

Drama, Performativity, and Performance

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There is a conceptual crisis in drama studies, a crisis reflected in the ways different disciplinary styles approach questions about dramatic texts, theatrical productions, and performance in general. In the introduction to *Performance and Cultural Politics*, Elin Diamond provides an exemplary account of contemporary interest in performance and, in a gesture that has now become reflex, suggests why this interest necessarily sidesteps the narrowly authorized performances of dramatic theater. As a consequence, she argues, of late-1960s experimental theater, the effect of theory on writing about performance, and "poststructuralist theorizing (Barthes on Brecht, Derrida on Artaud), performance came to be defined in opposition to theater structures and conventions. In brief, theater was charged with obeisance to the playwright's authority, with actors disciplined to the referential task of representing fictional entities" (3). Although there has been an explosion of "performance discourse, and its new theatrical partner, 'performativity,'" in many respects this expanding investment in performance has "floated free of theater precincts and of the modes of performance and performance analysis associated with theater and drama" (2). Indeed, performance has been so "honored with dismantling textual authority, illusionism, and the canonical actor" that it is questionable whether any frontier remains between dramatic studies and performance studies (3). The reasons for this "terminological expansion of performance and its drift away from theater" (12n22) have to do in part with the different disciplinary investments of performance studies and literary studies. Literary engagements with performativity tend to focus on the performative function of language as represented in literary texts, and much performance-oriented criticism of drama, for all its invocation of the theater, similarly betrays a desire to locate the meanings of the stage in the contours of the dramatic text. Performance studies has developed a vivid account of nondramatic, nontheatrical, nonscripted, ceremonial, and everyday-life performances, performances that appear to depart from the authority of texts. Both disciplines view drama as a species of performance driven by texts; as a result, drama appears to be an increasingly residual mode of performance.

In the past two decades, the literary discussion of drama has developed a sophisticated approach to performance, a critical vocabulary for considering the interplay between the scripted drama and the (actual, implied, or imagined) practices of stage performance. In Shakespeare studies—one corner of literary study where performance has had an effect—the analysis of stage performance is motivated by a disciplinary interest in the dramatic text, and not surprisingly, many discussions of the stage implicitly take performance to be underwritten by a text. This view is exemplified by important studies that collocate theatrical practice with Shakespeare scholarship (Styan, *Shakespeare Revolution*; Taylor, *Reinventing Shakespeare*), that trace histrionic (Goldman, *Acting and Shakespeare*) or illocutionary (Berger) patterns latent in the play texts, that describe the performance "discoveries" productions make about the plays (Warren 3) or the "decisions" any production must confront in staging a text (Dawson xi), or that interpret the dramatic text not only as encoding practices current in the era of the play's composition (gender trouble in Shakespeare's plays reflected in cross-dressing by male actors playing female roles, for example) but also as responding to the circumstances of modern stage performance.' While these modes of performance analysis are highly developed in Shakespeare studies, similar scholar formations orbit around other playwrights, where criticism traces performative features of the drama to designs in the dramatic text - Chekhov (Styan, *Chekhov*), Beckett (Cohn), and Molière (Whitton) come to mind, as do classical Greek dramatists (Taplin; McDonald).

As Michael Bristol and others have observed, this view of text and performance places performance in a "ministerial" or "derivative" relation to the dramatic text, which is regarded as the authentic ground or source of theatrical meaning (*Shakespeare's America* 105; *Big-Time Shakespeare* 61). There are various reasons to question this model of performance, and the "expansive interdisciplinary or postdisciplinary agenda" (Roach, *Cities* xii) of performance studies might be expected to relocate dramatic performance within a wider perspective, an "antidiscipline" (Carlson 188-89) not concerned with maintaining the priority of texts or with seeing performance merely as a side effect of dramatic writing. Flourishing in an ambiguous tension with theater studies and drama studies, performance studies now traces the horizon of an energetically expanding field characterized by a range of aims, methods, and objects of inquiry: ethnographies of performance (Conquergood, "Ethnography, Rhetoric" and "Rethinking Ethnography"; Limon; Taussig); psychoanalytic (Phelan) and postcolonial (Bharucha; Savigliano) models of representation; institutional studies (Cole; Patra); studies of street performance (Roach, "Mardi Gras Indians"), performance art (Schneider), and performance in everyday life (Kapsalis); and theoretical investigations of identity performance (Butler, *Gender Trouble*). Yet the burgeoning of performance studies has not really clarified the relation between dramatic texts and performance. As an object of

and vehicle for sustained theoretical inquiry, dramatic performance often emerges in performance studies marked with the vague contemptibility of the familiar. As Richard Schechner puts it in a now notorious comment in *TDR*: "[T]heatre as we have known And practiced it-the staging of written dramas-will be the string quartet of the 21st century: a beloved but extremely limited genre, a subdivision of performance" ("New Paradigm" 8).

