MAKING A
LABORATORY

Dynamic

Configurations
with

Transversal

Video

Ben

Spatz

MAKING A LABORATORY

Fig. 1. Hieronymus Bosch, *Ship of Fools* (1490–1500)

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ADVANCED METHODS

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The identity of the practitioner in the laboratory is contested, inventive, and inconsistent. The practitioner, consciously or unconsciously, is always already in a process of reassessing what she represents in her action. What I am specifically interested in here are the moments when the representational dissolves into something coming from "inside," something uncontrollably responsive, as in responding and feeling responsible for. It is neither arbitrary nor ordinary. I usually experience it as frantic and mostly reactive. It is reified within the act of doing something together in a particular group in a designated place. Even within the walls of the sterile enclosed studio space, identity is constantly recalled as a force to move through / around / by and from. It is contested because the practitioner constantly negotiates with grand cultural categories of being, becoming, and from-ness in her action. It is inventive because the practitioner creates and blends bodily techniques and methods to circumnavigate stereotypes and go beyond the representational. It is also inconsistent because it carries traces of intersecting and disparate geographies one identifies with: geographies of birth, growth, travel, trauma, and exile. Identity in the laboratory is never one fixed category but a relational unfolding practice.

—Nazlıhan Eda Erçin

In a non-imperial understanding of photography, the photograph is only one possible outcome of a complex encounter. The encounter involves not only the one who holds the camera and those in front of it, but also other participants, including imaginary spectators. These spectators are not necessarily the same from the point of view of the photographed person as they are from that of the photographer. While the person who holds the camera is most likely committed to a milieu of experts — an editor, for example, in the different venues where the photograph is likely to be published, and an audience — the person who is photographed has perceptions and aspirations of her own. We should not let the photograph, a contingent product, overshadow the complex nature of the encounter out of which it was taken, nor to blur the inequalities, the patterns of exploitation, and the incommensurable expectations, aspirations, and modalities of participation inherent in a photographic event.

— Ariella Aïsha Azoulay

Contents

for Elaine and Morris

who are everywhere in these pages

Preface

Advanced Methods is a new imprint from punctum books, designed to offer practical and theoretical interventions through the rigorous elaboration of concrete new research methods and associated methodological frameworks. The working assumption is that methods are fundamental onto-epistemological building blocks and therefore crucial leverage points from which institutional transformation might be initiated. In many cases, these transformations will necessarily take place in modes and media not amenable to the book form, such as the audiovisual works discussed in this first volume. Yet the book still has important work to do. The Advanced Methods imprint will primarily publish short books, like this one, that focus narrowly on a specific new research method, detailing both how to do it and what it does. These books are intended to be highly portable, compact, and inexpensive (print) or free (open access), allowing them to move between different types

of spaces. They will bridge critical theory to new forms of experimentation and make a range of emerging methods available to practitioner-researchers within and beyond academia.

New methods take a long time to develop. I founded Urban Research Theater as a research-oriented theater company in Poland in 2004. By 2007, I had moved back to New York City and was working regularly with a single collaborator, Michele Farbman, on a rigorous exploration of nonlexical songs as a basis for embodied practice and research. During that time, I began to rethink the epistemic significance of the actor–director relationship and developed a simple technique of switching back and forth between these roles, which turned out to be the seed of the method described in this book. Between 2008 and 2013, I worked closely with another partner, Massimiliano Balduzzi, completed a PhD in Theater, and took up a teaching and research position in northern England. In early 2017, I wrote an introductory methodology for embodied research (Spatz 2017a), but this was still only a general overview of possibilities, not an actual method. Only in late 2017, during an "audiovisual embodied laboratory" project with Nazlıhan Eda Erçin and Agnieszka Mendel, did this long process crystallize in a form of work that deserves to be called a research method. I share this story to illustrate how

an entire decade was needed to get from the simple act of switching between roles to a fully developed embodied audiovisual research method. The purpose of this book is to describe that method, from a range of perspectives, in order to make it available for use by others.[1]

As this narrative suggests, what I offer here is not "just" or "merely" a research method. It could also be called an experimental practice, an artistic practice, or even a spiritual practice. Yet for me, the idea that this practice arrives to the status of research method

constitutes a specific and radical claim. *Making a Laboratory* attempts to reconsider the relationship between embodiment and technology through a newly epistemic understanding of video. It is best understood as a textual addendum or prelude to a practical onto-epistemological proposal that cannot be realized within any text-based paradigm but instead requires the integration of textuality and audiovisuality within the medium of video. At the same time, this book is intended to stand on its own as a critical philosophical text, an intervention in some of the theoretical frameworks through which knowledge, embodiment, and performance are predominantly analyzed today. That is why, although the book is structured as a step-by-step introduction to a specific method, its practical instructions are accompanied throughout by a serious grappling with the practical and theoretical contributions of Jerzy Grotowski, Giorgio Agamben, Rebecca Schneider, Hito Steyerl, and others, as well as with the knowledge/practice communities of social epistemology and ethical kink. Further artistic and scholarly contexts for these discussions can be found in my other books (Spatz 2015; 2020).

