something to write on ordinary affects, “in the way that they pick up density and texture as they move through bodies, dreams, dramas, and social worldings of all kinds. Their significance lies in the intensities they build and in what thoughts and feelings they make possible. The question they beg is not what they might mean in an order of representations, or whether they are good or bad in an overarching scheme of things, but where they might go and what potential modes of knowing, relating, and attending to things are already somehow present in them in a state of potentiality and resonance.” In Kathleen Stewart, *Ordinary Affects* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 3 – 4.

⁸⁴ Jean-Luc Nancy, *Listening*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007/2002), 31. Even though Nancy articulates subjectivity as the part of the body that vibrates with listening, he also stated that this subject is perhaps not a subject. He writes, “The subject of the listening or the subject who is listening... is perhaps no subject at all, except as the place of resonance, of its infinite tension and rebound, the amplitude of sonorous deployment and the slightness of its simultaneous redeployment—by which a voice is modulated in which the singular of a cry, a call, or a song vibrates by retreating from it (a ‘voice’: we have to understand what sounds from a human throat without being language, which emerges from an animal gullet or from any kind of instrument, even from the wind in the branches: the rustling toward which we strain or lend an ear.” In Nancy, *Listening* 21 – 22.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 6. Nancy explicates, “If *listening* is distinguished from *hearing* both as its opening (its attack) and as its intensified extremity, that is, reopening beyond comprehension (of sense) and beyond agreement or harmony (*harmony* [entente] or *resolution* in the musical sense), that necessarily signifies that listening is listening to something other than sense in its signifying sense.” In Nancy, *Listening* 32

⁸⁷ Nancy articulates the part of a body that vibrates with listening as: “the rhythmic reployment/deployment of an enveloping between ‘inside’ and ‘outside,’ or else folding the ‘outside’ into the inside,’ invaginating, forming a hollow, an echo chamber or column, a resonance chamber.” *Ibid.*, 38.

⁸⁸ Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984).

⁸⁹ “‘To be exposed’ means to be ‘posed’ in exteriority, according to an interiority, having to do with an outside *in the very intimacy* of an inside.” In Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, ed. Peter Connor, trans. Peter Conner, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawney (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).

⁹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari outline three treatments of animals that are not mutually exclusive: as pets, as scientific classifications, and as affect animals. All animals can be treated in all of these manners. Deleuze and Guattari argue, “It is clear that the anomalous is not simply an exceptional individual; that would be to equate it with the family animal or pet.... Nor is the anomalous the bearer of a species presenting specific or generic characteristics in their purest state; nor is it a model or unique specimen.... The anomalous is neither an individual nor a species; it has only affects, it has neither familiar or subjectified feelings, nor specific or significant characteristics.” In Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand* 240 – 241, 244.

⁹¹ I developed the Fragments in History section of this chapter from a paper written on *Home is in Our Past* (2003/2005) for my preliminary exams in the spring of 2008.

⁹² The man submerged in the tank with remnant objects appears to physicalize an attempt at contemplating how the objects fulfill a purpose or form an identity. In the modern society of the spectacle, Guy Debord explains that an individual becomes alienated from his own gestures in contemplation of objects. Debord states, “THE SPECTATOR’S ALIENATION from and submission to the contemplated object (which is the outcome of his unthinking activity) works like this: the more he contemplates, the less he lives; the more readily he recognizes his own needs in the images of need proposed by the dominant system, the less he understands his own existence and his own desires. The spectacle’s externality with respect to the acting subject is demonstrated by the fact that the individual’s own gestures are no longer his own, but rather those of someone else who represents them to him. The spectator feels at home nowhere, for the spectacle is everywhere.” Debord claims that as a spectator becomes more involved in contemplating the spectacular images of the dominant system seeing his own needs in external representations he lives less. However, the objects in the performance-film no longer fit in a dominant system of recognition. In Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995), 23.

⁹³ All *Home is in Our Past* text comes from the DVD *Home is in Our Past*. dirs. Hamed Mohamadtaheri and Mojtaba Mirtahmasb, perf. Atefeh Tehrani and Majid Bahrani, “Black Narcissus” Group, 2005.

⁹⁴ In contrast to Benjamin’s constellations in the now, Jean Baudrillard’s event strike relegates objects to the function of endlessly recycling history and anticipated meanings in a *current* time. In Baudrillard’s conceptualization of the event strike, he claims that objects fall into the order of the recyclable insofar as they can be utilized to package, promote, and distribute idealized meanings and images. Baudrillard states, “We shall not be spared the worst—that is, *History will not come to an end*—since the leftovers, all the leftovers—the Church, communism, ethnic groups, conflicts, ideologies—are indefinitely recyclable...History has only wrenched itself from cyclical time to fall into the order of the recyclable.” For Baudrillard, the endless recycling of History results in an

appropriation of the real in old ideas and worn out rationalizations, which brings about the paralyzation of history instead of the end of history. Baudrillard claims, “what we seek now is not glory but identity, not an illusion but, on the contrary, an accumulation of proofs—anything that can serve as evidence of a historical existence.” However, images and objects become unintelligible in their proliferation—in recycling and resurfacing—and in their excess. The fragmentary historical references and the useless muddy objects in the performance-film challenge Baudrillard’s idea that objects are just materializations of current images that “have no more significance than their anticipated meaning.” In Jean Baudrillard, “The Event Strike,” *The Illusion of the End*, trans. Chris Turner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 27, 21, 22.

⁹⁵ Walter Benjamin, “Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian,” *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1982), 225 – 253.

⁹⁶ Roland Barthes thinks through the seeming opposition between imaginary narration and historical narration. Barthes wonders more specifically whether the narration of past events, which are authorized by historical science and fall under the rubric of the “real,” differs significantly from, for example, dramatic narration. On one hand, a past event—such as May 1968—is located in the bodies and conditions of the event’s happening. On the other hand, a discourse forms around the event in the present—including a film—which has the potential to make the event visible and/or real in the imaginations of current minds or a current situation. The colonization of the imagination manifests in Barthes’ reality effect where unrealistically developed narratives serve to authenticate and make intelligible a supposedly concrete reality. Barthes asserts the value of prestige in shaping historical discourse. He states: “The prestige of *this happened* has a truly historical importance and scope. Our entire civilization has a taste for the reality effect, attested to by the development of specific genres such as the realistic novel, the private diary, documentary literature, the news item [*fait divers*], the historical museum, the exhibition of ancient objects, and, above all, the massive development of photography, whose sole pertinent feature (in relation to drawing) is precisely to signify that the event represented has *really* taken place.” In Roland Barthes, “The Discourse of History,” *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 127, 139.

⁹⁷ Walter Benjamin, “Convolut N [On the Theory of Knowledge, Theory of Progress],” *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland & Kevin McLaughlin, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University of Press, 1999), 475.

⁹⁸ Benjamin writes, “Where thinking comes to a standstill in a constellation saturated with tensions—there the dialectical image appears. It is the caesura in the movement of thought. Its position is naturally not an arbitrary one. It is to be found, in a word, where the tension between dialectical opposites is greatest. Hence, the object constructed in the materialist presentation of history is itself the dialectical image. The latter is identical

with the historical object; it justifies its violent expulsion from the continuum of historical process.” Ibid., 475.