How practitioners of performance studies and of dramatic studies understand dramatic performance is important, not because Schechner is wrong, but because he is mainly right. Understanding dramatic performance as authorized in a relatively straightforward way by a scripted text does indeed consign theater (and criticism that understands performance to be determined by the text) to some faded conceptual Levittown: dramatic performance is a series of authorized reproductions, each plotted on the blueprint of the authorial text. It may be that at this moment in the history of cultural production in the West, the performance of plays is residual, a mode of production fully inscribed within a discourse of textual and cultural authority (e.g., Shakespeare or Beckett) that other kinds of performance are able to engage in more resistant, oppositional, emergent ways. The apparent troping of performance by the text seems so evident, so deeply rooted-despite Artaud and his inheritors-in conventional ways of describing, producing, and evaluating Western dramatic performance that it is rarely unpacked. Yet although the sense of dramatic performance as a performance of a play is widespread, as John Rouse remarks, just "what the word of means" in this context is "far from clear" (146). How can performance studies help move the literary conception of drama beyond the incapacitating notion of performance as a version of the text, a version emptied of multiplicity and ambiguity through the process of (authorized) embodiment; alternatively, how might a rethinking of drama reinvigorate it as a mode of performance theory, a way of exploring - not prescribing - the possibilities of performance?

Here I consider two places where definitions of performance depend on an artificially narrow sense of the relation between texts and performances: first, literary discussions of performativity and performance that develop J. L. Austin's account of speech acts and, second, the tribulations of textuality and textualized models of performance in performance studies, particularly in performance ethnography. To ask how performance of a text-a difficult phrase in itself-might be conceived to investigate or retheorize the problematics of performance, I conclude with a glance at Baz Luhrmann's recent film William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Though Luhrmann's work is a film-perhaps given license because it is not tied to the textual ontology that afflicts common understandings of staged drama-it enacts a powerful theoretical encounter with the

questions I explore here, with ways of rethinking the relations of authority that inform texts and performances.

One way literary scholars have adapted their understanding of texts to the environment of performance is by using Austin's approach to speech acts, working to see the performative mediating between language and modes of doing. Much as literary scholars tend to see dramatic performance as lapsed reading deriving from the proper meanings prescribed by the text, Austin is notoriously skeptical of theatrical performatives. Austin, of course, finds theatrical discourse peculiarly "hollow" - "performative utterance will, for example, be in a peculiar way hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage" (22) - insofar as it exemplifies a special class of infelicitous utterance in which the motives of the agent ("persons having certain thoughts or feelings" [15]) are insincere or are not directly embodied in subsequent conduct (an utterance can also be hollow in this sense if "introduced in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy" [22]). Austin excludes such hollow utterance from consideration precisely because it uses language in ways he finds "parasitic upon [language's] normal use-ways which fall under the doctrine of the etiolations of language" (22). Oddly enough, while Austin's cavalier dismissal of theatrical performatives - hollow to whom? in what sense?-now seems to drive literary studies toward performativity and performance, it does so by asserting the peculiar hollowness of dramatic theater.

Several recent efforts to use Austin to reclaim performance from dramatic theater work in this way, segregating unscripted performance from the tawdriness of the stage to liberate performance (and performance studies) from its infelicitous connection to the theatrical (and to theater studies). Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, for instance, use Austin to chart a "convergence" between literary studies and performance studies that has pushed performativity "onto center stage" (1): "If one consequence of this appreciation has been a heightened willingness to credit a performative dimension in all ritual, ceremonial, scripted behaviors, another would be the acknowledgment that philosophical essays themselves surely count as one such performative instance" (2). While it may be a relief to some that philosophers are now performers, it is striking to think that literary scholars have only recently recognized the performative aspects of rituals and ceremonies, a development they assign to the new antidiscipline of performance studies. According to Parker and Sedgwick, theater studies, "[r]eimagining itself over the course of the past decade as the wider field of performance studies," has 'moved well beyond the classical ontology of the black box model to embrace a myriad of performance practices, ranging from stage to festival and everything in between" (2).

Parker and Sedgwick's powerful reading of Austin queers felicitous performativity, demonstrating its constitutive predication on the "etiolated" - meaning "linked with the perverted, the artificial, the unnatural, the abnormal, the decadent, the effete, the diseased" (5) - theatrical performance it excludes. For this reason, though, it is surprising that in describing the disciplinary evolution of theater studies into performance studies Parker and Sedgwick use a contemporary theatrical convention as a synecdoche for the ontology of theatrical performance: in their view the theater and theater studies are epitomized by the black box of modern stage realism. Given the subsequent discussion of marriage as a form of conventional theater, it seems evident that what Parker and Sedgwick mean by "black box model" is the spatial and performance dynamics of modern proscenium performance, a performance mode that emerged barely a century ago, at the juncture of the familiar social, aesthetic, and technological (electricity) pressures of Western industrial modernism: a darkened auditorium, a bourgeois drama, performance conventions that confine the play behind the fourth wall of a box set onstage. (In contemporary theater, of course, a black box is a small theater space susceptible to multiple configurations and so to various ways of shaping the stage-audience relation; in this sense black-box theater does not have a proscenium. Whether the black box-let alone the modern proscenium house-defines the "classical ontology" of theater seems open to question.) Ignoring theater studies' long-standing interest in dramatic, festival, and popular performance-as well as in the stage production of eras such as the nineteenth century, often overlooked in accounts of dramatic literature-Parker and Sedgwick enact a typically literary disciplinary investment in textually motivated forms of modern theater as definitive of theatrical production. Confining theater to the black box of modern stage realism, Parker and Sedgwick take performance studies to confirm theater as an essentially reproductive mode-, they view theater as a parasite on the dramatic text, much as Austin saw it as a parasite on language.

