The Archaeology of Liveness

Dissertation

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This dissertation investigates the history of semantic changes that the concept and category of “liveness” had to undergo when it was pressed into service by scholars and professionals in Theatre Studies, Broadcast Studies and Performance Studies. It queries the oppositional relationship between “live” and “recorded;” it describes how, and under what circumstances “live” (as a time-based concept) counters prevailing theories about technologically-mediated forms of performance; and it explains why “live” (as a polar opposite of “technologically-mediated” performance) in theatre needs to abandoned.
To Melinda
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CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION

The Problem of Hybridization

Traditionally, drama has been studied mainly as a branch of literature, and the primary method for this type of study has been textual analysis and/or historical analysis. However, with the advent of semiotics in the twentieth century, the methodologies for the analysis of drama expanded to include the study of “spectacle” as it is presented on stage, on film, and on television.¹ Beginning in the 1960s, the semiotic method has facilitated a process in which theatrical, cinematic and televised performances are “read” as organized audiovisual semantic structures that communicate meaning to their audiences.² Semiotic

¹ Aristotle’s Poetics (ca. 335 BCE) distinguishes six constituents for tragedy: plot, character, thought, diction, melody or song, and spectacle. Seen from the perspective of the playwright, “[s]pectacle, or stage-effect, is an attraction of course, but it has the least to do with the playwright’s craft or with the art of poetry. For the power of tragedy is independent both of performance and of actors, and besides, the production of spectacular elements is more the province of the property-man than of the play-wright” (T. S. Dorsch qtd. in McAuley 285).

² Semiotics is premised on the idea that, in human communication, meaning is produced by combining and organizing various signs as messages. Every basic unit of meaning, or sign,
analysis examines a specific set of elements – typically and predominantly visual and auditory – that comprise the spectacle.

The semiotic method was critiqued for being too “formalist” and for paying little or no attention to the affective responses of the audience. In the 1980s, phenomenological analysis was introduced as a complementary method to semiotic analysis. In subsequent decades, semiotic analysis and phenomenological analysis together became the primary methods for analyzing and understanding “performance.”

adds cumulatively to how reality is perceived and experienced by people. A message is understood once the decoding process is completed. Semiotic analysis, by systematizing the decoding process, provides a better understanding of how meaning is generated and interpreted. The semiotic model of language can serve as a heuristic instrument in the analysis of other sign systems – for instance, theatre. Thus, semiotic analysis reads “spectacle” as an organized semantic structure that is comprised of a specific set of sign systems. The sign systems in the theatre include modalities and properties that are typically and predominantly visual and auditory in nature – for instance, costume, mask, makeup, props, music/sound production, and image projection, color, brightness, volume i.e. sound level, and localization; including both the performers’ and the spectators’ expressive repertoire (gesture, posture, vocalization, and orientation in relation to the space and the objects in it).

3 Theatre phenomenology adopts Edmund Husserl’s method of “phenomenological reduction” also known as “bracketing.” Theatre phenomenology supplements theatre semiotics by “exploring human reality as it appears to perception while negotiating between the subjective and objective aspects of experience” (Moran and Mooney 1). Significant scholarship on the subject of the audience’s contribution to semiosis includes Bruce Wilshire’s Role Playing and Identity (1982), Bert O. States’ Great Reckonings in Little Rooms (1985), Alice Rayner’s To Act To Do To Perform (1994), and Stanton Garner’s Bodied Spaces (1994). The validity and adequacy of Edmund Husserl’s method of “phenomenological reduction” also known as “bracketing,” “parenthesizing,” or “suspending” the “natural attitude” to the analysis of theatre performance has been questioned. See, for instance, Pannill Camp’s “The Trouble with Phenomenology” (2004), and Joshua Edelman’s “What Phenomenology Can Bring to Theatre Sociology, and What It Cannot” (2012).
In the wake of the “performative turn,” thinking about “performance” had been fostered in Performance Studies. The discipline of Performance Studies investigates practices along what Richard Schechner, as one of the founding fathers of the discipline,

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4 Richard Schechner theorizes that all kinds of performances exist somewhere between theatre and ritual. He writes: “[i]n [figure a,] the continuum is depicted as a continuous range. In [figure b,] ‘play’ and ‘ritual’ are shown as underlying, supporting, and permeating the range” (Performance Studies 42).

5 The phrase “performative turn” describes a paradigmatic shift that entered the humanities and social sciences around the 1950s. Instead of focusing solely on given symbolic structures and artefacts, scholars stressed the active, social construction of reality as well as the way that individual behavior is determined by the context in which it occurs. This process whereby the authority of the script over the actualization of the script score in a theatrical performance is gradually rejected is typified by, for instance, by Allan Kaprow who, in 1961, defines “happenings” as: “A happening is generated in action by a headful of ideas or a flimsily jotted-down score of ‘root’ directions” (19). From the 1950s through the 1990s, the trope of performance was elaborated across a range of academic disciplines. In the context of the study of theatre, the “performative turn” indicates a shift of attention from the “art object” to the “art event” and its stage technology.
has called the “performance continuum” (Figure 1). \(^6\) “Performance” which was previously used as a metaphor for theatricality was now employed as a heuristic device to describe and understand human behavior. In a formal sense, “performance” refers to a framed event regardless of whether “event” is an aesthetic enactment rooted in a tradition or a cultural manifestation that is framed by a specific social context or convention, such as a ritual, a religious ceremony, a political rally, or an athletic contest. Schechner dubs this category “is-performance.” In a casual and broader sense, “performance” refers to the informal scenarios of daily life. Schechner calls this category “as-performance.”

Progressively, formative theorists in Performance Studies – such as Richard Schechner in *Theatre Criticism* (1965), Marcia Siegel in *At the Vanishing Point* (1972), Herbert Blau in *Take up the Bodies* (1982), Peggy Phelan in *Unmarked* (1993), and Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett in *Destination Culture* (1998) – drafted a classificatory model of performance, one that opposed manifestations of **IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE** (such as theatre and dance) with manifestations of **MEDIATED PERFORMANCE** (such as cinema, radio, television, photography, telephony, print, and so on).

Figure 2. The classification model that systemizes communicatory practices.\footnote{7}

Figure 3. The subtle dichotomy “live/recorded” differentiates ‘technologically-mediated performance that is live’ from ‘technologically-mediated performance that is recorded.’

\footnote{7} The taxonomic principle assesses the sender-receiver relationship in terms of temporal synchrony and spatial proximity: In the theatre (a), the relationship between the spectator and the performer is co-spatial and co-temporal; in the cinema (b) the relationship between the spectator and the performer is not spatiotemporal; in live television (and live radio) (c), the relationship between the spectator and the performer is co-temporal but not co-spatial.
This type of thinking advanced a polarity and a classification model that was founded on the unwarranted assumption that the categories IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE are different and dichotomous because the former are live and immediate whereas the latter are not live and technologically-mediated (Figure 2).

*Routledge Companion to Theatre and Performance* edited by Paul Allain and Jen Harvie provides a useful definition of the concept of “liveness:”

Liveness describes a quality of live performance – the sense that it is happening here and now. It is an important idea because it apparently distinguishes live performance from recorded performance-based media such as film and television, indicating that live performance has some intrinsic qualitative and even political difference from other forms of performance. […] Performance’s liveness is exciting because it cultivates a sense of presence, and because risk is unavoidable where accident cannot be edited out (as it can in recorded media). Performance’s liveness is social because it produces meaning in a dynamic process, rather than in the fixed and passive form that recorded media seem to present. (168-169)

This influential line of thought within Performance Studies was politicized because it undergirds the founding of Performance Studies as an autonomous academic discipline, or area, within Communication Studies, separate from Media Studies, Film Studies, Broadcast Studies (including Radio Studies and Television Studies), and Multimedia Studies. In addition to the dichotomy between LIVE PERFORMANCE and
MEDIATED PERFORMANCE, there is a more subtle dichotomy between MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (that is live) and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (that is recorded) as seen in “live radio vs. recorded radio,” and “live television vs. recorded television” (Figure 3).

By the late 1970s, however, theorists in both Theatre Studies and Performance Studies as well as in Broadcast Studies increasingly started to notice the problematic nature of the dichotomy between LIVE PERFORMANCE (as live) and technologically-mediated forms of performance (as not live). In particular, the flagrant existence of hybrids such as the use of video projection during a stage performance (Figure 4) or of pre-written scripts in live television shows (Figure 5) challenged the notion that “live” and “recorded” are binary opposites. Consider, for instance, Claudia Georgi who in 2014 asserted:

Although theatre has always been a live medium, its liveness only gained centre stage with the successive invention of film, television, video and other technological media. With the spread of mediatisation, the liveness of theatre could no longer simply be taken for granted and seemed to be threatened by mediatisation. (12)
Figure 4. Hybrids on stage: LIVE PERFORMANCE (A) is fused with pre-recorded video (B).\(^8\)

Figure 5. Hybrids on television: A live transmission (A) integrates pre-written scripts (B).\(^9\)

\(^8\) During the 1981 production of The Wooster Group’s “Route 1 and 9 (The Last Act)” overhead monitors showed pre-recorded video fragments while a live telephone conversation was played over the loudspeakers. Source: Derivate of photograph by Bob van Dantzig, from David Savran, Breaking the Rules: The Wooster Group (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1986): 38.
Television Studies theorist John Caldwell problematizes hybridization in broadcasting as follows:

Very little, in fact, looks live or transmitted in international broadcasting.

Even the [...] broadcasting of live and unscripted media events – like ABC’s *Monday Night Football*, or major league baseball – are comprehensively planned, scripted, and rehearsed; are in fact highly regulated and rigidly controlled performances, fabricated to fit a restricted block of viewing time. (31)

The problem of the hybridization of “performance” was taken up as a salient topic of debate in various disciplines within Communication Studies such as Television Studies, ¹⁰ Music Performance Studies,¹¹ and Theatre Studies and Performance Studies.¹²

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¹¹ See, for instance, Steve Connor’s “The Flag on the Road” (1987), Steve Wurtzler’s “She Sang Live, but the Microphone Was Turned Off” (1992), Sarah Thornton’s *Club Cultures* (1996), and Paul Sanden’s *Liveness in Modern Music* (2013).

Fusions of IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE with MEDIATED PERFORMANCE are studied in disciplines that focus on manifestations of LIVE PERFORMANCE such as Theatre Studies, Performance Studies, Dance Studies, and so on. Fusions of ‘MEDIATED PERFORMANCE that are live’ with ‘MEDIATED PERFORMANCE that are recorded’ are studied in disciplines that focus on manifestations of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE such as Broadcast Studies, Television Studies, Radio Studies, Multimedia Studies, and so on.

Theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies commonly refer to theatre productions that incorporate technologically-mediated forms of performance (for instance, cinema or video projection) as “intermedial performances.” In this dissertation, I am adopting the term hybrid instead. As I have pointed out earlier, the fusion of the allegedly binary oppositional categories “live” and “recorded” is also manifested in connection with MEDIATED PERFORMANCE. In other words, the way in which theorists in

13 The term LIVE PERFORMANCE describes particular manifestations of IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE that are play – for instance, performance on the theatre stage, music performance in the concert hall, happenings in the street and so on. LIVE PERFORMANCE is a sub-category of IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE which, more broadly, also includes manifestations of performance that are not “play” – for instance, performance in everyday life, face-to-face interaction, public address, and so on. Manifestations of LIVE PERFORMANCE, such as theatre, dance, and so on, are manifestations of IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE. In this chapter, the terms IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and LIVE PERFORMANCE are therefore used indiscriminately.
both Theatre Studies and Performance Studies, and Broadcast Studies problematize those fusions is similar. The term “intermedial performance” has no place in connection with performances that are already entirely technologically-mediated. Hence, my use of the term hybrid. Essentially, hybrid is a constant reminder to the reader that this dissertation investigates why two categories that can be fused are somehow believed to be mutually exclusive.

Figure 6. Hybrids on stage: LIVE PERFORMANCE (A) and film projection (B).\textsuperscript{14}

Theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies commonly attribute the problem of hybridization to the “technologizing” of the stage. Power, for instance, problematizes the polarity between IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE (i.e., THE LIVE) and technologically-mediated manifestations of performance (i.e., THE RECORDED) as follows:

It has been argued that notions of “live” presence in theatre have become untenable at a time when microphones, film projections, television screens and computer animation technology are becoming increasingly common features of the stage. To suggest that theatre is “live” and distinct from performances mediated by technology is to ignore the fact that much theatre explores today’s technological landscape, both in form and content. (147)

Karel Vanhaesebrouck writes in a similar vein:

this radical dichotomy between the ontology of performance on the one hand and all possible forms of reproduction on the other hand, has become increasingly problematic, as mediation has become more and more an integral part of performance itself. (12)

There is, however, disagreement about which technologies constitute a problem for
theatre’s “liveness.”

Philip Auslander, for instance, writes:

I want to emphasize that reproduction (recording) is the key issue. The Greek theatre may have been technologically mediated, if one subscribes to the theory that the masks acted as megaphones. What concerns me here, however, is technological reproduction, not just technological mediation. Greek theatrical masks may have amplified the actors’ voices, but they did not reproduce them, in the manner of electric amplification. (Liveness 57; rev. ed.)

However, by privileging modern electro-mechanical and digital technologies, Auslander applies a reductive definition to the concept of “recording” because he fails to acknowledge the products of pre-modern recording technologies such as writing (e.g., a theatre script), and the products of non-technological means of recording such as memorization and embodiment (e.g., recitation and re-enactment). Essentially, his definition reduces the meaning of “recording” to the level of “identical copy” and

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15 See, for instance, Robin Nelson’s “Live or Wired?” (2004) and Christopher Baugh’s Theatre, Performance and Technology (2005).

16 Manifestations of LIVE PERFORMANCE – for instance, theatre performance – are hybrids by definition because they embed inscribed recordings (that are presented/actualized by means of representational technologies – for instance, video projection but also costume, sets, props, and so on) and embodied recordings (that are presented by means of live performers). Arguably, the mime approximates the ideal of a LIVE PERFORMANCE that is “live” best.
“uniform reproducibility.” Moreover, the realization that recordings – both embodied and inscribed – are intrinsically connected to representational practices suggests that theatre and other forms of \textit{live performance} are hybrids by nature because they include recordings and – by this definition – were never live to begin with.\footnote{Roach steered away from the notion of \textit{performance as disappearance} (which was advanced by Schechner and Phelan) and, instead, proposes \textit{performance as surrogation}, i.e., the way how culture reproduces and re-creates itself through collective representations (or, what Roach – after Foucault – calls “\textit{genealogies of performance}”) that are transmitted across time and space (25-32). Carlson explored the relationship between “\textit{performance}” and cultural memory in \textit{The Haunted Stage}. He writes: “Drama, more than any other literary form, seems to be associated in all cultures with the retelling again and again of stories that bear a particular religious, social, or political significance for their public. There clearly seems to be something in the nature of dramatic presentation that makes it a particularly attractive repository for the storage and mechanism for the continued recirculation of cultural memory” (8). Schneider acknowledged that Fischer-Lichte, Phelan and Auslander ignored that manifestations of \textit{live performance} are “already a means of recording in and through body-to-body transmission” (\textit{Performing Remains} 210).}

By the mid-1990s, theatre directors such as Frank Castorf and Renè Pollesch began mounting live video camera(s) onto the stage (Figure 7).\footnote{The terms “\textit{embodied}” and “\textit{inscribed}” identify two main types of recordings. The concepts are related to “\textit{inscribed memory}” and “\textit{embodied memory}” as defined by Paul Connerton in \textit{How Societies Remember} (1989).} As a result, the spectators could see both the live performer and his mediated double simultaneously on the stage and in \textit{screen}-space.

\footnote{Carlson coined the term “\textit{roving eye}” to describe productions by Frank Castorf and Renè Pollesch that use video cameras on the stage (“\textit{Video and Stage Space}” 614).}
Figure 7. *Big Art Group* fuses LIVE PERFORMANCE and video which is produced live on stage.\textsuperscript{20}

Figure 8. *Hotel Modern* fuses LIVE PERFORMANCE and ‘video which is produced live on stage.’\textsuperscript{21}

Theatre Studies theorists have considered developments such as the above, as a logical progression of enmeshing video technology with the stage. They, however, failed to notice the significance for the question of semiosis. This mode of production yields a hybrid performance that fuses IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE with MEDIATED PERFORMANCE whereby two modes of performance are equally defined as co-spatial and co-temporal (Figure 8). According to the classification model, the categories IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE (i.e., the live acting) and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (i.e., the live video production) overlap. Thomas Kuhn reminds us that meaning is (locally) holistic and the categories in a taxonomy must therefore be hierarchically organized; they cannot overlap:

No two kind terms, no two terms with the kind label, may overlap in their referents unless they are related as species to genus. There are no dogs that are also cats, no gold rings that are also silver rings, and so on: that’s what makes dogs, cats, silver, and gold each a kind. Therefore, if the members

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22 As a spectacular technology, cinema could only suggest a temporal simultaneity between the stage action and the projection. Video on the other hand, was able to sustain this illusion technologically. Many stage productions capitalized on this ability to blur the boundaries of time and space between the action on and the action off the stage and to investigate the relationship between the corporeal performer and the mediated double. This trope has been used in both productions of the past and in contemporary theatre stages. Avant-garde companies such as The Builders Association in the United States, Forced Entertainment in England, Robert Lepage’s Ex Machina in Canada, and La Fura dels Baus in Spain capitalized on television’s technological feat of projecting moving images that are produced in the time of the audience. See: Greg Giesekam’s Staging the Screen (2007).
of a language community encounter a dog that’s also a cat […] they
cannot just enrich the set of category terms but must instead redesign a
part of the taxonomy. (The Road Since Structure 92)

In sum, many theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies have failed to notice
that “overlapping categories” prove that the cause of the crisis is taxonomic.

*Thesis Statement and Methodology*

This dissertation will query and critique the concept and category of “liveness” as
it is currently understood and applied in the fields of Theatre Studies and Performance
Studies. The position (thesis) taken is the following: Any current taxonomies (i.e.,
classification models) that rest on the concept and category of “liveness” have lost their
explanatory power and need to be revised in order to better reflect new (but also older)
forms of performance that have been made possible by the continuous application of
technological developments in these two fields. An ontology is an explicit
conceptualization that categorizes the members of the taxonomy and specifies the
relationships among them. Robert Goldstone and Alan Kersten offer the following

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23 The term *taxonomy* is mainly used as reference to classification models of living
organisms in biology. The classic example of a taxonomy is the Linnaean taxonomy of biological
organisms, with the hierarchical top-down structure: *kingdom, phylum, class, order, family,*
genus, and *species.* In this dissertation, *taxonomy* will be used in its broader sense to refer to a
knowledge organization structure.
distinction between a concept and a category:

A concept refers to a mentally possessed idea or notion, whereas a category refers to a set of entities that are grouped together. The concept *dog* is whatever psychological state signifies thoughts of dogs. The category *dog* consists of all the entities in the real world that are appropriately categorized as dogs. (600)

An ontology, on the other hand, is a special type of taxonomy because the types of relationships between the terms that it describes are greater in number, more specific in their function, less hierarchical, and more semantic. An ontology is an explicit conceptualization that defines (specifies) both the members of the taxonomy and the relationships among them which are relevant for modeling a domain.

The classificatory principles or criteria that govern an ontology are determined by the goals of those who proposed and developed the ontology. The overall goal is not only to provide researchers with a reliable nomenclature with which to categorize and classify the domain and the entities within the domain, but also to provide them with a conceptual framework which can give direction to their research and a theoretical basis for their findings. The way knowledge is represented influences the effectiveness with which that knowledge can be shared and reconstructed. Benjamin Bloom (1956) describes knowledge acquisition as a cumulative process involving specific intellectual abilities and skills. The acquisition sequence can be summarized as: if you can’t remember it, you won’t understand it; if you can’t understand it, you won’t be able to use it; if you can’t
use it, you won’t be able to analyze it; if you can’t analyze it, you won’t be able to evaluate it; if you can’t evaluate your knowledge, you won’t be able to create solutions to problems.

A description of an object or a concept is both a reflection of the thing described and of the subject creating the description. Inevitably, descriptions and vocabularies are theory-laden. One cannot examine them in a neutral way because they perpetuate the theories that are implied in those terminologies: any author’s deductions are contingent on (and indeed reinforce) the archival formation of his/her time. As Michel Foucault warns in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*: “It is not possible for us to describe our own archive, since it is from within these rules that we speak” (146). This methodological problem plagues any enterprise that aims to challenge the hegemony of an ontology. For instance, the phrases *live performance* and *immediate performance* impede some theorists from asking if those forms of performance are actually live or immediate and, in doing so, conceal the reality that those practices are not actually “live” or “immediate.”

Therefore, when analyzing a taxonomy in an objective way it is critical to move away from *pre-notions*. To pursue his archeological line of inquiry, Foucault coined a catalogue of terms such as “enunciative function,” “discursive formation,” and “archive system” (148). In this dissertation, I will adopt in a similar fashion more neutral designations: LIVE PERFORMANCE and IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE identify practices such
as theatre, dance, ritual, performance in everyday life; MEDIATED PERFORMANCE identifies technologically-mediated practices such as cinema, radio and television. The terms LIVE PERFORMANCE, IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE merely group together certain practices on the basis of their phenomenology without making or endorsing any value statements. Similarly, the use of the terms “live” and “recorded” as binary opposites instills a false dichotomy in some cases because “live/recorded” may be a binary pair in some contexts, but not necessarily in all contexts.

The integration of technology in the theatre has made possible new representational practices. However, those practices are unaccounted for by the classification model. It is at this point that the prevailing classification model becomes strained and that the forward thinking in the field becomes unduly constrained. To address this subsequent critical point and crisis in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies this dissertation advances a critique of the theories and epistemologies that are in competition with each other. To summarize, this dissertation aims to contribute to the timely development of a more discerning ontology of “performance” and a sounder epistemological foundation for Theatre Studies and Performance Studies.

Theatre Studies was established in the course of the twentieth century. By the early 1990s, a group of influential theorists from the social sciences, theatre and dance

24 Some theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies refer to those categories as THE LIVE and THE RECORDED respectively.
(including Herbert Blau, Peggy Phelan, Joseph Roach, and Richard Schechner) developed the concept and eventually the programme of Performance Studies. Performance Studies investigates practices along what the founder of the discipline, Richard Schechner, has called the “performance continuum” (Figure 1). As Schechner stated in a 1991 interview with Joseph Galbo:

Theater is just a genre of performance. Performance is a large area. Performance is really what I call twice-behaved behavior, or planned behavior, or restored behavior. In other words, what is a performance is behavior that is not for the first time; it is for the second to the n-th time.

(“Richard Schechner on Applying Theory”)

The founding narrative of Performance Studies emphasizes a definition of “performance” as an inclusive category, as being “between theatre and anthropology” and often stresses the importance of intercultural performances as an alternative to either traditional proscenium theatre or traditional anthropological fieldwork that explores rituals, sporting events, parades, “and every manner of public event and ceremony” (Carlson, “Theatre and Performance at a Time of Shifting Disciplines” 141). In a formal sense, “performance” refers to a framed event regardless if the “event” is an aesthetic enactment rooted in a tradition or if it is a cultural manifestation that is framed by a specific social context or convention, such as a ritual, a religious ceremony, a political rally, or an athletic contest. Schechner dubs this category “is-performance.” In a casual and broader sense, “performance” refers to the informal scenarios of daily life. Schechner
calls this category “as-performance.” Many scholars rehashed Performance Studies’ dual nature after Schechner who had coined the categories “as-performance” and “is-performance” to articulate this dualism. Elin Diamond, for instance, defined “performance” as “a doing and a thing done” (1) and Diana Taylor, along the same lines, wrote:

Performance, on the one level, constitutes the object/process of analysis in performance studies, that is, the many practices and events—dance, theatre, ritual, political rallies, funerals—that involve theatrical, rehearsed, or conventional/event appropriate behaviors. On another level, performance also constitutes the methodological lens that enables scholars to analyze events as performance. Civic obedience, resistance, citizenship, gender, ethnicity, and sexual identity, for example, are rehearsed and performed daily in the public sphere. (3)

Diamond and Taylor acknowledge that “performance” is both a subject and a method of analysis. Essentially, the object of study is undetermined. Early theorists in Performance Studies took pride for their work in a field that was devoid of a consensual paradigm. Consider Mary S. Strine, Beverly W. Long, and Mary Francis Hopkins writing in 1990:

Performance, like art and democracy, is what W.B. Gallie (1964) calls an essentially contested concept, meaning that its very existence is bound up in disagreement about what it is, and that the disagreement over its
Strine, Long and Hopkins relish the idea that the concept of “performance” is not identified, or delineated, on the basis of a fixed set of principles. Yet, they fail to realize that this means that what constitutes “performance” and Performance Studies is defined on the basis of a set of principles as selected and determined by each scholar individually.\(^{25}\) It would appear that the oft-repeated catchphrase that Performance Studies is “interdisciplinary,” like their notion of “contested concept,” serves as mere stopgap, or euphemism, for a “discipline” that lacks direction.\(^{26}\) A similar example is the invitation for the 2015 conference *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: 100 Years of Fortitude*
organized under the auspices of Centre for Performance Research and The Laboratory Theatre Network:

A three-day conference/gathering to consider the histories and futures of Laboratory Theatres: speculative, provocative, radical, retrospective, nostalgic, optimistic, idealistic, naïve, incorrigible, iconoclastic, irreverent and, dare one say, experimental in approach.

This example illustrates how a group reclaims – i.e., “re-appropriates” – terms or artifacts which are used in a way that is disparaging of that group. The moniker “Queer Studies” is another example of this cultural process. The meaning of “performance” vacillates between “performance in art” and “performance in life.” This vacillation is problematic because theatre is inclusive or exclusive depending of the context. For instance, “performance” refers to non-artistic events such as sports, public ceremonies, boardroom presentations, political rallies, courtroom trials and public executions, and so on. They are studied together with theatrical performances under the umbrella term of Performance Studies. By this definition, “performance” refers to a broader and less culturally specific category than theatre. In addition, some theorists stretched Performance Studies even further to include objects and spaces by considering them active agents. Barbara

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27 See Foucault’s *History of Sexuality* (1990) for a discussion “reverse discourse.”
Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, for instance, suggested in *Destination Culture* (1998) that museums can possess performativity. In a 2001 interview with Diana Taylor she explained:

The first tenet [of performance studies] is to use performance as an organizing idea for almost anything […] that means I can think about museums, everyday life, streets, cities, architecture, space, world’s fairs, food […] Performance as an organizing idea is a very, very powerful concept. (N. pag.)

Schechner thinks that to say that Performance Studies is essentially open is not to say that the discipline lacks focal subjects, key questions, or a specific analytical approach. However, a handful of theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies – especially Stratos E. Constantinidis (1993), Bert O. States (1996), and Richard Hornby (1995) – have been critical of the shaky foundations of either discipline as well as of the flimsy structure of Schechner’s work that has become the time-honored cornerstone of Performance Studies. Constantinidis, for instance, discussed Schechner’s mis-appropriation of Johan Huizinga’s concept of “play.” Constantinidis concluded that Schechner “called upon the authority of ethnology and anthropology to defend and expand his directorial turf;” “took for granted that the development of cultural phenomena – such as theatre – follow profound universal patterns of development;” and that Schechner and his disciples “used analogy to compensate for lack of evidence” (75-77). States similarly problematized Schechner’s notion of “restored behavior” as a
criterion for “performance” and the way in which Goffman defined “performance” (“Performance as Metaphor” 18). Hornby critiqued Performance Studies for “[having] promulgated a view of theatre that is explicitly anti-playwright and implicitly anti-actor:”

Performance theory, like the performance studies that spawned it, sounds like an expansion of traditional theatre history and dramatic criticism but is actually a rejection of them. Performance theory today, when it deals with theatre at all (there is much study of popular entertainment, or even the "performative" aspects of completely non-theatrical events), consists of semiotic analysis of theatrical presentation, sociological analysis of the audience, anthropological analysis of exotic non-Western performance, or inflated discussion of avant-garde performance here in the West. […] When the traditional Western actor is described at all, it is likely to be from the outside, via semiotic analyses of his gestures, positions, or spatial relationships. […] Finally, it hardly needs saying that performance theorists also specifically avoid the analysis of playscripts. (144-145)

Marvin Carlson (2001) has argued that the challenges faced by Performance Studies are directly related to Theatre Studies’ tenuous position when it was established as distinct from traditional disciplines such as Literature Studies and Cinema Studies. Theatre Studies emerged thanks to a trend whereby emerging fields of research have sought to transcend the historical structure of academic research that was confined in discrete disciplines and departments. The developing trend gave urgency to a concern
with how Theatre Studies should be defined as a discipline and how to draw clearer borders with other disciplines:

The key question was not how theatre might relate to other disciplines, but, on the contrary, what distinct area of culture could theatre claim for itself that would justify its establishment as an independent academic discipline. To respond to this question and to be accorded a place at the table, theatre studies had to renounce certain obvious areas of concern already claimed by existing disciplines, dramatic literature to English and foreign language departments, opera to departments of music, and the cultural background of theatre to departments of history and sociology. A more hidden, but equally serious compromise had to be made in the range of material studied. Before the appearance of theatre as a new discipline, the university had, within what was defined as the humanities, already committed itself, in literature, music and art, to European high culture, thus erecting academic boundaries that essentially excluded the domains of folk or popular culture, as well as almost all non-European artistic traditions. In order to demonstrate its academic respectability, theatre was also forced to follow this model, thus further excluding vast areas of potential study, both cultural and geographical, from its claimed area of interest. (Carlson, “Theatre and Performance at a Time of Shifting Disciplines” 143)
Carlson believes that “the rise and the success of a movement like [Performance Studies] provides powerful evidence of the troubled and unstable current condition of the whole system of traditional academic disciplines” (144). He writes that the institutionalized disciplines and fields of study first respond administratively to defend their intellectual territories against “the problem of interdisciplinarity” (139). They can do so because “[a]lmost every aspect of university organization operated and still operates according to disciplinary lines — hirings and promotions of faculty, admission and training of students, representation on administrative committees” (139). Ultimately, however, the University cannot ignore the innovative and influential research that emerges in these interdisciplinary areas. First, however, there is “a transitional period during which more and more elaborate modifications of the accepted system are created in an attempt to preserve it until, at last, the system becomes so cumbersome that a new and simpler way of dealing with both old and new material can be put in its place” (139). Carlson emphasizes the contribution of Performance Studies is aspirational and must seen “as a part of the transitional process to a new order:”

In certain ways, performance studies has fulfilled this interdisciplinary or antidisciplinary promise. It has provided a kind of academic neutral ground where scholars from a wide variety of hitherto separated and occasionally ghettoized disciplines have been able to meet, to share ideas, and to develop new collaborations, cooperations, and exchanges. […] Thanks to the orientation provided by performance studies, the neglected
field of popular culture has been given new attention, the relationships between theatre and other performing and visual arts, particularly dance, film, video, and photography have been strengthened, and the performative aspects of a wide range of cultural activities, never hitherto examined by theatre historians, have been explored. (142)

In sum, while they have become strained, those earlier theoretical models fulfilled a particular function in a particular historical period. Moreover, they informed pedagogy via textbooks and each discipline’s canon formation. In doing so, those earlier models have coalesced various theories ensuring the continuation of tradition.