⁹⁹ Adorno writes, “your dialectic is lacking in one thing: mediation. You show a prevailing tendency to relate the pragmatic contents of Baudelaire’s work directly and immediately to adjacent features in the social history and [...] economic features of the time. [...] you substitute metaphorical expressions for categorical ones [...] one of the most powerful ideas in your study seems to be presented as a mere as-if [...]. I regard it as methodologically inappropriate to give conspicuous individual features from the realm of the superstructure a ‘materialist’ turn by relating them immediately, and perhaps even causally, to certain corresponding features of the substructure. The materialist determination of cultural traits is only possible if it is mediated through the total social process [...] [the] immediate—and I would almost say again ‘anthropological’—materialism harbours a profoundly romantic element [...]. The mediation which I miss, and find obscured by materialistic-historical evocation, is simply the theory which your study has omitted [...] the theological motif of calling things by their names tends to switch into the wide-eyed presentation of mere facts. [...] one could say that your study is located at the crossroads of magic and positivism. The spot is bewitched. Only theory could break this spell—your own resolute and salutarily speculative theory. It is simply the claim of this theory that I bring against you here.” In Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, *The Complete Correspondence 1928 – 1940*, ed. Henri Lonitz, trans. Nicholas Walker (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 281 – 283.

¹⁰⁰ Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2007), 97.

¹⁰¹ Adorno writes, “After the catastrophes that have happened, and in view of the catastrophes to come, it would be cynical to say that a plan for a better world is manifested in history and unites it. Not to be denied for that reason, however, is the unity that cements the discontinuous, chaotically splintered moments and phases of history—the unity of the control of nature, progressing to rule over men, and finally to that over men’s inner nature. No universal history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one leading from the slingshot to the megaton bomb.” Ibid., 320.

¹⁰² Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989), 222.

¹⁰³ Benjamin at one point describes his method of historical materialism as “theology.” Ibid., 239 – 241.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 241 – 245.

¹⁰⁵ Buck-Morss writes, “When the philosophical gaze scrutinizes the juxtaposition of these images, utopian and real, it is compelled not only to recognize technical nature’s original state of innocence, but to study empirical history for the reasons why technology nonetheless came to terrorize humanity.” *Ibid.*, 245.

¹⁰⁶ Recognizing Adorno’s disapproval of Benjamin’s avoidance of theological terms in *The Arcades Project*, Buck Morss indicates that “Adorno turned to art, human creation, rather than nature, God’s creation, in order to ground the transcendent element in his philosophy”—as part of the bourgeois intellectual tradition. In Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics* 246 – 247.

¹⁰⁷ Barthes argues that “historical fact is linguistically linked to a privilege of being: [where] one recounts what has been, not what has not been or what has been questionable.” In part, Barthes body of work investigates how man makes meaning through diverse procedures of documentation and constructions of history. As fragments of culture, history, images, events, and objects collage, meaning can no longer be situated within a stable and teleological historical and documentary frame. The rupture underscores a tension between a historical event as a questionable occurrence (engendering procedures that prove) and a historical event as drawn into processes of questioning (engendering procedures that inquire). This distinction reinvests relationality in the modernist project, which advocates breaking with traditions that are typically historically and culturally rooted in procedures of meaning making. In Barthes, “The Discourse” 135.

¹⁰⁸ The historical discourse that the directors emphasize questions technological progress in its alignment with political achievement. As Benjamin claims, the limited idea of progress that concerns itself only with man’s infinite and continuous perfection at another’s expense “displays technocratic features of fascism.” The potential for fascism to emerge in relations grows in traditions and historical norms in which the nonhuman is subject to the mastery and exploitation of humanity. In Walter Benjamin, “On the Concept of History,” *Selected Writings Volume 4, 1938 – 1940*, eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 389 – 400.

¹⁰⁹ Walter Benjamin, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire,” *Selected Writings Volume 4, 1938 – 1940*, eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 316.

¹¹⁰ Benjamin explains Bergson’s theorization that, “the concrete living present, which consists in the consciousness one has of one’s body as a center of action, necessarily occupies a moment of duration very different from our ideas of chronological time. Every perception fills a certain ‘depth of duration’ (*épaisseur de durée*), prolonging the past into the present and thereby preparing the future. As a constantly varying spatio-

temporal ‘rhythm,’ a flow of states, duration is the basis of matter, which, insofar as it is extended in space, must be seen as a present which is always beginning again.” Ibid., 344.

¹¹¹ Benjamin writes concerning Proust’s Madeleine, “The reception of shocks is facilitated by training in coping with stimuli; if need be, dreams as well as recollection may be enlisted. [...] That the shock is thus cushioned, parried by consciousness, would lend the incident that occasions it the character of an isolated experience [*Erlebnis*].” Consciousness channels the full affect of shock through a receptive control of external stimuli. Protective mechanisms vigilantly guard against overload and isolate the experience. However, failure of defensive mechanisms can occur with the involuntary memory. The uncontrolled and uncontrollable reception of stimuli reveals an opening where affect moves freely. Ibid., 318.

¹¹² Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 157.

¹¹³ Ibid., 186.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 188.

¹¹⁵ Benjamin, “Convolut N” 473.

¹¹⁶ The performance-film demonstrates that historical-material objects materialize a tension between a perspective that heralds the utopic capabilities of scientific and technological progress on a continuum of history that disregards historical, geographic, and social context for the liberation of all mankind and the perspective that historical problems cannot be solved without regard to context and structures of meaning.

¹¹⁷ A 1985 – 88 study from the NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) investigated the characteristics and distribution of neuston plastic in the North Pacific Ocean. The paper states, “The distribution of neuston plastic results from two main phenomena, heterogeneous geographic input of plastic and subsequent redistribution by currents and winds.” The particular form of marine debris called neuston plastic is the result of the breakdown or fragmentation of various kinds of plastic into progressively smaller pieces that can be caught in nets and ingested. These plastics undergo chemical, thermal, mechanical, and solar weathering to extents dependent upon their locations and suggestive of their long-term residence in particular areas of the ocean. The paper in particular predicts, “the generally convergent nature of water in the North Pacific Central Gyre (Masuzawa 1972) should result in high densities there also [in addition to the other areas tested].” In Robert Day, David Shaw, & Steven Ignell, “The Quantitative Distribution and Characteristics of Neuston Plastic in the North Pacific Ocean 1985 – 1988,” *Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Marine*

Debris, 2 – 7 April 1989, eds. R. S. Shomura and M. L. Godfrey, (Honolulu, Hawaii. U.S. Dep. Commer., NOAA Tech. Memo. NMFS, NOAA-TM-NMFS-SWFSC., 1990), 261.

¹¹⁸ Even though images and objects can be recycled literally and figuratively to fit any particularly marketable vision or version of a current situation in the capitalist economy, the capacity of objects to recycle, reshape, remold, and resurface is not just the paralyzation of history as Jean Baudrillard might have had it. Even though the replacement of the real by images disguised as reality has the capacity to bind people to a perpetual and televised current—which packages and preserves the past and pre-fabricates the future—objects exceed the market and can never be entirely pulled along by an endless current.

¹¹⁹ Benjamin, “On the Concept” 396.

¹²⁰ See Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex,” *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, ed. Rayna R. Reiter, (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), 157 – 210, for a poignant explication of the exchange of women in its capacity to establish kinship ties and social relations and the political stakes that are invested in these exchanges.

¹²¹ I have used the phrase “performance-film” to reference *Home is in Our Past* in order to mark its double character as a live performance and a film. Importantly, the visual-auditory recording does not operate as a simple documentation of a past live theatrical event. The directors use filmic techniques such as slow and stop motion, multiple and spliced together camera angles, and visual and sound editing to create scenic-auditory images that surpass the frame of a recording or documentation of live performance. In taking up the filmic medium as part of a constructive strategy, the directors expose the involvement of technologies of recording in shaping past historical events. The recording process itself thereby becomes another historical object in the constellation, which opens for critique ways of seeing and narrating history and live performance. In fact, since the final image of the performance-film—of Kantor’s *The Dead Class*—takes up the entirety of the filmic image on the screen rather than being seen as projected on the live screen in the live performance via the film recording, I thought for a long time that this fragment belonged to an erased performance on a used and unmarked DVD upon which *Home is in Our Past* was recorded for me.