Despite this disciplinary prejudice, Parker and Sedgwick nonetheless read Austin in a way that imagines a more subtle and adequate relation among drama, theater, and performance. Developing the reading of Austin in Derrida's "Signature Event Context," Parker and Sedgwick note that Austin's exclusion of theatrical discourse from ordinary performance finally predicates performative utterance on the "hollow" citationality characteristic of the stage. Parker and Sedgwick open the terrain of the performative by deconstructing Austin's opposition between "normal" and etiolated performance, between the felicitously performative and the theatrical: performative speech cannot be distinguished from the "hollow" utterances of the stage on the basis of originality, as though nontheatrical speaking were authentic and nonrepetitive. Performatives can work felicitously only to the extent that they, like theatrical performance, are reiterable, that they signify through a process of citation; utterances perform actions only when they

iterate familiar verbal or behavioral regimes. But while this deconstruction reveals the citational "hollowness" of ordinary language performatives, it does not seem, conversely, to render the "hollowness" peculiar to the stage any more felicitous. While ordinary-language performatives signify not as words but as a reiteration of various ideological and behavioral regimes, theatrical performance-in the conventional literary sense assumed by Austin and by Parker and Sedgwick-is understood principally in literary terms, as a mode of speaking scripted words. The theater, in this sense, is understood to signify principally by reiterating the dramatic text (a mode of citation that renders theater peculiarly "hollow"), not by deploying scripted language in the constitutive citational behaviors proper to the circumstances of utterance, here to the stage. But is it language, the text, that motivates the force of dramatic performance? Is it, in other words, the dramatic text that the citational performances of the theater cite?

Parker and Sedgwick's sense-of theater and theatrical performance is dramatized in their canny examination of Austin's reliance on the marital vow ("I do") as an instance of performative speech (illocution), of

marriage itself as theater-marriage as a kind of fourth wall or invisible proscenium arch that moves through the world (a heterosexual couple secure in their right to hold hands in the street), continually reorienting around itself the surrounding relations of visibility and spectatorship, of the tacit and the explicit, of the possibility or impossibility of a given person's articulating a given enunciatory position. (11)

Parker and Sedgwick argue that the performative force of marriage is enacted not by the Austinian utterance, the text "I do," but by the ways this utterance text, performed within the ceremony, cites and so reenacts the institutions of compulsory heterosexuality. Marriage is "like a play" to the extent that it is like modern realistic theater, a theater whose conventional "relations of visibility and spectatorship," as Brecht long ago recognized, mask the ideological labor behind its claims to versimular representation: "Like the most conventional definition of a play" - or, more precisely, like the working of modern realistic plays in a mode of production associated with proscenium theatricality that Parker and Sedgwick take to be the "conventional definition of a play" - marriage is constituted as a spectacle that denies its audience the ability either to look away from it or equally to intervene in it" (11). Parker and Sedgwick brilliantly rethink the working of Austin's illocutionary "I do"; it gains its force not because it is an utterance of a text, not because the words themselves accomplish an action, but because the "I do" cites and so reproduces an entire genre of performance. That this performance - the coercive citation of heteronormativity-is epitomized as proscenium theater reveals how Parker and Sedgwick conceive of theater and how they position theater relative to performance and to the "wider field of performance studies." For Parker and Sedgwick take the

characteristic formation of modern theater-the silent audience immobilized before the proscenium frame where all the action is (faked); an audience removed from participation, from visibility, consuming the spectacle from their individual seats; a darkened throng of individualized subjects disciplined by and into the illusion of community - to epitomize dramatic theater itself. Reducing theater to the characteristic ideological apparatus of modern realism, Parker and Sedgwick's stage is finally the emblem of powerful yet coercive conventionality (as, of course, much modern theater is).

"When is saying something doing something? And how is saying something doing something?" - Parker and Sedgwick imply, one of the problems of modeling dramatic performance on Austinian performativity is that performance is reduced to the of language, words, as though dramatic performance were merely, or most essentially, a mode of utterance, the (infelicitous) production of speech acts (1). The conundrum that Parker and Sedgwick enact here has to do with their view of dramatic performance-or the mode of utterance known as acting-as a straightforward citation of the dramatic text and nontheatrical performance (the marriage ceremony, for example) as a mode of citation that extends well beyond the text ("I do"), that reconstitutes the meanings of the text instead of being determined by those meanings. Indeed, it is in this distinction that Parker and Sedgwick's rethinking of speech acts holds the most promise for a rethinking of dramatic performance. For while theater remains for them a peculiarly hollow sign of how social hegemonies are reproduced through a conventional apparatus of visibility (the proscenium and the realistic modes of dramatic narrative and audience interaction it shapes), the marriage ceremony provides a searching model of the relation between texts ("I do") and performances, a model more adequate to the task of figuring dramatic performance. It is not the text that prescribes the meanings of the performance: it is the construction of the text within the specific apparatus of the ceremony that creates performative force. The performance is not a citation of the text. The ceremony deploys the text-and much else-as part of an elaborate reiteration of a specific vision of social order: the meaning of the performance depends on the citation not of the text but of the regimes of heterosexual socialization, on the interplay among a specific text, individual performers, the "materiality and historical density of performance" (Diamond, Introduction 5), and the web of performance practices that constitute the performance as a meaningful citation. Although the theater is, for Parker and Sedgwick, still hollow, their discussion of nontheatrical performance suggests that dramatic performance should be released from the charge of "obedience" to the playwright's or the text's authority (Diamond, Introduction 3).