Theatre semiotics is premised on the idea that “meaning” is the product of a synergistic process whereby the combined effect of the constitutive systems is greater than the sum of those systems. The advancement of scholarly understanding about “meaning” rests on the ability of any project to categorize the constitutive parts so that they can be studied both in isolation and in relation to their context. As Keir Elam asserts:

The production of meaning on the stage is too rich and fluid to be accounted for in terms of discrete objects and their representational roles.

An adequate account must be able to identify the range of sign repertories

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making up what might be termed the theatrical system of systems; to explain the internal (syntactic) relations of each and the inter-relations between systems; and to make explicit the kinds of rules which allow meaning to be communicated and received in the performer-spectator dialectic. The semiotician of theatre, in brief, will be equally concerned with modes of signification and with the resulting acts of communication and will wish to provide a model that accounts for both. (29)

In the 1930s and 1940s, the theorists of the Prague School published a series of articles and treatises that laid the foundations for the theoretical classification of theatre. Elam identifies as the primary insight of the Prague School the idea that (in Bogatyrev’s words) “on the stage things that play the part of theatrical signs ... acquire special features, qualities and attributes, that they do not have in real life” (7). This principle was re-stated in 1968 by Polish semiotician Tadeusz Kowzan who proposed a system of thirteen basic theatre sign systems to facilitate semiotic analysis (Table 1).

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29 For a discussion and description of the influence of the Prague School, see Keir Elam’s *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (1980).

30 Kowzan lists language, tone, facial mime, gesture, movement, make-up, hairstyle, costume, props, décor, lighting, music and sound effects (including ‘noises off’). Some pertain mainly to the actorly acts, others operate outside of the actor’s domain. In addition, Kowzan imposes a time- and space-based classification; for example, the spoken text belongs to a temporal mode, and the visual text belongs to a spatial one (52-80).
Kowzan’s model, however, did not account for new technologies (such as cinematic projection). Elam notes:

Tadeusz Kowzan provides a preliminary and approximate typology of some thirteen systems, while admitting that ‘a much more detailed classification could also be made’ […] It is notable that Kowzan does not include architectural factors (the form of playhouse and stage) and omits occasional technical options such as film and back projection, but he can be said to have identified the principal systemic categories, at least with

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regard to traditional performances, and no significant modification to his classification has been suggested. (45)

Two decades later, Martin Esslin (1987) increased Kowzan’s sign-system to twenty-two. Esslin added ten more sign-systems which extended just to cinematic media. After 1990, Patrice Pavis (1976), Anne Ubersfeld (1982), Umberto Eco (1977), and other influential theorists have advanced classifications to facilitate a more effective and accurate analysis of “spectacle.” Those theoretical models enjoyed varying degrees of acceptance. In 2008, Eli Rozik summed up the state of affairs as follows: “To date, traditional theatre semiotics has not succeeded in creating an intelligible and effective method of performance analysis. I believe, nonetheless, that a semiotic method that aims at revealing the mechanisms of generating theatre meaning is viable and even obligatory” (“The Homogeneous Nature of the Theare Medium” 169). While many of those earlier theoretical models in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies are still useful, they have become unduly strained due to technological innovation.

Traditionally, staged forms of performance and technologically-mediated forms of performance (such as cinema) have been separated due to an idea that the sender of a message can be separated from the recipient of the message in both time and space. Earlier in this introduction, I have shown that stage performances which fuse ‘performance by live actors’ with ‘video that is produced live on stage’ constitute overlapping categories of sign systems. Kuhn set one of the methodological parameters of this dissertation when he stated that categories in a taxonomy must be hierarchically
organized and cannot overlap. Kuhn developed the “no-overlap principle” to help explicate his “incommensurability thesis.” The idea of incommensurability was introduced to the philosophy of science by both Kuhn and Paul Feyerabend independently of each other in the early-1960s. The term commensurability was coined because of a series of problems that both authors found when trying to interpret successive scientific theories. In his presidential address to the 1990 Philosophy of Science conference, Kuhn presented the following useful synthesis:

Incommensurability is a notion that for me emerged from attempts to understand apparently nonsensical passages encountered in old scientific texts. Ordinarily they had been taken as evidence of the author’s confused or mistaken beliefs. My experiences led me to suggest, instead, that those passages were being misread: the appearance of nonsense could be removed by recovering older meanings for some of the terms involved, meanings different from those subsequently current. If different speech communities have taxonomies that differ in some local area, then

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32 Originally, Kuhn’s concept of incommensurability characterized the holistic nature of methodological, observational and conceptual changes that take place during scientific revolutions in the natural sciences. Later Kuhn refined the idea arguing that incommensurability is due to differences in the taxonomic structures of successive scientific theories and neighboring contemporaneous sub-disciplines. Kuhn continued to refine his understanding of incommensurability until his death in 1996.
members of one of them can (and occasionally will) make statements that, though fully meaningful within that speech community, cannot in principle be articulated by members of the other. To bridge the gap between communities would require adding to one lexicon a kind-term that overlaps, shares a referent, with one that is already in place. It is that situation which the no-overlap principle precludes. Incommensurability thus becomes a sort of untranslatability, localized to one or another area in which two lexical taxonomies differ. The differences which produce it are not any old differences, but ones that violate either the no-overlap condition, the kind-label condition, or else a restriction on hierarchical relations that I cannot spell out here. (“The Road Since Structure” 4-5)

Kuhn’s premise is that after a scientific revolution or conceptual change, many (though not all) of the older concepts are still used, but in a slightly modified way. The modifications (i.e., changes in the intentional aspects of concepts) result because the terms that are used to express a theory are inter-defined; their meanings depend on the theories to which they belong. Conceptual changes also occur when old elements are excluded from the extension of a concept or subsumed by new elements. Thus, a term that is shared by successive theories has taken on different meanings and has come to refer to different things. Consequently, discussions about competing theories become muddled because theorists use the same vocabulary to describe a same situation, yet coming from viewpoints that are incommensurable (Structure 201). As an example to
illustrate his thesis, Kuhn contrasted the theories of Ptolemy and Copernicus (“The Road Since Structure” 5). In the Copernican theory the term “planet” refers to the earth, but not to the sun. Copernicus classifies the sun as a star. A statement such as “Planets orbit the sun” is correct according to Copernican theory, but incoherent in Ptolemaic vocabulary because in the Ptolemaic theory the term “planet” referred to the sun but not to the earth. Kuhn also argued that scientific training within the context of a specific scientific paradigm radically conditions the way in which scientists reflexively interpret events. For instance, the Copernican claim that the planets orbit the sun could not have been made without abandoning the Ptolemaic concepts and developing new ones to replace them (and not just to supplement them).

Kuhn deployed the “no-overlap principle” to illustrate his thesis that scientific revolutions change the structural relations between pre-existing kind terms. In a similar way, I have invoked Kuhn’s “no-overlap principle” to show that the overall paradigm for Theatre Studies and Performance Studies is compromised and no longer able to support new developments in the field. Moreover, the realization that LIVE PERFORMANCE is a hybrid by definition (because it includes recordings) implies that the semiotic impasse is not limited to “higher order classification” (i.e., research project in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies that study hybrids that fuse LIVE PERFORMANCE with ‘video that is
produced live on stage’), but extends to any type of hybrid.\(^{33}\)

It is the lack of a functional classification model to analyze theatre productions that fuse \textsc{live performance} with ‘video that is produced live on stage’ that prompted me to undertake this dissertation project. Of course, one cannot advocate a paradigm shift without offering a credible critique of the current models. My project is similar to (though not as extensive as that of) Foucault’s in \textit{The Archaeology of Knowledge} (1972). For Foucault, the epistemological problem (i.e., what makes knowledge possible) takes on a historical and discursive character. In \textit{The Order of Things}, Foucault writes:

I tried to explore scientific discourse not from the point of view of the individuals who are speaking, nor from the point of view of the formal structures of what they are saying, but from the point of view of the rules that come into play in the very existence of such discourse: what conditions did Linnaeus (or Petty, or Arnauld) have to fulfill, not to make his discourse coherent and true in general, but to give it, at the time when it was written and accepted, value and practical application as scientific discourse [...?] (xiv)

\(^{33}\) Embodied recordings are, for instance, gesture, enunciation, movement, and so on. Inscribed recordings are, for instance, props, scenery, costume, sounds and music, stage lighting, image projection and theatrical effects, and so on.
Theorists such as Jean Piaget (1972), Edward Saïd (1994), and George Steiner (1994) among others have noted a resemblance between Foucault and Kuhn in the way both authors reject the thesis on the accumulation of scientific knowledge which holds that the body of scientific knowledge increases with the passage of time. Like Kuhn, Foucault maintains that scientific practice includes elements that go beyond epistemologically-authorized norms of scientificity. Comparing both Kuhn and Foucault, Serhat Kologlugil remarked:

[I]t seems to me that Foucault is rather interested in understanding the assumptions and regularities at the “unconscious” of scientific practice than in the paradigm shifts that result from deliberate and conscious reaction to the accumulation of certain theoretical problems. This allows him, for example, to explicitly problematize how and with respect to what discursive rules reality is constructed as the object of scientific analysis, a problem that does not arise in the descriptive branch of the philosophy of science. (10)

Foucault’s premise is that systems of thought and knowledge (“epistemes” or “discursive formations”) determine the boundaries of thought in a given domain and period:

the episteme is not what may be known at a given period, due account taken of inadequate techniques, mental attitudes, or the limitations imposed by tradition; it is what, in the positivity of discursive practices,
make possible the existence of epistemological figures [i.e., theorists] and sciences. (192)

In other words, for Foucault there are only different “truth claims” which are historically situated and which find their justification and authorization within the network of discursive rules. Those rules allow theorists and scientists to define their objects of study (the formulation of concepts, the articulation of theoretical structures, the creation of a scientific nomenclature), yet also constrain them in their analyses and scientific investigations by imposing limits upon what they can say, write, or think within a particular historical era. Therefore, Foucault does not explicitly question whether or not what those individuals say about their object of study is “true” according to a universal benchmark of epistemology. Rather, he is interested in unearthing the network of discursive rules that those scientists of a particular historical period follow because those rules conceal the conditions of what is true and what is false.

In the next chapter, I will apply Foucault’s method to interrogate the existing literature in both Theatre Studies and Performance Studies, and Broadcast Studies that is concerned with the study of hybrids. I will analyze the different and, at times, conflicting discursive formations which define, shape and characterize different schools of thought in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies and which underlie the dominant classification models.
Chapter Division

The remainder of this dissertation is structured as follows:

Chapter Two will review the major publications that promote false dichotomies between “live” and “recorded” or between “immediate” and “mediated” in Theatre Studies, Performance Studies, and Broadcast Studies. Theories that assert that “live” is “that which is not recorded,” will be problematized in such a way as to demonstrate that they are reductive and ill-conceived. In addition, my investigation will show that the various methods to study of hybrids in the theatre and on the screen are unproductive.

Chapter Three will query the soundness of the classification principles that govern the taxonomy of performance practices. This two-tier investigation will demonstrate that the taxonomy is governed by rules which lie beyond grammar and logic. A taxonomic lexicon is based on two main structural principles: the onomasiological principle that organizes the kind-terms on the basis of their orthography or phonology and the semasiological principle that organizes the taxonomic categories on conceptual or semantic grounds. Onomasiology relates to the system of kind-terms that identifies the distinct categories in the taxonomy. Semasiology relates to the system of associative and taxonomic relationships that underlie the taxonomic paradigm and that produce meaning. The first part is concerned with onomasiology: It will trace the origin of the concept of “liveness” by investigating the semantic relationship between “live” and “recorded” through a critique of Auslander’s Liveness (1999; 2008). It will show that the term “live” was first used by radio-professionals before it was introduced to theatre performance; and will explain why and how the binary oppositional pair “live/recorded” was exported from
its original conceptual context. As a consequence of this transference, the meaning of “live” transitioned from temporal to spatiotemporal. The second part will investigate the semasiological principle that undergirds the ontology of “liveness.” It will interrogate the validity and usefulness of “immediacy” as a taxonomic principle. Immediacy, as a substitute for “liveness,” articulates the dichotomous relationship between IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE (such as in theatre, happenings, rituals, etc.) and manifestations of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (such as in cinema, television, photography, multimedia, etc.) in terms of spatial proximity and temporal synchrony.

Chapter four will be the conclusion to my dissertation and it will also discuss the implications of my findings regarding the value of “live,” “recorded,” and “liveness.”
CHAPTER 2:
REVIEW AND CRITIQUE OF THE EXISTING LITERATURE

Theorists who study the fusion of live practices with recorded practices in LIVE PERFORMANCE (for instance, Philip Auslander, Christopher Balme, Marvin Carlson, Nick Couldry, Andy Lavender, and Chris Salter among many others) and theorists who study the fusion of live practices with recorded practices in MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (such as Jérôme Bourdon, Jane Feuer, Paul Sanden, and Steve Wurtzler, among many others) share a common assumption; namely, that “live” is “that which is not recorded.” However, both camps have a different understanding of the concept of “recording.” For instance, some theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies (for instance, Schechner and Phelan) consider a performance during which the actors recite a memorized written text (or read the script as in a staged reading) as live. Therefore, they do not consider a written script as a recording.34 In opposition, some theorists in

34 Phelan notes in an interview with Marquard Smith: “For me, live performance remains an interesting art form because it contains the possibility of both the actor and the spectator
Television Studies (for instance, John Ellis and Jérôme Bourdon) have contended that a live news show during which the news anchors read their lines from a pre-written script does not constitute a live transmission because they consider those written scripts as a recording.\(^{35}\)

Hybrids exist both in MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (such as broadcasting) and in IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE (such as theatre). However, in MEDIATED PERFORMANCE, hybrids that fuse ‘MEDIATED PERFORMANCE that is live’ with ‘MEDIATED PERFORMANCE that is recorded’ are still technologically-mediated. For instance, a live newscast that includes pre-written scripts is still mediated by the television-apparatus, regardless of the fact that those programs are hybrids that fuse “live” and “recorded” practices.\(^{36}\) From this becoming transformed during the event’s unfolding. […] In live performance, the potential for the event to be transformed by those participating in it makes it more exciting to me - this is precisely where the liveness’ of live performance matters” (Phelan qtd. in Smith 295). Phelan, by contending that “liveness” relates the (potential of) transformation suggests that, for her, the presence of written scripts on the stage is irrelevant.

\(^{35}\) The meaning of the concept of “recording” underwent a demotion in response to the progressive technologizing of recording technologies (the advent of mechanically produced recordings specifically). Scholars of the Frankfurter Schule – Benjamin and Adorno amongst others – have advanced a view of recordings as commodities. The reductive meaning of the term “recording” comes to signify “to document.” Those contemporary uses of the term “recording” relate the concept of recording to notions such as “verisimilitude,” “exactitude,” “fidelity,” and “uniform reproducibility” all of which evoke associations with nineteenth and twentieth century electromechanical means of recording.

\(^{36}\) Some theorists have problematized the notion that virtual objects (e.g., CGI) are recordings. Steve Wurtzler, for instance, writes about the use of sampling technologies in music production: “In these instances representation is conceived of as the complete dismantling of the notion of an original event. In such practices, copies are produced for which no original exists” (“She Sang Live but the Microphone Was Turned Off” 88). By the same token, a theorist could
perspective, the problematization of hybrids in the context of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (such as broadcasting) is the result of a confusion of terms, not of a fusion of categories. By contrast, hybrids that fuse LIVE PERFORMANCE with MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (for instance, the use of video projection on the theatre stage) subverts the dichotomy between IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE. Consequently, the hybridization of LIVE PERFORMANCE challenges the ontology of theatre because theatre is predicated on notions of both liveness and immediacy.

A. The Study of Hybridization in Broadcasting

There is a long history of work within Television Studies concerned with the way in which “live” and “liveness” have been presented and conceptualised as one of television’s defining qualities. From a historical point of view, television – like radio – was initially produced live. The use of the kinescope made it possible to preserve live television broadcasts by recording the image from a television display to film, and by replaying the film image before a video camera for re-display. However, it was not until the invention of the videotape recording machine in the 1950s that broadcast technology became truly recorded. Due to advances in recording and editing technologies and due to cost-cutting considerations, direct-to-air transmissions in the United States and in

argue that those virtual objects are neither mediated nor immediate. This view, when taken to its logical conclusion, undermines the notion that CGI is mediated – since it is not really mediating anything.
Western Europe fell drastically. For instance, Robert Vianello reports that by 1957 more than seventy percent of prime-time transmissions was pre-recorded in the United States (33). By the late-1970s, theorists in Television Studies increasingly started to challenge the preconception that “live” and “recorded” are dichotomous. Ellis, for instance, pointed out that live programs are often a “patchwork” of pre-produced features including scripts, pre-rendered graphics and animation sequences, subtitles and end title sequences, replays (as seen, for instance, in sports coverage), sound effects, and so on (31). John Caldwell remarked that the particular nature of broadcasting always involves some kind of planning and that programs are “highly regulated and rigidly controlled performances, fabricated to fit a restricted block of viewing time” (31). Margaret Morse noted that the depiction of an event will often appear live to the viewer even though the event itself occurred in the past: “whether segments or entire news programs are taped or live, the effect of the broadcast is the production of a present tense” (“The Television News Personality and Credibility” 62-63). More importantly, they noted that the television industry (or, institution) kept insisting in its own practices that “live” and “liveness” constituted television’s ontological essence. Responding to those apparent contradictions and incongruences, theorists in Broadcast Studies (Television Studies predominantly) advanced the idea that “liveness” had evolved from a technical characteristic of television into an experiential concept. This idea was articulated most famously by Jane Feuer who argued that “live” and “liveness” are “ideological and constructed concepts” that are used by the industry to cover over the fact that all of television is deliberately constructed (14-
16). Feuer is commonly credited with the development of this influential perspective in contemporary Broadcast Studies. However, Feuer’s insight has several precursors. David Antin, for instance, wrote in 1977: “The industry wishes, or feels obligated, to maintain the illusion of immediacy, which it defines rather precisely as the feeling that what one sees on the TV screen is living and actual reality, at that very moment taking place” (118). Gilbert Seldes, in 1952, wrote: “The essence of television techniques is their contribution to the sense of immediacy. ... The tension that suffuses the atmosphere of a live production is a special thing to which audiences respond; they feel that what they see and hear is happening in the present and therefore more real than anything taken and cut and dried which has the feel of the past” (Seldes qtd. in Boddy 80–81). Bourdon writes: “[t]elevision reminds us that it links us live to something, to a specific place (‘live from’), to a specific person (‘live with’)” (532). This observation clarifies that the locus of “liveness” is two-fold: “liveness” is situated on the side of the senders (i.e., the television institution) and on the side of the receivers (i.e., the television and radio audiences). Theorists explored the production and the reception of “liveness” from the perspective of both the producers and the audience.37

Over the last three decades, theorists have further complicated televisual liveness variously as a technical-procedural characteristic, as a televisual aesthetic, as an ideological promise, as a historical period in the technological development of television, and as a representative of a constantly reinforced social-cultural understanding of both the medium and the industry. Of interest for my purpose are those theorizations that associate the (sense of) “liveness” with concepts such as “community,” “unpredictability,” “immediacy,” and “intimacy” because, as we will see later, theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies deploy those exact same concepts. Television Studies theorist Claus-Dieter Rath, for instance, writes that the “live aura [consists in] the collective, simultaneous perception of an event charged with symbolic value [by drawing] the audience into an “electronically constituted society” (89). In this sense, “liveness” is defined as being connected to other people at the moment of watching. Theorists also noted that this imagined community extends beyond the actual broadcast because viewers often discuss the programs they have seen afterwards (Scannell 276-280) and pointed out the importance of joining in the morning-after discussion of the media event is an important part of inserting oneself into “the zone of liveness [because] it expands the manifestation of liveness as ‘community’ to include ‘intimacy’” (Kavka and West 140). Theorists also argued that a particular attraction of “liveness” lies in its dramatic quality, i.e., in “the promise of the unforeseeable” (Rath 85). Elana Levine, who

Levine's “Distinguishing Television” (2008), and Åsa Kroon Lundell’s “The Design and Scripting of ‘Unscripted’ Talk” (2009).
refers to television’s unpredictability as “[its] admirable and distinguishing feature,” articulates the excitement that is associated with the sense of “liveness” nicely:

The potential for something unpredictable to happen, for something to go awry, is of course central to live coverage of breaking news events; it is part of what makes viewing even the most horrific of real-world happenings so enthralling. Because the tension and thrill of the unpredictable is so central to both theatrical and real versions of television liveness, it is perhaps the most vital element of the liveness myth—it is television itself that allows for the excitement, not any specific form or genre of television, and thus it is cited as the medium’s most fundamental trait. (5)

In addition, theorists noted that viewers will experience “liveness” even when the program has been recorded using, for instance, time-shifting technologies such as a TiVo digital video recorder (slogan: *Play with Live TV*). Defined in this way, “live” and “liveness” are associated with *a lack of information* as the following example illustrates:

As any football fan knows, if you tape an important match for later viewing, then you also have to impose a news blackout, forcing yourself not to hear a result which would ruin the liveness effect of watching the game. (Kavka and West 140)

To summarize, in Television Studies theorists have identified and explored notions such
as “risk,” “community,” and “unpredictability” as attributes, or markers, of the medium’s “liveness.”

The notion that “live” and “liveness” are experiential concepts offers a solution to the problem of hybridization because it dislodges the binary oppositional meaning-relationship between “live” and “recorded” which, since both concepts are no longer dichotomous, eradicates the problem. Essentially, however, the meaning of “live” and “liveness” hinges on one’s subjective interpretation of the experience. This definition thus implies that any broadcast production can be qualified as “live” by mere assertion of one’s affective response. In fact, by this definition, any movie that one watches for the first time is “live” since, after all, the viewer does not know what will follow. Furthermore, claims that assert “liveness” are unfalsifiable because the experience of “liveness” is only in the eye of the beholder. To conclude, the notion that “liveness” is experiential is problematic because the concepts have become subjective and, as such, have no place in scholarly discourse.\(^{38}\) Those discussions that explore the meaning of “live” and “liveness” as subjective concepts say more about the relationship between

\(^{38}\) To demonstrate the weakness when “live” becomes an affective concept, consider, by analogy, the term “smurf” which was coined by Belgian comics artist Pierre Culliford, known as Peyo. The Smurfs habitually replace nouns, verbs, and anything in between by the term “smurf.” “I feel like smurfing you on the smurf” could mean either “kissing you on the cheek” or “hitting you on the head.” If this idiosyncratic speech pattern were to be used in the real world, a predictable confusion would be the result.
production processes and the viewer’s experience (which, by extension, relates to Reception Studies) than help to clarify the significance of “liveness” for television’s ontology.

Caldwell, in 1995, drew attention to the fact that many theorists continued to define “liveness” as an absolute, time-based concept even though they insisted that “liveness” was an experiential concept. He concluded that “[i]n high theory, the liveness paradigm simply will not die:”

[T]he ideology of liveness myth lives on, even if in modified form. A sophisticated analysis of catastrophe programming on television describes the ideology of time, and the sense of continuity that drives it on, as both a target and victim of broadcast catastrophes. Liveness, at least when linked to death and disaster, is textually disruptive but ultimately pleasurable since its coverage works to assure domestic viewers that the catastrophe is not happening to them. Television is again defined, even in this catastrophe theory, by its temporality and not by its image. (27-30)

Theorists such as Mary Ann Doane (1990) and Mimi Smith (1999) identified “catastrophe coverage” as one area where television could fulfill its ontological promise. Those theorists connected “liveness” to ceremonial occasions, sporting events, one-off spectacles, daytime magazine shows, shopping channels and certain kinds of reality television. Defined in those terms, “liveness” is a genre- and niche-dependent phenomenon.
However, Stephanie Marriott, analyzing the 9/11 live coverage, noted that “the same brief loops [were played] over and over again, insistenty cutting into the live flow of the broadcast [thus interweaving] the immediate past [with the present]” (47). She also turned to the daytime show formats which “segue apparently effortlessly between recorded features, collages of actuality footage taped earlier and fully live studio segments” (48) and to the live coverage of ceremonial events which “draw upon library footage to amplify and contextualize the images that are unfolding in the real time of the broadcast” (48). Equally not live are television shopping channels which, in spite of “the need to update potential customers on remaining stocks and changing prices can be seen to cut occasionally to a montage of pre-recorded images of the commodity on offer (48). Like Caldwell and Bourdon before her, Marriott concludes that “television can rarely be said to be fully live in anything other than a fragmentary way” (49). As put by Bourdon:

Live television is not an absolute. It is, rather, a question of degree. There are moments of ‘maximum liveness’: we are watching at the same time as the event, at the same time as everyone else, and, what is more, with an event taking place in different locations connected by television, as is typically the case with major media events. Then, there is a whole series of configurations where the sensation that the programme is live might be as pronounced. (534-535)

Bourdon’s assertion reveals the strategy that those theorists deploy. Essentially, they reconceptualize the relationship between “live” and “recorded” as a continuum instead of
as a polar opposition. This allows theorists to position hybrids as permutations of liveness along this continuum. For instance, live broadcast transmissions that make use of pre-written scripts are denoted by the term “scripted liveness.” Those labels create the suggestion that the concerned practice (for instance, “scripted liveness”) constitutes a specific permutation of “liveness.” This then allows theorists in Broadcast Studies to theorize those practices. In fact, those theorists are merely qualifying the notion of “recording.” For instance, theorists that consider catastrophe coverage “live” ignore that the words spoken by journalists constitute embodied recordings – regardless whether those words are scripted or not. In sum, the case for “catastrophe liveness,” hinges on a reductive definition of “recorded” because it excludes, for instance, memory.\(^\text{39}\) Moreover, each object that is depicted in a television broadcast constitutes an inscribed recording (that represents the culture that engendered it) similar to how props and scenery on the theatre stage constitute inscribed recordings. Bourdon’s suggestion that television texts should not be divided according to genre, but “in terms of types, where live television is more or less achieved” (534) is, in fact, a demonstration of the same strategy. The “liveness as a continuum–strategy” works, but only because in the context of MEDIATED

\(^{39}\) Detractors will argue that memories do not constitute recordings in the way that sound recordings, videotapes, photographs, etc. are recordings; however, this counter-argument defines recordings in a reductive way by prioritizing inscribed recordings over embodied recordings. This argument has been rehearsed in this dissertation.
PERFORMANCE, the terms “live” and “recorded” differentiate between performance practices that are members of the same category: “live radio” is juxtaposed with “recorded radio,” and “live television” is juxtaposed with “recorded television.” In other words, categorizing hybrids such as “catastrophe liveness,” “scripted liveness,” “shopping channel liveness,” and so on, as permutations of liveness alongside the continuum between “live” and “recorded” is a viable strategy because those hybrids are technologically-mediated. Even so, they are merely positioned somewhere along the continuum. Therefore, theorists are unable to compare the “live-worthiness” of one permutation of liveness in relation to the “live-worthiness” of another permutation of liveness. For instance, questions such as “how does the liveness of ‘catastrophe liveness’ compare to the liveness of ‘scripted liveness’?” cannot be asked.40

Discussions that associate “live” with particular “genres” often offer insightful reflections about production practices and about broadcasting as a societal

40 Regarding “scripted liveness,” some scholars argue that the use of scripted material in a live television transmission undermines the program’s “liveness.” As an example, they point to news readers that are reading pre-written text from a prompter in a live news cast. The term “scripted liveness” which was coined expressly to denote this particular production mode attests to the fact that some scholars consider these elements to undermine a show’s “liveness.” By contrast, theatre scholars consider the mere manipulation of the performance text as “live” even when the text consists of materials that are recordings – for instance, as in the tape recorder that features prominently in Samuel Beckett’s 1959 play Krapp’s Last Tape. Thus, for theatre scholars, the presence of scripts does not affect a performance’s “liveness.” Even so, they still make a distinction between either mode of production because they use terms like “staged reading” and “staged performance.”
phenomenon. However, they fail to resolve the conflict between the theory which alleges that ‘the live mode of production’ and ‘the recorded mode of production’ are mutually exclusive and the manifest existence of productions that fuse ‘the live mode of production’ and ‘the recorded mode of production.’