¹²² Kobialka, “Tadeusz Kantor” 83.

¹²³ Benjamin, “Eduard Fuchs” 227.

¹²⁴ Eric Colleary, Arij Mikati, John Potter, Anika Reitman, Jonah Winn-Lenetsky, and I worked on the production.

¹²⁵ Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling, and Skill*, (London: Routledge, 2000), 352.

¹²⁶ I considered sending you a box of things and wondered how you might engage with them as you unpacked the box: handling them with care or perhaps with curiosity or dread. Perhaps you might wonder how and why these objects found their way into your hands. Questioning what they were saying...while attending to their contours, weights, colors, shapes, and textures. Perhaps some of them would resist your handling...I wonder what I might send you....What in my collection would arouse your thoughts and your senses? So many things.

a glassy fish eye
a box of rusty hinges, glass vials, and cut hair
a shriveled leg of a bird
an old barn door with chipped red paint
a hollowed and leathered body of a turtle
bits of bugs, burlap and other textured fabrics...

Just a few so as not to overwhelm you.

Everywhere a thing calls out wanting to be picked up, handled, touched, engaged with. I am sorry...resisting the urge to touch. It is not possible to touch everything...or is it? I am sorry to throw away the small pieces of a broken object, keeping only large fragments. It seems that every part of every object must be handled with care. An object must have a place where it would be most happy and most alive. My mother's good dishes always did prefer the mud under the evergreen trees to the stifling cramped quarters of the kitchen cupboards. In sending you a box of things, I dream of what you might do with them and they with you.

¹²⁷ Benjamin, "Eduard Fuchs" 225 – 253.

¹²⁸ Susan Stewart, *On Longing Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 151.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹³¹ Benjamin in fact calls Fuchs a packrat in his essay "Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian."

¹³² Stewart, *On Longing* 153 – 154.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 166 – 167.

¹³⁴ Benjamin claims: “What is decisive in collecting is that the object is detached from all its original functions in order to enter into the closest conceivable relation to things of the same kind.... It is a grand attempt to overcome the wholly irrational character of the object’s mere presence at hand through its integration into a new, expressly devised historical system: the collection.” In Walter Benjamin, “Convolut H [The Collector],” *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland & Kevin McLaughlin, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 204 – 205.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹³⁶ Walter Benjamin, “First Sketches,” *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland & Kevin McLaughlin, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 858.

¹³⁷ As Benjamin states: “We need only recall what importance a particular collector attaches not only to his object but also to its entire past [...] It suffices to observe just one collector as he handles the items in his showcase. No sooner does he hold them in his hands than he appears inspired by them and seems to look through them into their distance, like an augur.” *Ibid.*, 858.

¹³⁸ Benjamin explicates for the collector Henri Bergson’s theorization of perception, which occurs according to different rhythms. Benjamin writes, “At the conclusion of *Matière et mémoire*, Bergson develops the idea that perception is a function of time. If, let us say, we were to live vis-à-vis some things more calmly and vis-à-vis others more rapidly, according to a different rhythm, there would be nothing ‘subsistent’ for us, but instead everything would happen right before our eyes; everything would strike us. But this is the way things are for the great collector. They strike him. How he himself pursues and encounters them, what changes in the ensemble of items are effected by a newly supervening item—all this shows him his affairs in constant flux [...] (At bottom, we may say, the collector lives a piece of a dream life. For in the dream, too, the rhythm of perception and experience is altered in such a way that everything—even the seemingly most neutral—comes to strike us; everything concerns us...)” Benjamin, “Convolut H” 205 – 206.

¹³⁹ In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes describes the capacity of the *punctum* to rupture the *studium* in terms of the photographic image. In writing on photography, Barthes is interested in the ways in which the photographic image participates in human practices of meaning making. These image-making practices—which include but are not limited to photography—are entwined in memory, history, and constructions of reality. Barthes explicates the *punctum* as a force of the image that wounds or pricks the viewer and ruptures the *studium*—understood as a sort of field of knowledge and civility—of the

sovereign consciousness of the viewer (recall my previous claim in *Living Things* that consciousness is immanent in practice and ongoing relationality). Importantly, the *punctum* rises out of an image and is not sought out by the viewer. Barthes states: “This time it is not I who seek it out (as I invest the field of the *studium* with my sovereign consciousness), it is this element which rises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me. A Latin word exists to designate this wound, this prick, this mark made by a pointed instrument: the word suits me all the better in that it also refers to the notion of punctuation, and because the photographs I am speaking of are in effect punctuated, sometimes even speckled with these sensitive points; precisely, these marks, these wounds are so many *points*. This second element which will disturb the *studium* I shall therefore call *punctum*; for *punctum* is also: sting, speck, cut, little hole—and also a cast of the dice. A photograph’s *punctum* is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me).” In Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 26 – 27.

¹⁴⁰ Benjamin, “Convolut H” 205.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹⁴² Benjamin states, “Possession and having are allied with the tactile, and stand in a certain opposition to the optical. Collectors are beings with tactile instincts.” In Benjamin, “Convolut H” 206.

¹⁴³ Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (London: New Left Books, 1974), 246.

¹⁴⁴ Adorno states, “My argument is that precisely because art works are monads they lead to the universal by virtue of their principle of particularization. In other words, the general characteristics of art are more than just responses to the need for conceptual reflection: they also testify to the fact that the principle of individuation has its limits and that neither it nor its opposite should be ontologized. Art works approach this limit by ruthlessly pursuing the principle of individuation, whereas if they pose as universals, they end up being accidental and pseudo-individual like examples of a type or species.” In Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Athlone, 1997), 259.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 280.

¹⁴⁶ Moreover, Adorno argues, “Aesthetic feeling is not what is being aroused in us. It is more like a sense of wonderment in the presence of what we behold; a sense of being overwhelmed in the presence of a phenomenon that is non-conceptual while at the same time being determinate. The arousal of subjective effect by art is the last thing we should

want to dignify with the name aesthetic feeling. True aesthetic feeling is oriented to the object; it is the feeling of the object, not some reflex in the viewer.” Ibid., 236.

¹⁴⁷ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans Colin Smith, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1945/1962), 284.

¹⁴⁸ William Henry Fox Talbot—in writing about the new technology of the camera—states: “The phenomenon which I have now briefly mentioned appears to me to partake of the character of the *marvelous*, almost as much as any fact which physical investigation has yet brought to our knowledge. The most transitory of things, a shadow, the proverbial emblem of all that is fleeting and momentary, may be fettered by the spells of our ‘*natural magic*,’ and may be fixed for ever in the position which it seemed only destined for a single instant to occupy.” See William Henry Fox Talbot, “Some Account of the Art of Photogenic Drawing,” *The London and Edinburgh Philosophical Magazine and Journal of Science*, vol. 14, March 1839. Reprinted in *Photography into Print*, ed. Vicki Goldberg (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981), 36 – 48.

¹⁴⁹ Again Roland Barthes in reference to the photograph states that, “each perception and reading of a photo is implicitly, in a repressed manner, a contact with what has ceased to exist, a contact with death.” Roland Barthes, *The Grain of the Voice Interviews 1962 – 1980*, trans. Linda Coverdale, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 356.

¹⁵⁰ All *Explosion of a Memory/Description of a Picture* text can be located in Heiner Müller, *Explosion of a Memory: writings by Heiner Müller*, ed. & trans. Carl Weber (New York: PAJ Publications, 1989).