Performing reconstitutes the text; it does not echo, give voice to, or translate the text. Performance does not cite the text any more than "I do" constitutes the force of marriage.⁵ Instead, performance produces the text within a system of manifestly citational behavior, such that when "a performance 'works,'" it does so "to the extent that it draws on and covers over the constitutive conventions by which it is mobilized" (Butler, *Excitable Speech* 51). If, as Judith Butler argues in her critique of the perlocutionary claims of antipornography censorship, "the performativity of the text is not under sovereign control" (69), then the meanings of theatrical performance cannot be attributed to the sovereign control of the dramatic text. Does stage performance operate citationally, less as an uttering or iterating of a text than as an iterating of the conventions of performance, which accumulate "the force of authority through the repetition or citation of a prior and authoritative set of practices" (51)? As a citational practice, dramatic performance - like all other performance - is engaged not so much in citing texts as in reiterating its own regimes; these regimes can be understood to cite - or, perhaps subversively, to resignify - social and behavioral practices that operate outside the theater and that constitute contemporary social life. The citational practices of the stage-acting styles, directorial conventions, scenography - operate on and transform texts into something with performative force: performances, behavior. The invocation of Austin tends to associate theatrical performance with speech and so leads ineluctably to the portrayal of a performance's relation to the dramatic text as akin to Austin's account of an utterance's relation to language: dramatic theater is understood as a perlocutionary medium, in which the performance onstage is a direct consequence of performatives inscribed in the text. This application of performativity to dramatic performance reinforces the sense that performances are scripted by their texts and so reproduces both traditional and recent disciplinary controversies among drama studies, theater studies, and performance studies. A more consistent rereading of Austin, an application of the deconstruction of "I do" not only to social actions but to dramatic performance as well, would relocate the function of the text in the performance, conceive the text as material for labor, for the work of production. Although dramatic performance uses texts, it is hardly authorized by them: to preserve this claim is to preserve the sense of dramatic performance as a hollow, even etiolated, species of the literary.

One of the ways both literary studies and performance studies have misconceived dramatic performance is by taking it merely as a reiteration of texts, a citation that imports literary or textual authority into performance. In part because performance studies shares this literary sense of dramatic theater, it has successfully invoked ethnographic models of ritual and everyday-life behavior as a way to redefine performance in explicitly nonliterary and nontheatrical terms. Not surprisingly, perhaps, Clifford Geertz's readings of culture as text-which have been influential in the practice of

new historicism and in its morphing into cultural, poetics - provide a defining point of contention. For while the textualization of culture enabled literary studies to generalize interpretive practices from texts to other phenomena, the ethnographic approaches invoked in performance studies have come to resist reading performances as texts. In part, this hesitation stems from a laudable desire not to privilege the dramatic theater of the West as a paradigm of performance: not only, of course, are many non Western performance forms nontextual, but in many of those that use texts - No, for example - the text does not function as it does in conventional Western theater. But this resistance is sometimes also driven by suspicion regarding writing's implication in the reproduction of authority and consequently in the reproduction of social hegemonies. Resistance to a textualizing ethnology is modeled, in other words, on the dialectic between authorized texts and resistant performances that informs Parker and Sedgwick's understanding of performativity.

In this view - elegantly argued by Dwight Conquergood ("Ethnography, Rhetoric" and "Rethinking Ethnography") - Geertz's textual model of culture embodies a profound desire to represent other cultures within Western epistemologies. Geertz typically takes the "culture of a people "as" an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong" (452). The Balinese cockfight, to take Geertz's celebrated example, does what, for other peoples with other temperaments and other conventions, *Lear and Crime and Punishment* do; it catches up these themes-death, masculinity, rage, pride, loss, beneficence, chance-and, ordering them into an encompassing structure, presents them in such a way as to throw into relief a particular view of their essential nature. (443)

Geertz clearly articulates the practices of other cultures with the role of literature in the West, but what disturbs Conquergood about the textualization of culture is a more fundamental problem. Ethnography, to the extent that it reads the culture of nonliterate societies as texts, prolongs a colonizing project, modeling the epistemologies of the other in Western terms. Conquergood argues that to regard culture as a text and to represent it in writing is to represent the processes of other cultures not only in terms of Western ways of knowing and representation but also in forms-writing, texts-that have often been used to dominate and exploit them.