Herbert Zettl proposed a different perspective that describes “liveness” as a determinant of broadcast transmission as a physical phenomenon:

[T]he television image is continually moving [because the] scanning beam is constantly trying to complete an always incomplete image. Even if the image on the screen seems at rest, it is structurally in motion. Each television frame is always in a state of becoming. While the film frame is a concrete record of the past, the television frame (when live) is a reflection of the living, constantly changing present. (263)

Sean Cubitt echoed Zettl’s view:

the broadcast flow is . . . a vanishing, a constant disappearing of what has

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41 This perspective originated in Reception Studies: In Literary Studies, Reception Theory focused on a reader’s reception of the text. In Broadcasting Studies and in Theatre Studies, Reception Theory shifted its attention to the relationship between the producer and the television viewer or radio-listener, and between the actor and the spectator respectively. Work on agency and the activity of the television viewer was an important attempt to capture some of the attractions of resistant popular culture. Theorists paid increasing attention to the agency of clients as active rather than passive.
just been shown. […] TV’s presence to the viewer is subject to constant
flux: it is only intermittently “present,” as a kind of writing on the glass
… caught in a dialectic of constant becoming and constant fading. (qtd. in
*Liveness* 48; rev. ed.)

Zettl and Cubitt aimed to reassert the basic ontology of television as live. They ignored
the difference between ‘television that is recorded’ and ‘television that is live’ because
the depiction of the televised image is interlaced – irrespective of whether the depicted
lies in the past or coincides with the moment of transmission. Zettl and Cubitt, however,
conflated the transmission-process with the representational process. They highlighted a
specific technological aspect of the television apparatus; namely, screening. The
presentation of images using electronic scanning beams that interlace the lines was a
solution to a technical problem. Today’s screening technologies use non-interlaced,
progressive scanning methods. Hence, the notion of interlacing (which Zettl and Cubitt
use to support their argument) is superseded by technological progress which,
subsequently, invalidates their project to prove that “liveness” is part of television’s
ontology.

It is remarkable that after thirty years of scholarship theorists have not reached a
consensus about the definition of “live” and “liveness.” Some define “live” and
“liveness” in an effort “to see events as they occur [whereby television liveness]
collapses the time of action with the time of viewing” (Kavka and West 139). Other
theorists define “live” and “liveness” in terms of the *transmission process* – i.e., the
instantaneity of the broadcast transmission process. This distinction raises the following question: Does the concept of “live” include the actual viewing experiences or does it merely describe a time-based alignment between an event and its transmission to a point-of-reception, i.e., a receiver *device*. Writing in 2007, Stephanie Marriott offered a solution when she differentiated between “immediacy” (when event and reception are simultaneous) and “instantaneity” (when transmission and reception coincide) (72).

The notion that the concept of “live” is experiential, which emerged within Television Studies, was also adopted by scholars in Multimedia Studies. Morse, for instance, related “liveness” to the feedback that a computer interface provides to the user (*Virtualities* 14). For Morse, feedback “is a capacity of a machine to signal or seem to respond to input simultaneously. A machine that thus ‘interacts’ with the user even at this minimal level can produce a feeling of ‘liveness’” (*Virtualities* 15).

In conclusion, theorists in contemporary Broadcast Studies have taken issues with two prevalent preconceptions. First, the preconception that “live” and “recorded” describe binary oppositional concepts. Second, the preconception that “live” is a concrete, time-based concept which describes that the moment an event is watched on television (or heard on the radio) coincides with the occurrence itself. Theorists who

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42 Theorists, in opposition, believe that the manifestation of *hybrids* that fuse both supposedly dichotomous categories undermines the preconception that “live” and “recorded” describe binary oppositional concepts.
study “liveness” from the sender’s perspective and theorists who study “liveness” from the receiver’s perspective equally reject the notion that “liveness” is a time-based concept. However, they do not explore the possibility that the sender’s and the receiver’s operational definitions of “liveness” are not the same – or not necessarily the same.

**B. The Study of Hybridization in Theatre and Performance**

In the previous section, I discussed the way in which theorists in Broadcast Studies have problematized hybrid broadcast productions (i.e., productions that fuse ‘MEDIATED PERFORMANCE that is live’ with ‘MEDIATED PERFORMANCE that is recorded’). In this section, I will interrogate “discursive formations” in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies. Many theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies believe that the categories of LIVE and RECORDED are mutually exclusive. By this definition, hybrids challenge the dominant classification model. Examples of hybrids are: hybrids that fuse LIVE PERFORMANCE with pre-recorded elements (Figure 9); hybrids that fuse LIVE PERFORMANCE with ‘sound that is technologically-mediated, but not pre-recorded’ (Figure 10); hybrids that fuse LIVE PERFORMANCE with ‘technologically-mediated images that are pre-recorded’ and ‘technologically-mediated images that are not pre-recorded’ (Figure 11); hybrids that defy classification (Figure 12).
Figure 9. A lip-synch performance fuses live choreography (A) with pre-recorded sound (B).

Figure 10. LIVE PERFORMANCE (A) fused with technologically-mediated sound that is not pre-recorded (i.e, amplified) (E).⁴³

Figure 11. LIVE PERFORMANCE (A) fused with technologically-mediated video that is pre-recorded (B) and technologically-mediated video that is not pre-recorded (i.e., live-relay) (E).  

Figure 12. The Builders Association’s Jet Lag fuses LIVE PERFORMANCE (A) with computer-generated imagery, i.e., technologically-mediated performance that is virtual (D).  


Catherine Graham problematizes the situation as follows:

[distinctions between live and recorded] no longer work in the early years of the twenty-first century, where the boundaries between theatre and other art forms, between recorded and live, immediate and mediatized forms of dramatic performance are increasingly blurred, both in practice and in theory. (2-3)

Theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies have addressed this issue in different ways.

*The Ontology Theorists*

Ontology theorists (such as Richard Schechner, Peggy Phelan, Herbert Blau, and Noël Carroll among others) set **LIVE PERFORMANCE** – such as theatre and dance – in opposition with **MEDIATED PERFORMANCE** – such as cinema and television – because “[p]erformance originals disappear as fast as they are made. No notation, no reconstruction, no film or videotape recording can keep them” (Schechner, *Between Theater & Anthropology* 50). Following Schechner’s lead, several formative theorists in Performance Studies have perpetuated that way of defining “performance” in terms of

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“disappearance,” “immediacy,” and “evanescence,” and even “dead.” Rebecca Schneider provides a useful overview and brief history of the ephemeralization of “performance:”

The peculiar burden and problem of the theater is that there is no original artwork at all. Unless one maintains that the text is the artwork (which repudiates the entire history of the theater), there seems no way of avoiding this difficult fact. Every other art has its original and its copies. Only music approximates the theatrical dilemma, but notation insures that each musical performance will at least come close to the composer’s intention. (Richard Schechner writing in 1965 qtd. in Performing Remains 97)

Dance exists at a perpetual vanishing point. […] It is an event that disappears in the very act of materializing. (Marcia Siegel writing in 1968 qtd. in Performing Remains 97)

In theater, as in love, the subject is disappearance. (Herbert Blau writing in 1968 qtd. in Performing Remains 97)

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46 In 2004, Phelan declared that “it is impossible, even now, to discuss live performance without also talking about death” (“On Seeing the Invisible” 20).
Performance originals disappear as fast as they are made. No notation, no reconstruction, no film or videotape recording can keep them. [...] One of the chief jobs challenging performance scholars is the making of a vocabulary and methodology that deal with performance in its immediacy and evanescence. (Richard Schechner writing in 1985 qtd. in *Performing Remains* 95)

The ephemeral encompasses all forms of behavior – everyday activities, story-telling, ritual, dance, speech, performance of all kinds. (Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett writing in 1998 qtd. in *Performing Remains* 95)

The above theorists are aware of the fact that these claims which predicate the dichotomy between the categories of LIVE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (on the basis that LIVE PERFORMANCE is both live and immediate whereas MEDIATED PERFORMANCE is neither live nor immediate) are problematic. Instead, they associate the ontology of LIVE PERFORMANCE with attributes such as “risk,” “variability,” “community,” and “uniqueness.” These attributes are juxtaposed with “the fixed and passive form” of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE. Upon closer inspection, however, these attributes, which serve as placeholders, fail to prove that such hybrids are live. They merely assert (instead of proving) that manifestations of LIVE PERFORMANCE – such as theatre – are unrecorded and therefore live, or that manifestations of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE – such as cinema and television – are recorded and therefore not live. The principle that undergirds those lines of reasoning is the notion that “live” is the opposite
of “recorded.” Elizabeth Bell illustrates this reasoning: “The action and the audience's experience of the action, both on the stage and in the seats, is live. With liveness comes unpredictability – a quality that draws many performers and audiences together in the first place – and risk” (242). Bell associates the liveness of a theatre performance with “unpredictability” and with “risk.” The notion that MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (for instance, cinema) is predictable derives from the fact that MEDIATED PERFORMANCE is pre-recorded. “Predictability” depends on recordedness, and “liveness” is associated with the absence of the recorded. “Risk” and “unpredictability” thus become placeholders for “liveness.”

A similar reasoning undergirds the dichotomy between LIVE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE which rests on notions such as “spontaneity,” “danger,” “anything-can-happen,” all of them synonyms of “risk.” Notions such as “community,” “ephemerality,” “evanescence,” “disappearance,” adhere to the same pattern of reasoning. Scholars who assert the dichotomous relationship between LIVE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE often use both forms of reasoning. For instance, Richard Schechner has suggested that a theatre performance has “no originals” (“Theatre Criticism” 22). His claim implies that the performance is not a copy of some earlier

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47 This line of inquiry was developed by Richard Schecher at New York University during the 1980s and 1990s. In 1974, Schechner described theatre as “evanescent,” saying that “it is an event characterized by ephemerality and immediacy” (Schechner, “TDR Comment: A
performance. An “original” has no precedents. Without a precedent, a performance is not a copy or a recording. His claim also implies that a performance engenders no copies. Since there is no legacy and no lineage, a performance is “unique.” “Uniqueness” and “originality” operate in tandem and they confine the performance in the “now” as a singular event which is tied to neither past nor future. Phelan, paraphrasing Derrida, asserts that “Theatre continually marks the perpetual disappearance of its own

Critical Evaluation of Kirby’s Criticism of Criticism” 118). “Performance originals disappear as fast as they are made. No notation, no reconstruction, no film or videotape recording can keep them. What they lose first and most importantly is their immediacy, their existence in a specific space and context” (Between Theater & Anthropology 50). Schechner echoed Antonin Artaud who wrote that “The theater is the only place on earth where a gesture, once performed, is never enacted a second time” (qtd. in De Marinis 47). Schechner’s key idea was taken further by other theorists such as Herbert Blau, Marcia B. Siegel, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett who associated the specificity of performance with attributes such as variability, ephemerality, evanescence, and disappearance. Other scholars such as Joseph Roach and José Esteban Muñoz expressed reservations and shifted away from the idea of “performance as disappearance.” Instead, they approached the dichotomy between LIVE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE in terms of “ephemera.” Muñoz writes: “Ephemera, as I am using it here, is linked to alternate modes of textuality and narrativity like memory and performance: it is all of those things that remain after a performance, a kind of evidence of what has transpired but certainly not the thing itself” (Muñoz 10).

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Walter Benjamin defined the concept of “original” within the context of technologies of reproduction that are mechanical. In this context, “original” denotes an inscribed recording. Thus, when Performance Studies scholars use the Benjaminian concept of “original” in relation to manifestations of LIVE PERFORMANCE, such as theatre, they misappropriate the concept. It is equally incorrect to deploy the Benjaminian concept of “original” in relation to other technologies of reproduction that are not mechanical – for instance, digital reproduction technologies. Rodolphe Gasché’s “Objective Diversions” (1994) and Warwick Mules’ “Aura as Productive Loss” (2007) discuss the ways in which theorists have misread the Benjaminian concepts of “aura” and “copy.”
enactment.\textsuperscript{49} Or, as she later writes: “performance’s only life is in the present [because] performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance” (\textit{Unmarked} 146). Phelan’s argument that \textit{LIVE PERFORMANCE} offers the freedom of an event which is not subject to the economic imperative of repeatability was critiqued by Auslander who contended that there are no ontological grounds on which one can maintain a distinction between \textit{LIVE PERFORMANCE} and technologically-mediated forms of performance (or, as Auslander calls it, \textit{the mediatized}) \textit{(Liveness)}. In 2008, Phelan responded in a 2008 interview with Marquard Smith:

Now we have streaming video, web casts, all sorts of media capable of recording and circulating live events. They can give us something that closely resembles the live event but they nonetheless remain something other than live performance. But these are very useful and very interesting tools and I am not against their use at all. But in terms of the ontological question, it’s simply not the same thing. For me, \textit{live performance} remains an interesting art form because it contains the possibility of both the actor and the spectator becoming transformed during the event’s unfolding. Of course, people can have significant and meaningful experiences of

\textsuperscript{49} Derrida writes: “The theatre is always born of its own disappearance” (233).
spectatorship watching film or streaming video and so on. But these experiences are less interesting to me because the spectator’s response cannot alter the pre-recorded or remotely transmitted performance, and in this fundamental sense, these representations are indifferent to the response of the other. In live performance, the potential for the event to be transformed by those participating in it makes it more exciting to me – this is precisely where the liveness’ of live performance matters. Of course, a lot of live performance does not approach this potential at all, and of course many spectators and many actors are incapable of being open to it anyway. But this potential, this seductive promise of possibility of mutual transformation is extraordinarily important because this is the point where the aesthetic joins the ethical. (135-136)

Phelan’s argument that immediate performance is different from technologically-mediated forms of performance hinges on the notion that the spectator-performer relationship is one of instantaneous reciprocity. She thinks that she is responding to Auslander’s critique. However, she ignores that what is problematizing her polarization is the manifestation of hybrids. Essentially, Phelan’s rebuttal merely restates the ontological view.

The connection between liveness, LIVE PERFORMANCE and the way in which the live performers and the live spectators share a spatiotemporal frame is a recurring theme in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies. Consider, for instance, Fischer-Lichte who
defines the spectator-performer relationship as an “autopoietic feedback loop.” She writes:

Whatever the actors do elicits a response from the spectators, which impacts on the entire performance. In this sense, performances are generated and determined by a self-referential and ever-changing feedback loop. Hence, performance remains unpredictable and spontaneous to a certain degree.” (The Transformative Power of Performance 28)

Power queries the liveness of hybrids that fuse LIVE PERFORMANCE with MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (sound amplification technologies in particular). Whereas Fischer-Lichte points to simultaneity and to the presence of an instantaneous feedback loop to emphasize the dichotomy between LIVE PERFORMANCE as live and technologically-mediated performance as not live, Power uses those exact same qualities to argue that technologically-mediated performances are in fact live. In addition, Power identifies qualities such as “vulnerability” and “fragility” as markers of liveness:

[T]oday, there seems seldom any disagreement that a performance is live even though the voices are amplified. That amplification can intensify the sense of liveness by amplifying not only the voice but also the hesitations, the breath – capturing the vulnerability and fragility, is a point in case. (147-148)

Essentially, Power tries to make the case that theatre productions which fuse practices
that are live and immediate with practices that are mediated but not recorded (such as, amplified sound) are live. Essentially, he reduces the problem of hybridization to the dichotomy “live/recorded” and ignores the dichotomy “immediate/mediated.” David Saltz similarly tries to show that technology can function as a scenic element that maintains theatre’s “liveness.” He draws a distinction between interactive technology and linear media. Linear media are incapable of responding directly to the performers whereas interactive media are responsive, thus offering performers “the potential to combine the strengths of both live performance and media” (109). Theorists such as Power and Saltz base their claim that those productions are “live” on the “logic” that those hybrids fuse LIVE PERFORMANCE with live technologically-mediated forms of performance. Essentially, they position hybrids on a continuum between THE LIVE and THE RECORDED. This is similar to theorists in Broadcast Studies who classify “scripted liveness” as a permutation of liveness between “fully live” and “fully recorded.” This strategy, however, does not apply to hybrids that are manifested in the context of LIVE PERFORMANCE because the ontology of LIVE PERFORMANCE (such as theatre) is predicated on notions of both liveness and immediacy. Power and Saltz refuse to admit that hybrids cannot be theorized as manifestations of LIVE PERFORMANCE according to the theoretical model that separates LIVE PERFORMANCE and technologically-mediated forms of performance.

Detractors of the ontological premise – for instance, Auslander – concede that it is the very context of the theatre performance – such as the responses of individual
spectators – that renders the theatre performance unique, and therefore “live.” However, they then counter that a film screening likewise varies from instance to instance. Thus, they conclude that a performance event is always unique both in the theatre and in the cinema. In sum, those theorists destabilize the polar opposition between LIVE PERFORMANCE (as variable and therefore live) and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (as sameness and therefore not-live). By the same token, the idea that theatre’s variability is what makes theatre live could be discarded simply by juxtaposing theatre with performance in everyday life, which, by comparison is more variable. It could be argued that theatre which is frequently scripted or rehearsed is very recorded (and therefore not-live) by comparison with performance in everyday life which is totally un-scripted, i.e., unrecorded (and therefore totally live). By this definition, some theorists might conclude that there is no such thing as liveness in the theatre. Improvisation in “improvisational theatre” (which is deemed spontaneous and unrehearsed) allows the above theorists to counter-argue that LIVE PERFORMANCE is distinct from MEDIATED PERFORMANCE after all.

It has been argued that improvisation (as seen in improvisational theatre, stand-up comedy, jamming sessions in music performance, and so on) relies on re-arranged patterns, themes or phrases that constitute forms of recording. Even if, for the sake of argument, we concede that improvisation is indeed totally unrehearsed and spontaneous, one cannot but agree that the thesis that “theatre is live” strictly applies to improv theatre, i.e., a subset of theatre, but not to the other manifestations of LIVE PERFORMANCE. In other words, the claim that theatre is not the product of a recording cannot be generalized and
is true only for improv theatre.

Now, let’s see how the supporters of the ontological premise try to defend and to restore the polar opposition:

[T]he uniqueness of an event is not in its materiality but in its interactivity. If this is so with regard to film and digitized events, how much more so in live performance, where both production and reception vary from instance to instance. Or in daily life, where context is impossible to perfectly control. (Schechner, Performance Studies 23)

Schechner tries to restore the polar oppositional relationship between “live” and “recorded” as an oppositional relationship between performances that are “more live” or “less live” and between performances that are “less recorded” or “more recorded.”

However, the dichotomy is construed on a polarity between “live” and “recorded” (i.e., not-live). Thus, by qualifying IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE in terms as “more live” and “less live” Schechner creates a false polarity. Diana Taylor similarly moderates the polarity. She emphasizes the reciprocity between the spectators and the performers, and contrasts the “finite variability” of the MEDIATED PERFORMANCE to the “infinite variability” of the LIVE PERFORMANCE:

Live performance is necessarily unique because performers and audiences will respond differently to each other on each occasion - so the essential fact of live performance causes infinite variation within defined
David Saltz is another supporter of the idea that LIVE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE are dichotomous because LIVE PERFORMANCE (such as theatre) is more variable by comparison with technologically-mediated performances (such as cinema). He suggests that “risk” and “variability” are the distinguishing characteristics of LIVE PERFORMANCE which, for Saltz, explain theatre’s continuing appeal:

If perfect invariance between performances and the absence of risk were the ultimate ideals, then live theatre would have no reason to exist in the twenty-first century; the art form should have ceded to recorded media such as film and video long ago. (109)

Like Schechner and Taylor, Saltz tries to account for theatre’s liveness in spite of the presence of recorded media, such as scripts. He, however, applies a different strategy: he concedes that elements such as scripts and rehearsals indicate that LIVE PERFORMANCE is a product of the process of recording, but when it comes to the crunch, he excludes them from his consideration:

[T]he value of live theatre, especially in a mediatized age, lies precisely in its variability. Regardless of how rigorously scripts and the rehearsal process constrain performances, each performance within those constraints is a unique event [....] The thrill of the live is to see a performance event unfold, with all the risk that entails. (109)
Saltz considers live performance “live” because of each performance’s “variability” and because of the event’s “uniqueness,” but his selective constraints include only those qualities that support the view that live performance is not recorded. Invariably, the claims made by Schechner, Saltz and Taylor fall back on such tenets as “uniqueness,” “risk,” and “variability” which, in their opinion, are evidence of the dichotomous relationship between live performance and mediated performance. However, notions such as “risk,” “variability,” “spontaneity,” “unpredictability” fail to advance our understanding about the ontology of live performance mainly because, as I have shown, they are used as placeholders for the concept of “liveness.” Moreover, the realization that the meaning of “liveness” is construed in opposition with one single concept – namely recorded – means that definitions have become circular. Both terms are paired to one another, they are defined in opposition of each other. One is what the other is not. Consequently, when the definition of one term changes, this will affect how the other element is defined. The sequence whereby the meaning of “liveness” hinges on the meaning of “recorded” calls into question the reciprocity of the relationship between “live” and “recorded.” It would seem that the binary opposition “recorded/live” cannot be equated to “recorded/not-recorded” – or, in other words, that the opposite of recorded is not necessarily – or not always – “live.”

The ‘Contingency Theory’ Group

Contingency theorists (such as Auslander, Causey, Couldry, Morse, Giannachi,
Kaye) think that the definition of live changes over time in response to technological change. Contingency theorists are commonly considered as adversaries of the ontology theorists because they challenge the ontological premise that THE LIVE and THE RECORDED are dichotomous. Auslander is undoubtedly the most prominent promoter of the contingency theory:

The default definition of live performance is that it is the kind of performance in which the performers and the audience are both physically and temporally co-present to one another. But over time, we have come to use “live” to describe performance situations that do not meet those basic conditions. […] The phrases “live broadcast” and “live recording” suggest that the definition of liveness has expanded well beyond its initial scope as the concept of liveness has been articulated to emergent technologies. Liveness is attributed not only to the entities we access with the machine but also to the machine itself. When a website is first made available to users, it is said to “go live.” As is true of the computer, the liveness of a website resides in the feedback loop we initiate with it: the website responds to our input. (Liveness 62; rev. ed.)

Theorists, such as Auslander, believe that the Contingency Theory can explain
why many scholars in Performance Studies still pledge an allegiance to the Ontological Model that is clearly inaccurate.\footnote{Several theorists have taken issues with Auslander’s argument. In particular the statement that there are no ontological distinctions between live performance and mediated performance was met with fierce criticism. See, for instance, Noël Carroll’s “Philosophy and Drama” (2006), Matthew Reason’s \emph{Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance} (2006), and Erika Fischer-Lichte’s \emph{The Transformative Power of Performance} (2008). Many of those scholars would object to being categorized in the same group as Auslander because they have argued against many of Auslander’s arguments. However, they all agree that hybrids can potentially be theorized as manifestations of \textsc{live performance} (on a case-by-case basis).} According to Auslander, the Ontological Model is a product and a remnant of the discursive history of the term “liveness.” He theorizes that the erroneous “ontological way of thinking” held true in the past. However, because the meaning of the concept of “live” changed over time, this view is no longer true. Auslander posits that this view (or model) is a remnant from the past and it survives because it is less complicated:

A) The default definition of live performance is that it is the kind of performance in which the performers and the audience are both physically and temporally co-present to one another. But over time, we have come to use “live” to describe performance situations that do not meet those basic conditions. (\textit{Liveness} 62; rev. ed.)

B) As recording technology brought the live into being, it also respected and
reinforced the primacy of existing modes of performance. Live and recorded performances thus coexisted clearly as discrete, complementary experiences, necessitating no particular effort to distinguish them. […]

But radio represented a challenge to the complementary relationship of live and recorded performances […] Unlike the gramophone, radio does not allow you to see the sources of the sounds you are hearing; therefore, you can never be sure if they are live or recorded. Radio’s characteristic form of sensory deprivation crucially undermined the clear-cut distinction between recorded and live sound. […] The response to this crisis was a terminological distinction that attempted to preserve the formerly clear dichotomy between two modes of performance — the live and the recorded — a dichotomy that had been so self-evident up to that point that it did not even need to be named.

The word “live” was pressed into service as part of a vocabulary designed to contain this crisis by describing it and reinstating the former distinction discursively even if it could no longer be sustained experientially. As a consequence of the circumstances under which this vocabulary was instated, the distinction between the live and the recorded was reconceived as one of binary opposition rather than complementarity. This way of conceptualizing the live and the distinction between the live and recorded or mediatized
originated in the era of analog technologies and persists to the present day; it forms the basis of our current assumptions about liveness. (*Liveness* 59-60; rev. ed.)

In this argument, Auslander compares three modes of performance: **LIVE PERFORMANCE**, **MEDIATED PERFORMANCE** which is recorded (e.g., the gramophone), and **MEDIATED PERFORMANCE** that is either live or recorded (e.g., radio) (Figure 13). Next, Auslander compares the way in which the audience assesses those respective modes of performance as either live or recorded, and concludes that “[r]ecording technology brought the live into being, but under conditions that permitted a clear distinction between the existing mode of performance and the new one” (*Liveness* 59-60; rev. ed.). In other words, he claims that in the era of the gramophone, live performances and recorded performances “coexisted clearly as discrete, complementary experiences,” and that “radio represented a challenge to the complementary relationship of live and recorded performances.” He also claims that there was no need for the term “live” in the era of the gramophone, mainly because live and recorded performances co-existed as discrete, complementary experiences and the term “live” was unnecessary.
If Auslander is correct in his assumption that the phonograph brought the concept of “live” into being, then “live” emerged as a concept and as a term at the same time.\footnote{Auslander contends that while “basic recording technologies”, i.e., the gramophone, made the concept of “live” possible, it was “the maturation of mediatized society” that brought the concept into being”: “The concept of live performance came into being not at the appearance of the basic recording technologies that made the concept possible but only with the maturation of mediatized society itself” (Liveness 58; rev. ed.). “As recording technology brought the live into being, it also respected and reinforced the primacy of existing modes of performance” (Liveness 58; rev. ed.). “The concept of the live was brought into being not just when it became possible to think in those terms – that is, when recording technologies such as the gramophone were in place.}
Figure 14. Is (C) a hybrid?

Auslander’s first claim, i.e., that live and recorded performances clearly coexisted as discrete, dichotomous but complementary experiences in the era of the gramophone is questionable and so is his idea that radio represented a challenge to the complementary relationship of live and recorded performances. Auslander focuses on what he perceives as a clear-cut distinction between the live mode of performance and the recorded mode of performance which remained experientially unproblematic. In short, Auslander erroneously believes that hybrids did not exist in the era of the gramophone against all evidence of hybrid performances (Figure 14, C). The performance “C” in Figure 14 fuses IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE (live singing) and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (a technologically-mediated performance, i.e., a recording) regardless of how each of them to serve as a ground against which the figure of the live could be perceived – but only when it became urgent to do so” (Liveness 59; rev. ed.).
is perceived.

Auslander did not define the term “complementary” explicitly when he wrote that, before radio, “live and recorded performances [...] coexisted clearly as discrete, complementary experiences” (Liveness 59: rev. ed.). However, it was because of radio that this “complementary” relationship became oppositional. When one compares the situations between the era of the gramophone and the era of radio, it becomes clearer what Auslander meant by writing “complementary.” (Figure 15). Auslander simply contrasted the era when there was a one-on-one relationship between the terms “live” and “recorded” and the era when this relationship was no longer direct. In short, Auslander claims that there is a correlation between the discursive history of the term “live” and the way in which the categories of “live” and “recorded” are conceived.

53 “Complementary opposition” is a linguistic concept which expresses a meaning-relationship between two terms whereby there is no middle-ground. For instance, mortal vs. immortal; night vs. day; identical vs. different. A performance that is “not live” is “recorded” and a performance that is “not recorded” is “live.” A union of complementary opposites includes everything there is in a particular universe. For example, if the universe is the set of integers, then the complement of the set of odd numbers is the set of even numbers. “Ungradable” indicates that the meaning relation between the terms is oppositional along a continuum. The opposite of a complementary antonym then, is a gradable antonym, i.e., one of a pair of words with opposite meanings where the two meanings lie on a continuous spectrum, such as hot and cold. Antonyms thus lack the property of entailment: to call a beverage “not cold” does not entail that the beverage is therefore “hot.” John Lyons (1977) restricts antonym and antonymy specifically to gradable opposites. Some linguists discern a third type: converse (or relational) opposites. In this type one term summons the other term of the pair. For example, “husband/wife;” “buyer/seller.” Arguably, relational opposition is a subtype rather than a type).
Auslander’s two claims are groundless mainly because he conflates the relationship between the two categories “live” and “recorded” with the relationship between the reference and its referent. Auslander’s theoretical problem is caused by his

54 The fact that terms stand in an oppositional meaning-relationship does not automatically mean that the phenomena – as identified by those terms – are similarly mutually exclusive. For instance, the terms “red” and “blue” are often used to identify “warm” and “cold”
erroneous preconception that the categories IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE are mutually exclusive. Auslander borrows the term “mediatized” from Jean Baudrillard and he (re-)defines the term “to indicate that a particular cultural object is a product of the mass media or of media technology. ‘Mediatized performance’ is performance that is circulated on television, as audio or video recordings, and in other forms based in technologies of reproduction” (*Liveness* 4; rev. ed.). Baudrillard himself wrote. “What is mediatized is not what comes off the daily press, out of the tube, or on the radio: it is what is reinterpreted by the sign form, articulated into models, and administered by the code” (175-176). In other words, that which is mediatized is not restricted to the actual products of the media, whether they be print, visual, or audio, but also includes that which is defined by its relationship to the media and which functions within the cultural parameters that have been set by the media. Auslander’s appropriation has been criticized notably by Power (2008).