¹⁵¹ Jean-François Lyotard maintains that a representational practice needs to evoke, “the unrepresentable in presentation itself, that which refuses the consolation of correct forms, refuses the consensus of taste permitting a common experience of nostalgia for the impossible, and inquiries into new presentations—not to take pleasure in them, but to better produce the feeling that there is something unrepresentable.” In Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained Correspondence 1982-1985*, trans. Don Barry, Bernadette Maher, Julian Pefanis, Virginia Spate, & Morgan Thomas (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 15.

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Benjamin thinks,

“[In using waste products children] do not so much imitate
ping-pong ball
the works of adults as bring together, in
the artifact produced in play, materials of
widely differing kinds in a new,

child, director, scholar, collector

discontinuous relationship.”
 old clocks
 In striking me
 an object refuses to go unrecognized
 and unwanted
 and refuses to be trifled with.
 And asks to be trifled with.
 An object refuses rejection and
 makes a claim on my joy and sorrow.
 in consciousness
 in body, in imagination, in spirit?

creative intuition
 alone does not produce
 assemblage
 but moreover
 creativity in things in relation
 produces
 play.
 of thought.
 an artist exposed
 in practice
 with a thing they do not
 so much imitate... or use
 a piece of spare chicken-wire
 as participate.
 and listen.
 ponytail of hair
 pieces of rope and
 an object lives
 vague and indistinct
 and easily changes.
 wind-up key thingy
 A things becomes an enchantment,
 a hallucination, a cloud
 a mode of transmutation. The movement and position of things in a
 collection is a paradox surprising and confusing
 Playing with things fuses
 concrete immateriality and
 imagination
 in persistent liveliness. reality?

enduring An object in an environment
 butterflies
 beyond use. Perhaps in a dreamscape.

things. Becoming intimate with

how does a moving thing

call you?
 doll-face mask a bit of black gaffe tape

white kitchen garbage bags

here and there
 playing ground framing trash
 hiding places hidden spaces swallowing life
 into the depth dump heaped objectscape shadowing
 liveliness in performance
 child searching thrown away stories
 hollowed carcasses hollowing lives generations not known

 they found a body or at least
 they found traces of it

Quote in Walter Benjamin, "Old Forgotten Children's Books," *Selected Writings, 1913 – 26*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996), 408.

¹⁵³ Poet Rainer Maria Rilke writes: "But outside, everything is immeasurable. And when the level rises outside, it also rises in you, not in the vessels that are partially controlled by you, or in the phlegm of your most unimpressionable organs: but it grows in the capillary veins [...] This is where it rises, where it overflows from you, higher than your respiration, and, as a final resort, you take refuge, as though on the tip of your breath. Ah! where, where next? Your heart banishes you from yourself, your heart pursues you, and you are already almost beside yourself, and you can't stand it any longer. Like a beetle that has been stepped on, you flow from yourself, and your lack of hardness or elasticity means nothing any more. Oh night without objects. Oh window muffled on the outside, oh, doors carefully closed; customs that have come down from times long past, transmitted, verified, never entirely understood. Oh silence in the stair-well, silence in the adjoining rooms, silence up there, on the ceiling." In Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 229 – 230.

¹⁵⁴ A slightly different version of the production that I attended in Washington D.C. can be viewed online at <http://vimeo.com/5923204>. Performers: Quinn Bauriedel, Trey Lyford, and Geoff Sobelle; Machines designed by Steven Dufala and Billy Blaise Dufala; Set by Hiroshi Iwasaki; Sound design by James Sugg; Lights designed by James Clotfeller; Directed by Aleksandra Wolska and Charlotte Ford.

¹⁵⁵ Jon McKenzie, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

¹⁵⁶ Foucault states, “By means of such [hierarchized, continuous, and functional] surveillance, disciplinary power became an ‘integrated’ system, linked from the inside to the economy and to the aims of the mechanism in which it was practised. It was also organized as a multiple, automatic and anonymous power; for although surveillance rests on individuals, its functioning is that of a network of relations,” which holds the whole together. In “The Means of Correct Training,” *Discipline and Punish The Birth of the Prison*, 176 – 177.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 172.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁵⁹ Bachelard, *The Poetics* xxxi.

¹⁶⁰ Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment Philosophical Fragments*, eds. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 1 – 34.

¹⁶¹ In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno understand the history of civilization as a history of the introversion of sacrifice, which anticipates the structure of commodity exchange. In contrast to magic and mimesis in which the object does not operate as a substitute for the individual, sacrifice regards the object as a representative stand in for the individual. Herein, the mimetic element is given over to art as a supposedly a-rational domain devoid of cognition and cognitive thought takes on the task of classification and identification. *Ibid.*, 40 – 43.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 19 – 20.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 35 – 62.

¹⁶⁴ Horkheimer and Adorno further critique in their philosophical fragments the non-transparency of social relations and mode of productivity—the production of exchange value for its own sake—indicative of the culture industry that generates a form of fascist and anti-Semitic hatred and fear that tends toward barbarism and self-destruction.

¹⁶⁵ Alfred Sohn-Rethel, *Intellectual and Manual Labour A Critique of Epistemology* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1978), 56 – 57.

¹⁶⁶ In *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, Martin Heidegger describes the essence of technology as a way of revealing that in the modern age is tied to an ordering of knowledge defined as Enframing [*Ge-stell*]—a self-revealing—that challenges-forth the world as a picture. Heidegger states, “The fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture. The word ‘picture’ [*Bild*] now means the structured image [*Gebild*] that is the creature of man’s producing which represents and sets before. In such producing, man contends for the position in which he can be that particular being who gives the measure and draws up the guidelines for everything that is.” In Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), 134. Herein, technology functions as a representationalist way of revealing in which the world is constructed as an object of representational knowledge where man is the only and entire subject. Heidegger argues that through modern technology man’s challenging [*Herausfordern*] “puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy which can be extracted and stored as such” for maximum yield at minimum expense. In Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” *Basic Writings from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), 296. What Heidegger describes as modern technology’s inauthentic mode of revealing challenges forth the world in a way that conceals the way of revealing of truth. This way of revealing—in contrast to a representationalist way—is not the correspondence of a representation to an objective or subjective reality but *poiesis*—a bringing-forth of the world in a revealing *that also conceals*.

In critique of Heidegger’s philosophical use of terms such as “Dasein” and “care,” Theodor Adorno argues that after WWII the use of existential terms such as evident in Heidegger’s work generates a jargon of authenticity that obscures the relation between language and objective content. Adorno emphasizes that idealized symbols of the jargon of authenticity do not represent actual social relations but rather abstract relations between concepts that appear to remain untouched by processes of abstraction and history. See Adorno, *The Jargon*. Therefore, Heidegger’s phenomenology and ontological language feeds on the opposition between the authentic and the inauthentic, which reinforces knowledge of the subject as an object of explicit calculation and pre-established knowledge formations.

¹⁶⁷ Michel Foucault, “The Means of Correct Training,” *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 204.

¹⁶⁸ Foucault, “The Means” 172.

¹⁶⁹ Foucault writes, “Historians of ideas usually attribute the dream of a perfect society to the philosophers and jurists of the eighteenth century; but there was also a military dream of society; its fundamental reference was not to the state of nature, but to the meticulously subordinated cogs of a machine, not to the primal social contract, but to permanent coercions, not to fundamental rights, but to indefinitely progressive forms of training, not to the general will but to automatic docility,” In Michel Foucault, “Docile Bodies,” *Discipline and Punish The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), 169.

¹⁷⁰ Michel Foucault, “Right of Death and Power over Life,” *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 261 – 262.

¹⁷¹ “Ibid., 265.