The first section of *Making a Laboratory* offers a working definition of laboratoriality that is independ-

ent of technoscience. This may be useful for anyone who is looking to frame their practice rigorously as research. The next four sections describe the specific method of audiovisual embodied research that I developed, as described above, between 2007 and 2017, which I call "Dynamic Configurations with Transversal Video" (DCTV). Two sections are dedicated to the "opening cut" of dynamic configurations (DC) and two to the "closing cut" of transversal video (TV). The final section locates DCTV in a broader critical and political context and explores some of its implications and potentials under the rubric of a "queer laboratory." In general terms, what is introduced here is a new way of conceptualizing and implementing what Jerzy Grotowski called a "theater laboratory." Indeed, DCTV owes its techniques and ethics primarily to the worlds of contemporary theater and dance, especially their practices of collaborative creation (Colin and Sachsenmaier 2016). But the method described here also abandons the most fundamental principle of contemporary performing arts, namely the performance of an artistic "work" before a live audience. It replaces this with something that is formally and technologically closer to cinema, although on closer inspection it is also unlike any existing approach to filmmaking. In fact, DCTV is a blueprint for a new type of audiovisual embodied laboratory.

1

Two Cuts

Across contemporary arts and humanities, we find the body figured as technical. This idea can be founded in analyses of gender as technology (De Lauretis 1987); race as technology (Coleman 2009); somatechnics (Sullivan and Murray 2009); anthropotechnics (Sloterdijk 2013); the "original technicity of the body" (Gill-Peterson 2014); and my own work on embodied technique. What is this *bodily technicity* and how is it archived in fields of knowledge? More specifically, how does the contrast between writing and audiovisuality affect the ontology and epistemology of embodiment? Theorists of embodiment often draw on their own lived experience, but they are not necessarily equipped to design rigorous experimental systems in practice. Instead, what we find in many branches of contemporary philosophy, from poststructuralism to new materialism and affect theory, is an anxious wrestling with the limits of language. This wrestling generates often very dense, sometimes poetic,

sometimes powerful new terms and concepts. But for those outside these particular discourses, their appeal can be confusing. Why all this writing about the limits of writing? Why undertake a critique of philosophy in the medium of written text? Meanwhile, the fields of artistic research that are most actively developing new methods for experimental practice (e.g., Allegue et al. 2009; Nelson 2013; Barrett and Bolt 2013) often remain bound to notions of art and performance that undercut their epistemic ambitions. There is a pressing need for new experimental methods, for the "invention of new forms of philosophy" and new enactments of "what it means to think" (Maoilearca 2018: 108, 110).

The concept of the laboratory has a long history in theater and performance. Philosopher of science Robert Crease devoted a volume to developing an analogy between scientific experiments and theatrical processes, according to which a laboratory "is a particular *space of action*" (1993: 106, italics original). But the analogy between laboratory and theater is as problematic for philosophers of science as it is for contemporary performers working in the lineage of Jerzy Grotowski's "theater laboratory" (Grotowski 1982; Schechner and Wolford 1997). While there are undoubtedly experimental aspects of theatrical processes, it has never been clear exactly how and when theatrical performances can be understood

to generate knowledge, or how such "performed" knowledge might be compared with that produced in the sciences or humanities. In theater-making, the aims of experimentation and knowledge production compete with those of artistic composition and public spectacle. How should we distinguish the space of the theatrical laboratory from that of theatrical production? In my previous work, I have used social epistemology, a branch of science and technology studies, to demonstrate that embodied technique in fields like postural yoga, actor training, and gender is structured by knowledge as much as by habit and repetition (Spatz 2015). Here I extend this thesis by synthesizing key insights from two major theorists of scientific experimentation, Hans-Jörg Rheinberger and Karen Barad.[1] The understanding that follows does not result from squeezing embodied practice and performing

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1   Rheinberger calls himself a historian of science and is an important figure in early social epistemology, inspiring the work of Karin Knorr Cetina and many others. Barad's writing on laboratory science is more recent and employs a different rhetorical strategy, part of what has been called the ontological turn. Rather than linking culture and materiality at the level of discipline, Barad locates this entanglement in experimentation itself, using the term "onto-epistemology" to grasp the workings of laboratories. Barad's onto-epistemology

arts into a scientific or quantitative frame, but instead from recognizing that the social and historical models offered by Rheinberger's "philosophy of experimental practice" (Lenoir in Rheinberger 2010: xi) far exceed the technoscientific domains that inspired them. My emphasis here is neither on the wider context of science studies nor on their implications for critical ontologies — although I touch upon these matters below — but on the practical, methodological, and onto-epistemic structure of the laboratory as a place of sustained and systematic investigation. What parameters define the time and space of "laboratoriality" (Schino 2009: 24)? How is this "space of action" set apart from others and by what mechanism does it make its specific contributions to knowledge?