–– as in warm water and cold water. In this particular context, the terms “red” and “blue” are polar opposites along a continuum. However, “red” and “blue” are also applied to the visual spectrum. In this context, the labels “red” and “blue” denote light of a different wave length. Further, when used in the context of the visual spectrum, the terms “blue” and “red” identify categories that are mutually exclusive. In sum, the relationship between the labels (terms) and the phenomena is arbitrary. Similarly, Sarah Thornton contrasts the live performance of musicians with the recorded performance that is technologically mediated. According to Thornton, it was the competition by recorded music performances which prompted the coinage of a term which could emphasize the difference between a mode of performance involving live musicians, and a mode of performance involving recording, reproduction, and mediation technologies (such as phonography and radiophony). “The term ‘live’ entered the lexicon of music appreciation only in the fifties. As more and more of the music heard was recorded, however, records become synonymous with music itself. It was only music’s marginalized other - performance - which had to speak its difference with a qualifying adjective” (41).
For Auslander, the antagonistic relationship between LIVE PERFORMANCE, such as theatre, and “the mediatized,” “presumably derive[s] from significant ontological distinctions between live and mediatized cultural forms” (*Liveness* 4; rev. ed.).

*Meditized performance* is defined by Auslander as denoting a particular type of cultural object that is the product of the mass media or of media technology: “performance that is circulated on television, as audio or video recordings, and in other forms based in technologies of reproduction.” Auslander turned “the mediatized” into a category which merges ‘technologically-mediated performances that are live’ with ‘technologically-mediated performances that are recorded’ and, in doing so, he obfuscates this conflictual dichotomy between “live” and “recorded.” The term *mediatized* gathers practices that are neither “live” (i.e., LIVE PERFORMANCE-kinda-live) nor recorded such as live television and live radio. However, Auslander’s category of “the mediatized” is unable to account for all mediations that are not spatiotemporal (for instance, telephony). According to Auslander, ontology theorists perpetuate theories that “yield a reductive binary opposition of the live and the mediatized:”

In challenging the traditional opposition of the live and the mediatized, I am not suggesting that we cannot make phenomenological distinctions between the respective experiences of live and mediatized representations, distinctions concerning their respective positions within cultural economy, and ideological distinctions among performed representations in all media. What I am suggesting is that any distinctions need to derive from careful
consideration of how the relationship between the live and the mediatized is articulated in particular cases, not from a set of assumptions that constructs liveness as an ontological condition rather than a historically mutable concept and the relation between live and mediatized representations a priori as a relation of essential opposition. […] That theatre and television came to be competitors within cultural economy resulted from this particular discursive history, not from some intrinsic opposition between them. (‘Live and Technologically Mediated Performance’ 62)

Auslander reasons that if there was an ontology of performance, this relationship ought to have been stable and immutable. Auslander thus concludes that “the relationship between live and mediatized forms and the meaning of liveness be understood as historical and contingent rather than determined by immutable differences” (Liveness 8; rev. ed.). For Auslander, the fact that the definition of the concept of “liveness” changes over time outrules an ontological distinction between LIVE PERFORMANCE, such as theatre, and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE mainly because his reductive definition of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE is almost entirely concerned with the relationship between theatre and television. However, in doing so, Auslander dismisses the possibility that the ontological view could be shaky because it is grounded on flawed principles. Instead, he dismisses the possibility that the dichotomy between IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE has been asserted based on ontological grounds.
Auslander refuted that “live performance” and “mediatized performance” differ on ontological grounds:

If live performance cannot be shown to be economically independent of, immune from contamination by, and ontologically different from mediatized forms, in what sense can liveness function as a site of cultural and ideological resistance? (Liveness 7; rev. ed.)

Auslander construes a polar opposition between the ontological view and his contingency view by referencing Phelan who has articulated the specificity of LIVE PERFORMANCE (as opposed to MEDIATED PERFORMANCE) in terms of “the economy of reproduction:”

Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented [...] once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction, it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology.” (Unmarked 146)

Power, among others, agrees with Auslander who, unlike Phelan, claims that theatre is not economically independent (because both forms of performance participate in the same cultural economy and therefore they are subject to its “laws”). However, they

Auslander points out that both forms of performance are cultural objects, and subject to the same economical laws: “It is not realistic to propose that live performance can remain
frown upon the way in which Auslander misrepresents Phelan’s claims with the intent to polarize the discussion. There is no indication that Phelan thinks that the economic context of market values and marketability is the sole “ontological” criterion that marks the specificity of Live Performance:

Auslander sees Phelan’s definition of performance as a valorization of the live over the recorded, in which performance is defined by its non-reproducibility. […] However, Phelan’s position is far more complex than Auslander's critique suggests; her account clearly envisages performance within rather than without a mass media economy[.] (170)

Robin Nelson writes in a similar vein: “[Auslander’s conclusion is valid] only if the essence of being is defined in terms of the market” (314). In sum, Auslander validates his historical method based on a forced and false polarity. Nonetheless, he (mis)represents the relationship between live and mediatized forms and the meaning of liveness “as historical and contingent rather than determined by immutable differences” (Liveness 8; rev. ed.).

In addition, Auslander fails to see that both broadcasting and sound recording are technologies that yield manifestations of performance that are mediated. His conclusion that there are no ontological grounds for opposing “the live” with “the mediatized” is ontologically pristine or that it operates in a cultural economy separate from that of the mass media” (Liveness 45; rev. ed.).
unfounded. Even so, he proceeds to construe a taxonomy for “liveness” that is independent from the taxonomy for “mediatized” (Figure 16).

Figure 16. The creation of a parallel taxonomy in which “liveness” is defined as an affective concept.

In sum, contingency theorists, such as Auslander, think that the problem of hybridization is caused by the fusion of “live” and “recorded” performance, so they stopped defining “liveness” in terms of time and space. In doing so, they think that “liveness” and “recordedness” are no longer binary opposites; and hence, they think that they resolved the problem of the hybridization of modes of performance. However, by redefining “liveness” as an affective concept they generated an additional taxonomy (Figure 16). But unfortunately, the creation of a parallel taxonomy does not answer the problem of hybridization.

The idea that “our” understanding of “liveness” changes over time reached
another plateau when scholars in both Broadcast Studies and Performance Studies redefined “liveness” as affective, not spatiotemporal or temporal. Auslander articulated this idea when he wrote that “liveness” is primarily built around the audience's affective experience:

It may be that we are at a point at which liveness can no longer be defined in terms of either the presence of living human beings before each other or physical and temporal relationships. The emerging definition of liveness may be built primarily around the audience’s affective experience. To the extent that websites and other virtual entities respond to us in real time, they feel live to us, and this may be the kind of liveness we now value.

(Liveness 62; rev. ed.)

Fred McVittie expresses that same idea as follows:

One of the key features of ‘liveness’ is best partially understood not as a property of an individual entity or event, but as a relationship between two or more entities. In this formulation, liveness signifies simultaneity in time such that to experience an entity ‘live’ is to be in a relationship to that entity that includes this simultaneity. (McVittie)

This shift needs to seen against the background of theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies who studied forms of LIVE PERFORMANCE that integrate live acting with advanced broadcast technologies (such as the Internet) or that integrate virtual
actors. Those practices elude classification as “live” because they are technologically-mediated forms of performance. Equally, those practices elude classification as “recorded” because they are dynamic and interactive which means that each performance is uniquely different. To resolve the impasse, theorist such as Causey, Couldry, Morse, Giannachi, Kaye, amongst others, turned to the idea that “liveness” is experiential. This idea, as we have seen, was developed by theorists in Television Studies. Nick Couldry, among other theorists in Performance Studies, adopted the idea. Couldry suggested that “liveness” could be interpreted as a “ritual term” (“Liveness, ‘Reality,’ and the Mediated Habitus from Television to the Mobile Phone” 355). As we have seen, the notion that “live” and “liveness” are experiential implies that those qualities can be attributed to any type of communicative interaction including communication exchanges that involve machines and non-corporeal entities.

Auslander destabilized the dichotomous relationship when he argued that some modes of performance, which are considered live, are in fact mediated, just as some modes of performance that are mediated are in fact live:

Although chatterbots are programmed and draw their conversational material from databases, their individual performances are responsive to the actions of other performers, autonomous, unpredictable, and improvisational. That is, they perform in the moment. The chatterbot undermines the idea that live performance is a specifically human activity; it subverts the centrality of the live, organic presence of human beings to
the experience of live performance; and it casts into doubt the existential significance attributed to live performance. (*Liveness* 72; rev. ed.)

Auslander associates “live” with a quality which is associated with “recorded.” In particular, he pairs “uniqueness” with “interactivity” to convince the reader that manifestations of performance that are executed by “digital agents” are live. In “Humanoid Boogie” Auslander uses the same strategy to argue that an installation by Sergei Shutov (Figure 17) constitutes a live performance:

Sergei Shutov's *Abacus* (2001) in the Russian pavilion of the 49th Venice Biennial International Exposition of Art (June 10-November 4, 2001) was a frequent subject of discussion during the press opening for the exhibition, which I attended in my capacity as a critic of the visual arts.

*Abacus* consists of over forty crouching figures draped in black, which face an open door and pray in numerous languages representing a multitude of faiths while making the reverential movements appropriate to prayer. Nearby video monitors display the texts of the prayers in their many alphabets. People at the opening talked of the “performance” in the Russian pavilion; a journalistic colleague, knowing that performance is the main subject of my research and writing, asked me whether I considered the piece a performance. I blithely answered yes, realizing only later that I had taken a position I needed to consider further. (“Humanoid Boogie” 87)
Auslander proceeds:

The reason for both my colleague’s question and my own desire to think more about it is that the figures performing in Abacus are not human beings—they are robots programmed by a computer to engage in dahvening (Jewish prayer) movements accompanied by the recorded sounds of ecumenical prayer. Given that the figures are machines, not human beings, some might argue that the piece should be considered an animated sculptural installation, not a performance—it is described as an installation in the Biennale catalog. (The figures could also be considered automata, or the whole system a playback device: the robots and sound system function to make the playback of the computer program apprehensible to an audience in a way analogous to a CD player's converting information on a disc into audible music. But Abacus is not a playback device of the kind Godlovitch describes because the actions of its robots do not re-create a prior performance: although Abacus is a representational work, it is not a record of a gathering of black-garbed figures that took place at some earlier time. As a playback device, Abacus is, in this respect, what I have called a technology of production, not reproduction. (“Humanoid Boogie” 87-88)

Auslander asserts that this type of performance is live because each new presentation differs from the one(s) preceding. In other words, for Auslander, the notion of
“variability,” which indicates that the performance is live, proves that the performance is not a recording.

Figure 17. Sergei Shutov’s Abacus (2001).

Actually, the performance’s variability is achieved because the software program uses dynamic sensorial data from sensors that monitor, for instance, light intensity changes in the robot’s immediate vicinity. The program is composed of one or more scripts that include one or more algorithms. Since an algorithm is a mathematical

representation of a process, the algorithm is also a recording of the process. It follows that a performance that is executed by robots is the product of a process of recording and thus, by the definition that “live is that which is not recorded,” cannot be live.

Another example that illustrates the principle that undergirds Auslander’s reasoning is his claim that franchise productions such as “Disney on Ice” are “mediatized.” To argue his point, Auslander departs from the assumption that “recordedness” means that each performance is identical. Next, he points out that, in fact, *Disney on Ice* is franchised, i.e., each performance is the same. Since *sameness* is a quality that is commonly associated with “recordedness” and, by extension, with manifestations of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (i.e., the mediatized) Auslander concludes that performances such as *Disney on Ice* are in fact manifestations of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (i.e., members of the mediatized). In this line of reasoning, the meaning of “recorded” is contingent on (the meaning of) the concept with which it is allied or juxtaposed. In other words, the concept of “recorded” has become elastic. Auslander deploys the exact same principle as we have encountered in debates about the notion that “theatre performance is ‘live’ because it is variable.” Ontology theorists win the argument when they juxtapose theatre and cinema, yet they lose the argument when their opponents counter by juxtaposing theatre with ‘performance in everyday life.’

Auslander’s project is to destabilize the dichotomy between LIVE PERFORMANCE (as live) and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (as recorded) by undermining the idea that the involvement of live actors is the defining characteristic or one of the defining
characteristics which separate LIVE PERFORMANCE from MEDIATED PERFORMANCE.

Auslander introduces a performance genre that – so he asserts – focuses on stage performances which are “identical” such as Tamara and Disney on Ice; or performances by theme park entertainers who pose as popular cartoon characters (e.g., Batman, Bugs Bunny, Cinderella, and so on):

Consider the various live performances of actors portraying trademark cartoon characters and superheroes who interact with visitors at theme parks all over the world. It is precisely the point of these performances that they all represent the same, standardized characters. […] These instances also suggest how live performance may participate in the economy of repetition, not just by being recorded and replicated, but through the mass production of the live event itself. (Liveness 63; rev. ed.)

According to Auslander, these performances are “mechanically identical” and “mass-mediatized,” not unlike cinema, television and other forms of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE.

Auslander concludes:

A) Like live performance, electronic and photographic media can be described meaningfully as partaking of the ontology of disappearance ascribed to live performance, and they can also be used to provide an experience of evanescence. Like film and television, theatre can be used as a mass medium. (Liveness 55; rev. ed.)
B) [T]he general response of live performance to the oppression and economic superiority of mediatized forms has been to become as much like them as possible. From ball games that incorporate instant-replay screens, to rock concerts that recreate the images of music videos, to live stage versions of television shows and movies, to dance and performance art’s incorporation of video, evidence of the incursion of mediatization into the live event is available across the entire spectrum of performance genres. (*Liveness* 7; rev. ed.)

Auslander relates the terms “mass-medial” and “mechanical” to both theatre and television. From this, he argues that *l ive performance* and *mediated performance* are similar. However, he fails to note that when “mass-medial” and “mechanical” are applied to theatre, they are used metaphorically. The presumed similarity that Auslander takes for granted does not exist. The notion that *live performance*, such as theatre, “can even function as a kind of mass medium” (*Liveness* 5; rev. ed.) is different from stating that theatre *is* a mass medium.57

In other words, Auslander progressively calls into question the ontological distinctions between *live performance* and *mediated performance* by turning the tables so that, eventually, he comes to the conclusion that theatre (immediate

57 This part of Auslander’s argument was critiqued by Noël Carroll (2006). Auslander responded to Carroll (*Liveness* 52-54; rev. ed.).
PERFORMANCE) and television (MEDIATED PERFORMANCE, i.e., the mediatized) lie in a mutual relationship of “dependence and imbrication” (“Humanoid Boogie” 198). In doing so, Auslander’s ultimate goal is to prove that there is a historical pattern, i.e., “the general cultural tendency of mediatized forms to displace and replace live ones” (Liveness 7; rev. ed.).

Figure 18. Flavia Sparacino’s Dance Space fuses live dance with digital technologies.58

Next to the strategies of the ontology deployed by theorists who maintain the polarity between IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE, there are some strategies that position the hybrid manifestations of LIVE PERFORMANCE on a continuum.

For instance, consider Marvin Carlson, who theorizes about practices that combine live acting with live video that is produced on the stage. Carlson coined the term “roving eye productions” to describe productions by Frank Castorf and Renè Pollesh. Carlson theorizes theatre productions that fuse performance practices that are live and immediate with performance practices that mediated but not recorded. This label, however, does not conceal that those productions are essentially hybrids – and that to claim that such a production is a LIVE PERFORMANCE is problematic because it challenges the ontology of LIVE PERFORMANCE as live and immediate.

Another case is Jodie McNeilly. She writes about the fusion of dance performance with digital, interactive technologies (Figure 18). She coins the term “digital dance performance” for this mode of production:

Digital Dance Performance may be described (non-exhaustively) as fluid spaces of interactivity between performers, audience and a range of technologies both digital and analogue. They might combine interactions between live bodies in movement with digital interactive technologies that enable the visual or sonic representation of bodies or objects in two dimensions to be streamed in real-time (“at the same time”), or in play back as digital doubles. These screen presences may be televisual, projected or in holographic form. Performers may enable visual or sonic outputs through wearable technologies. Digital dance may be performed by avatars in second-life or mediated through other social
networking technologies, or webcam devices for telematic distal presentations.” (4)

Carlson and McNeilly seem to think that there is no problem because those manifestations of LIVE PERFORMANCE fuse performance practices that are live (live acting or live dance) with performance practices that are not recorded (e.g., live video, interactive digital technologies, and real-time animation or computer imagery). They, however, ignore that live acting and live dance are manifestations of IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE whereas live video and interactive digital technologies are manifestations of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE. The fusion of IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE violates the logic of the Ontological Model – even if the performance practices that constitute the hybrid are not recorded. Carlson’s and McNeilly’s strategy consists of defining the hybrid manifestations of LIVE PERFORMANCE which fuse IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE with MEDIATED PERFORMANCE. Those hybrids are then positioned on a continuum between IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE.

The principle that undergirds this strategy is identical to that of scholars in Broadcast Studies. They study hybrids that fuse MEDIATED PERFORMANCE, which is live, with MEDIATED PERFORMANCE, which is recorded, and they situate those hybrids on a continuum. However, their “solution” is merely cosmetic. It is true that hybrids are acknowledged and that new categories are created; but the continued development of modes of performance which emerge in the wake of technological progress, erodes these
new categories from within. For example, consider a production that fuses live acting with film projection such as some of Erwin Piscator’s productions. Here, the MEDIATED PERFORMANCE is recorded. The director can merely suggest that the live acting and the mediated action are happening simultaneously because of the limitations of the medium used – namely, the process of production and the process of presenting are separated in time. Video technology, however, allows the director to exploit the sense of instantaneity because the screened action and the staged action can coincide in time. If, on the other hand, video cameras are mounted directly onto the stage, the audience can authenticate video’s mode of production as either live or pre-recorded. However, the audience loses this capacity if a camera operator were to walk off the stage, for instance, to show events that are happening out of the audience’s visual field. At that moment, the audience’s belief that the mediated action is temporally contiguous (i.e., happening simultaneously) with the live acting is disrupted. In sum, the integration of video technology and scenography makes it possible to affect the temporal relationship between the staged action and the screened action and, more importantly, to upset the audience’s perception (and expectation) of that relationship. When the continuity of a “video narrative” is disrupted, the audience is asked to renegotiate the relationship between the LIVE PERFORMANCE and the MEDIATED PERFORMANCE. Fundamentally, each “break” forks into a new dichotomy “live/recorded.” The category “roving-eye productions” did not anticipate those intricate configurations (i.e., representations of “time”) and, consequently, becomes strained. In response, theorists will likely coin new labels – for
instance, “dynamic roving eye,” “static roving-eye,” and so on. In other words, the category (“roving eye”) is retrofitted to reflect new possibilities.

The coinage of the term “livecast” illustrates this phenomenon. In Theatre Studies and Performance Studies, “livecast” describes a specific hybrid – namely, a LIVE PERFORMANCE (for instance, theatre and opera) that is watched by a live audience that is present at the venue itself and by a distributed audience that is present at their local movie theatres. Inevitably, as representational technologies complicate “pure” livecast, theorists will diversify the category of “livecast” because they want to describe and delineate the specific permutation of “livecast” they are studying from other – similar, yet different – “livecast” manifestations.59 What is hailed as an “expansion” is in fact an endless “fragmentation” of the territory in ever-smaller topoi of “liveness.” They document new production methods, but this strategy is unable to advance our knowledge about the concept of “liveness.” On this point, consider McNeilly who uses conditional clauses (“may be described as,” “they might combine,” “they may be televisual, projected or in holographic form,” and so on) to describe the category “digital dance performance.” She includes just about any type of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE that is not considered as recorded. In doing so, McNeilley defines “digital dance performance” comprehensively, yet at the expense of rigor and exactitude.

59 For a discussion about the phenomenon of “livecasting,” see Martin Barker’s Live to Your Local Cinema (2013).
In sum, “the contingency theory” allowed theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies to theorize hybrid practices such as cyberformance, digital theatre, and multimedia performance as live. This is evident in the call for papers for the conference LIVE INTERFACES: Performance, Art, Music. This call for papers gathers under the umbrella of “performance” practices that are hybrids because they involve live performers, shared temporal frames, and a shared spatial frames:

We invite submissions addressing the conference theme of technology-mediated live interaction in performance, and suggest the following indicative topics: Audience perception/interaction, Biophysical sensors, Brain-computer interfaces, Computer vision/real-time video in performance, Cross-modal perception/illusion, Digital dramaturgy/choreography/composition, Digital performance phenomenology, Gesture recognition and control, Historical perspectives, Live coding in music, video animation and/or dance, Participatory performance, Performance technology aesthetics, Redefining audience

60 LIVE INTERFACES is dedicated to problematising convergences and divergences between different understandings of performance technology. It exposes a variety of motivations and approaches, and discusses how specific understandings of “liveness,” “immediacy,” “timing” or “flow” are manifested in performance that includes digital media. The first edition of the conference was held in Leeds, UK in 2012; the second edition in Lisbon, Portugal in November 2014.
interaction, Tangible interaction. (“LIVE INTERFACES” n. pag.)

Theorists that adhere to this school of thought have moved away from the notion that THE LIVE and THE RECORDED are polar opposites. The use of the phrase “technically mediated live interaction” confirms that the writers believe that the dichotomy between THE LIVE and THE RECORDED has dissolved entirely. They acknowledge that performances that fuse live practices with technologically-mediated practices (for instance, digital technologies) constitute hybrids. However, hybridization is not a problem for them because they no longer think of the categories THE LIVE and THE RECORDED as binary opposites. Thus, hybrids are theorized as manifestations of “performance.” Essentially, however, contingency theorists (such as Auslander, Causey, Couldry, Morse, Giannachi, Kaye, among others) and ontology theorists (such as Schechner, Phelan, Carroll, and Blau among others) apply identical strategies: they define the concept of “recorded” in a reductive way so that “recorded” (and “live”) become relative concepts.

The notion that the definition of what counts as a live event changes in response

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61 Consider for instance Roger Copeland and Karel Vanhaezebrouck. Copeland says that “the idea that the theatre’s ‘liveness’ is - in and of itself - a virtue, a source of automatic, unearned moral superiority to film and television, is sheer bourgeois sentimentality” (42). Vanhaezebrouck on the other hand, says that hybrid performances are “intermedial contamination” (98). A method of denial involves arbitrarily moving the criteria for “proof” or acceptance out of range of whatever evidence currently exists.
to technological innovation has prompted the idea that the definition of “liveness” is “built primarily around the audience’s affective response” (Liveness 62; rev. ed.). The re-conceptualization of “live” as a subjective/experiential concept implies that performances do not need to involve live performers to be deemed live. Jon McKenzie, for instance, contends that performance is neither constricted to humans, nor does performance requires a corporeal, live body. According to McKenzie, performance “can refer to experimental art, productivity in the workplace, and the functionality of technological systems” (11). He asserts:

The emergence of this hypermediating media affects all cultures and technologies, for the digitalization of discourses and practices enable them to be recorded, edited and played back in new and uncanny ways. Highly localized ensembles of words and gestures can now be broken apart, recombined, and hyperlinked to different ensembles in ways unlike anything in the past, at speeds incredible from all perspectives except those of the future. (22)

Along the same lines, Auslander dismisses the primacy of the live performer. He argues that interactions that involve interactive displays, robots, bots (i.e., virtual robots) and CGI that take place in virtual environments can be theorized as live experiences:

[L]iveness is first and foremost a temporal relationship, a relationship of simultaneity: ‘Of a performance, heard or watched at the time of its
occurrence.’ The ability to present performances that can be watched as they occur, or, to switch to a technological vocabulary, to perform in real time — the heart of the concept of liveness — is an ability shared by human beings and chatterbots. […] Moreover, the chatterbot undermines the idea that live performance is a specifically human activity; it subverts the centrality of the live, organic presence of human beings to the experience of live performance; and it casts into doubt the existential significance attributed to live performance. (‘Live From Cyberspace’ 21)

As we have seen, Auslander rejected ‘presence’ or ‘the magic of live theatre’ as viable tenets of LIVE PERFORMANCE. He also problematized the traditional view that ‘live’ and ‘liveness’ are spatiotemporal concepts. However, as I have argued, Auslander’s suggestion that ‘live’ and ‘liveness’ are affective concepts is equally non-productive because it implies that any phenomenon — even those that do not involve live

62 Auslander writes: ‘I quickly became impatient with what I consider to be traditional, unreflective assumptions that fail to get much further in their attempts to explicate the value of ‘liveness’ than invoking clichés and mystifications like ‘the magic of live theatre,’ the ‘energy’ that supposedly exists between performers and spectators in a live event, and the ‘community’ that live performance is often said to create among performers and spectators. In time, I came to see that concepts such as these do have value for performers and partisans of live performance. […] But where these concepts are used to describe the relationship between live performance and its present mediatized environment, they yield a reductive binary opposition of the live and the mediatized’ (Liveness 2-3; rev. ed.).
performers or live spectators – can be theorized as live (Figure 19).

Figure 19. RoboCup Soccer Competition.  

63 Two robot-teams, the Blue Ribbons and the Red Rovers, play a game of soccer. After the game has ended, one spectating robot uploads a video recording of the game onto YouTube. A couple of days later, two Performance Studies theorists, Paul and Marty, watch the game together on YouTube. Paul argues that the game is live. Marty disagrees, because, as he points out “the game was played in the past. So, we are watching a recording. Therefore, the game cannot possibly be live.” Paul rebuts that he does not know the final score. Or, as he puts it: “I have not yet ‘recorded’ the game. I do not know the game’s final outcome nor its development. So, for me, the game is live.” Marty halts. Thinks. Then says: “I see your point. However, I already watched the game last night. So, since I already ‘recorded’ the game, the game is not live.
In the first section of this chapter (“discursive formations” in Broadcast Studies), I wrote that the notion that the meaning of “liveness” is historically contingent was developed first in Broadcast Studies by scholars such as Bourdon and Caldwell. In *Liveness* (1999; 2008), Auslander applies this idea to the study of hybrids that fuse immediate performance with mediated performance. Auslander invokes Nick Couldry to support his move:

[T]he definition of liveness has expanded well beyond its initial scope as the concept of liveness has been articulated to emergent technologies. And the process continues, still in relation to technological development[…]

Along these lines, Nick Couldry proposes “two new forms of liveness,” which he calls “online liveness” and “group liveness”: “[O]nline liveness: social co-presence on a variety of scales from very small groups in chat rooms to huge international audiences for breaking news on major Web sites, all made possible by the Internet as an underlying infrastructure . . . [G]roup liveness: . . . the ‘liveness’ of a mobile group of friends who are in continuous contact via their mobile phones through calls and texting.

More importantly however, Auslander writes the following:

Although the decentered experiences of liveness to which Couldry points are not easily assimilable to a performance-audience model, they nevertheless posit liveness as a technologically mediated relationship among human beings. *(Liveness 61; rev. ed.)*

Couldry draws a distinction between the “decentered experiences of liveness” (which are in fact modes of performance that are mediated) and the mode of performance that he investigates (i.e., hybrids that fuse IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE with MEDIATED PERFORMANCE). However, Couldry’s discussion is not concerned with hybrids because telephone conversations are – generally – live. *64* Moreover, mobile telephony is an application of broadcast technology whereby the interlocutors can both send and receive messages (i.e. full duplex two-way communication). Essentially, Auslander conflates “live” as a concept that is used in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies with “live” as

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*64* Some theorists in Broadcast Studies would disagree that *all* telephony is live. For instance, they would query the liveness of telephone conversations that are scripted, or communications that are conducted on telephone sets that are equipped with a seven-second profanity delay application. (The profanity delay is a practice in television production whereby the transmission of the signal is delayed to prevent undesirables – such as profanity, bloopers, violence, and so on – from reaching the viewer). Theorists in Television Studies fact have argued that the *seven-second profanity delay* means that live programming is a thing of the past entirely.
a concept that is used in Broadcast Studies. Auslander contends that he can adopt Couldry’s perspective because “[both telephony and hybrids] posit liveness as a technologically mediated relationship among human beings.” However, this claim does not explain Auslander’s underlying rational. His rational is that “live” (as a concept that is used in Theatre Studies and Performance) and “live” (as a concept that is used in Broadcast Studies) equally and similarly expanded beyond their intial scopes in response to emergent technologies. In sum, Auslander’s move is unsupported.

The ‘Intermedial Performance Analysis’ Group

‘Intermedial Performance Analysis’ was proposed by such scholars as Sarah Bryant Bertail, Freddie Rokem and Eli Rozik in 1991 under the auspices of IFTR. Their intent was to pursue an alternative analysis to those of theatre phenomenology and theatre semiotics:

This initiative reflected a sense of theoretical deadlocks and a genuine attempt to create a suitable method on inductive grounds, commencing from actual performance analyses […] [T]he aim was to understand the mechanisms that explain the generation of their meanings.” (Generating Theatre Meaning 6)

The intermedial perspective investigates the relationship between the performers and the audience as it is taking place in an environment of independent, yet connected media. It studies the hybrid performance practices as processes of negotiation between the medial
constituents such as cinema, television and digital technologies. As a method of analysis, “intermediality” focuses on “the proliferation of texts, medial spaces and intermedia relationships created when the live medium of theatre (and the other “live” performing arts) intersects with cinema, television and, in particular, digital technology” (“Intermediality in Theatre and Performance” n. pag.).