¹⁷² In Walter Benjamin, “Convolut I [The Interior, The Trace],” *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland & Kevin McLaughlin, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 223. Benjamin quotes Karl Marx from *Der historische Materialismus*.

¹⁷³ Benjamin points out that the etymology of the word comfort changes meaning from consolation and wellbeing to indicate in, Wladimir Weidlé’s words, “nothing more than rational convenience.” Ibid., 225.

¹⁷⁴ In Foucault’s argument, factory surveillance “took into account the activity of the men, their skill, the way they set about their tasks, their promptness, their zeal, their behaviour.” In Foucault, “The Means” 174 - 175.

¹⁷⁵ Walter Benjamin, “Convolut I [The Interior, The Trace],” *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland & Kevin McLaughlin, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 227.

¹⁷⁶ The word factory “designates the combined operation of many orders of work-people...in tending with assiduous skill a system of productive machines continuously impelled by a central power...[T]his title, in its strictest sense, involves the idea of a vast automaton, composed of various mechanical and intellectual organs, acting in uninterrupted concert for the production of a common object, all of them being subordinated to a self-regulated moving force.” In Andrew Ure, *The Philosophy of Manufactures: Or An Exposition of the Scientific, Moral, and Commercial Economy of the Factory System of Great Britain* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 1861/2010), 13 – 14.

¹⁷⁷ The first quote comes from an Indian citizen commenting on a widespread blackout in India. The second quote is a statement made about the prospects of arctic drilling.

¹⁷⁸ Following the lead of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, recent social theorizations—as exemplified in works such as Rosi Braidotti’s *metamorphosis Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002) and Brian Massumi’s *Parables for the Virtual Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002)—have taken up Deleuze and Guattari’s conceptualization of the machinic as a process in which connections multiply and proliferate in infinite and ungraspable webs of complexity.

¹⁷⁹ The 2006 *Die Hamletmaschine* production was performed in the Charles M. Nolte Xperimental Theatre at the University of Minnesota. The rehearsals for this production generated the material for both productions. The 2007 production was performed for the Minnesota Fringe Festival at the Theatre de la Jeune Lune. The primary creative collaborators included: Xanthia Walker, Bryce Volrath, Blake T. Snortland, Nikki Schultz, Laura Purcell Gates, Malin Palani, Angela Olson, Sara Munzesheimer, Merrick Mayer, Howard Kenty, Garrett Fitzgerald, William Daddario, Eric J. Colleary, Lee R. Chriske, and Jeffrey Aldrich.

¹⁸⁰ For a detailed explication of Adorno’s critical approach see Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 1973/2007).

¹⁸¹ Rollo May, *The Courage to Create* (New York: Bantam Book, 1975), 50.

¹⁸² This anecdote comes from the rehearsal-performance process of the remount of *Die Hamletmaschine*. Similar exercises were used for the first rehearsal-performance process as well.

¹⁸³ Martin Buber in particular describes community as specifically inter-human. He states, “The primal hope of history depends upon a genuine, hence thoroughly communally disposed community of the human race.” He goes on to ground the communally disposed in the commonness of need, of spirit, of trouble, and of salvation. Buber calls for a human “upright village” that can grow in the midst of “rationalized factories.” However, it is important to note that the phrase “in the midst of” disrupts the notion that community might be delimited to the domain of the inter-human and the notion that the “upright village” might be set apart (as upright) from what it is in “the midst of.” In Martin Buber, *On Intersubjectivity and Cultural Creativity*, ed. S.N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 99.

¹⁸⁴ Jerzy Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre*, ed. Eugenio Barba (New York: Routledge, 2002/1968), 57.

¹⁸⁵ Heiner Müller, *Hamlet-Machine and Other Texts*, ed. & trans. Carl Weber (New York: PAJ Publications, 1984).

¹⁸⁶ *Annals of Psychology*, “Social Animal,” *The New Yorker*, January 17, 2011, p. 26. Retrieved from http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/01/17/110117fa_fact_brooks.

¹⁸⁷ What specific social relations are produced between humans and art and between art and the living world? The relation between art and the living world might be considered not as an opposition between nature and culture in which art is sometimes both relegated to the embodied irrational domain and also set apart from natural reality but as an intertwining in which every human is involved and implicated. Still, the distinct and specific social relationships that are produced of course depend on many different historical and contextual factors. Perhaps a social relation that is generative, that affirms life, perhaps a social relation in which thought does not operate to classify life into hierarchies and to promulgate systems of privilege and cruelty. Of course, what is unmentioned in the question and the answer is the “who or what.” If not the subject and object, if not the human and the more-than-human—then who or what? Generosity comes into play in an ethical practice of the self in not answering this question but in continually posing it to the extent that one’s self must continually listen and adjust to the ever-varying, contradictory, and ungraspable who or what emerging and becoming in encounter.

Art is a mode that I can point to that informs the generosity and care that I cultivate in a practice of “the self with others.” While I suggest art as a way to cultivate generosity and care, this does not mean that I make an opposition between the artist and the non-artist and/or scholar but that in the work that I do—whether writing, drawing, directing, or teaching, etc.—I approach the work as a way of living in the world with an openness to others (and to being affected). That is the most concrete indication of how I cultivate generosity and care—which has a fundamental and artful relationship to time and materiality. However, this relationship is not a model that I can outline because it is worked and reworked in terms of my self (with others). The relation between I and we for understanding “our” practice of performance and performance research is an important one—and one that I do not often effectively maneuver. On one hand, I want to reaffirm the autonomy of a practice of the self (with others) and therefore in some ways I am uninterested in providing a model (of art) that (we) can follow to engender generosity linked to a practice of the self with others—which I explicate and theorize as a “wayfinding/following” in Chapter Four of my dissertation. However, I am concerned with the potential for a generous and caring materialization of relationships in the world (and in providing a meaningful address to the question of how my practice speaks to others).

The connection between a practice of the self with others (wayfinding/following as an artful practice) and scholarship inheres in the notion that concepts emerge from and are bound to a material world that exceeds conceptual thought. The potential for scholarship interweaving with a practice of the self with others hinges on the manner in

which scholarship “connects” to the material world (and to art). Of course, this by itself is a huge area of contestation that not in the least of which plays out in the divisions that are propagated between theory, practice, and pedagogy; in the confusions between embodied writing and critical analysis; and in the evaluative judgments that are made on others’ thinking and embodiment that unwittingly reinforce normative standards. The potential for interweaving artful wayfinding/following with scholarship is a risk that might rupture the very disciplinary ground upon which we supposedly stand. However, wayfinding/following interwoven with performance scholarship enacts a reinvestment not only in a performance-philosophical project of self-transformation but also of continuous and enduring wonder that binds (artful) non/conceptual and practical thinking together.

A colleague further asked, what relationships (not kinds of scholarship) might we see in the world of scholarship (once generosity has been produced and the social relations between humans and more-than-humans acknowledged and embraced)? What relationships might we see in the world of scholarship? I repeat the question because I want to acknowledge how the question sits in me not as a breath of hope for a bright future but as a vice grip that inhibits my ability to breathe. Even though I cannot envision with any kind of certainty the emergence of potential relationships and therefore the underlying response is that I do not know, I would propose that the kind of relationship is one in which we are all in this together (a flexible field of inquiry rooted in the world) in which our roles and lives are not compartmentalized and institutionalized in a comparative and hierarchical structure. The word that I have to understand and to cultivate this kind of relationship in scholarship-practice is “classroom”—working together with autonomy of embodied thought in the midst of and in affirmation of belonging together with others in the world.