Conquergood calls for ethnography instead to use performance as both a mode of investigation and a mode of representation. He remarks that 'performance- sensitive ethnography' alters the "power dynamic of the research situation:' which "changes when the ethnographer moves from the gaze of the distanced and detached observer to the intimate involvement and engagement of 'coactivity I or co-performance with historically

situated, named, 'unique individuals'" ("Rethinking Ethnography" 187-88). As George E. Marcus notes, the changing "mise-en-scène" of ethnographic representation-associated "with the writing of James Clifford and loosely derived from Mikhail Bakhtin's notions of polyphony and dialogism as an alternative to the monologic authority of modes of voicing in the novel" (91-92)-has forever changed the fundamental ethics of ethnography, as well as ethnographic notions of collaboration, complicity, objectivity, disinterestedness, and activism. Conquergood more narrowly phrases this transformation as a basic asymmetry in the power relations ascribed to writing and performing; by engaging in and valuing performance, ethnography can alter its disciplinary processes and procedures: "The performance paradigm can help ethnographers recognize 'the limitations of literacy' and critique the textualist bias of western civilization" ("Rethinking Ethnography" 188). To Conquergood, the assertion of performance-as object, as practice, as a means of scholarly dissemination-against texts, textuality, and the textualizing practices of conventional ethnography is a means of tactically resituating ethnography and ethnographers in a collaborative relationship with their subjects and in a "subversive" relation to the "text-bound structure of the academy" and its traditional system of authorization (190).

Performance-sensitive ethnography has the salutary effect of enabling ethnographers and their audiences to recognize and perhaps to circumvent such colonizing epistemologies. But while performance may share with rhetoric an "opposition to foundationalist thought" (Conquergood, "Ethnography, Rhetoric" 80), to see performance as a mode of resistance to textual authority is to mistake the instrumental for the essential. While writing (in some situations, at least) may now be associated with colonial hegemony, complicity with authority is hardly foundational to textual practices. The authority of writing and other performances as modes of cultural production is determined much as that of speech acts is: within an elaborate, historically contingent, dynamic network of citational possibilities. Although Conquergood is alert to this point ("How does performance reproduce, enable, sustain, challenge, subvert, critique, and naturalize ideology?" he asks ("Rethinking Ethnography" 1901), the habitual collocation of textuality with authority reflects more clearly on the uses of writing-in ethnographic practice, in a culture at large-than on essential features of texts or performances as forms of cultural production. Shakespearean drama, for example, might now be taken as an example of textual culture, indeed as part of an avowedly imperial educational project (see Bennett). Yet as Leah Marcus and others have suggested, Shakespeare's works were perhaps not viewed as textual in his era, when the transformation from oral to literate culture was far from complete, even within the practice of Shakespeare's theater (see 132-76); the attribution of authority to textual, as opposed to oral, communication may well have remained contestable to some extent throughout Shakespeare's career. And while

print is now closely identified with authority in various ways--colonial, cultural, academic-it often plays a subversive role in relation to the transmission practices of traditional or elite cultures. Elizabethan manuscript circulation, for example - a densely performed practice of the hothouse culture of the court (see Wall; Whigham)-would in this sense have been countered by printing, which generally makes reading more widely "accessible through a system of commodity exchange that effectively disempowers traditional forms of surveillance and control for anyone who knows how to read" (Bristol, *Big-Time Shakespeare* 44).

While it is time for the presumed authority of texts over performances to be displaced, Conquergood is right to sense that if "the Performance Paradigm simply is pitted against the Textual Paradigm, then its radical force will be coopted by yet another either/or binary construction that ultimately reproduces modernist thinking. The Performance Paradigm will be most useful if it decenters, without discarding, texts" ("*Rethinking Ethnography*" 191). Yet in some respects, this "radical force" depends on a foundational binary, the untenable opposition between texts and performances. For the same reason that Conquergood celebrates the connection between rhetoric and performance in a presumed "opposition to foundationalist thought," it remains important not to relocate that foundation in an opposition between scripted and unscripted performances. To see performance as an "essentially contested concept" (Strine, Long, and Hopkins 183) is to see that contestation taking place not only within performance but along its borders as well, as Joseph Roach implies in suspending a "schematized opposition of literacy and orality as transcendent categories," arguing that "these modes of communication have produced one another interactively over time" (*Cities* 11). Texts-with their boundaries in flux, their authors appearing and disappearing, even their typography dissolving on the computer screen-might as well be seen as similarly contested fields, fields in which notions of authority are constantly under negotiation, redefinition, change. A more sophisticated understanding of how performativity operates in the theater would make it difficult to see drama and theater as ineluctably authoritarian, dependent on the reproduction (rather than the decentering, the remaking as performance) of texts. Can the conceptual tools of performance studies and performance theory be used to expand the ways of talking about dramatic performance that do not persistently ground it in textual meanings, the reencoding in action of essentially textual messages, the authority of the script, the text?

What are dramatic performances performances of? One of the most disabling aspects of performance criticism of drama is the way it tends - or until recently has tended - to regard the performance as a reading, interpretation, realization of the text (or, much the same thing, of the play or its potentialities or, for example, of Shakespeare). To say that a

performance is of a text is immediately to recognize that its relation to that text is extremely tenuous: a performance is not usually of one text in any direct sense, since a number of different versions of a classic play might be consulted as part of the production process and many scripts are produced and used in the process of shaping a play. In contemporary textual scholarship, the widespread interrogation of how texts constitute authority would make such a claim similarly problematic (see McGann; Bornstein and Williams; Shillingsburg; Grigely; Masten). The text is absorbed into the multifarious verbal and nonverbal discourses of theatrical production, transformed into an entirely incommensurable thing, an event. Texts in the theater are always more like the phone book than like Hamlet: they are transformed by the performative environment of the theater into something else, a performance. One function of conventional theater is to assert the rhetoric of of, an assertion that is bound up in conventions of performance rather than in an essential relation between texts and enactments.