In support of the intermedial perspective, IFTR Intermedial Performance Analysis Group published two compendia containing over twenty research papers each, to demonstrate the potential of Intermedial Performance Analysis for the analysis of (hybrid) performance practices.⁶⁵ While those theorists located the medial processes in historical forms of theatrical expression such as Wagner’s Gesamtkunstwerk or Bauhaus, the intermedial perspective research method and models has been questioned and critiqued for their shaky foundations. Irina Rajewsky notes:

> From its beginnings, “intermediality” has served as an umbrella-term. A variety of critical approaches make use of the concept, the specific object of these approaches is each time defined differently, and each time intermediality is associated with different attributes and delimitations. The specific objectives pursued by different disciplines (e.g. media studies,

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literary studies, sociology, film studies, art history) in conducting intermedial research vary considerably. In addition, a host of related terms has surfaced in the discourse about intermediality which are themselves defined and used in a variety of ways (e.g. multimediality, plurimediality, crossmediality, infra-mediality, media-convergence, media-integration, media-fusion, hybridization, and so forth). More recently, researchers have begun to formally specify their particular conception of intermediality through such epithets as transformational, discursive, synthetic, formal, transmedial, ontological, or genealogical intermediality, primary and secondary intermediality, or so-called intermedial figuration. (44)

Greg Giesekam’s Staging the Screen (2007) offers an example of a work that analyzes hybrid productions on the stage using the lense of Intermediality. Giesekam investigates the use of projection technologies on the stage. He draws a distinction between “multimedia productions” and “intermedia productions.” Multimedia productions utilize film, video, or other media alongside live performance in much the same ways as costume, lighting, or sets are used, “to locate the action and suggest particular interpretive approaches to it” (8). By contrast, “intermedia” productions feature “extensive interaction” between performers and media, often to the extent that neither the live nor the recorded material “would make much sense without the other” (8). He contends that this basic interdependence between multimedia and intermedia productions challenges efforts to isolate theatre from film and video: in “work scenography, mise-en-
scène and dramaturgy are less easily disentangled, as the use of recorded media and live relay multiplies the scope of possible incidents, source materials, interactions, intertexts and issues, and the ways of presenting and perceiving them” (10). Giesekam is unable to study audience reception in a meaningful way. He is unable to theorize about the subject matter that is projected either as produced live (that is, in the time of audience), as pre-recorded, or as virtual (for instance, CGI). In sum, Giesekam’s analysis is restrained: those are questions that he simply cannot ask due to the limited power of the classification model. This limitation cuts to the heart of the problem: Intermedial performance analysis negates the classification between “live” and “recorded.”

Chiel Kattenbelt thinks that the intermedial perspective eliminates the question about theatre’s ontology:

From a trans- and intermedial perspective it is important to examine to what extent these changes and correlations [between media] have been decisive for the development of new modes of experience and expression. We need also to question how much the ontology of media is relevant, assuming that the dynamics of trans- and intermedial processes primarily concern the mutual relations between materiality, mediality and aesthetic convention of making and perceiving. However, for research on media changes and co-relations between media, the interdisciplinary arts practice is the main point of reference. (22)

Kattenbelt assumes that the classification principles are primarily based on “materiality,
mediality and aesthetic convention of making and perceiving.” However, a cursory glance reveals that the field is governed by an abundance of media topologies that propose classification models which try to categorize the proliferation of texts. Kattenbelt’s question “how much the ontology of media is relevant […] for research on media changes and co-relations between media” (27) is based on an assumption that one can bypass the critical investigation of pre-imposed taxonomies because the intermedial method is concerned with intermedia relationships. However, this perspective fails to acknowledge that there can be no “neutral” or “objective” way to select properties, or criteria, for classification. Any selection of criteria, or properties reflects the specific objectives of those that developed the classification (Ørom). Therefore, it is critical for the intermedial researcher to gain an understanding of the context wherein taxonomy was developed. Additionally, the reseacher’s approach, i.e., the act of framing a particular performance practice implicitly imposes a taxonomy (or, media topology) onto the

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66 Some taxonomic schemas draw from categories like space and time. Other criteria that have been proposed include sensory distinctions based on which senses are involved – for instance, auditive, alfactory, tactile, and gustative; physical differences such as motion or stillness; material support; dimensionality; social/cultural status (art or non-art); technical reproducibility, author function; degree of reciprocity between sender and receiver; characteristic codes (digital or analog; indexical, iconic, or symbolic); interaction level such as observational, navigational, participatory, co-authoring, and intercommunication; and so on. See, for instance, Marshall McCluhan’s Understanding Media (1964), Lev Manovich’s The Language of New Media (2002), Michael Noll’s The Evolution of Media (2007), Andrea Valente and Emanuela Marchetti’s “Interaction Models for Audience-Artwork Interaction” (2012).
object of study. Consequently, the “lense” will both shape and inform both the design of
the study and its findings. This is inevitable. However, it is critical that the researcher is
aware of this process so that she can account for its reverberations in the study’s
methodological approach. In sum, it would be a mistake to ignore the impact of a
classification model and of the process of classifying. The critical assessment of pre-
imposed taxonomies is an essential part of the methodology of the existing intermedial
research projects. Kattenbelt’s claim reveals a lack of understanding that the problem
which prompted the development of “intermediality” is the product of a taxonomic crisis.

Another illustration of how intermedia theorists erroneously think that they can dispense with taxonomies is offered in *Interfaces of Performance*. In the opening pages, editors Maria Chatzichristodoulou and Rachel Zerihan firmly assert:

> As technologies become increasingly integrated into theatre and performance practice, this volume aims to investigate emergent paradigms while at the time consciously avoids offering or imposing taxonomies upon such varied practices. Taxonomies require the classification of things into groups based on their formal characteristics and often entail hierarchies. […] The proposed approach intends to unpack conceptual, aesthetic and societal elements of performance practice, investigating the strategic use of a diverse spectrum of technologies as a means to artistic ends. The focus of this analysis is neither on the formal characteristics of these practices, nor on the types of technology employed. Instead, we
embark on an investigation of the practitioners’ ideas, objectives and concerns; we ask how these artists employ technologies in order to research new dramaturgies and methodologies for the creation of more e/affective experiences for, and encounters with, their audiences. (1-2)

However, the fragment continues as follows:

In order to align the structure of this analysis into the process of integrating technologies into the current practices, we began by identifying five core elements that we consider integral to the make-up of all performance, namely; Bodies, Affect, Environment, Politics and Audiences. Exploring diverse types of current digital, networked, virtual or technologized performance, this volume asks what becomes of these core performance elements once information and communication technologies become integrated as a sixth core element of practice. (2)

The identification of “five core elements” and the believe that those elements can be integrated implies that the authors operate on a classification model. The authors list practices, such as “digital, networked, virtual or technologized performance.” Unless those labels are used synonymous (which does not appear to be the case), this differentiation equally implies that principles of classification are deployed.
The ‘Performance-as-Cultural Memory’ Group

Theorists such as Joseph Roach (1996), Marvin Carlson (The Haunted Stage 2003), Diana Taylor (2003), and Rebecca Schneider (2011) observed that live performance includes both inscribed recordings (e.g., the material aspects of theatre production such as scripts, props, costume, and so on) and embodied recordings (expressed, for instance, as recitation/enunciation, gesture, and movement). Taylor, who investigates written and embodied histories as commemorations of a contested past, writes: “[p]erformances function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity through reiterated, or what Richard Schechner has called ‘twice-behaved behavior’” (2-3). Schneider, who focuses on historical re-enactments, equally challenges the preconception that “performance” is “the antithesis of preservation.”

The live act does not necessarily, or does not only, precede that which has been set down. In the dramatic theatre, the live is a troubling trace of a precedent text and so (herein lies the double trouble) comes afterward, even arguably remains afterward, as a record of the text set in play. (89-90)

The subsistence of those artefacts through time as text documents, costumes, buildings, and even bones undermines ontology theorists, such as Schechner and Phelan, who define “performance” – including ritual, sport events, political manifestations, and so on – in terms of “ephemerality, “transience,” and “disappearance,” and oppose
“performance” with technologically-mediated forms of performance which they associate with “permanence.” By those definitions, “performance” is a singular event that is tied to neither past nor future.

In their writings, Roach, Carlson, Schneider and Taylor reflect on the relationship between past and present, history and cultural memory, documentation and the archive within the context of “performance.” They believe that by looking at “performance” as a continuum of intercultural exchange that reinvents, recreates, and restores history they are advancing a new perspective. However, their solution is pragmatic: they normalize hybrids (i.e., “performances” that are infused with recorded practices) yet ignore that “performance” is, supposedly, predicated on the dichotomy between “live” and “recorded.” In sum, their arguments are based on a reductive definition of “recorded.”

In Performance Remains, Schneider also takes a stab at Auslander’s argument that “the live is that which requires recording to remain” (90), or, as Auslander puts it “the ‘live’ can be defined only as ‘that which can be recorded’” (“Live and Technologically Mediated Performance” 56). She finds this claim to be an oversimplification, or as she put it “apparently simple:”

Consider, simply, a pose. A pose is a posture, a stance, struck in reiterative gesture often signifying precedent. In this way, a pose can be said to be reenactive, citational. Even if the precise original of a pose is unclear, or nonexistent, there is still a citational quality to posing due to the fact that a pose is arrested, even if momentarily, in what is otherwise experienced as
a flow in time. The pose articulates an interval, and so, in Henri Bergson’s sense, is given to multiple and simultaneous time(s). (90)

Next, Schneider turns the tables and problematizes the way in which “live” is defined in connection with performance as “not a recording:” “[b]ut a recording itself can be live: a recording made of a live musical event is a ‘live recording’ […] To consider the live a record of precedent material flips on its head the supposition that the live is that which requires recording to remain” (90). Like Auslander, Schneider is playing out theorems such as ‘live is that which is not-recorded,’ and ‘recorded is that which is not-live’ against each-other. And, like Auslander, she concludes that definitions of “performance” that are based on binary opposites (or as Auslander put it, “ontological oppositions”) are not useful: “Clearly, a definition of “live” based on antonyms will prove problematic. […] An ongoing tangle – a meantime – between live and dead, or live and recording, cannot usefully be approached only by way of strictly binarized antonyms” (90).67

Essentially, Schneider defines “live” in an extra-ordinary way which allows her to

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67 “Far from being encroached upon, contaminated, or threatened by mediation, live performance is always already inscribed with traces of the possibility of technical mediation (i.e., mediatization) that defines it as live. […] The immediate is not prior to mediation but derives precisely from the mutually defining relationship between the immediate and the mediate. Similarly, live performance cannot be said to have ontological or historical priority over mediatization, since liveness was made visible only by the possibility of technical reproduction [.].” (Auslander qtd. in Performance Remains 91)
normalize those hybrids as manifestations of “performance.” However, the absence of any theory or logic reasoning to support this move means that Schneider’s theory (i.e., the notion that in the context of live performance, “live” is not “that what is not recorded”) is apodictic. To support her conclusion, Schneider instead adduces practices such “liturgy, or any inscribed set of performatives written to require repetition where [like drama] repetition is both reiteration of precedent and the performance of something occurring ‘again for the first time’” (90). However, Schneider uses the observation that recordings and recorded behaviors can coexist with live practices to support her theory. This reverses the burden of proof. Essentially Schneider puts the cart before the horse.

In conclusion, ‘Performance-as-Cultural Memory’ theorists try to come to terms with the fact that “performance” includes recordings and is itself the product of a process of recording. They try to account for the fact that the materials which remain like residue after the end of the performance event often become part of new performances. However, like the ontology theorists, their theories are based on reductive conceptualizations of “recorded.”

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68 Schneider traces “again for the first time” to Andrew Benjamin’s Present Hope: Philosophy, Architecture, Judaism (2005). Yet, the phrase echoes and aligns with Schechner’s definition of performance as “restored behavior” or “twice-behaved behavior” (Between Theater & Anthropology 36-37) by which he suggests that performance is always subject to revision and reinvention, never happening in exactly the same way twice.
The ‘Cognitive Turn’ Group

Cognitive Science is an umbrella term that encompasses specializations that study the nature of the mind by drawing from research in a number of areas including psychology, neuroscience, artificial intelligence, computer science, linguistics, philosophy, and biology. Cognitive scientists seek to understand mental processes such as perceiving, thinking, remembering, understanding language, and learning. John Lutterbie summarizes the appeal, or promise, that Cognitive Sciences holds for theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies as follows:

Cognitive approaches are unified by two ideas. The first is that to understand the arts, we need to understand psychology. […] Now that psychology has undergone its empiricist revolution, literary and performance scholars should rejoice in the fact that our psychological claims are on firmer footing. Second, is the idea that scholarship in this field should be generally empirical, falsifiable, and open to correction by new evidence and better theories — as are the sciences themselves. (x)

Bruce McConachie equally emphasizes “falsifiability:”

Cognitive science can offer empirically tested insights that are directly relevant to many of the abiding concerns of theatre and performance studies, including theatricality, audience reception, meaning making, identity formation, the construction of culture, and processes of historical
change. The key terms here – and ones that differentiate *Performance and Cognition* from nearly all other books about theory and practice in our field – are “science” and “empirically tested.” (*Performance and Cognition* x)

By 2001, papers were being presented at American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR) seminars and articles were appearing in theatre journals and scholarly collections, and by 2004 there were working groups at both ASTR and the Performance Studies Focus Group preconference of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE). Theorists such as Bruce McConachie (2002; 2006; 2008; 2013), Rhonda Blair (2007), Amy Cook (2010), John Lutterbie (2011), and Teemu Paavolainen (2012) believe that cognitive science provides a more sound theoretical grounding for the study of “meaning-production” on the stage. For instance, McConachie points to Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner’s Conceptual Blending Theory that can contribute to an understanding of the way in which spectators understand theatrical doubleness and action on the stage, i.e., how spectators balance or blend their “readings” of the various

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personas of the actor/character during a performance. McConachie also references the widely publicized “mirror neuron theory” which suggests that the human brain mirrors action – including feelings of emotion.\textsuperscript{70} Previously, theorists relied on the Semiotic and the Phenomenological method. Those methodologies study “meaning” as the product of the relationship between the spectator (subject) and the constitutive sign systems, audience included. Both the “subject” and the “object” were theorized as spatiotemporal “units.” This “disembodied realism” was critiqued by Lakoff and Johnson:

Disembodied scientific realism creates an unbridgeable ontological chasm between objects which are “out there,” and subjectivity, which is “in there.” Once the separation is made there are only two possible, and equally erroneous, conceptions of objectivity: Objectivity is either given by the things themselves (the objects) or by the intersubjective structure of consciousness shared by all people (the subjects). … The alternative we propose, embodied realism, relies on the fact that we are coupled to the

\textsuperscript{70} Mirror neurons are neurons that fire, or activate, when a subject acts, emotes or experiences a certain sensation, and also when a subject observes a target acting, emoting or experiencing a certain sensation. For instance, one scientific experiments that was conducted by Beatriz Calvo-Merino (et al.) involved professional dancers. The study has shown that when one observes someone performing an action some of the areas in the brain are activated (neuronal activity) as though the observer is undertaking the observed action. This led Calvo-Merino to suggest that the human brain understands actions by motor simulation.
world through our embodied interactions. … What disembodied realism misses … is that, as embodied, imaginative creatures, we never were separated or divorced from reality in the first place. (qtd. in “Falsifiable Theories for Theatre and Performance Studies” 566)

McConachie believes that the challenge that theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies face is caused by the difficulty to overcome the dichotomy between subjective meaning (or signification) and the world of objects (for instance, on the stage). Following in the footsteps of Lakoff and Johnson, McConachie thinks that the paradigm that is active in Cognitive Sciences resolve this issue because it conceives “the object” as a mental representation that is already a part of the spectator’s subjectivity: 71

[cognitive science] has discovered an interactional relationship that occurs prior to any cognitive distinctions between subjects and objects and that does not rely on signification. […] Although audiences must also interpret spoken language and engage in other mental operations when they watch

71 Amy Cook accepts the same fundamental premise as McConachie. Cook writes: “In The Way We Think, Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner expand upon metaphor theory to argue that meaning is often constructed not simply from source to target, but as blends of mental spaces. Information is projected from two or more input spaces to a blended space, such that the blended space contains information and structure from more than one domain. Importantly, the blended space contains emergent structure not available from the input; the collision is synergistic” (Cook, “Interplay” 581).
actors performing, interactional simulation seems to be primary. […]}

[T]he mind does not need to generate signs or holistic images and then manipulate these complex representations to understand human action on the stage [.] (“Falsifiable Theories for Theatre and Performance Studies” 565)

McConachie accepts that the cognitive perspective precludes this subject-object dualism. He reasons that since the binary opposition between the “I” of the human mind (i.e., the conceiver) and the mental representation (i.e., the conceived) is dissolved, the problem of “interpretation” is solved. However, the cognitive perspective rather than dissolving the dualism, merely displaces the dualism by re-situating it within the subject. So, McConachie may be pitching his expectations too high.

Magerko et al. (2009) tried to integrate a cognitive approach to the study of theatre performance:

The goal of the research […] is to acquire a deeper understanding of human creativity and cognition through an empirical study of improv. By conducting a large-scale study of performing human improvisers, we hope to build an understanding of the cognitive processes of both novices and experts when improvising a scene on stage. (118)

The study, however, is severely flawed because of its data collection methods and verification methods. Magerko and his collaborators relied on retrospective interviews to
collect their principal data:

[video capture from the performance is played back to the participant with the interviewer stopping the video at short intervals to allow the participant to describe what they were thinking about each action in the scene. Per a typical retrospective protocol collection, improvisers are asked to describe what they were thinking at the time of the activity. They are specifically asked not to critique their performance, nor to concern themselves with their thoughts after the performance concluded. Rather, they are prompted at each phase of the performance to discuss their thoughts in the moment each action was being performed. (120)

Conscious introspection provides little knowledge about one’s cognitive process because cognition precedes and informs both the act of seeing (perception) and the act of communication thus making bias inevitable. None of the participants in the above study was subjected to any method of brain scanning as is standard procedure in cognitive science research. The researchers were unable to monitor the performers’ brain activity in real-time. At long last, in 2010 McConachie expressed his disappointment because the problem persisted and had not yet been resolved:

I must admit that the experiments I was hoping to inspire have not occurred; we are not closer to discovering similarities and differences between, say, theatrical and filmic viewing than we were three years ago.
There are many reasons for this, ranging from the continuing animus toward science in our field to the difficulties of setting up such experiments. ("An Evolutionary Perspective on Live and Mediated Popular Performance" 27)

"Presence" as the Philosopher’s Stone

The problem of classifying hybridity unsettles “liveness” as the cornerstone of Performance Studies as a discipline because hybridization undermines the alleged dichotomy between “performance” and technologically-mediated forms of performance. To legitimize Performance Studies as an autonomous field of study, several theorists in Performance Studies tried to find an alternative foundational principle to replace “liveness”. Theorists such as Gabriella Giannachi and Nick Kaye (2011), Erika Fischer-Lichte (2008), and Jane Goodall (2008) embraced “presence” as the philosopher’s stone. Consider Fischer-Lichte who writes:

Through their singing, especially in the higher pitches, the singers exude what I have called presence. They radiate a tremendous energy which the voice spreads through the space and that physically takes hold of the listeners. Detached from language, the voice emerges as the opposite of logos. Having escaped the power of rationality, the voice becomes dangerous and seductive. To succumb to it does not necessarily lead to downfall and death as the story of the sirens forewarns. It rather promises

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the equally lustful and terrifying emotional experience of one’s own corporeality at its most sensual and simultaneously its most transfigured.

(The Transformative Power of Performance 127)

Joseph Chaikin was among the first to identify “presence” as the “heart” of all theatre: “You’re there in that particular space in that room, breathing in that room . . . That’s what the theater is. It’s this demonstration of presence on some human theme or other and in some form or other” (qtd. in Blumenthal 40). For Chaikin, “presence” means that the theatre spectator and the theatre performer share a spatiotemporal frame. Since the opposite of “presence” is “absence,” theorists have gradually re-conceived “presence” as the performer’s psychophysical appeal (i.e., charisma, magnetism, charm, personality, allure and flair) which affect a spectator’s appreciation. Thus, “presence” came to mean “a sense of being there” even when “there” is no longer a physical space. Kwan Min Lee, for instance, defines presence as “a psychological state in which virtual objects are experienced as actual objects in either sensory or nonsensory ways” (abstract). In this sense, “presence” can lie at the center of any mediated experience ranging from theatre and cinema, to television, or to the experience of being immersed in a virtual environment, or when reading a novel. More importantly, when “presence” is used in this affective sense, it becomes indexical. In other words, “presence” is always the presence of something. It follows then that when “presence” denotes charisma, its opposite is not just “absence,” but “the absence of charisma.” As Ann Wilson observed, “this absolute validation of ‘presence’ assumes a very particular, and questionable, notion of what
exactly is present: namely, the authentic, essential self, whole and pure, recuperated from the fragmenting effect of modern technology” (qtd. in Nunn 36). This empty binarism poses considerable problems for those theorists who want to use “presence” as a classification principle or as a founding principle for LIVE PERFORMANCE. They spend their time trying to define the concept of “presence” in the absence of its binary opposite instead of investigating the validity of the (mis-)application of this concept. In short, “presence” is a very shaky founding principle for Performance Studies, which focuses exclusively on forms of LIVE PERFORMANCE (unlike Media Studies, Broadcast Studies, New Media Studies, etc. which focus on forms of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE).

Remediation Theorists

Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin examine the relationship between a user and a media text or, more specifically, the user’s involvement with a text. They propose that

72 For instance, film theorist André Bazin (1967) argued that a screen-actor can have presence too: “Presence, naturally, is defined in terms of time and space. ‘To be in the presence of someone’ is to recognize him as existing contemporaneously with us and to note that he comes within the actual range of our senses – in the case of cinema of our sight and in radio of our hearing. Before the arrival of photography and later of cinema, the plastic arts (especially portraiture) were the only intermediaries between actual physical presence and absence” (96).

73 For a critique of the ways in which theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies have deployed the concept of “presence” as a foundational principle for “performance, see, for instance, Cormac Power’s Presence in Play (2008).
“new technologies of representation proceed by reforming or remediating earlier ones” (352). They refer to this process whereby aesthetics are appropriated by and shared between media as “remediation.” Remediation is essentially “the representation of one medium in another” (45). In addition to remediation, they consider immediacy and hypermediacy as defining characteristic of “the new digital media.” Bolter and Grusin note their use of the terms immediacy and hypermediacy can have both an epistemological and a psychological meaning:

In the epistemological sense, immediacy is transparency: the absence of mediation or representation. It is the notion that a medium could erase itself and leave the viewer in the presence of the objects represented, so that he could know the objects directly. In its psychological sense, immediacy names the viewer’s feeling that the medium has disappeared and the objects are present to him, a feeling that his experience is therefore authentic. Hypermediacy also has two corresponding senses. In its epistemological sense, hypermediacy is opacity—the fact that knowledge of the world comes to us through media. The viewer acknowledges that she is in the presence of a medium and learns through acts of mediation or indeed learns about mediation itself. The psychological sense of hypermediacy is the experience that she has in and of the presence of media; it is the insistence that the experience of the medium is itself an experience of the real. The appeal to authenticity of experience is what
brings the logics of immediacy and hypermediacy together. (70-71)

According to Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, a sense of immediacy is achieved by both “removing the programmer/creator from the image” while also “involving the viewer more intimately in the image” (Bolter and Grusin 30).

Performance Studies theorist Andy Lavender observes that Bolter and Grusin neglected to include theatre:

Interestingly, Bolter and Grusin’s book does not include theatre among the various media where the authors observe the effects of hypermediacy at work. However, their comments do describe well some of the effects that structure contemporary performance in which there is a combination of screened images and live action. (56)

Lavender thinks that Bolter and Grusin’s approach can be usefully applied to the study of “the relationship between stage and screen [and] the ways in which their very co-relation produces effects of immediacy that are deeply involving – more, deeply pleasurable – for spectators” (56). Lavender ignores that any staged object (such as props, scenery, image projection, sound objects, sound object, including live actors) retains its medium-specificity. Like Lavender, Telma João Santor (2013) and Bert Vandenbussche (2003) made the same error of introducing the lense of remediation to study of live performance.
C. Synthesis

As I have discussed earlier, many theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies believe that the manifest existence of hybrids conflicts with the classification model that draws a polarity between “performance” and technologically-mediated forms of communication (such as cinema, radio and television). The preceding comparison and juxtaposition of “discursive formations” of theories and models proposed in Theatre Studies, Performance Studies, and Broadcast Studies were informed by Foucault’s “archeological method.”

I identified various “schools of thought” (ontology theorists, cultural memory theorists, contingency theorists, and so on) and demonstrated that while they reach opposite conclusion they deploy theorizations and strategies that are essentially identical. They are concerned with the study of “liveness,” seeking principle(s) that uniquely define theatre and set it apart from other types of performance even though the concept of “liveness” has been contested. Many of these theorists construe a reductive definition of “recorded” that considers only recordings that are inscribed. By doing so, they limit the concept of “recording” to signify “identical copy” and “uniform reproducibility.” Other theorists question the cogency of tenets such as “live” and “liveness.” Instead, they advance substitute concepts such as “variability,” “risk,” “spontaneity,” “unpredictability,” and “community.” However, as I have shown, those concepts are placeholders for “un-recordedness.” Thus, when those theorists associate LIVE PERFORMANCE with “variability,” “risk,” “spontaneity,” “unpredictability,” and “community,” they are actually reinforcing the dichotomy “live/recorded.” In addition to
deploying reductive definitions, contingency theorists (such as Auslander) dislodge the oppositional binary between THE LIVE and THE RECORDED by claiming that the concepts of “live” and “liveness” are “historically contingent.” The core issue that causes this crisis is taxonomic. So, any attempts to end the crisis by construing a definition of “performance” perpetuate a concept that, as we will see, is epistemologically unfounded and their theorizing merely reinforces the ontology. The intermedial theorists ignore the taxonomy all together and do not attempt to end the crisis. They simply continue to do “scholarship” within the self-imposed confines of their research paradigm. As for those theorists who eagerly, yet uncritically adopt existing theories, taxonomies and nomenclature to serve their own research goals (from flow theory to remediation) they import concepts and categories from a host of other disciplines (from philosophy and critical theory to philosophy and political theory). In doing so, many theorists in Performance Studies adopt grand theories by overlooking the fact that most of the psychoanalytical, poststructuralist and neo-Marxist studies rely on “protocols” which are normative and for the most part speculative. The ramifications are two-fold: a) The “findings” of past and present studies on “performance” rely on untested assumptions; b) the uncritical application of theories incite other theorists to apply those unfounded

74 See, for instance, Martin Puchner’s and Kenneth Burke’s “Theater, Philosophy, and the Limits of Performance” (2006), and Bruce McConachie’s “Falsifiable Theories for Theatre and Performance Studies” (2007).
theorizations in a comparable uncritical fashion. However, repetition validates neither a
theory nor the infallibility of its methodology.

In this chapter, I have advanced a critique of the prevalent theories and
epistemologies in both Theatre Studies and Performance Studies, and Broadcast Studies.
I have shown that those theories are ill-conceived and unproductive. In addition, I have
shown that theorizations that address the tenet of “performance” fail to advance credible
alternatives or merely reassert the binary “live/recorded.” Theorists in both Theatre
Studies and Performance Studies and in Broadcast Studies have responded to the
limitations of their strained model precisely in the manner described by Thomas Kuhn in
Structure: As hitherto accepted models become strained, there is a period of transition
during which more and more elaborate modifications of the accepted system are created.
In fact, those modifications preserve the system. Perhaps the best-known example is the
replacement of the old Ptolemaic astronomical system by Copernicus, whose famous
preface demonstrated clearly that the attempts to save the old system by more and more
adjustments, adding epicycles to cycles, at last had created a system so cumbersome that
it was both unworkable and unacceptable.

My interrogation of the literature in both Theatre Studies and Performance
Studies, and Broadcast Studies strengthens my thesis that the origin of the crisis is
taxonomic. Therefore, I am advocating a drastic revision of the current paradigm that
defines theatre and “performance” in opposition with technologically-mediated forms of
performance. However, one cannot advance a new paradigm without thoroughly and
systematically refuting the prevalent paradigm and the theories that support it. The next chapter is concerned with the semantic relationships that govern the taxonomy. In particular, I will investigate the origin and the development of the dichotomy “live/recorded” which undergirds the classification of theater and “performance” in opposition with technologically-mediated forms of performance.
CHAPTER 3:
THE TAXONOMIC PRINCIPLES

A. Why is ‘Live Performance’ not Live?

The Search for the Native Meaning of the Word “Live” and Why it Matters

The English word “live” is polysemous. For instance, when the term “live” is used in relation to manifestations of IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE (such as performance in everyday life and on the theatre stage), “live” means that the spectator and the performer share a spatiotemporal frame. The term “live” is also used in relation to manifestations of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (such as performance on the radio and on television). When the term “live” is used in relation to performance on the radio and on television, “live” typically means that the spectator and the performer share a temporal frame, but not a spatial frame. In addition, the term “live” is used in relation to modes of performance that do not involve living bodies. For instance, theatrical performances that are distributed (so-called cyberformances) are experienced by a collective audience that is united temporally, but not spatially “since each participant is located at her or his workstation anywhere in the world” (Nelson 310). Another example are theatrical performances that
are presented by robots, as discussed, for instance by Auslander ("Live From Cyberspace" 2002; “Humanoid Boogie” 2006). In such contexts, the term “live” describes performances that are mediated, yet not recorded (and by extension are regarded as “live”).

The binary opposition “live.recorded” is further complicated by the existence of forms of-mediated performance that are not recorded. For instance, radio and television can be either live or recorded. Therefore, the dichotomy between immediate performance and mediated performance as predicated by the current concept of “liveness” can be re-articulated in terms of “live” vs. “not-live.”