¹⁸⁸ Heiner Müller, *Germania*, trans. Bernard and Caroline Schütze, ed. Sylvère Lotringer, (New York: Semiotext(e), 1990), 76. It is important to recognize the tension between relation infused with care and conflict in a rehearsal-performance process and the subject obligations in Müller’s text that involve fulfillment of historical roles tied to domination—and the tension between the textual consumption of the King that fortifies a societal bond of domination and violence and the sharing of a meal in the rehearsal-performance process that fortifies bonds of companionship.

¹⁸⁹ The Practicing Machine part of this chapter was first presented at the 2011 Mid-America Theatre Conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota as part of the Acting and Directing Symposium: In the Company of the Classics.

¹⁹⁰ These words were written in a daily newspaper to describe the sound of the first assembly lines at the Ford Motor Company plant and are fitting to describe the machine sound that I requested for *Die Hamletmaschine*. This sound encircles the performance in a seemingly infinite machinic loop. Henry Ford American Experience, PBS.

¹⁹¹ Walter Benjamin argues that the commodity form produces “[a] hollow comfort of never having to experience how the productive forces had to develop under [one’s own] hands.” The concern is that human reception of technology “consists of a series of energetic, constantly renewed efforts, all attempting to overcome the fact that technology serves this society only by producing commodities.” Benjamin, “Eduard Fuchs” 232.

¹⁹² My conceptualization of wayfinding/following materializes in stark contrast to wayfinding as it is conceived in the professional fields of design, which take up wayfinding in terms of a system and graphics of signage that organizes and facilitates the efficient and effective travel of human people through a built environment.

¹⁹³ Wendy Arons and Theresa May, “Introduction,” *Readings in Performance and Ecology*, eds. Wendy Arons and Theresa May (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 4 – 6.

¹⁹⁴ Eiko and Koma’s work emerges from Butoh—a Japanese dance form founded by Ohno Kazuo and Hijikata Tatsumi. In part, Butoh emerged from an environment marked by the catastrophic atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, Japan’s military defeat in 1945 and the subsequent American occupation, and the artistic intellectual provocations and socio-political tensions of the 1960s. The 1960s in Japan saw both a substantial resistance to Americanization and a significant influx of American culture. While the earliest years of Hijikata’s and Ohno’s work demonstrates the influences of Western modern dance, Hijikata and Ohno turned away from technique and choreography in order to foreground a practice of dance that unfolds experientially. In 1968, Hijikata’s earlier explorations of erotica and sacrifice gave way to a more forthcoming reengagement with the rural Tohoku region of northern Japan in which he grew up. The performance titled *Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese: Rebellion of the Body* marks most overtly Hijikata’s rejection of a Western style of dance that values lightness and long elegant extensions that defy gravity. The harsh and remote region of Tohoku along with the working bodies that peopled the landscape during his childhood became fodder for Hijikata’s dance experience. While the beginnings of Butoh have inspired a long and extremely diverse tradition, the work of Ohno and Hijikata and the contemporary movement artists Eiko and Koma manifests a deep and powerful environmental and earthly rootedness. In a contemporary moment in which ecological crises appear to loom beyond distant horizons and also to shadow and threaten the immediate everyday lives of all life on earth, art that continues to foreground immersion within the world draws attention to environmental concerns and gives priority to the relational over the individual subject. Hijikata’s rejection of values that aim at mastering a landscape rather than participating and rooting one’s experience within it responds to an atomic landscape devastated by the human capacity for exploitation, domination, annihilation, and occupation of others and by the horror that sometimes comes with scientific development and progress. Likewise, understanding the ontology of performance as a becoming reinvests the work of performance and performance

research—often taken up as human-centered practices and products—in relational participation with/in the world.

¹⁹⁵ The William and Nadine McGuire Commissioning Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation made the commission possible.

¹⁹⁶ In the work of Ohno Kazuo and Hijikata Tatsumi a landscape is neither a simple backdrop for human activity nor an ordered space with clear boundaries. Hijikata states, “But first of all I must, I think, wipe out all art and culture. This ‘dance experience,’ which fiercely took up this challenge for the sake of cultural material, has been for me a marvelous spiritual journey. There is, I always feel, an unfathomable ocean before my body.” In Hijikata Tatsumi, “Inner Material/Material,” *The Drama Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, Spring 2000), 41. Understanding a landscape also as an unfathomable ocean, Ohno speaks in his dance workshops of delving into a limitless world—soaring through the sea and detaching the arms from the body. In Kazuo Ohno and Yoshito Ohno, *Kazuo Ohno’s World from Without & Within*, trans. John Barrett (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 206 – 7. Together their words express that a landscape is a terrain that draws together all perception and sensation in an ongoing movement. A practice of attunement or adjustment within a surrounding landscape goes on and on in perceptible and imperceptible ways. As a landscape spatially and temporally spreads out *beyond all horizons*, attunement must be continually learned and made.

¹⁹⁷ Una Chaudhuri, “Introduction: Land/Scap/Theater and the New Spatial Paradigm,” in *Land/Scap/Theater*, eds. Elinor Fuchs and Una Chaudhuri (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), 14.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁹⁹ Ingold, *The Perception* 282 – 283.

²⁰⁰ “Movement as Installation Eiko and Koma in Conversation with Matthew Yokobosky,” *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, No. 64 (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 32.

²⁰¹ Interview with Philip Bither, “Time Is Not Even, Space Is Not Empty,” *Walker*, November – December 2010, 15.

²⁰² The excerpt comes from the program.

²⁰³ Ingold, *The Perception* 220.

²⁰⁴ I have also tried in my practice to carefully adjust along the way to the surrounding landscape of bodies and thinking.

²⁰⁵ On the artists' Web site at www.eikoandkoma.org.

²⁰⁶ Importantly, Hijikata's statement in the epigraph places the basis for embodied being and becoming not in a delimited subjective or intersubjective domain but in that of desire—where experience does not just mediate through the subject but where experience unfolds immediately through a body wrought with the overwhelming ways in which everything and anything might be encountered.

²⁰⁷ Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. D. Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970).

²⁰⁸ Even though Husserl heralds the importance of reason in the face of the rising threat of European fascism in the 1930s, Rosi Braidotti argues that in *The Crisis* Husserl situates Europe as “the site of origin of critical reason and self-reflexivity,” which thereby equates Europe with universal consciousness in a “Humanistic norm” that implies a self-other dialectic in which otherness is meant in the pejorative. In Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2013), 15.

²⁰⁹ Husserl's “natural attitude” is pragmatically directed at the world “toward this or that, being directed toward it as an end or as a means, as relevant or irrelevant, toward the private or public, toward what is daily required or obtrusively new.” In Husserl, *The Crisis*, 103 – 186.

²¹⁰ Husserl uses the term “bracketing” to describe how one must place presuppositions, assumptions, and biases rooted in knowledge formations outside phenomena and phenomenological inquiry. In Edmund Husserl, *The Idea of Phenomenology* (The Hague: Marinus Nijhoff, 1970), 33 – 42.

²¹¹ Herein, consciousness does not produce the relation that is already there. “What distinguishes intentionality...is that the unity of the world, before being posited by knowledge in a specific act of identification, is ‘lived’ as ready-made or already there.” In Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* xix.

²¹² Husserl claims, “this world...derives its whole sense and its existential status, which it has for me, from me as the transcendental Ego, the Ego who comes to the fore only with the transcendental-phenomenological epoché.” In Edmund Husserl, First Meditation section 10, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 189.