The problem of dramatic theater's citationality is a complex one, and many dramatic performances (hose-and-doublet Shakespeare) are inscribed with authorizing gestures: they use acting, costume, direction, the entire *mise-en-scène* to claim an authority located in a certain understanding of a text, a genre, a performance tradition, a mystified author. Performances do not signify by citing texts. A performance creates a sense of "proximity" (to the text, to something else) as part of its rhetorical deployment of contemporary conventions of performance, as a way of claiming "something we value." As rhetoric, such gestures are hardly confined to dramatic performance. Theatrical production - which recasts and so re-creates the script in another idiom, as speech, gesture, or action that is entirely incommensurable with notions of the text itself - should not be seen as distinctively preoccupied with questions of authority. Such a view ignores the discourse of authentication surrounding a variety of performance and performance-art forms, not only the work of monologists like Spalding Gray and Karen Finley, but also that of Anna Deavere Smith - whose elaborately depersonalized miming of her interview subjects may recall James Clifford's critique of "Geertz's abrupt disappearance into his rapport" (40-41) - or performances that appear to cite a personal relation to the subject matter (Annie Sprinkle comes to mind). In all these cases, performance is performative in Butler's sense, working as a "ritualized practice" that "draws on and covers over the constitutive conventions by which it is mobilized" (*Excitable Speech* 51); sometimes those conventions summon an illusory textual authority, sometimes they do not.

So what options are there for repositioning the text within an understanding of the work of dramatic performance? Is it possible, as Joseph Roach suggests, to see performance - dramatic performance - "as an alternative or a supplement to textual mediation" ("*Kinship*" 221)? Roach is talking here about performative research and dissemination, but I want to take him in a different sense, one amplified by the account of "surrogation"

he gives in *Cities of the Dead* (2-3). To Roach, performance can be described as surrogation, an uncanny replacement acting, an ambivalent replaying of previous performers and performances by a current behavior. An act of memory and an act of creation, performance recalls and transforms the past in the form of the present. Like Schechner's "restored behavior" ("Collective Reflexivity" 39), surrogation involves not the replaying of an authorizing text, a grounding origin, but the potential to construct that origin as a rhetorically powerful effect of performance. To consider the performance of a play an act of surrogation, an act generating "improvised narratives of authenticity and priority" that often "congeal into full-blown myths of legitimacy and origin" (Roach, *Cities* 3), is to alter the conventional priority of text to performance. Dramatic performance becomes more like nondramatic surrogation; it becomes an act - like the performance citationality of the marital "I do" - in which an understanding of the text emerges not as the cause but as a consequence of performance.

Although Roach tends to frame performance surrogation as a form of resistant remembering that is opposed to the oppressive forgetting he associates with textual transmission, the power of this sense of surrogation lies in how it reflects the transformative nature of the cultural transmission of meanings, textual as well as performative. "It is somewhat disconcerting," Joseph Grigely remarks in a provocative study of the transmission of artworks, "given the record of unending change physically altering artworks, that many people continue to believe that art is immutable, that the artist's intentions are paramount, and that original works should be 'preserved' from various agents of change" (6). From Grigely's perspective, the transmission of art - texts, plays, sculpture, paintings - necessarily involves surrogation, a continual "process of being unmade (as an object) and remade (as a text and as memory)," a kind of performance he calls "textualterity" (33, 1). Drawing from Derrida's understanding of citation, Grigely deploys the notion of "iteration" to characterize not only the transmission of texts but also the ongoing negotiation of the meaning of artworks in culture. He argues that while language "is iterative to the extent that it is a socially shared code," utterances-and texts-seem to be noniterable (93). Utterances "may survive the death of the addressee, but in a special way: they become desyntagmatized, lifted from the context of articulation, but do not cease to function" (94). The implications for textual and performance studies here should be clear: "although language (langage) is iterable, this iterability begins to rupture when applied to utterances (parole)" (96); as a result, "the fixedness of a text is as illusory as the fixedness of an interpretation; neither is final, neither is authorial" (108).

Grigely argues that textual studies frequently misunderstands the nature of iteration: insofar as texts are products of the working of culture at a given moment in history,

copies of texts produced under new conditions do not iterate the original text. A performance, like an "edition, like a text, is merely a site of passage of a work of literature: a site in which instabilities are both made and made manifest" (118). Grigely's sense of the cultural iteration of artworks brings dramatic performance closer to an act of surrogation in Roach's sense. Much as Hamlet exists as a work variously iterated in a textual history-as a range of printed, unprinted, and hypothetical (Shakespeare's manuscript) texts-so it is also surrogated in various forms, in innumerable audiotape, videotape, film, and stage performances. A performance of Hamlet is not a performance of a text. Instead, it uses a text (usually a palimpsest of texts) of Hamlet within a specific selection of available regimes of production (acting style-, set and costume design; the representational rhetoric of stage, film, or video) to perform a new iteration of Hamlet, an iteration that-though it may be encoded with signs of fidelity or resistance, to an "original," to Hamlet, to Shakespeare - is finally a surrogation of the work, one instance of "the doomed search for originals by continuously auditioning stand-ins" (Roach, *Cities* 3).