Since the definition of “liveness” is changing over time, these semantic shifts have prompted two questions: (a) what is causing the changes? and (b) is change predictable? A logical point of departure for most performance theorists has been the meaning of “liveness” when it was first used in relation to performance. For instance, Sarah Thornton, who documented the early history of the use of records for public performance in the UK, traced the term “live” to the 1950s when the British Musician’s Union launched campaigns “to combat the menace” of recorded music that affected the livelihood of musicians:

At first, the word ‘live’ was short for ‘living’ and modified ‘musicians’ as in the following passage: ‘during and since the war, recorded music has been used more and more instead of “live” instrumentalists’ (Musicians’ Union Report 1949). Later it referred to music itself and quickly
accumulated connotations which took it beyond the denotative meaning of performance. [...] Through a series of condensations, then, the expression ‘live music’ gave positive valuation to and became generic for performed music. (41-42)

Auslander, in turn, dated the first use of the word “live” to 1934:

[T]he *Oxford English Dictionary’s* earliest examples of the use of the word “live” in reference to performance come from 1934, well after the advent of sound-recording technologies in the 1890s and the development of broadcasting systems in the 1920s. (*Liveness* 58; rev. ed.)

Steve Dixon, on the other hand, related the notion of liveness to “the incorporation of film footage into live theater” (115-116). Contrary to Thornton and Auslander who relate “live” to sound, Dixon relates “live” to “lens-based optical recording technology, that is to say, a photographic system” (115-116). However, the concept of “live” is also used in the context of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE. Surprisingly, the theorists in Broadcast Studies have not challenged the common assumption that the concept of “liveness” predates MEDIATED PERFORMANCE, nor did they offer alternative theories. Auslander’s claim will be used in this chapter as a starting point to trace the semantic shifts of the term “liveness” in connection to performance.
Philip Auslander and the Historicity of “Live”

In his book *Liveness* (1999; 2008), Auslander examines the status of live performance “in a culture ever more dominated by mass media” (*Liveness* xi; rev. ed.) In developing his thesis that the meaning of “liveness” is historically contingent and changes in response to technological development Auslander echoes some of the views which Steve Wurtzler articulated in his 1992 article “She Sang Live, but the Microphone was Turned Off.” It would seem that Auslander misinterprets Wurtzler arguments. In addition, Wurtzler makes errors, too. Hence, it is worthwhile revisiting Wurtzler.

Auslander situates his investigation in the specific context of theatre versus television. Conversely, Wurtzler analyzes “liveness” in relation to music performance. He investigates the conflict between the Ontological View (that holds that performance is either live or recorded) and the fact that the word “live” is also used in relation to music performances that are not truly live. For instance, the word “live” is used in relation to lip-synch performances. The word “live” is also used in relation to music concerts that frequently include recorded elements such as “audio playback of prerecorded material, and large screen video representations of onstage events” (92). Another baffling use of the term is the *live* music album. Wurtzler also points out that the term “liveness” cannot
accurately describe “music samples.”

Table 2. Steve Wurtzler classifies performance events according to the spatial and the temporal proximity of the spectators to the “event.”

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75 Music samples are *bits of music*. The music sample is a music performance that is neither live nor recorded because nothing precedes it so the music sample is not a recording of anything.

76 The graph illustrates how the spectators position themselves in time and in space to the “event” that is posited by the representation Wurtzler defines “the live” and “the recorded” as follows: “[t]he live is characterized by the spatial co-presence and the temporal simultaneity of audience and posited event. The recorded is characterized by the event’s spatial absence and temporal anteriority” (89).

Wurtzler situates lip-synch performances in quadrant III. This, however, is an error. Quadrant III includes performance practices whereby the spectator-performer relationship is co-
Wurtzler concluded that the socially constructed categories “live” and “recorded” cannot account for all representational practices. He provides a graph that shows that the category “live” occupies quadrant I, yet the term “live” is also used in relation to representational practices that are situated in quadrants I, II, III, and IV (Table 2).

Wurtzler then proceeds to investigate the discursive strategies that the music industry deploys to “reinstate the hierarchical binary [between an original music performance and spatial but not co-temporal. On an experiential level, lip-synch performance fuses choreography that is accompanied by a pre-recorded music performance. However, this type of performance is identical to performances that are situated in quadrant II. Wurtzler mistakes a dissociation between the visual elements and the auditory elements that characterize a lip-synch performance for a dissociation between the temporal and the spatial dimensions that characterize the spectator-performer relationship. Wurtzler’s table represents how various performance practices are conceived by the consumers, but there is no evidence that spectators think of lip-synch performance as spatially present and temporally anterior.

Essentially, the Wurtzler table shows that both lexical vocabularies (featuring the terms “live” and “recorded”) have been conflated which corroborates Kuhn’s thesis that terms cannot be imported from one scientific lexicon to another.

Wurtzler puts “event” in quotation marks to clarify his point that contemporary music production technologies now produce recordings for which there exists no original. For Wurtzler, the absence of an original complicates the notion that products such as the live music album can be categorized as MEDIATED PERFORMANCE. For instance, a music sample such as the TR-808 handclap sound refers to an “event” that never took place. Similarly, contemporary live music albums – almost invariably – merge music fragments that are recorded at different concerts, and include studio recordings, samples, redubs, and sound enhancement technologies. Thus, the “live concert” may have never taken place. For Wurtzler, those practices point to a conception of representation in which “representation is conceived of as the complete dismantling of the notion of an original event. In such practices, copies are produced for which no original exists. Under such circumstances, the binary opposition “live/recorded” takes on a new importance, in that the live comes to stand for a category of authenticity completely outside representation” (88). See also Steve Connor (1987).

Source: Steve Wurtzler, “‘She Sang Live, but the Microphone Was Turned Off,’” Sound Theory, Sound Practice (New York: Routledge, 1992):89.
its representation] through criticism, promotion and other discursive means” (95).

Auslander reproduces ‘the Wurtzler table’ in *Liveness*, but then he adds the following interpretation:

Wurtzler challenges this binary opposition by asserting that ‘the socially constructed categories live and recorded cannot account for all representational practices.’ He offers a chart in which various kinds of events are positioned according to spatial and temporal vectors. Two categories of representations that are neither purely live nor purely recorded emerge: those in which performance and audience are spatially separate but temporally co-present, e.g., live television or radio, and those in which performance and audience are spatially co-present but elements of the performance are pre-recorded, e.g., lip-synched concerts, instant replays on stadium video displays. (*Liveness* 3; footnote, rev. ed.)

Like Wurtzler, Auslander initiates the discussion by referencing high-profile lip-synch scandals of the early 1990s that involved the singer Whitney Houston and the pop-duo Milli-Vanilli. According to Auslander, Wurtzler challenges the binary opposition between the ontology of immediate performance as live and mediated performance as recorded. Auslander reiterates Wurtzler’s statement that “the socially constructed categories live and recorded cannot account for all representational practices” (qtd. in *Liveness* 3; rev. ed.). However, Auslander misinterprets and misrepresents Wurtzler. Auslander overlooks the fact that, for Wurtzler, the dichotomous relationship between
“live” and “recorded” is a *perception*, i.e. it is “socially constructed.” Wurtzler articulates the ontological view as follows:

As socially and historically produced, the categories of the live and the recorded are defined in a mutually exclusive relationship, in that a notion of the live is premised on the absence of recording and the defining fact of the recorded is premised on the absence of recording and the defining fact of the recorded is the absence of the live. (qtd. in *Liveness* 3; rev. ed.)

Wurtzler writes that the categories “live” and “recorded” are “by definition” mutually exclusive;” but he does not endorse this view. For Wurtzler, the idea that “live” and “recorded” are mutually exclusive categories is an acceptable contradiction, a paradox:

The apparent collapsing of distinctions between live and recorded, and the difficulty of theorizing a subject effect for the popular music concert, result from the simultaneous presence of two, by definition, mutually exclusive categories: the live and the recorded. Even though the live concert struggles to reinstate a notion of the fully present original event in popular music, the co-presence of the live and the recorded contribute to a potential crisis in our notions of a real that exists prior to representation.

(93-94)

Wurtzler posits that the “(potential) crisis” (which is caused by “the apparent collapsing of distinctions between live and recorded”) is the product of “social” and “historical”
causes without identifying them. His project is about the relationship of the consumer
(the audiophile, the record-buyer, the concert-goer) with the event (“posited by the
representation”).

Auslander’s discussion, on the other hand, is concerned with the intrinsic
relationship between the phenomenological categories of “live” and “mediatized” and the
way in which this relationship is misconstrued by ontology theorists such as Schechner,
Phelan, and Blau, among others. Wurtzler, however, did not challenge the notion that
there is a dichotomy between “live” and “recorded” (i.e., between IMMEDIATE
PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE) as Auslander seems to think.

Auslander posits that the concept of “live” is historically contingent and it was
brought into being in the 1890s when the concept of “recording” emerged. According to
Auslander, the gramophone was the first recording technology:

I want to emphasize that reproduction (recording) is the key issue. The
Greek theatre may have been technologically mediated, if one subscribes
to the theory that the masks acted as megaphones. What concerns me here,
however, is technological reproduction, not just technological mediation.
Greek theatrical masks may have amplified the actors’ voices, but they did
not reproduce them, in the manner of electric amplification. Throughout
history, performance has employed available technologies and has been
mediated in one sense or another. It is only since the advent of mechanical
and electric technologies of recording and reproduction, however, that
performance has been mediatized. (*Liveness* 57-58; rev. ed.)

Auslander insists that “live” only existed as a concept because, in the age of the gramophone and up until the age of radio, the difference between attending a live

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performance as opposed to attending a recorded performance was “experientially unproblematic”:

[With] sound recording, the distinction between live performances and recordings remained experientially unproblematic. If you put a record on your gramophone and listened to it, you knew exactly what you were doing and there was no possibility of mistaking the activity of listening to a record for that of attending a live performance. (Liveness 59-60; rev. ed.)

OED dates the first use of the word “live” in relation to performance to 1934. This leads Auslander to reason that sound recording brought the concept of “live” into being whereas radio technology brought the term “live” into being.

It is significant that the earliest use or the word “live” in relation to performance listed in the OED has to do with the distinction between live and recorded sound, but not with the gramophone. The technology necessitating this usage was radio. [...] Unlike the gramophone, radio does not allow you to see the sources of the sounds you are hearing; therefore, you can never be sure if they are live or recorded. Radio’s characteristic form of sensory deprivation crucially undermined the clear-cut distinction between recorded and live sound. It appears, then, that the concept of the live was brought into being not just when it became possible to think in those terms – that is, when recording technologies such as the gramophone
were in place to serve as a ground against which the figure of the live
could be perceived – but only when it became urgent to do so. (*Liveness*
59; rev. ed.)

In short, for Auslander “live” only existed as a *concept*, and not as a *term*, simply because there was no need for a term such as “live.” Following the advent of radio technology, it became necessary to articulate the idea of “live” in 1934. Jon Erickson (2000) has critiqued Auslander’s argument as a “semantic quibble” because, for Auslander, a concept can exist only as a concept and not as a term. In the text fragment above, Auslander writes: “the development of recording technologies by the end of the
nineteenth century […] made it possible to perceive existing representations as ‘live’” (*Liveness* 56; rev. ed.). The difference between *concept* and *term* is critical for this section. I assume that Auslander meant to write “the *term* ‘live’ was brought into being” instead of “the *concept* of ‘live’ was brought into being.” Otherwise, Auslander contradicts his own claim that sound recording technology brought the *concept* of “live” into being, whereas radio technology brought the *term* “live” into being.

The advent of sound recording technologies was sufficient for the term “live” to come into existence. In the days before the talkies a phrase such as “with *live*
accompaniment” would allow an audience to differentiate between silent movies screened with live accompaniment, and silent movies screened without live accompaniment. This provides one more example that there were already opportunities for the words “live” and “recorded” to emerge prior to radio. Thomas A. Edison’s *Tone*
Tests (Figure 20) prove the unfounded nature of Auslander’s claim that there was no need for a term such as “live” during the age of the gramophone.

In the 1920s, the Edison Company organized a nationwide series of Tone Tests to demonstrate the verisimilitude of “Edison Records.” Audiences were plunged into darkness and had to discern a vocal live performance from a performance of the Edison phonograph. Auslander invokes the “maturation of society” to explain the forty-four year time lapse between the emergence of the concept of “live” in the 1890s and the emergence of the term “live” in 1934 (OED). However, he relates the emergence of the concept of “live” to sound recording technology (phonography) whereas he relates the emergence of the term “live” to broadcast technology (radio). The phonograph and the radio receiver serve different functions, i.e., (sound) recording and (sound) transmission respectively. He claims that it

78 For discussions of the Tone Tests and their importance to the phonograph industry, see Emily Thompson’s “Machines, Music, and the Quest for Fidelity” (1995), Jonathan Sterne’s The Audible Past (2003), and Steve Wurtzler’s Electric Sounds (2013).

79 Auslander attempted to counter a general criticism that his conclusion was marked by technological determinism and that he ignored “audience” as a factor. In 2009, he attempted to address those criticisms: “My emphasis on feedback and real-time operations slip into technological determinism by implying that technologies, rather than people, are the causal agents in the experience of digital liveness. The need for another way of approaching the question is clear simply from the fact that while real-time operations and the initiation of a feedback loop may be necessary conditions for the creation of the effect of liveness in our interactions with computers and virtual entities (digital liveness, in short), they are not sufficient conditions” (Reactivation: Performance, Mediatization and the Present Moment 82).
was radio that necessitated the term “live” because it “undermined the clear-cut
distinction between recorded and live sound” (Liveness 59; rev. ed.). This claim implies
that without the invention of broadcast technologies – or any technology that sensorially
“deprives” its audience – there would still be no term such as “live” and “live” would
only exist as a mere concept to this day.  

Auslander posits that the term “live” was initially used in connection to radio, and
that the relationship between “the live” and “the recorded” changed from a
complementary one to an oppositional one. In Liveness, he omits to clarify why the
relationship between “live” and “recorded” changed, i.e., what motivated this change?
Not until 2012 does he address this lacuna. He retains the fragment the way in which it
appeared in Liveness, but includes the following clause:

The word “live” was pressed into service as part of a vocabulary designed
to preserve this distinction discursively even if it could no longer be

80 Auslander’s definition and use of the term “mediatized” differs from Baudrillard’s. For
Baudrillard, who incidentally coined the term, “mediatized” describes the way in which the media
are constructing “the news” and “information” as ideological narratives. Importantly, for
Baudrillard, that which is mediatized is not restricted to the actual products of the media, whether
they be print, visual, or audio; mediatization also includes that which is defined by its relationship
to the media and which functions within the cultural parameters that have been set by the media:
“[w]hat is mediatized is not what comes off the daily press, out of the tube, or on the radio: it is
what is reinterpreted by the sign form, articulated into models, and administered by the code”
(Baudrillard qtd. in Liveness 5; rev. ed.). Auslander’s mis-appropriation has been criticized by
sustained experientially by the listener’s relationship to the technology.

*Because of the negative value attached to the use of recorded music in early broadcasting,* the distinction between the live and the recorded was conceived as one of binary opposition rather than complementarity.

(“Digital Liveness” 5) (emphasis added)

Auslander fails to provide support for his argument that the use of recorded music was valued negatively in early broadcasting. Moreover, how this then would relate to the transition remains unexplained.81 In other words, the argument is vague and demands more explanation. It appears that Auslander is drawing a correlation between the assessment - or valuing - of a particular experience (as either positive or negative) and the lexicon of a given language. However, this merely shifts the question: *if* the negative value attached to the use of recorded music in early broadcasting prompted a transition *how* then would the transition from complementarity to binary opposition resolve the issue that a negative value was attached to the use of recorded music? Auslander’s argument is nomothetic, and fails to provide a credible answer to the question “what motivates the desire ‘to preserve’, ‘to redefine’, ‘to reconceive’, and ‘to reinstate’ this

81 Sarah Thornton offers a similar speculative argument to explain how the term “live” transitioned from a spatiotemporal concept to a temporal concept: "Through a series of condensations, then, the expression ‘live music’ gave positive valuation to and became generic for performed music. It soaked up the aesthetic and ethical connotations of life-versus-death, human-versus-mechanical, creative-versus-imitative" (42).
former dichotomy?”

Auslander connected the emergence of “live” to technology. Therefore, he is compelled to define “recorded” in similar technological terms:

[L]ive performance cannot be said to have ontological or historical priority over mediatization, since liveness was made visible only by the possibility of technical reproduction. […] This means that the history of live performance is bound up with the history of recording media; it extends over no more than the past 100 to 150 years. […] Prior to the advent of those technologies (e.g., sound recording and motion pictures), there was no such thing as live performance […] I propose that, historically, the live is actually an effect of mediatization, not the other way around. It was the development of recording technologies that made it possible to perceive existing representations as “live.” Prior to the advent of those technologies (e.g., sound recording and motion pictures), there was no such thing as “live” performance, for that category has meaning only in relation to an opposing possibility. The ancient Greek theatre, for example, was not live because there was no possibility of recording it.

(“Live and Technologically Mediated Performance 56)

However, Auslander insists that the emergence of the concept of “live” is related to sound recording technologies, while the emergence of the term “live” is related to radio. In doing so, Auslander corroborates the presupposition that “live” emerged as a
spatiotemporal concept, while at the same time, he also adheres to OED. However, to maintain the integrity of his argument, Auslander is now compelled to demonstrate that it was the development of sound recording technologies in the 1890s that made it possible to perceive existing representations as “live.”

Auslander’s argumentation needs to meet three requirements to back his theory. First, to uphold the reductive definition of “recording” as a nineteenth century electro-mechanical concept. Second, to explain why it was specifically the phonograph that led to the emergence of “live, rather than contemporaneous recording technologies such as photography or cinematography.  

Third, to pre-empt criticism from scholars who argue that recording technologies (such as writing) existed prior to those pre-nineteenth century recording technologies. Auslander supports his thesis that writing is not a form of recording as follows:

Scripts are blueprints for performances, not recordings of them, even

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82 OED dates “recording” (a) in the sense of “attestation or testimony of a fact; witness, evidence, proof” (noun) to 1330, and (b) “recording” in the sense of “the action or an act of setting down in writing or putting on record; something which has been recorded in this way” (verb) to 1544.

83 As Walter Ong reminds us, “writing” is a technology without a doubt: […] we find it difficult to consider writing to be a technology as we commonly assume printing and the computer to be. Yet writing (and especially alphabetic writing) is a technology, calling for the use of tools and other equipment: styli or brushes or pens, carefully prepared surfaces such as paper, animal skins, strips of wood, as well as inks or paints, and much more” (Ong 80–81).
though they may contain some information based on performance practice.

Written descriptions and drawings or paintings of performances are not
direct transcriptions through which we can access the performance itself,
as aural and visual recording media are. (Liveness 58; rev. ed.)

Auslander begins with a non-sequitur, i.e., that a script is not a recording of a
performance simply because he sees the relationship between a recording and its
provenance as one of anteriority. He concedes that “written descriptions and drawings or
paintings of performances” could be forms of recording, but he excludes them because
they are “indirect.” His deductive reasoning assumes that a statement which is valid for a
class of objects is also valid for each member in that class. Auslander deludes himself and
his reader by assuming that “scripts,” “descriptions,” “drawings,” and “paintings” are
members of the same class of objects. The correspondence is lacking. In the class of
“means of recording,” “script” is not a member of such a class of objects because it
precedes performance. Usually, “scripts” serve as a resource for the performance as
opposed to textual and/or graphic descriptions of performances that sometimes serve as
recordings of a performance. Next, Auslander contrasts “writing” with “aural and visual
recording media.” However, the fact that the former are artisanal methods of recording
whereas the latter are mechanical methods of recording does not preclude that both are
methods of recording. In other words, the distinction that Auslander advances (namely,
the level of exactitude) is a difference in degree, not in kind. In sum, Auslander provides
insufficient reasons and evidence to support his claim that writing and painting are not
recording technologies like photography, cinema, and video.\textsuperscript{84} Auslander’s categorical syllogism consists of three propositions (two premises and a conclusion) that can follow either pattern: “\textit{all A is B, all B is C, therefore all A is C}”; or, “\textit{no B is A, all C is B, therefore no C is A}.” Auslander’s syllogism is shaky because its major term is repeated as a middle term. His theory that “live” emerged in relation to phonography (as a concept) and in relation to radiophony (as a term) is questionable. He is compelled to argue that “writing is not a form of recording” to validate his claim that the concept of “liveness” emerged in relation to nineteenth-century electro-mechanical representational technologies.

Next, Auslander needed to address the issue of whether or not IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE (such as theatre) is live. Mediation technologies (such as, amplified sound or live video feeds) pose a problem for the theorists of LIVE PERFORMANCE who regard it as “live” and “immediate.” Strictly speaking, such technologies do not record performance even though they mediate it. LIVE PERFORMANCE often includes sound which is amplified (e.g., through the use of microphones on stage). This type of LIVE

\textsuperscript{84} Auslander throws several red herrings. For instance, he substitutes “direct transcriptions” for “means of recording” which obfuscates that “descriptions, drawings and paintings” too, are means that allow artists to record a performance for posteriority. Also, by inserting the phrase “in this context” Auslander limits the validity of the statement. In doing so, he suggests that even though writings are generally recordings, this may not be so within a limited, special context. However, the clause is redundant because the discussion is situated in live performance arts.
PERFORMANCE is a hybrid because it fuses performance which is live and immediate with performance which is mediated.

Auslander chose to circumvent this issue. Following in the footsteps of Barthes, Auslander distinguishes between technologies that mediate and technologies that mediatize:

I would draw the same distinction here that Roland Barthes (1977:44) makes between drawing and photography: whereas drawing, like writing, transforms performance, audio-visual technologies, like photography, record it. In everyday usage, we refer to “live” or “recorded” performances but not to “written” performances or “painted” performances, perhaps for this reason. This means that the history of live performance is bound up with the history of recording media [.] (Liveness 58; rev. ed.)

Auslander proceeds to define mediatized performances (as the products of, for instance, phonography, photography, cinematography, or videography) as technologies of reproduction. Conversely, he regards amplification technologies as mediation technologies. For Auslander, the problem of liveness started with the advent of recording technologies. His project is to draw a distinction between amplification technologies and recording technologies so that performances that involve amplification are no longer part of the category MEDIATED PERFORMANCE. Auslander argues that mediation technologies do not challenge the ontology of LIVE PERFORMANCE:
Throughout history, performance has employed available technologies and has been mediated in one sense or another. [...] It is only since the advent of mechanical and electric technologies of recording and reproduction, however, that performance has been mediatized. (*Liveness* 57-58; rev. ed.)

It is true that Barthes differentiates between writing and photography, but not the way that Auslander interprets it. Barthes wrote:

[i]n the photograph - at least at the level of the literal message - the relationship of signifieds to signifiers is not one of 'transformation' but of 'recording', and the absence of a code clearly reinforces the myth of photographic 'naturalness': the scene is there, captured mechanically, not humanly (the mechanical is here a guarantee of objectivity). (44)

Barthes contrasts photography with drawing. His opposition points to a difference between the inclusion of "codes" (as in the case of drawings) and the exclusion of "codes" (as in the case of photography). In addition to drawing, Barthes also contrasts photography to cinematography and posits that a photograph relates to a "pure spectatorial consciousness" as opposed to film that relates to a "magical fictional consciousness." In other words, Barthes opposition between "transformation" and "recording" does not imply that a drawing is not a means of recording. Rather, his opposition between photography and drawing (and cinema) relates to how each affects the viewer differently: "[while the drawing] does not reproduce *everything* [,][…] the
photograph, although it can choose its subject, its point of view and its angle, cannot intervene within the object (except by trick effects)” (44).

In conclusion, Auslander’s claim that the history of recording media extends over no more than the past 100 to 150 years cannot be deduced from Barthes views on photography. Auslander cites Barthes’ out of context and shifts the focus of the debate regardless of his disclaimer: “I am not suggesting that recording media do not transform live performance in the process of capturing it, only that they can provide a kind of access to the live event that writing and static visual media do not” (Liveness 58; rev. ed.). While the use of the verb “to capture” establishes that there is a semantic difference, Auslander cannot but concede that both sound amplification and sound recording transform the signal as a result of decoding/encoding processes. For Auslander, mediation technologies and recording technologies differ because they provide a different kind of access to the recorded event. In his article Live from Cyberspace, Auslander repeats the same reasoning when he differentiates between “technologies of production” and “technologies of reproduction”:

[B]ots are virtual entities, they have no physical presence, no corporeality; they are not dying in front of our eyes—they are, in fact, immortal. […] They perform live, but they are not a-live, at least not in the same way that organic entities are alive. Performances by bots therefore do not engage existential issues simply by virtue of the performers’ presence, in the way Blau and Phelan describe human performances. […] Bots are
technological entities, but they constitute a technology of production, not reproduction. ("Live From Cyberspace 19-20)

Moving on, the validity of Auslander’s claim depends on a third condition. That is, Auslander needs to prove that it was specifically sound recording that prompted (the concept of) “liveness.” He eliminates image-recording technologies – such as photography and cinematography – by privileging television:

The fact that television can “go live” at any moment to convey sight and sound at a distance in a way no other medium can remains a crucial part of the televisual imaginary even though that way of using the medium is now the exception rather than the rule. I contend that this ideologically engrained sense of television as a live medium makes its historical relationship to the theatre different from that of film, and enabled television to colonize liveness, the one aspect of theatrical presentation that film could not replicate. (Liveness 12-13; rev. ed.)

Auslander contends that “[t]elevision was imagined as theatre” (Liveness 22; rev. ed.) because of television’s unique ability to broadcast events as they happen (to “go live”). Because of this, people felt that television was able to sustain the illusion of in-timeness, or now-ness of the theatrical experience. Auslander contrasts the way that people conceive television with the way in which people think about cinema; they know – for a fact – that the event that is depicted lies in the past, i.e., cinematography is unable to
support, or reinforce, the illusion of simultaneity technologically.\textsuperscript{85} However, the way in which \textit{the public} “imagines” this relationship between cinema and television/video does not negate the fact that cinema is mediated.\textsuperscript{86}

Lastly, the efficacy of theories that attempt to explain the emergence of a concept based on the principle that a concept emerges only alongside its opposite have been questioned. Yet, Auslander’s three hypotheses that explain the emergence of “liveness” are exactly predicated on this principle.

\textit{A Theory of Semantic Traversal}

In Telecommunication and Information Theory, “broadcasting” describes a system of communication that allows people that are spatially dispersed to exchange messages instantaneously as if they were share a spatiotemporal frame. Until the invention of broadcast technologies such as the telegraph and the telephone (in 1837 and 1876 respectively), long-distance communication depended entirely upon conventional

\textsuperscript{85} “The essence of the televisual was understood, from television’s earliest appearances, as an ontology of liveness more akin to the ontology of theatre than to that of film. Television’s essence was seen in its ability to transmit events as they occur, not in a filmic capacity to record events for later viewing” (\textit{Liveness} 12-13; rev. ed.).

\textsuperscript{86} Auslander’s argumentation privileges popular opinion against scientific classification. For example, anecdotally speaking, many people consider a tomato a vegetable. Botanically speaking, a tomato is a fruit. Even though popular opinion sees a tomato differently, a tomato should not be classified as a vegetable.
means of transportation: like any material commodity, messages had to be *moved* to their destination as a mass through space – for instance, by ship, by horse, by pigeon, or by human courier. The advent of telegraphy and telephony made possible instantaneous long-distance communication between the point-of-transmission and any point-of-reception that is connected to the network.\(^7\) Telegraphy depended on the building and the maintenance of a closed, wired circuit with fixed reception units; and telephony required an even more complex system. Electromagnetic radiation (radio waves), which had been discovered several decades earlier, were used for broadcasting purposes by the 1890s onward. Radio-broadcasting used relatively inexpensive equipment. Consequently, *the wireless* was quickly adopted by inventors and hobbyists as a social activity.

The default broadcast production mode is when a message is presented by a live person at the time of transmission. Sent messages are received instantaneously because the signals that carry those messages (either radio waves or electric pulses) travel at the

\(^7\) In broadcasting, the time it takes for information (i.e., a message) to travel from the point-of-transmission to the time-of-reception is affected by the properties of the medium(s) that conduct the signal. When an information-bearing signal passes through a communication channel, it is degraded due to loss of power. For example, when a telephone call passes through a wire telephone line, some of the power in the electro-magnetic pulse, which represents the audio signal, dissipates. Radio waves are especially prone to signal degradation because of atmospheric conditions or the earth’s topography. When reception between radio stations is weak or inconsistent, sometimes an intermediate radio relay station is used. The relay station receives the weakened radio signal which it amplifies and subsequently rebroadcasts thus expanding the range of the base station. In addition, fraction and defraction takes place each time a signal enters a new medium.
speed of light. Thus, to establish communication, both the sender and receiver(s) have to be connected to the network at the same time.

The convenience of broadcasting as a communication service is greatly enhanced when representational technologies (for instance, a gramophone player) are added (Figure 22). When sound recording technologies are added on the senders’ side, broadcasters can record the host’s presentation for later transmission. This advanced production mode implies that at the time of transmission, the presentation is actualized by a technological device.

Figure 21. Broadcast services, such as radio and apparatus, are aggregates that combine representational technologies (a) and transmission technologies (b). 88

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88 In a strict sense, “broadcasting” merely denotes the process of transmitting messages. Broadcast services — such as, radio and television — and broadcast devices — such as radio and television sets — are in fact aggregates that operate by combining both transmission technology and representational technologies. A message represents a recording of a presentation; a message
I postulate that the term “live” was adopted by radio-professionals to identify the default broadcast production mode. The term “live” is polysemous in English. The first occurrence of the word “live” has been traced to 1531: “that possesses life, alive, living, can be manifested (i.e. presented) either as an embodied or as an inscribed recording; recordings that are transmitted by means of a technology can be produced either “live” (if presented by a live person) or “recorded” (if actualized by a representational technology), or “real-time/not real-time (when exchanged directly between technological devices).