²¹³ Heidegger argues that the terms phenomenology and ontology characterize philosophy itself. Heidegger states, “Philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology, and takes its departure from the hermeneutic of Dasein, which, as an analytic of *existence*, has made fast the guiding-line for all philosophical inquiry at the point where it *arises* and to which it *returns*.” In Martin Heidegger, *Being* 62. However, please recall Adorno’s critique of Heidegger in *The Jargon of Authenticity*, which affirms that the language of authenticity and universal togetherness entraps and condemns subjects to the roles outlined and identified for them.

²¹⁴ Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Reasons* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969), 29, 39.

²¹⁵ Massumi, *Parables* 191.

²¹⁶ The contention is raised with Heidegger’s argument that, “A stone is worldless. Plant and animal likewise have no world; but they belong to the covert throng of a surrounding into which they are linked. The peasant woman, on the other hand, has a world because she dwells in the overtness of beings [...] The work as work sets up a world.” Heidegger situates man’s essence in his “*Ek-sistenz*” with a capacity for representation and ontological thinking—which generates a contradiction between being-with others in a shared world and denial of a shared world. In Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” *Basic Writings from Being and Time (1927) to The Task of Thinking (1964)* ed. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1993), 170. Also in Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (HarperCollins, 2001), 43 – 44. See for example Rosi Braidotti, *metamorphoses Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002); Seyla Benhabib, “The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt,” *Modernity and Social Thought*, 10 (Rowman and Littlefield, 1996); and Luce Irigaray, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger* (Paris: Minuit, 1991).

²¹⁷ For performance ecologist Baz Kershaw, theatre is a site of heterogeneous ecosystems. Kershaw theorizes a performance commons in which two or more ecologies meet. In Kershaw’s performance ecology and theatre ecology paradigms, the performance commons indicates an overlapping of multiple performance systems from which homologous structural ecological principles in nature and culture emerge. In Baz Kershaw, *Theatre Ecology Environments and Performance Events* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 21.

²¹⁸ Ingold, *The Perception* 239.

²¹⁹ In a different context, Deleuze and Guattari assert that movement has an essential connection to imperceptibility and is by nature imperceptible. Deleuze and Guattari write that, “movement in itself *continues* to occur elsewhere...always tak[ing] place above the

maximum threshold and below the minimum threshold, in expanding or contracting intervals (microintervals).” In Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand* 280 – 281.

²²⁰ On a trip to the Dead Sea, Ohno Kazuo describes looking across a barren landscape that seems to possess no life but with an adjustment demanded by movement in a scurrying animal he is able to become aware of an emerging unknown world. He realizes and instructs, “But not only was that hillside home to thousands of creatures; they were also closely connected with me [...] It was another world, once I opened myself up to it [...] Remember, the visible world is only one of many.” Importantly, opening and extension within a landscape also means a landscape’s non-visible imperceptible domain. In Kazuo Ohno and Yoshito Ohno, *Kazuo Ohno’s*, 253 – 254.

²²¹ Ingold, *The Perception* 242.

²²² Edmund Husserl, “Foundational Investigations of the Phenomenological Origin of the Spatiality of Nature,” trans. Fred Kersten, in Peter McCormick and Frederick A. Elliston, eds. *Husserl: Shorter Works* (Brighton, England: Harvester Press, 1981).

²²³ Heidegger, *Being* 176 – 177.

²²⁴ While the etymological construction of “Dasein” means “Being-there,” Heidegger uses the term to indicate the entity—“man himself”—whose Being is an issue for it. Even though Heidegger works to re-conceptualize the human being in all its ways of being beyond terms like “human,” “man,” and “subject”—the concept of Dasein as “being in such a way that one has an understanding of Being” nonetheless ontologically separates the entity “man” essentially and universally apart from all others. *Ibid.*, 32.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 174.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 176.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 385.

²²⁸ Heidegger argues, “Thus the significance-relationships which determine the structure of the world are not a network of forms which a worldless subject has laid over some kind of material. What is rather the case is that factual Dasein, understanding itself and its world ecstatically in the unity of the ‘there’, comes back from these horizons to the entities encountered within them.” *Ibid.*, 416 – 418.

²²⁹ Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995).

²³⁰ Ibid., 62.

²³¹ The beginnings of Butoh emphasize the weight of becoming affected in many ways. The dance experience that Hijikata and Ohno develop engages in part with similar concerns in phenomenology of how we experience the world and others within the world. Hijikata and Ohno's work takes up experience in all its varieties without reference to the question of whether what is experienced is objectively real or not. Rather, the emphasis in understanding and experiencing the world in Hijikata and Ohno's work is on how one is affected. Hijikata's dance-movement gathers up the vast ever-changing landscape in the remote region of Tohoku in northern Japan. During Hijikata's childhood, Tohoku was an area where seasonal changes penetrated everyday life. Rural landscapes can be both cruel and sustaining, making inhabitants perpetual foreigners to so-called civilization. Remote and severe climates possess an isolation that can be both maddening and magical, instilling in bodies an intense and relentless awareness of processes of life and death. Hijikata asserts that for him Butoh began in Tohoku with what he learned from the mud in the early spring season. He describes: "Fallen down in the mud and barely being able to move [...] a mouth comes out from the sole of my foot and sucks the mud up from my sole. Tongues of mud appear between my toes and my head and feet go topsy-turvy." In Hijikata Tatsumi, "Wind Daruma," *The Drama Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, Spring 2000), 73. I grew up poor in the sometimes-harsh climate of rural Iowa on a farm, which could (and still can) be reached from one direction on a dirt road that in a rainy season turns to deep and sucking mud. Those who have stepped into a deep rut of mud know the capacity of mud to swallow, suck, and desperately hold things in its malleable consistency. Mud not only resists distinct formations but also sucks up and holds distinct forms in its dark depths. Mobile materials like mud within landscapes complicate the understanding of landscape as fixed and/or fixable—landscape as that which can be mastered. Hijikata's topsy-turvy and constricted movement is built on being "born of the mud" and on his embodied relationally rooted experiments that rupture distinct formations.

²³² Heidegger, *The Fundamental* 62.

²³³ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Intertwining—The Chiasm," in *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964/1968).

²³⁴ John Cage emphasizes that silence enables free association and that anything can operate as an instrument. Greatly influenced by Zen Buddhism and Eastern philosophy, Cage situates the future of music in unintentionally made sounds that might be captured and used to improvise a composition. Cage's composition 4' 33" in 1952—a recording where no sounds are intentionally produced—fully engages with the notions that meaning making occurs as a process of consciousness in the audience and that chance acts an unintentional and generative principle. Sigmund Freud's configuration of the conscious

and unconscious—despite rebuffing the notion of chance for a deterministically structured unconscious—inspired a new kind of creativity that emphasized indeterminacy and chance in artistic practice even earlier in avant-garde movements such as surrealism.

²³⁵ In 1996 the Chattahoochie River (Roswell Park) in Georgia, the Japanese Pond (Sarah P. Duke Gardens) in North Carolina, Medicine Lake (French Regional Park) in Minnesota, and Nakatsugawa (Yadorigi) in Japan; in 1998 the Winooski River (Winooski One Hydroelectric Park) in Vermont and the Huron River (Nichols Arboretum) in Michigan; in 1999 the Monongahela River in Pennsylvania and again at the Japanese Pond; in 2006 the Cherry Creek and Platte River in Colorado; and in 2011 again for the American Dance Festival in Durham North Carolina. *River* also has a proscenium version.

²³⁶ Freud's ahistorical unconscious contrasts the Marxian class-consciousness, which is fundamentally historical. The practical historical function of class-consciousness implies that class is conditioned in the unconscious. Historical materialism plays a key role in the struggle for consciousness.