How can dramatic performance be conceived not as the performance of the text but as an act of iteration, an utterance, a surrogate standing in that positions, uses, signifies the text within the citational practices of performance? Driven in part by Artaud's cry "No more masterpieces:" stage performance during the past three decades has often tried to disentangle its work from the apparent authority of the text, while at the same time engaging with classic drama. I am not thinking here of the long tradition (dating to the 1920s) of setting classic plays in modern dress or in alternative "historical" settings. Such productions usually dress conventional notions of textual authority in new clothes (see Berry 14-23). Nor am I thinking of experimental productions like the Performance Group's *Dionysus* in 69, a landmark participatory, "environmental" production nonetheless deeply governed by Euripides's *The Bacchae*. Instead, I have in mind productions that resituate the production of the text in the performance in unconventional waysthrough speech, gesture, physical enactment-and thus resignify. the authority conventionally ascribed to the text. In Robert Wilson's production of Ibsen's *When We Dead Awaken*, for instance, the performers' stiff gestures and operatically unrealistic speech patterns prevented the assimilation of the words to a sense of psychologically motivated character, usually viewed as a sign of fidelity to Ibsen onstage. One of the most powerful stage performances I have seen recently, *Going, Going, Gone*, a work "[c]onceived and [d]irected" by Anne Bogart and "[c]reated and [p]erformed" by the Saratoga International Theater Institute company, also uses performance to interrogate textual functioning and exemplifies one version of performance-sensitive research. The cast consists of an older and a younger couple whose ages, gestures, costumes, and behavior evoke the action of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* The stage

set and physical enactment reiterate Albee's *Walpurgisnacht*, or at least Richard Burton's and Elizabeth Taylor's performances; the actors' intonations, posture, and movement enact discussion, argument, seduction, "get the guests:" surrogating the behavioral regimes of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* In place of Albee's dialogue, the actors speak fragments drawn from a range of scientific (Stephen Hawking) and nonscientific (T. S. Eliot, William Blake) texts, a pastiche of Newtonian, quantum mechanical, and literary utterances about the physical world in its gross, subatomic, and poetic manifestations. As the director Tina Landau remarks, in Bogart's work "the movement has been freed from the text so that each is informed by and related to the other without it being the same as the other" (25). The meaning of *Going, Going, Gone* cannot be ascribed to the text; the performance cannot be understood - as productions of Shakespeare or Ibsen or Beckett usually are - as a realization, translation, interpretation, or citation of (potentialities latent in) the text. But while *Going, Going, Gone* might appear to be a special case, it is in fact the normative case of dramatic performance. Much as "I do" gains its force from the citational behaviors within which it is performed, so too the dramatic text of more conventional plays gains its force in performance from the behaviors that constitute it as meaningful.

This interrogation of the working of texts relative to performances is not merely the province of performance studies or of avant-garde theater; it is the work-often only the implicit work-of dramatic performance. Indeed, it impels the action of Baz Luhrmann's widely distributed film *William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet*. To be sure, as a film, Luhrmann's work engages in a mode of surrogation unlike that of theatrical performance. As a performance, it is preoccupied less with the theatrical than with televisual citation, with the self-conscious address to an MTV audience embodied in its urban setting, quick cuts, visual saturation, and pop-music sound track. This dimension is also signaled in the opening and closing moments of the film, in which a newscaster on a television screen speaks the prologue and epilogue, and by the superposition of credits over the initial appearances of the major characters: "Fulgensio Capulet as Juliet's Father" and so on. Shakespeare's language performs in and so is constituted by such citations: MTV; the made-for-TV acting styles of Claire Danes and Leonardo DiCaprio; the span of film history that in the opening scene alone encompasses 1950s westerns and gangsta films like *Boyz n the Hood*; the voguing (reminiscent of both Madonna's video and Jennie Livingston's film *Paris Is Burning*) that sustains Mercutio's Queen Mab scene and that lends Mercutio's entire performance meaningful specificity as performance. Although Timothy Murray rightly sees the film's citation of television as a surrogation of the playful feel of Shakespeare's theater - "as the destabilizing mechanism of irony and hyperbole for which rhetoric and perspective were the playful engines on the Renaissance stage" (2) - most critical reception of the film has paid only passing attention to the

citational texture of the performance, focusing instead on the relation between these "effects" and their putative cause in Shakespeare's text. While Stanley Kauffmann, for instance, recognizes the film's implication in music video ("One visual cascade after another, one sound blast - mostly of rock - after another" [40]), he regards the performance's success or failure as a function of how well it reproduces the text. Though finally preferring Luhrmann's approach to Trevor Nunn's "fiddling" with decor in *Twelfth Night*, Kauffmann sees Luhrmann as "in effect doing a translation, almost as if he had rendered the text into Finnish or Bulgarian, with a few English wisps remaining as souvenirs of the origin" (42).

How does William Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* represent the relation between texts and performances? The film's engagement with the dynamics of surrogation begins with its title. The title I have used above, in accordance with MLA style for regularizing titles - Shakespeare's title, so to speak - never appears in the film: *Romeo and Juliet*. The film's copyright title replaces the *and* with *&*, and the title shown in the opening and closing title sequences of the film, as well as in advertising and promotional material, frames that *&* within a large red cross (when it does not do away with the *&* altogether): *Romeo + Juliet*. Evoking, recalling, yet replacing the canonical title of Shakespeare's play, the film is preoccupied with the questions I have raised here, questions that apply to any dramatic performance: How does performance interrogate the text? How does it mark its relation to, its surrogation (and so its constitution) of, the text? Despite the film's effort to distance itself from-indeed, often to repudiate-the text, in its self-conscious engagement with a Shakespearean "origin" it seems in various ways to inspect the place of Shakespeare and Shakespearean texts in contemporary culture, to memorialize and reenact ideas about Shakespearean authority in performance, and to reflect on the relation among text, performance, and citation.