The addition of representational technologies (i.e., recording technologies) improves the convenience of broadcasting as a communication service because senders and receivers are no longer required to be connected at the same time. When a performance is recorded prior to the transmission, the performance can be transmitted at any time even in the absence of the presenter (a). When a performance is recorded at the point-of-reception (for instance, by a tape deck) the listener can actualize the recording at a time of his/her convenience (b). In sum, the addition of a sound recording/representation device greatly enhances the usability of broadcasting as a convenient means of communication.

The development of polysemy is a common means whereby languages encode new referents or alter the encoding of existing ones. Typically this involves extending a word for one referent to another when the two referents are in some manner perceptually and/or conceptually related to one another (Haspelmath 1179).
as opposed to ‘dead,’ especially in early use applied to animals” (OED). Since that time, the meaning of “live” has widened to include new contexts, such as, a live wire, live ammunition, live coal, and so on.\(^9\) In all of those meanings, some entailment of the liveness of a living being is mapped metaphorically.

Radio-broadcasters expanded the meaning of the term “live” in a similar fashion. That is, to identify the notion that the message that is being broadcast is presented by a live person, and to communicate this idea to colleague-broadcasters such as, radio engineers, radio hosts, radio producers, radio orchestra musicians, radio-advertising executives, and so on. When a broadcast is live, the act-of-presenting by the live person and the process-of-transmission necessarily coincide. Conversely, when a broadcast is not live, the act-of-presenting by the live person precedes the process-of-transmission; instead, the message is actualized (i.e., re-presented) at the moment of transmission by a technological apparatus (for instance, a gramophone player).

\(^9\) For instance, “of something combustible, flaming, glowing, or burning, frequently in live coal” (OED dates the first occurrence to 1747); “Of a text, question, subject of consideration, etc.: of present or continued importance; current” (OED dates the first occurrence to 1850); “Containing unexpended energy, of a shell, match, etc.: unkindled, unexploded. Of a cartridge, containing a bullet, opposed to blank” (OED dates the first occurrence to 1747), “Of a rail, wire, etc.: connected to a source of electrical potential, carrying a voltage; that will communicate a current to a conductor in contact. In a single-phase supply: designating the conductor on which the supply voltage is developed (with respect to the neutral). Earliest in live wire” (OED dates the first occurrence to 1881).
Figure 23. Broadcast-professionals adopted the terms “live” and “recorded” to describe two distinct production modes.\(^2\)

Only the radio engineer who is located at the primary point-of-transmission can ascertain that the mode of production is live because he/she can monitor both the act-of-presenting (either a live person or by a technological apparatus) and the process of transmission (Figure 23). However, radio engineers who are located at a relay station

only share a temporal frame. Because the term “live” serves a technical purpose, its meaning needs to be concrete; there can be no room for ambiguity. In sum, broadcast-professionals define “live” and “recorded” as time-based, technical terms that describe procedural concepts; namely, two production modes that are binary oppositional.  

The Temporal Concept of “Live” Acquires a Spatiotemporal Meaning

Initially, the binary oppositional pair “live/recorded” was jargon that was strictly used in the community of broadcast-professionals. Gradually, “live” and “recorded” trickled into the community of radio-listeners. Radio-listeners were familiar with the term “live.” However, they were new to using “live” in connection with radio broadcasting.

New concepts are defined in terms of other concepts that are better known and logically

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93 Many sources of the time refer to the recorded production mode by the terms “canned” and “bottled.” It is not inconceivable that in the beginning, alternative, synonymic terms were in use that expressed the same idea as “recorded.” The first occurrence of “recorded” is dated to 1568: “performed in song, sung” (OED). The meaning is then widened. For instance, “Preserved in writing or a written account; put on record” (OED dates the first occurrence to 1577); “Of sounds or images: converted into a durable form (e.g. on disc, magnetic tape, photographic film, or in digital form) for later reproduction” (OED dates the first occurrence to 1912). Similarly, before “live” became the standard term, there may have been various terms in use to articulate the idea of a live broadcast production. For instance, different terms could have been in use depending on regional differences, or even varying from station to station.
prior. Thus, to gauge the meaning of “live,” radio-listeners reverted to “recorded” which they already were using in connection with (the products of) representational technologies – for instance, a gramophone recording. Radio-listeners learned that radio-broadcasters defined “live” and “recorded” as binary opposites. Subsequently, radio-listeners defined the concept of “live” as the opposite of “recorded,” i.e., not-recorded.

For radio-listeners who were accustomed to using the term “recorded” in connection with sound reproduction technologies (especially the gramophone), “recorded” was a spatiotemporal concept: To play a gramophone record by Enrico Caruso signified that Caruso’s actual performance took place in the past and elsewhere.

When radio-listeners heard radio-broadcasters use the term “recorded” (or canned, or bottled) on the radio, they conceptualized “recorded” as a spatiotemporal concept.

After all, from the perspective of the radio-listeners, radio-producers were playing gramophone records in the radio studio just like radio-listeners were playing gramophone records in the radio studio just like radio-listeners were playing gramophone records in the radio studio.

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94 For a discussion about concepts and about the cognitive processes through which combinations of concepts are formed and comprehended, see: Robert Goldstone’s and Alan Kersten’s “Concepts and Categorization” (2003).

95 The concept of “recording” was initially also applied to embodied forms of recording – for instance, in the sense of “to learn by heart.” However, this meaning has become disused and is obsolete. This thus illustrates how, usually, words undergo two types of meaning change: generalization (i.e., the meaning widens to include new concepts) and specialization (i.e., the meaning contracts to focus on fewer concepts). For a discussion about the tendencies or possibilities of semantic change see, for instance, Gustaf Stern’s Meaning and Change of Meaning, with Special Reference to the English Language (1964) and Stephen Ullmann’s The Principles of Semantics (1957).
records in their living rooms at home. Radio-listeners failed to realize that when broadcast-professionals decided to deploy “recorded” in connection with broadcasting, those broadcast-professionals had further narrowed the meaning of the term “recorded” (from a spatiotemporal concept to a spatial concept). Thus, radio-listeners defined “recorded” as a spatiotemporal concept because they associated the concept with representational technologies, i.e., recordings that are transmitted over the radio.

Radio-listeners conceived “live” as temporal, yet “recorded” as spatiotemporal. Consequently, they were unable to join “live” with “recorded” as a binary oppositional pair. Even so, radio-listeners retained the (conceptual) binary oppositional relationship between “live” and “recorded” as production modes. The linguistic phenomenon whereby terms that are defined in a certain way in one context retains this semantic relationship when those terms enter a new context is referred to as property inheritance.

96 Originally, “to record” (v.) meant: to learn by heart, to commit to memory, to go over in one’s mind (OED). In this meaning, “recording” (n.) strictly denotes embodied recordings – for instance, memories. The meaning “set down in writing” was first attested in the mid-14th century. The meaning “put sound or pictures on disks, tape, etc.” is from 1892. As is often the case, when the meaning of a word is widened, its original meaning is excluded. (This linguistic process is referred to as “narrowing,” as opposed to “broadening”). Today, the use of the term “recording” in connection with inscribed recordings has become obsolete.

97 The notion that “recorded” is spatiotemporal when used in the context of broadcasting whereas “live” is temporal when used in the context of broadcasting persists into the present day and gave rise to the view that the meaning of “live” is context-dependent.
Figure 24. “Live” and “recorded” have a different meaning depending on the perspective of the user-community.  

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98 For broadcast-professionals, or senders, “live” and “recorded” are concrete, technical concepts. However, for listener, or receivers, the meaning of “live” and “recorded” is ambiguous.
Property inheritance is a key concept in theories about semantic networks and about how meaning is distributed through those networks. In brief, property inheritance explains that radio-listeners retained the idea that “live” and “recorded” describe two binary oppositional production modes even though they defined “live” as temporal and “recorded” as spatiotemporal.

Some questions remain. For instance, if radio-listeners realized that broadcast-professionals used “live” and “recorded” to identify binary oppositional concepts (and for radio-listeners, “recorded” was as a spatiotemporal term) why did radio-listeners conceptualize “live” as a temporal concept, and not, as a spatiotemporal concept? There are no simple answers. Possibly, radio-listeners defined “live” as a temporal concept because they observed that when a radio host in a live radio show would have a telephone conversation with a radio guest, this meant that the host and the guest only shared a temporal frame. More probable, I think, is that as new adopters of the term, radio-listeners conceptualized “live” from their own perspective. By this definition, a “live transmission” meant that listeners were sharing a temporal, but not a spatiotemporal, frame with the radio-host. Irrespective of how this process of meaning acquisition took place, my point is that radio-listeners defined “live” as a temporal concept, but “recorded” as a spatiotemporal concept.

At this juncture in my account about the semantic history of “live,” the oppositional pair “live/recorded” is used by both broadcast-professionals (senders) and broadcast-listeners (receivers). Even so, as a communication concept, “live” is used
exclusively in connection with broadcasting; to use the term “live” in connection to any
other forms of communication (for instance, theatre) would be without meaning, i.e.,
absurd.

Recall that, for radio-listeners (i.e., receivers), the meaning of “live” is
ambiguous: a broadcast transmission can be either “live” or “recorded” but they have no
means to ascertain those (often promotional) claims. However, the meaning of “live” is
concrete, and evidential, when “live” is used in connection with direct forms of
communication where the senders and the receivers are in each-others spatiotemporal
present. As a result, radio-listeners started deploying the term “live” in connection to
forms of communication other than broadcasting, e.g., theatre and dance. This
development explains how and why “live” expanded from a concept that was pressed into
service to be used exclusively in connection with broadcast-technologies to a concept that
became used in connection with both broadcast-technologies and LIVE PERFORMANCE.

The transmission of radio-with-pictures (i.e., television) emerges as a commercial
service by mid-1930. Broadcast television sees a parallel history of development.

99 In the early days, radio was a full-duplex, point-to-point communication system just
like telephony. However, the radio broadcasting industry opted for a uni-directional,
asymmetrical (i.e., one-to-many) network topography. Consequently, two distinct user-
communities were established: the senders on one end, and the receivers on the other end. John
Durham Peters refers to this one-way communication stream by the term of “dissemination.”
Peters writes: “dissemination basically sends information to an audience, without direct contact to
the receiver, and without a direct response or clarification method that a conversation or dialogue
Hence, the terms “live” and “recorded” were deployed in a similar fashion in order to identify the default broadcast production mode (“live”) as distinct from the advanced production mode (“recorded”).

I argue that “live” emerged as a temporal concept in connection with (radio) broadcasting and subsequently transitioned to be seen as a spatiotemporal concept. However, Auslander thinks that the phrase “live broadcast” proves that “live” evolved from a spatiotemporal concept to a temporal concept. He writes: “The idea of a live broadcast constituted a redefinition of liveness such that performers and spectators no longer had to be physically co-present for an event to count as live” (“After Liveness” n. pag.). He concludes: “[the phrase ‘live broadcasts’] is not considered an oxymoron, even though live broadcasts meet only one of the basic conditions: performers and audience are temporally co-present in that the audience witnesses the performance as it happens, but they are not spatially co-present” (Liveness 60; rev. ed.). Auslander then turns his attention to the phrase “live recordings” which he does consider an oxymoron. “How can something be both recorded and live?” (Liveness 60; rev. ed.). Erroneously, Auslander thinks that “live” and “recorded” denote the same thing which allows him to problematize this apparent conflict between two mutually exclusive concepts. In fact, the term “recorded live” refers to a specific method that is used in the record production

would have” (211). For an overview of the technological developments that preceded the invention of television, see: Raymond Williams' Television: Technology and Cultural Form (1975).
industry. A “live recording” aims to provide the listeners with a sense of participating in the original presentation including the rawness and the imperfections that often characterize those concerts. The opposite of a “live recording” is a “studio recording.” The term “studio recording” (or “studio album”) describes a production method whereby the mainstay of the performances is recorded within the controlled environment of a recording studio. In other words, the term “live” metaphorically references the live audience that attended the concert; their presence can be sensed on the recording. Thus, “recorded” refers to the mode of production whereas “live” qualifies the method of production.

A “studio recording” is a polished sonic experience that is free from unwanted elements that would detract from the listening experience. Conversely, the material that is included on a “live recording” constitutes predominantly of concerts, i.e., recordings of performances that have been performed before a live audience. Even so, a “live recording” relies on the same tricks to enhance the musicians’ performances including multi-track recording, overdubbing, re-mixing, editing, effects processing, sampling, filtering, and so on. Both a live recording and a studio album are enhanced in post-production. By capturing the rawness, unritualism and spontaneity of the live concert, a sense of authenticity is added to the presentation. What is considered as “authentic” varies over time and space and is a matter of convention. Often, those conventions change in response to technological advances. See also Steve Connor’s “The Flag on the Road: Bruce Springsteen and the Live” (1987).

By analogy, consider the terms “fresh” and “baked” which are binary opposites in some contexts. However, in the compound phrase “freshly baked,” “baked” describes the production method whereas “fresh” qualifies the product of the baking process. As a final example to illustrate Auslander’s erroneous reasoning, consider the phrase “original copy.” The term “original copy” is not an oxymoron, but is a specific term which denotes a first-generation duplicate of a document. Worth noting is that in the phrase “live recording,” “live” connotes
Lastly, consider the 1934 definition of “live” which similarly coerces the hegemonic interpretation of “live” as a spatiotemporal concept “of a performance, heard or watched at the time of its occurrence, as distinguished from one recorded on film, tape, etc.” The phrase “as distinguished from one recorded on film, tape, etc.” seemingly juxtaposes LIVE PERFORMANCE (such as theatre) with MEDIATED PERFORMANCE (such as

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of liveness</th>
<th>Significant characteristics</th>
<th>Cultural forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Classic” liveness</td>
<td>Physical co-presence of performers and audience; temporal simultaneity of production and reception; experience in the moment</td>
<td>Theatre, concerts, dance, sports, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live broadcast</td>
<td>Temporal simultaneity of production and reception; experience of event as it occurs</td>
<td>Radio, television, Internet, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live recording</td>
<td>Temporal gap between production and reception; possibility of infinite repetition</td>
<td>LP, CD, film, DVD, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet liveness</td>
<td>Sense of co-presence among users</td>
<td>Internet-based media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Couldry 2004)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social liveness</td>
<td>Sense of connection to others</td>
<td>Mobile phones, instant messaging, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Couldry 2004)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Website “goes live”</td>
<td>Feedback between technology and user</td>
<td>Websites, interactive media, chatterbots, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Auslander’s “Historical Development of the Concept of Liveness.”

cinema, television, and so on), which suggests that “live” is a spatiotemporal concept. ¹⁰³

Concept vs. Term

To summarize, I have argued that the emergence of the term and the concept of “live” is inextricably bound up with the fusion of sound recording technologies and broadcasting technologies because this created two distinct radio broadcast production modes. Yet, Auslander related the emergence of the concept of “live” to the gramophone which was invented in the 1880s, and the emergence of the term “live” to radio which was invented in the 1890s. OED, however, traces the emergence of the term “live” only as far back as 1934. Auslander argued that it was (only because of) the “maturation of mediatized society itself” (Liveness 58; rev. ed.) that prompted the term “live” to emerge in 1934. My theory, on the other hand, does not differentiate the emergence of the term from the emergence of the concept; theoretically, both should have emerged around the same time. In the next section, I will investigate what delayed the emergence of the term

¹⁰³ Auslander also pointed out that OED defines “live” as a temporal concept. He makes this inference based on the observation that OED situates the “live” in the context of broadcast technologies, radio in particular. However, recall that Auslander differentiates between the term “live” and the concept “live,” and that for Auslander “live” as a spatiotemporal concept precedes “live” as a temporal term. In other words, Auslander too approaches OED from the perspective of the dominant constellation, and bases his theory on the intuitive (yet fallacious) preconception that “live” emerged first in relation to LIVE PERFORMANCE (such as theatre and dance) rather than in connection to technologically-mediated forms of performance (such as radio and television) that are from a later date.
“live.” To explain the delay of “live” to 1934, I ground my theory on the linguistic phenomenon of retronymy.¹⁰⁴ For a retronym to emerge, two conditions need to be fulfilled. First, it is imperative that both production modes (the default and the advanced) are in use. Second, the advanced production mode needs to have reached a critical mass to the extent that there is a sustained problem of inefficient communication (such as, recurring confusions and misunderstandings) that can be resolved by coining a retronym.

Radio was neither the only broadcasting service nor the first. Barry Mishkind, for instance, writes that in “the 1880s and 1890s, the Budapest Telefon-Hirmondo (Cable) system sent out entertainment programs via telephone lines” (Mishkind). In addition, there was Clement Ader’s théâtrophone which allowed people to listen to theatre or opera performance over the telephone network. I assume that radio was the first broadcast technology to successfully integrate sound recording technologies which explains why the coinage of the retronym “live” is related specifically to broadcast radio and not to any older implementations of broadcasting.

Amateur radio came into being in the late 19th century when, following

¹⁰⁴ A retronym renames a technology (or a technological device) after it has been superseded by a more advanced version. For instance, in the days prior to color television black-and-white television was called “television”; there was no such term as “black-and-white television” simply because there was no need for. Then, color arrived. This novelty was called “color television.” Over time, color became the new standard and “color television” lost that part of its name that identified it as different. Thereafter, the outmoded technology was called by the retronym “black-and-white television.”
Marconi’s success, scientists and hobbyists began experimenting with this new form of “wireless telegraphy.”¹⁰⁵ The establishing of a series of copyright acts shows that the broadcasting of gramophone recordings was a common practice by the early 1900s.¹⁰⁶ Even so, the prevalent production mode was “live,” also because radio gave superior sound reproduction over pre-recorded sound.

By the mid-1920s, radio was finally underway as an industry. In the United States, radio broadcasting developed almost entirely as a commercial enterprise. By the mid-1920s, U.S. broadcasting was dominated by four national radio networks which linked affiliated radio stations coast-to-coast. The mainstay of radio programming was customarily produced live. Even radio shows that were broadcast nation-wide were produced live: once for the Eastern and Central time zones, and once again for the Pacific time zone three hours later.

The relationship between radio and recordings is quite complex. Some factors encouraged the use of recordings while others slowed down the adoption of the recorded

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¹⁰⁵ Raymond Williams writes: “The development of radio, in its significant scientific and technical stages between 1885 and 1911, was at first conceived within already effective social systems, as an advanced form of telegraphy” (Television 10).

¹⁰⁶ In those days, music records were broadcast on the radio simply by the acoustic method, i.e., by placing a microphone within range of the phonograph horn.
mode of production (Winston). For instance, the recording industry saw radio as a competitor. Yet, it also encouraged the use of recordings because playtime on radio helped to sell phonograph players and discs (Winston). The invention of the transcription disc allowed for considerably better sound quality. However, the most important obstacle to adopt the recorded mode of production proved to be the establishment of protectionist measures. During the 1930s and 1940s, American radio-network broadcasters were habitually forbidden to play pre-recorded radio shows. The ban was not lifted until the late 1940s. Factors, such as the presence of time zones, favored the adoption of the recorded mode of production. Yet, ultimately, the curtailment of the use of music recordings on the radio meant that, in the United States, the recorded mode of production gained a critical mass only after 1934.

OED relates the emergence of the term “live” to the British Broadcasting Company (hereafter BBC). In Europe, governments had taken the lead in integrating radio technology for communication purposes. By 1923, Britain and Germany had established radio stations that provided regular broadcasts. Since broadcasting was not a commercial enterprise, there were no economic incentives to overcome the resistance

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Copyright acts (i.e., a system for licensing the use of recorded material on the radio) were established as early as 1908 by a Berne Convention meeting in Berlin, followed by similar initiatives that established a royalty principle for recordings in the US (1909) and in Britain (1911).
against using low-quality recordings on the radio. Furthermore, radio listeners expected “radio to be live and objected to ‘canned’ or ‘bottled’ programming” (Winston). In 1932, however, BBC inaugurated its “Empire Service.”108 The Empire Service was aimed principally at English speakers in the outposts, colonies and dominions of what was then the British Empire. Critically, the adoption of the recorded mode of production became more prevalent because it allowed the broadcast of domestic materials from the mother land (Andrew Hill). BBC, anticipating the inauguration of the Empire Service, had been renting several steel-wire based sound recorders, or Blattnerphones, from 1930 onwards.109 Aaron Nmungun writes:

[T]he BBC was seriously considering the provision of an Empire Broadcasting Service, which embraced five time-zoned services beamed to different parts of the world for 2 hours everyday. The necessity for the equipment to be compatible with the services to be provided was of utmost importance, because it was necessary to time the long distance transmissions to obtain reasonable hours of reception – usually early

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108 For a complete and detailed overview of the history of radio broadcasting in the United Kingdom, see the first volumes of Asa Briggs’ The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom (1995).

109 The Blattnerphone, first used by the BBC on Christmas Day 1932, enabled edited and “bottled” programming thus offering the possibility of transmission across differing time-zones. See William Lafferty’s “The Blattnerphone” (1983).
evening local time – broadcasts were beamed by using directional aerials, with the transmitters switched to each aerial at 2-hour intervals. Thus, to enable a program broadcast to Australia to be heard in Canada, the material had to be available for repeat. Disc recording had not been used in the BBC up to that time, and in any case, the playing time was rather limited. The Blattnerphone seemed to provide just the answer. (54)

Winston concurs with my thesis that “[t]he Empire Service was […] responsible for overcoming the disinclination to recorded programming” (84). Auslander makes the BBC Yearbook corroborate his theory that “live” and “recorded” were spatiotemporal concepts, and that this relationship was inserted into new modes of performance even though audiences did not share a spatiotemporal frame in those contexts. He writes:

[The] first citation of the word “live” comes from the BBC Yearbook for 1934 and iterates the complaint “that recorded material was too liberally used” on the radio. (Liveness 59; rev. ed.)

However, the way in which the sentence in the BBC Yearbook makes reference to time zones leaves no doubt that the complaint is voiced by over-seas listeners living in Canada and Australia. In those days, BBC operated on a subscription model. Those listeners were dissatisfied because they felt BBC transmitted, or even recycled, “canned” materials in favor of live programming. In short, subscribers felt that they were not getting their money’s worth of value in terms of news and entertainment programming. My analysis is
corroborated by OED’s 1937 reference that “people do not like ‘canned’ entertainment when they can obtain ‘live’ entertainment just as easily” (Figure 25).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a. of a performance, event, etc.: heard or watched at the time of its occurrence; esp. (of a radio or television broadcast, etc.) not pre-recorded.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1934</strong> B.B.C. Year-bk. 248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1937</strong> M. Lowell Listen In 109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1944</strong> Ann. Reg. 1943 348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1955</strong> Radio Times 22 Apr. 15/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1970</strong> New Scientist 2 July 13/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1989</strong> Dirty Linen Spring 11/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2006</strong> Environmental Health Perspectives 114 A291</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 25. “Live” in OED.\(^\text{110}\)

It is worth noting that OED merely attests to the fact that the term “live” was in

use by 1934. It is uncertain whether the community of radio-listeners had adopted the term “live” by that time. Possibly, the 1934 BBC Yearbook helped introduce “live” as a term to the community of listeners. It is equally possible that the yearbook helped establish the term “live” as the de facto standard terminology among radio professionals. The term “live” is set in quotation marks in OED suggesting that the term was lifted out of its ordinary context (that is, as used by broadcast professionals as a technical concept). Radio broadcasters may have deployed the term “live” as a commercial, promotional or ideological concept in communications with radio listeners from the very beginning. This fuels my explanatory hypothesis that “live” emerged in connection to broadcast technologies, especially radio broadcasting.

If one takes into account the fact that “live” was used on a mass medium such as radio, it is surprising that neither community picked up that the other user-community had conceptualized “live” and “recorded” in an extra-ordinary way. As I have argued, radio-producers had redefined “recorded” as a temporal concept. Yet, radio-listeners conceived “recorded” as a spatiotemporal concept. However, the influx of new members into the community of broadcast-producers inevitably comes from the community of the listeners, i.e., people that already have grown accustomed to thinking of “recorded” as a

111 OED situates the first use of the term “live” in communications exchanges between both user communities. Even so, the source reporting the complaint is BBC (i.e., the community of producers).
spatiotemporal concept. Therefore, I postulate that sufficient conditions were met by 1934 that led to the adoption of the retronym “live” according to Oxford English Dictionary. The launch of the Empire Service in 1932 seems to have been instrumental in this development, which explains why OED relates the first appearance to the 1934 edition of the BBC Yearbook.

My main point is that “live” emerged as a temporal term and concept and subsequently transitioned to be seen as a spatiotemporal concept. It is on this basis that I critique Auslander’s “historicity of liveness” because he contends that “live” (and “liveness”) transitioned from a spatiotemporal to a temporal concept: “What had been a physico-temporal relationship thus became a purely temporal one” (“After Liveness” n. pag.). Since my explanatory hypothesis and Auslander’s explanatory theory are diametrically opposed, one of them must be false. If, as David Hume says, “there is no rational proof of validity through induction,” and if, as Karl Popper says, “the function of

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112 As time passes, the initial generation of broadcast producers dies out and the entire community of broadcast-producer is now composed of biased members. Consequently, there is no one left to explain that, within the context of broadcasting, “recorded” denotes a temporal concept. This phenomenon has been referred to as survivor-ship bias.

113 The 1938 production by Orson Welles and Mercury Theatre’s War of the Worlds presents a poignant example of how radio audiences conceived events that were broadcast on the radio as happening in the now. The history of how Welles cunningly exploited this preconception to deceive the listener is well-known. War of the Worlds was dramatized as breaking news by the Orson Welles anthology program The Mercury Theatre on the Air, heard over the CBS radio network on 30 October 1938.
induction is not to confirm; it is to disconfirm a hypothesis,” then, by falsifying Auslander’s theory, I do not necessarily validate my hypothesis. Even so, it seems that the inductive probability of my hypothesis is stronger.\textsuperscript{114}

In sum, the notion that “live” and “recorded” are binary opposites when they are used in connection with\textsc{live performance} (such as theatre and dance) is false and is the product of a series of semantic shifts. The concept of “live” emerged in connection to broadcast technologies (such as radio and television) and subsequently expanded to manifestations of\textsc{immediate performance} (such as theatre and dance). “Live” is a spatiotemporal concept that was used by a cultural elite to support an “ideology of liveness,” i.e. the notion that “live” is superior to technologically-mediated forms of performance such as cinema, radio and television.

The concept of “recorded,” when used by broadcast professionals, is a temporal concept that identifies a particular broadcast production process. “Recorded” is not a spatiotemporal concept that denotes technologically-mediated recordings (such as sound and/or image recording technologies) as distinct from embodied recordings (such as enunciation, gesture, and so on).

\textsuperscript{114} “Pluralitas non est ponenda sine necessitate” translates as “entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily.” This principle, also known as Occam’s razor, serves as a heuristic in logic and problem-solving. Relying on parsimony, economy, or succinctness Occam stated that among competing hypotheses, the hypothesis with the fewest assumptions should be favored.
The dichotomy between live performance (such as theatre and dance) and mediated performance (such as cinema, radio and television) is predicated on a taxonomic principle which is unsound. It follows that the phrase LIVE PERFORMANCE is misleading because it upholds this (erroneous) idea that the dichotomy between LIVE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE hinges on the concept of “liveness.”

Since the dichotomy is false, I will henceforth be using the term IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE instead of LIVE PERFORMANCE. The dichotomous opposition between “the Live” and “the Recorded” is thus equally re-labeled as the IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE. It is thought that the dichotomy between IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE hinges on the way in which the spectator and the performer relate to each other in terms of spatial proximity and temporal synchrony; namely, in the theatre the spectator and the performer share a spatiotemporal frame whereas in the cinema the spectator and the performer do not share a spatiotemporal frame. In the next chapter, I will investigate the validity of this binary opposition.

B. Why is ‘Immediate Performance’ not Immediate?

The Sense of Immediacy

Many theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies, for instance, Sarah Bay-Cheng, Peter Brook, Robert Brustein, Babak Ebrahimian, and Fischer-Lichte
associate the live body with immediacy. Bay-Cheng traces the association between “performance” and the “immediate body” to both theatre artists and Theatre Studies theorists:

Against theories [in Media Studies] of the mediated body, theatre tended to position itself as the domain of the immediate body. Simon Shepherd summed up the emphasis of much of this work when he wrote, “theatre is, and has always been, a place which exhibits what a human body is, what it does, what it is capable of.” This live, theatrical body stretched back to Peter Brook’s 1968 argument for an immediate theatre (in contrast to cinema) that “always asserts itself in the present,” and recurred in Phelan’s assertion that “Performance’s only life is in the present.” (66)

Fischer-Lichte similarly defines the ontology of LIVE PERFORMANCE as two people that share time and space:

Castorf’s [1997 production] Trainspotting […] incorporated the latest in the technology of image reproduction - just like Piscator’s productions in the 1920s and just as theatre has always incorporated the newest technology for its purposes, whether it was the different kinds of stage machinery in the Baroque theatre, electric light and the revolving stage at the turn of the twentieth century, or, most recently, lighting systems run by computers, video, and sound recordings. Does the use of such technology
impair or even reduce the sense of liveness? Is liveness ultimately only possible in Grotowski’s poor theatre? Of course, the answer depends on the definition given for “liveness.” It has been used as a normative and even as an ideological concept. I use it as a descriptive term, by which I mean the bodily co-presence of two kinds of people in one space, those who perform and those who look on[.](“Quo Vadis?” 55)

Ebrahimian maps the differences between theater and cinema as a table (Table 4). After discussing space (three-dimensional ‘R3’ vs. two-dimensional ‘R2’); time (variable ‘V’ vs. fixed/constant ‘C’) as criteria that support the dichotomy between theatre and cinema, Ebrahimian turns to “immediacy:”

The performance in the theater is immediate and takes place in the present (I); in the cinema, as discussed, the performance is recorded and projected, and, thereby, it is distanced (D) in both time and space. The same can also be said of the element of sound for most theater productions: it is immediate, whereas in the cinema, as with the image, it is recorded and played back in time in synchronicity with the projected image, and is thereby also distanced (D). (6)

To support his model, Ebrahimian references Robert Brustein who, writing in 1987, stated:

If the theatre has a single advantage over film and television it is its
immediacy. Dramatic events exist in a continuum of present time, while celluloid and videotape, no matter how convincing or realistic the photography, are imprisoned in the past (so is narrative fiction, which declares its past condition with the author’s “he saids” and “she saids”). The media are not happening; they have already happened. We are witnesses of history, remote, aloof, involuntarily disengaged. (qtd. in Ebrahimian 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>THEATER</th>
<th>FILM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPACE</td>
<td>stage (R3): I</td>
<td>screen (R3 on R2): D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIME</td>
<td>variable: V</td>
<td>fixed: constant C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTORS</td>
<td>immediate: I</td>
<td>filmed: D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOUND</td>
<td>immediate: I</td>
<td>recorded: D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Ebrahimian maps the differences between theatre and film.\(^{115}\)

Brustein sounds like Phelan when she wrote: “Performance honors the idea that a limited number of people in a specific time/space frame can have an experience of value which leaves no visible trace afterward” (Unmarked 149). Phelan similarly points to the spatiotemporal relationship between spectators and performers. In addition, she identifies

“limitedness.” However, the number of spectators that can attend a performance is limited because one can only gather so many people at one location at one single time.