²³⁷ Hijikata and Ohno's Butoh demonstrates that synaesthetic modulation continually teaches a sentient-sensible body to respond to and within the modulating plenitude within a surrounding landscape. Hijikata exclaims, "My body trains itself as a matter of course. [...] When you come in touch with such things, something is naturally forced out of your body. [...] Where does the rain start and where does it end? The surrounding space too gets mixed up in this time of rain with no start and no end and there is no longer any distinction between time and space. And I wonder if, like the rotting cabbage, I will end up rotten to the core." In Hijikata Tatsumi, "Wind Daruma" 76. Hijikata describes how his unfolding body practices and learns attunement in processes of affective transformation through encounter with others. He observes how time and affect move through rain permeating the surrounding landscape and wonders if his body will be affected in the same way as the cabbage. The dynamic and magnetic processes that unfold in the earth's landscapes give movement to life and cannot be divided into or summarized into constituent parts. As Ohno claims, "The sun and earth are just cosmic debris from a universe perpetually falling apart only to come together again." Even the sun and earth participate in the flow of movement and stillness—the basis from which the flow of all phenomena might be experienced. Like Hijikata, Ohno guides his workshop participants in practicing-learning attunement. He directs, "Don't use your eyeballs. Instead, look at us with your entire body, let your whole body and soul become your eyes." In Kazuo Ohno and Yoshito Ohno, *Kazuo Ohno's* 293, 262. Synaesthesia finds or makes a way by participating in an immersive relationality of unending activities in perpetual motion. It is on this basis from which Hijikata can speak of responding to a majestic landscape—on the basis of the contingency of his body experienced fully with respect to living and dying within a living landscape. When Hijikata claims that his butoh is not an expression, the dancer instructs that the dancing body and landscape is not

a representation of something else or somewhere else. Instead, it is a lively synaesthetic incarnation and invocation of bodies transforming within an ongoing and unfolding landscape.

²³⁸ Ohno and Hijikata understand that a landscape is integral to perceptual and sensual encounter and that the endlessly shifting and expansive elements of a landscape can never be arrived at or contained. Hijikata wonders at the disparate combinations of seemingly distinct things around him—a splintered board, a hidden space, a rabbit. Heeding the vague and dense urgings of im/materiality, Hijikata states, “The salty scent of the sea turned me into a foreigner.” In Hijikata Tatsumi, “Inner” 42.

²³⁹ Heidegger, “The Origin” 45.

²⁴⁰ Ohno Kazuo contemplates, “We tend to think that there’s nothing to be gained in observing the elements. [...] No matter how skillfully you imitate the rain, you’ll never succeed. It’s truly inimitable. The question is: Why, then, should we practice?” In Kazuo Ohno and Yoshito Ohno, *Kazuo Ohno ‘s* 197.

²⁴¹ Merleau-Ponty argues that all bodies are sentient and sensible. He writes, “in so far as my hand knows hardness and softness, and my gaze knows the moon’s light, it is as a certain way of linking up with the phenomenon and communicating with it. Hardness and softness, roughness and smoothness, moonlight and sunlight, present themselves in our recollection, not pre-eminently as sensory contents, but as certain kinds of symbiosis, certain ways the outside has of invading us and certain ways we have of meeting this invasion.” In Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology* 370.

²⁴² Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible* 263.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 132 – 133.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 264 – 265.

²⁴⁵ Merleau-Ponty’s beckoning of the sensible is perhaps most strongly evident—yet remaining always vague—for Ohno Kazuo in the call that he hears from the dancer La Argentina. After death, La Argentina pleads with Ohno to dance: “Onho-san, I’m going to dance, so please let’s dance together.” Ohno’s body responds to the call and Ohno maintains that he and La Argentina inhabit each other—always being together even as ashes. Even so, the two bodies—the two openesses—are not synthesized into a single and distinct body. La Argentina and Ohno’s togetherness hinges on in/corporeal openness, participation in a zone of indistinction, and a vague beckoning. In Kazuo Ohno and Yoshito Ohno, *Kazuo Ohno ‘s* 266.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 259

²⁴⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968/1994), 236.

²⁴⁸ Merleau-Ponty writes, “each perception is the term of an approach, of a series of ‘illusions’ that were not merely simple ‘thoughts’ in the restrictive sense of Being-for-itself and the ‘merely thought of,’ but possibilities that could have been, radiations of this unique world that ‘there is’...—and which, as such, never revert to nothingness or to subjectivity as if they had never appeared, but are rather, as Husserl puts it well, ‘crossed out’ or ‘cancelled’ by the ‘new’ reality.” In Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible* 41 – 42.

²⁴⁹ Freud’s claim that the effacement of the opposition between imagination and reality produces the uncanny betrays the strict division between the conscious and the unconscious that Freud also posits. In Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny* (London: Penguin Classics, 1925/2003).

²⁵⁰ Hijikata Tatsumi writes of himself as a frenzied boy who experimented with his body and the landscape—casting himself into surging rivers and turning his chest into a bellows for air. Hijikata wonders, “Why on earth did I used to get so frenzied? It was probably because of living in the freezing north country of Tohoku, where it was so cold that when you bent a finger it made a crackling sound.” In Shibusawa Tatsuhiko and Hijikata Tatsumi, “Hijikata Tatsumi: Plucking off the Darkness of the Flesh, An Interview,” *The Drama Review*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, Spring 2000), 50. These experiments continue throughout Hijikata’s life. He insists that such embodied transformations are not merely delusions. Embodied experimental extensions test the capacity of the senses to expand and work together promiscuously in order to encounter novel and strange unfolding relationality within a landscape. Hijikata’s detailed descriptions of his childhood and his continued experimentations reveal his movement as testing the indiscrete involvement and sensible capacity of relational embodiment within a landscape.

²⁵¹ Ohno conveys, “Today, I’d thought to get straight to the point and explain what reality consists of, but I was unable to do so. In fact, this very inability to do so is an integral part of reality.” In Kazuo Ohno and Yoshito Ohno, *Kazuo Ohno’s* 251.

²⁵² Gaston Bachelard, *Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter*, trans. Edith Farrell (Dallas, TX: Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture, 1942/1999).

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 103.

²⁵⁴ Mitsuharu Kaneko, “Song of Loneliness,” *Rakkasan (Parachute)*, trans. & ed., Nihon Miraiha Hakkosho, 1948.

²⁵⁵ Two days after reading *From Trinity to Trinity*—Hayashi Kyoko’s book recounting her journey to the Trinity atomic bomb test site in New Mexico—for Eiko Otake’s Delicious Movement seminar, I listened to a segment on National Public Radio of an old recorded interview of J. Robert Oppenheimer, the man who led the team at Los Alamos in the development of the atomic bomb. One question posed to him was whether he had any regrets. His answer—his only regret was that people no longer trusted science. The notion that science can or cannot be trusted as a whole fails to recognize that science is always a practice immersed within and affecting a living world. Perhaps a better question might have been to ask whether Oppenheimer had any remorse. The slight shift in wording recovers the weight of sorrow that comes with remorse—which is much more difficult to confront than a simple articulation of “what could have happened differently.” The sorrow in surviving the atomic bomb and the sorrow of death within the atomic landscape resides in Hayashi’s profound silence and questioning of what is not acceptable and why—a silence and questioning infused with the silences of the dead and of other *hibakusha* that haunt the silences of those who witnessed the Trinity test. Hayashi’s profound silence in the face of death resonates with the profound silence of dark waters and sets a contrast to the words of Oppenheimer describing the moments after the successful Trinity test—“A few people laughed. A few people cried. Most were silent.”

²⁵⁶ Eiko Otake, “Sustained Mourning,” unpublished manuscript.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 2

²⁵⁸ Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia,” *Collected Papers IV*, (London: The Hogarth Press, 1925/1953).

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 166.

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