The texture of Luhrmann's film is replete with visual allusions to, citations of, and stagings of the text. The film's dense, vivid palette, its florid Catholicism, and its hyped-up gang culture resonate against the baroque complexity of Shakespeare's language, the local jargon, while at the same time marking the performance's distance from the classical sounds of "Shakespearean" acting. More to the point, many words of the text are represented visually, as words, often as labels. For example, the "swords" that Tybalt and Benvolio refer to in act 1, scene I are elaborate, jeweled pistols inlaid with religious icons; when Benvolio cries, "Put up your swords" (1. 1.65), the camera work focuses on his pistol and-more important-on the manufacturer's label engraved on the barrel: *Sword 9mm Series 5*. When Capulet calls for his "long sword" (1. 1.75), he reaches above the door of the limo in which he is riding for an automatic rifle labeled *Longsword*. Luhrmann's film is full of such texts - gags, perhaps: the *Post Haste* mailing company

that Friar Lawrence uses to contact Romeo in Mantua; the Grove of Sycamore, an abandoned movie theater by the beach where Romeo lurks at the play's opening. In fact, the visual texture of the film is replete with allusions that extend beyond the lines of Shakespeare's play to the texture of Shakespeare the author and cultural icon: the Montague boys' taunting nuns with the line "bubble, bubble, toil and trouble" in the opening scene; the Globe Theatre pool hall where Romeo hangs out; a sign for "The Merchant of Verona Beach"; the billboard slogan I am thy Pistol and thy Friend" (2 Henry IV 5.3.93), "Prospero" scrawled on a fence; perhaps even Lady Capulet's Elizabeth-Taylor-as-Cleopatra costume for the ball.

The film sets the dramatic performance within a visible texture of verbal citation. Yet while its textual literalism may be merely a "neat conceit that gets rid of any historical bumps in the verse" (Lane 66; see also Turan), Romeo "+" Juliet seems to position Shakespeare's text ironically, as a way of marking a move away from what the performance is not, what no performance can be: Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. One of the most sophisticated aspects of the film is its alertness to the process of surrogation, its simultaneous invocation and displacement of the "original." The film marks its fidelity to Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet at the precise moment that it marks its distance from it, when it cites the text (e.g., "long sword") as text - a text that is instantly replaced by performance; refigured in an explicitly modern, non-Shakespearean visual register; consumed. In Luhrmann's film, the text is registered both as a cultural commodity and as an item in commodity culture. The Shakespearean text the actors speak is part of a wider texture that blurs into the "Shakespearean" lexicon of advertising and sutures the text to the other media of its performance, the discourses of film, music, video. To put Shakespeare into the play is not, the film seems to argue, to stage the play in some impossibly literary act of reiteration. Instead it is to register the ways that contemporary modes of cultural production can and do constitute their authority through the surrogation of Shakespeare and the ways that Shakespearean drama, the Shakespearean text - which can be performed only in the citational regimes of contemporary performance behavior - emerges as the ghostly "origin" of a contemporary process of surrogation.

Citing the text - the verbal text of the play, the cultural text of Shakespeare-Luhrmann's film undertakes a shrewd reflection of the relation between classic texts and their performances, presenting this version of Shakespeare's work not as a performance of the text and not as a translation of the work but as an iteration of the work, an iteration that necessarily invokes and displaces a textual "origin" by performing the text in a specific citational environment-the verbal, visual, gestural, and behavioral dynamics of youth culture, of MTV. The text inserted into Luhrmann's film fails to transform the images into Shakespearean properties: like the word sword and the pistol it labels, text and image

stand in a dialectical relation of difference. Romeo "+" Juliet cites the text of Romeo and Juliet, of Shakespeare, only to dramatize that performances never cite texts.

Writing the script into the visual texture of the performance, Luhrmann lands a palpable hit at the practice of performance analysis and at the disciplinary framing of drama and performance studies. The film dramatizes the limitations of conventional notions of dramatic performance; literalizing the text in performance, it shows that the text cannot be staged as performance. The drama can be produced within a web of citation - be it MTV, modern realism, the post-Brechtian-quasi-Method compromise of most Shakespeare today, the authentic reconstructed woollens of the new Globe - and it can be performed only by or as its surrogates. The surrogation of the drama, the performing of the text within the regimes of contemporary behavior, is not a betrayal of the play; it marks the ways - as Luhrmann's film demonstrates - that dramatic performance, far from being authorized by its script, produces the terms of its authorization in performance, raising (as all acts of citation, reiteration, and surrogation do) these terms for inspection at the moment it acts to conceal them. As a surrogate, the film memorializes a past (that it partly invents) and constitutes a new work. Romeo "+" Juliet makes visible what most performances work to conceal: that dramatic performance, like all other performance, far from originating in the text, can only cite its textual "origins" with an additive gesture, a kind of "+".