In sum, for those theorists, “immediacy” articulates the notion that in the theatre, the spectator and the performer share the same time and the same space during the performance. By qualifying theatre as “immediate” they construe a dichotomy with technologically-mediated forms of performance (such as cinema, radio and television) which qualify as “mediated.” Lastly, let’s return to Bay-Cheng who, discussing the work of Chris Verdonck, writes:

Verdonck’s mediated and technological bodies embark on struggles between their position as autonomous, subjective individuals and manipulated objects of technology and art. As such, Verdonck’s bodies suggest a new status between wholly mediated representations and immediate live bodies, and provoke new visions for how theories of the post-human can play out in physical performance contexts. (68)

For Bay-Cheng, the work by Verdonck counters the dichotomy between “immediate live bodies” and “wholly mediated representations.” Bay-Cheng’s analysis is predicated on a notion that LIVE PERFORMANCE and technologically-mediated forms of performance are dichotomous. Thus, Bay-Cheng’s reflection on Verdonck affirms my thesis that theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies assume a dichotomy between LIVE PERFORMANCE and technologically-mediated forms of performance in terms of “immediate/mediated.” Henceforth, I will label the category that contains performance
practices such as theatre and dance as IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE.

The Performer and the Process of Recording

I will investigate the validity of the argument that supports the claim that LIVE PERFORMANCE and technologically-mediated forms of performance are dichotomous. The argument under scrutiny runs as follows: during manifestations of LIVE PERFORMANCE (e.g., a theatre production) the spectator and the performer share a spatiotemporal frame whereas during manifestations of performances that are technologically-mediated (e.g., a film screening) the spectator and the performer do not share a spatiotemporal frame.

The Wurtzler Table (Table 2) offers a visual representation of the dichotomy between IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE. The table organizes the manifestations of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE into three categories: (1) manifestations of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE whereby the performer and the spectator share neither a temporal frame nor a spatial frame as, for instance, in the cinema (quadrant IV); (2) manifestations of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE whereby the performer and the spectator share a temporal frame but not a spatial frame as, for instance, in live television (quadrant II); and (3) manifestations of MEDIATED PERFORMANCE whereby the performer and the
The argument references two different performers: the performers acting before a theatre audience versus the performer acting before the film camera. It is important to clearly distinguish between both performers. Henceforth, I will use the term “stage actor” and “camera actor.” “Stage actor” identifies the performer who shares a spatiotemporal frame with the theatre audience whereas “camera actor” identifies the performer who does not share a spatiotemporal frame with the cinema audience.

To demonstrate that this argument is unsound, it is necessary to show that the “stage actor” and the “camera actor” fulfill different functions within the context of the mediation process (i.e., the process by which information is passed on until it reaches the spectators). The mediation process can be seen as a sequence of “acts of recording.” For instance, a screen writer writes (i.e., records) a story in the form of a script; the director reads (i.e., records) the information that is in the script; the director processes the

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Wurtzler situates lip-synch performances in quadrant III. He mistakes a dissociation between the visual and the auditory elements that comprise the lip-synch performance for a dissociation between the temporal and the spatial dimensions that define the various ways in which the spectator and the performer relate to each-other. A lip-synch performance fuses live acting (mime) with pre-recorded sound. Logically, a lip-synch performance thus constitutes a hybrid that encompasses practices from quadrant I with practices from quadrant IV. In other words, lip-synch performances is not a member of quadrant III. In fact, I argue that quadrant III is void. For Wurtzler, however, the table did not represent the situation as it is, but rather the way in which the general audience conceives, i.e. thinks about the way how the spectator and the performer relate to each-other in various performance practices. However, there is no evidence that spectators think of lip-synch performance as spatially present and temporally anterior.
information and re-writes (i.e., records) the script, the performer reads (i.e., records) the information, and so on until the information (which is an amalgamate of those various acts of recording) finally reaches the theatre spectator and the cinema spectator respectively. When a stage or film director reads the script, he extracts information from the script. This information, which is recorded as a mental image (i.e., recorded in an embodied sense), is connected to other bits of information that the director previously recorded. Thus, this new recording (i.e., the promptbook) is a blend of information from various sources. In brief, a recording is not the product of a linear process that connects the script and the mental image (i.e., the information that the director extracts from the script), but is the product of a rhizomatic process. Similarly, the theatre script and the screen script are the products of a rhizomatic process: the information that finds its way into the script derives from sources which lie beyond the writer and which are many.

\footnote{This blend is not a collection or an accumulation of the various strands of information because the product of a process of recording is affected by, for instance, a process of selection which is contingent on the nature and features of the storage medium and the nature and features of the reading/recording apparatus itself among others.}

\footnote{A rhizome is characterized by “ceaselessly established connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power, and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences, and social struggles. […] The rhizome presents history and culture as a map or wide array of attractions and influences with no specific origin or genesis (Deleuze and Guattari 25). Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the rhizome oppose an arborescent view i.e., a root-tree structured system which works with dualist categories and binary choices, and which charts causality along chronological lines looking for a point of origin. See Gilles Deleuze’s and Félix Guattari’s “A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia” (1987).}
Moreover, the information that is yielded by each of those sources is itself the product of innumerable, successive processes of a recording that are connected in a rhizomatic structure. In sum, it is impossible to trace the origin of a film script, or a theatre staging, or a film to one singular source. As seen from the perspective of the theatre audience and the cinema audience, the theatre staging and the film screening conclude this process of mediation because it is at that moment that the information (e.g., the narration) reaches the respective spectators. Now, let’s investigate the way in which the “stage actor” and the “camera actor” partake in this process. From the perspective of the theatre spectator, the “stage actor” represents the final, or concluding, step in the sequence. In the cinema, however, the “camera actor” does not represent the final step in the sequence. The “camera actor” performs before the camera and before the film crew that is attending the shoot; he does not perform before the cinema audience. There are still several steps in the sequence before the cinema audience can “record” the story (i.e., the recording that has been passed on) For instance, after the shoot, the image is edited, a sound score is

\[\textit{The process of recording is endless: by his/her turn, the receiver will present the recording to a new receiver, and so on. Thus, for each receiver, the final step refers to a different node in the chain that is created by successive acts-of-recording.}\]

\[\textit{For instance, the photo-negative that is created (i.e., the photographic recording of the scene) will undergo several processes (i.e., acts of recording) before it reaches the cinema spectator. Those processes constitute several additional acts-of-presenting and of acts-of-reception which, subsequently, will transform the recording. For instance, sound is added to the image.}\]
added, and so on. So, the last step is not the “camera actor,” but rather the film projector that represents the last step that allows the spectator to record the narrative. This shows that, as seen from the perspective of the spectator (either in the theatre or in the cinema) the performer (either the “stage actor” or the “camera actor”) fulfill a different function in the mediation process.

In sum, it is true that in the theatre, the spectator and the actor share a spatiotemporal frame. It is equally true that in the cinema, the spectator and the actor do not share a spatiotemporal frame. However, no valid inference can be made because the predicates (that is, “stage actor” and “camera actor”) are not logically equivalent. In sum, it is not possible to draw a distinction between IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and technologically-mediated forms of performance based on assessing the spectator-performer relationship in terms of time and space because those classificatory principles are unsound.

*Salva Veritate*

My analysis has shown that the predicates (namely, the “stage actor” and the “camera actor”) are not logically equivalent. I will now reassess the validity of the argument for each of the predicates separately. In other words, I will substitute the false predicate by its logical counter-part and reassess the validity of the conclusion. Since there are two predicates, I will go through this exercise twice. First, let substitute “camera actor.” From the perspective of the cinema spectator, the camera actor is not the last step
in the recording. Moreover, the camera actor is only one among the many steps that the recording has to go through before it reaches the “last step:” i.e., the moment that the film projector presents the recording to the spectator. In other words, many substitutes are logically equivalent with the “stage actor.” For instance, any rehearsal, any writing session, any rewrite, and so on complies.\textsuperscript{121} The cinema spectator and the “camera actor” do not share a spatiotemporal frame. However, neither do the theatre spectator and a rehearsal session (which is the logical equivalent of the “camera actor” – one of many, as we have seen). In sum, both predicates are defined in identical terms. Therefore, it is not possible to differentiate IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE by comparing the relationship on those terms. Let’s consider the second possibility – that is, to substitute “camera actor” by its logical counter-part. The logical equivalent for “stage actor” is “film projector.” The theatre spectator and the “stage actor” share a spatiotemporal frame. Yet, so do the film spectator and the “projector” (which is the logical equivalent of the “stage actor”). As before, we see that both predicates are defined in identical terms. Therefore – as before – it is not possible to differentiate IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE by comparing the relationship on those terms.

Some theorists have compared IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE and MEDIATED PERFORMANCE and

\textsuperscript{121} Since the process of recording is rhizomatic it would even be valid to select a moment in the theatre director’s life.
PERFORMANCE by analyzing the relationship between the spectators and the object of the presentation. According to Wurtzler: “The live is characterized by the spatial co-presence and temporal simultaneity of audience and posited event. The recorded is characterized by the event’s spatial absence and temporal anteriority” (89). Presumably, “event” is the shared term. In fact, “event” denotes two different concepts. Yet, the slippage is concealed because both concepts are referred to by the same word; namely, “event.” Wurtzler equivocates because the event that is presented, or re-enacted, in the theatre lies in the past (from the perspective of the spectator in the theatre); and the event that is presented, or re-enacted, before the camera lies (from the perspective of the spectator in the cinema) equally in the past. As before, the notion that theatre and cinema are dichotomous cannot be inferred from comparing the encounter between the spectator and “the event” in terms of temporal synchrony and spatial proximity.

Pro Forma

The category IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE also includes manifestations of performance that take place off stage and out of the theatre. Theorists in Theatre Studies have adopted the term “performance in everyday life” to describe non-theatrical

\[\text{122 Wurtzler uses the labels “the Live” and “the Recorded” which I have shown to be misleading. So, I substituted “the Live” and “the Recorded” by “IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE” and “MEDIATED PERFORMANCE” respectively.}\]
manifestations of IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE. I have already shown how invalid is the argument that immediate performance in everyday life is *more* immediate than immediate performance in the theatre just because performance in everyday life is genuinely unrehearsed and spontaneous as opposed to the performance in the theatre that is rehearsed and scripted; this statement merely qualifies immediacy and does not refute that both manifestations of performance are immediate.

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123 Theorists such as Richard Schechner erroneously draw a distinction between IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE on the stage and IMMEDIATE PERFORMANCE in everyday life based on the location and/or the context wherein those performances occur, i.e., performances that take place on the theatre stage, on the sports field or performances that are framed as cultural-artistic-ritualesque expressions. However, what separates “performance” from everyday life performance is “play.” “Play” is different from performance in everyday life because of the participants’ intentionality and reciprocity that define the activity as “play.” A requisite for any activity to be considered as “play” is that any party that participates in the “community of players” and that wishes to terminate the contract can do so unilaterally, voluntarily and with impunity. The difference between “for real” and “play” (or “simulation) is a “contract” i.e. *intentionality* from both sides/communication partners. The act of *negotiation* is essential, and the contract can be ended unilaterally at any moment. The mere intention suffices for a participant to terminate the contract in which case the activity no longer qualifies as “play.” The fact that one party exits the community of players does not preclude that other participants may continue to consider their interactions with each-other as “play.” Johan Huizinga defines “play” as a voluntary, repetitive, orderly activity which is similar to ritual, yet different from ordinary life. (Huizinga 13). This way of defining “play” in terms of activities causes a problem: Huizinga is unable to (clearly) differentiate “play” from “ritual” because they elude a precise aesthetic definition (Huizinga 7). My way of defining “play” as a way in which activities are *perceived*, or coded, by those involved as either “play” or “for real” avoids this quandary.

124 As I have shown, notions such as “spontaneity,” “variability,” “unrehearsedness,” “risk,” and so on, substitute for “un-recordedness.” In addition, recall my analysis and critique of Schechner’s statement: “It may be that a film or a digitized performance art piece will be the same at each showing. But the context of every reception makes each instance different. Even
Essentially, “performance” is never manifested *ex nihilo*. In the words of Kwan Min Lee: “All experiences are mediated in some way, either by sense organs or by technology” (30). In other words, the mere idea that performance can be immediate is fallacious. Muriel Dimen (1999) noted that the term “immediacy” denotes media that aspire to a condition of transparency by attempting to erase all traces of material artifice from the viewer’s perception. She identified televisual immediacy, narrative immediacy, immersive immediacy (VR), and so on. For instance, motion pictures are experienced as immediate compared to, for instance, still photography. To conclude, immediate performance, either on or off the stage, is mediated.

*Synthesis*

Historically, theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies assumed that live performance and technologically-mediated forms of performance are dichotomous. The argument that supports the dichotomy goes as follows: “performance” and technologically-mediated forms of performance are polar opposites because in the theatre the spectator and the performer share a spatiotemporal frame whereas in the

though every “thing” is exactly the same, each event in which the “thing” participates is different. In other words, the uniqueness of an event is not in its materiality but in its interactivity. If this is so with regard to film and digitized events, *how much more so* in live performance, where both production and reception vary from instance to instance” (*Performance Studies* 23) (italics added).

cinema (as in broadcasting) the spectator and the performer do not share a spatiotemporal frame. Fischer-Lichte articulates this assessment as follows:

[T]heater often plays with and reflects on other media, as well as on its own particular mediality, its liveness. This is because it is liveness, understood as the physical co-presence of performers and spectators in the same space, that seems to be a constitutive and defining concept of theatre. (“Quo Vadis?” 59)

Both premises are true when they are considered separately: it is true that during a theatre performance, the performer and the spectator share a spatiotemporal frame; it is equally true that during performances that are technologically-mediated (as seen in the cinema and on television, and as heard on the radio), the performer and the spectator do not share a spatiotemporal frame. However, both premises together cannot support the conclusion that theatre and cinema are therefore dichotomous because the predicates (namely, the live actor and the technologically-mediated actor) are not logically equivalent. In other words, theorists that produce this argument are committing (and perpetuating) a logical fallacy. The following analogy makes clear the logical fallacy at hand. Consider a classification of ruminants – for instance, giraffes – that is based on digestive physiology. The taxonomy separates giraffes in a category of ‘type A’ that have molar and incisor teeth to chew the cud, and in a category of ‘type B’ that have a four-compartment stomach to further break down the cud. Both statements are individually true: it is true that ‘type A’ giraffes have molar and incisor teeth to chew the cud; it is equally true that
‘type B’ giraffes have a four-compartment stomach to further break down the cud. However, “teeth” and “stomach” are false principles of classification. Both organs relate to the digestive process and are present in both categories. However, they fulfill different functions. Therefore, they are not logically equivalent in the context of the digestive physiology.

The second part of my investigation (salva veritate) is concerned with investigating the validity of the principles on their individual merit. For instance, it might be possible to categorize giraffes only on the grounds of the criterion “teeth,” or, alternatively, only on the grounds of the criterion “stomach.” By substituting a false predicate by a predicate that is logically correct one can systematically ascertain the validity of each classification principle on an individual basis. Thus, returning to the giraffe-analogy, I compare teeth of ‘type A’ giraffes with teeth of ‘type B’ giraffes; and stomach of ‘type A’ giraffes with stomach of ‘type B’ giraffes. This demonstrates that neither “teeth” nor “stomach” are sound principles of classification. The fallacy that is committed is easily detected in the “giraffe case.” However, the slippage is concealed when identical terms are used to identify principles that are, in fact, not logically homologous – as we have seen in the case study which uses the term “performer.” In conclusion, my investigation has shown that the classification principles “spatial proximity” and “temporal synchrony” are invalid.
CHAPTER 4:
CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I have investigated the current status of “liveness” as a concept and a category for studying non-broadcast-based communication (such as theatre and “performance”) and for broadcast-based communication (such as radio and television).

Traditionally, the ontology of “performance” on-and-off the stage is predicated on the premise that THE LIVE and THE RECORDED are dichotomous categories. And yet, contemporary performance practices habitually fuse both (allegedly) oppositional categories as in the case of theatre productions that make use of video projection (e.g., The Wooster Group). These manifestations of “intermedial performance” (or, what I call, “hybrids”) upset the traditional dichotomy between THE LIVE and THE RECORDED. Further, the fact that those hybrids are inadequately accounted for by the taxonomy of “performance” indicates that the classification has lost its explanatory power.

I have problematized the way in which theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies theorize hybrids by calling attention to a new type of anomaly – namely, theatre productions that fuse ‘live acting’ with ‘video that is produced live on the stage before a live audience’ (e.g., The Builder’s Association, Big Art Group, Hotel
Modern). Hybrids that fuse ‘live acting’ with ‘video that is produced live on the stage before a live audience’ fuse two sign systems that are defined in identical terms: the performer on the stage shares a spatiotemporal frame with the spectator, and so does the performer who is acting before the camera. Since both sign systems are deemed identical according to the prevailing ‘taxonomy of LIVE PERFORMANCE and technologically-mediated performance,’ they elude classification as distinct categories. Hybrids that fuse ‘live acting’ with ‘video that is produced live on the stage before a live audience’ plunge the field into a semiotic impasse because semiosis is predicated on the ability to separate the constitutive sign systems. Moreover, the fact that both categories overlap indicates that the nature of the crisis is taxonomic.

It is natural (and, in fact historical) for scientists and scholars to classify things and processes because a sound, well-conceived taxonomy has the power to frame all theoretical considerations of a particular field of study. The lack of a functional classification model constrains the production and the analysis of “knowledge” and calls for a revision, or a substitution, of the prevailing paradigm that draws a distinction between “performance” and technologically-mediated forms of performance in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies. Of course, one cannot advocate a paradigm shift without offering a credible critique. So, the main objective of this dissertation project became the identification and critique of the theories that undergird the outmoded paradigm in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies.

The classificatory principles that govern a taxonomy are not established a priori but by “literary warrant.” To understand the rules that govern the various discursive formations I analyzed a sizeable sample of the existing literature about hybrid
performance practices in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies. In addition, I sampled from the literature in Broadcast Studies because theorists in Broadcast Studies have problematized broadcast productions that fuse ‘practices that are live’ with ‘practices that are recorded.’ Like their colleagues in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies, theorists in Broadcast Studies believe that hybrids undermine the binary opposition “live/recorded.”

My analysis focused on the conflicting ways in which theorists in the aforementioned fields of study used – and continue to use – the terms “live,” “recorded,” and “liveness.” I grouped the theorists in schools of thought to review the validity and the effectiveness of their theorizations, claims, and methods in a comprehensive manner. I demonstrated that the views of theorists such as Auslander, Barker, Baugh, Bell, Bay-Cheng, Blau, Carlson, Couldry, Dixon, Fischer-Lichte, Giannachi, Jefferies, Kaye, Lavender, Phelan, Schechner, and Zerihan are contingent on a reductive definition of the concept of “recorded.” I critiqued Giesekam’s study on the use of projection technologies in the theatre (2007) to demonstrate the shortcomings of intermediality as a method to analyze hybrids on-and-off the stage. I discussed trends that establish new categories such as Carlson’s “roving eye” (which describes hybrids that fuse live performance with ‘video that is produced live on stage’) (2003) and McNeilly’s “digital dance performance” (which describes hybrids that fuse dance choreography with a wide range of novel technologies including CGI and motion mapping) (2011). Their strategies fail to make headway, however, because they merely subdivide the strained taxonomy into ever more (equally strained) subcategories. I questioned McConachie for hoping (in vain) that he can circumvent the semiotic impasse by applying the methods of Cognitive Science to
the analysis of “performance” (2007). I also critiqued a study by Magerko et al. (2009).

Next, I examined the value of new classificatory principles, such as “community,” “unpredictability,” “risk,” “immediacy,” “realness,” and “intimacy.” However, those concepts are invariably placeholders for “un-recordedness;” they substitute “liveness” and, consequently, reassert the same old binary: “live/recorded.” A tangential school of thought which explored, and continues to explore, concepts such as “presence” and “aura” inadvertently makes it clear that metaphysical concepts are dubious and therefore ill-suited principles of classification. Equally unproductive for scholarly discourse and debate is a line of inquiry that proposed, and continue to propose, that “live” and “liveness” are affective concepts. In sum, the above methodologies and theoretical models that are concerned with the ontology of LIVE PERFORMANCE in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies and with the ontology of technologically-mediated forms of performance in Broadcast Studies have failed to resolve what I argue is a taxonomic crisis.

After investigating the literature, I analyzed the onomasiological principle and the semasiological principle that together organize the taxonomy of ‘LIVE PERFORMANCE and technologically-mediated performance.’ In the first part of this two-tier investigation, I analyzed the relationships between the semantic concepts “live” and “recorded.” I concluded that “live” and “recorded” are binary opposites in the context of broadcasting, but not in the context of LIVE PERFORMANCE.

In the second tier of my assessment of the theories that undergird the taxonomy of ‘LIVE PERFORMANCE and technologically-mediated performance,’ I tested and contested the logic of the argument that underpins the dichotomy between LIVE PERFORMANCE and
technologically-mediated forms of performance. Theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies define “liveness” as a concept that qualifies the spectator-performer relationship as spatiotemporally contiguous. The argument runs as follows: LIVE PERFORMANCE is live because during manifestations of LIVE PERFORMANCE the spectator and the performer share a spatiotemporal frame; technologically-mediated performance, on the other hand, is not live because during manifestations of technologically-mediated forms of performance the spectator and the performer do not share a spatiotemporal frame. My interrogation demonstrated that this argument is founded upon a logical fallacy. This refutation invalidated “liveness” as a classificatory principle that can draw distinctions between LIVE PERFORMANCE and technologically-mediated forms of performance.

My analysis showed that when formative theorists in Performance Studies established a taxonomy of ‘LIVE PERFORMANCE and technologically-mediated performance’ to separate “performance” (e.g., theatre and performance in everyday life) from technologically-mediated forms of performance (e.g., cinema, radio and television) they merged two pre-existing taxonomies; namely, ‘the taxonomy which draws a distinction between theatre and cinema’ with ‘the taxonomy which draws a distinction between live broadcast productions and recorded broadcast productions.’ However, unknowingly they imported the binary oppositional relationship between “live” and “recorded” which, as I have argued, is valid in the context of broadcasting, but not in the context of LIVE PERFORMANCE. This realization was pivotal because it made it clear that “live/recorded” was imported from a “foreign” context before it became used in connection with LIVE PERFORMANCE. Consequently, the ideology of liveness (which they
established to support the dichotomy between LIVE PERFORMANCE and technologically-mediated forms of performance) was unfounded. The overarching taxonomy of ‘LIVE PERFORMANCE and technologically-mediated performance’ became increasingly strained due to technological advances. My analysis revealed that the taxonomic failure is due to (1) the fact that the overarching taxonomy is governed by a set of thesauri that are incommensurable, and (2) the fact that the overarching taxonomy is predicated on a paradigm that is founded on classificatory principles that are inadequate or inaccurate.

This dissertation, by tracing the ways in which the meaning of “live,” “recorded,” and “liveness” evolved, made significant contributions to scholarship in both Theatre Studies and Performance Studies, as well as Broadcast Studies, and advocated a paradigm shift in both fields of study. First, what are the implications for theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies who study hybrids and who investigate the ontology of “performance?” As we have seen, historically, the ontology of LIVE PERFORMANCE was predicated on “liveness.” After the publication of Auslander’s Liveness (1999) most theorists in the above-mentioned fields of study conceded that the ontology of “performance?” could not be predicated on “liveness” alone. Yet, like Auslander, most theorists maintained that “liveness” is a significant and a useful concept for the analysis of “performance” on-and-off the stage. As Fischer-Lichte asserts:

The concept of liveness […] is indispensable to theatre studies as media studies. It has proven to be a basic concept - not for ideological, political, or essentialist reasons, nor for the sake of ensuring advance value judgments, but as something that enables the media scholar to define
differences, to describe the possibilities offered and developed by the different media, regardless of whether they can be copied or simulated by other media [....] The concept of liveness is a useful tool that allows such distinctions to be made. However, it is not the only one. In order to discover, describe, and analyze processes of transferring, copying, or simulating possibilities of one medium to or by another, it is absolutely mandatory to know all the media and their particular potential. (“Quo Vadis?” 59)

This dissertation, however, argued that “liveness” is a specific broadcast concept. Therefore, “liveness” (defined as the opposite of “recordedness”) can be studied only in connection with broadcast technologies (e.g., telegraphy, telephony/SMS, broadcast radio, broadcast television, and multimedia) and, by extension, in connection with hybrids on-and-off the stage that fuse “performance” and broadcast technologies. By this definition, the study of “liveness” in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies becomes the focus of Reception Studies – e.g., studies that investigate the way in which, for instance, production modes, scenography (e.g., interactions between the live performer and the broadcast presentation), evoke the sense that a broadcast transmission is produced live (i.e., the spectator believes that the message is presented by a live person as opposed to pre-recorded) and the factors or the conditions that contribute to (or detract from) this affect. The term “live” also means “not dead.” Therefore, phrases such as “live performer” (literal sense) and “live curtain” (figurative sense) are unaffected by my refutation.
Second, let’s consider the implications of my dissertation for Broadcast Studies. Many theorists in Broadcast Studies believe that the manifestation of hybrids in broadcasting must mean that “live” and “recorded” are not mutually exclusive concepts. In response, theorists such as Boddy, Bourdon, Caldwell, Ellis, Feuer, Heath, Kavka, Levine, Rath, Scannell, Smith, Vianello, and West questioned, and continue to question, the notion that “live” and “recorded” are mutually exclusive concepts. They also problematized, and continue to problematize, claims that predicate the ontology of broadcast television on liveness. My investigation revealed why “live” and “liveness” are contested concepts in Broadcast Studies. It showed that the ontological crisis in Broadcast Studies is contingent on the way in which theorists in Broadcast Studies across the board associated, and continue to associate, “recorded” with representational technologies and, consequently, misconceptualize “recorded” as a spatiotemporal concept. In opposition, I argued that “live” and “recorded” are time-based broadcast concepts that describe two mutually exclusive broadcast production modes. Further, I argued that unlike what theorists in Broadcast Studies believe, “live” and “liveness” are not synonymous. Rather, they are two distinct concepts: “live” is a technical term that allows broadcast-producers (i.e., the senders) to identify a specific broadcast production mode; “liveness” is an experiential concept that describes the sense that, from the perspective of broadcast-audiences (i.e., the receivers), a broadcast transmission is live irrespective of the actual production mode.

This dissertation contributes to future scholarship in Broadcast Studies because it advances a functional classificatory model and it clearly delineates terminologies such as “live,” “recorded,” and “liveness.” As such, this dissertation resolves a disconnect that
has separated theorists in Broadcast Studies from broadcast-professionals. The way in which theorists in Theatre Studies, Performance Studies, and Broadcast Studies were misguided is rather striking: theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies sustained the ideology of “liveness” whereas theorists in Broadcast Studies dismissed the ideology of “liveness.” As I have shown, both sides were mistaken.

Many theorists in Theatre Studies and Performance Studies who claim that they do not aspire to scientific methods suffer from an apparently antiscientific prejudice. Their critical methods remain speculative at best. Nonetheless, their disclaimers do not place them above or beyond scientific protocols such as the principles of logic and reasoning. One goal of scientific and scholarly inquiry is to narrow the range of possible explanations and interpretations. I believe that there is no fundamental difference between the humanities/social sciences, and the natural/empirical sciences other than the methods and the protocols they must rely on. Falsifiability strives to disprove rather than prove hypotheses. The challenge that theorists in the Arts and Humanities face is therefore not dissimilar to the challenge that scientists face: theorists need to identify sound questions that can provide criteria to eliminate false hypotheses whereas scientists need to devise sound experiments that can validate their provisional theoretical models and theories.

This dissertation has demonstrated that theories in Theatre Studies, Performance Studies, and Broadcast Studies can be put to the test, falsified, and replaced. By interrogating and displacing theories that supported the hitherto accepted paradigm, this dissertation cleared the way for the difficult but necessary task of forming a new paradigm for Theatre Studies, Performance Studies, and Broadcast Studies that will
establish a more functional taxonomy of performance on the stage, in everyday life, and in broadcasting.


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