For Rheinberger, experimental practices involve "a permanent process of reorientation and reshuffling of the boundary between what is thought to be known," the *technical,* "and what is beyond imagination," the *epistemic* (Rheinberger 1997: 11). This suggests a kind of border or edge, continually redrawn, between the known and the unknown, which any given experimental system implements in a specific way. A similar

can also be compared with Isabelle Stengers's "cosmopolitics" (see Stengers 2010).

model is proposed by Barad in her examination of the experimental systems of quantum physics:

> The boundary between the "object of observation" and the "agencies of observation" is indeterminate in the absence of a specific physical arrangement of the apparatus. What constitutes the object of observation and what constitutes the agencies of observation are determinable only on the condition that the measurement apparatus is specified. The apparatus enacts a cut delineating the object from the agencies of observation. Clearly, then, as we have noted, observations do not refer to properties of observation-independent objects. (Barad 2007: 114, italics removed)

For Barad, the "cut delineating the object from the agencies of observation" is essentially defined by an act of measurement. Yet the image of the cut, with its decisive cleaving of a whole into parts, can be applied much more broadly if we clarify two points. First, it is hardly the apparatus by itself that enacts an onto-epistemological cut. What makes something a measuring device in the first place is a whole ensemble of social and technical conditions that constitute an experimental system. Second, my key point here: There is not one cut needed to produce laboratorial

space, but rather two distinct cuts, with a crucial gap between them.

If there were just one cut separating the "object of observation" (Barad) or "epistemic thing" (Rheinberger) from the technical conditions that produce it, then it would not be possible to retrieve any meaningful data from the experimental event, because the definition of the experiment would be the same as its result. In each of the experimental systems described by Rheinberger and Barad, there are actually two cuts, two distinct ways or moments in which the technical interacts with and defines the epistemic. These two cuts are not separated by time or space, but by knowledge. That is, the opening cut does not happen first or in a different place from the closing cut; rather, the two cuts happen simultaneously and together, the difference between them being their relation to the space of unknown that emerges between them because it is defined precisely by them. Thus, what Barad calls a "cut" is more accurately a gap created by two cuts, one on either "side" of it. This gap has epistemic width or thickness and it is "inside" the gap, in the unpredictable phenomena that emerge between the experimental conditions and the measurement of what happens, that the experiment unfolds. As Barad demonstrates at length, the unknown be-

comes knowable in experimental science through an act of measurement. But the measurement cannot be the same as the experimental conditions, or else nothing could be learned. Thus, the cut is always two cuts, or better, two sets of cuts. These occur simultaneously but have different epistemic positions, one instigating the experimental event and the other measuring it. Barad declares, "what is at issue is the cut that makes a distinction between object and instrument" (2007: 328). If we clarify that, in practice, this cut is always made twice, in two different epistemic locations, and that the object therefore appears between two different sets of instruments, then we will be in a position to apply the idea of epistemic cuts in situations that have little to do with technoscientific measurement.

A single cut would be like a scientist who slips a slide into the microscope and then refrains from peering through the lens, or who takes a detailed reading of an empty chamber into which nothing of interest has been inserted. Such actions would be epistemically incomplete. In the first example, an experimental event is "opened" but not closed; in the second, it is "closed" without having been opened. To generate new knowledge, both cuts are needed: the opening cut, also known as the initial or technical *conditions* of the experiment, which generates a situation or object of interest; and the closing cut, by which that mani-

festation is measured, imaged, or otherwise traced. The opening cut generates a potentially interesting space of unknown — Crease's "space of action" in its narrowest sense — while the closing cut produces a trace of what happens there. Hence the experimental cut is always two cuts: a cut that specifies conditions for something to happen and a cut that derives traces from what happens. Referring to these two cuts as a single cut effectively builds a particular interpretation of the experiment into its description, as if the relationship between opening and closing cuts were fully transparent or determinative. This is only possible retroactively: After the experiment has been enacted and interpreted, one can perhaps retrospectively describe both the experiment's initial conditions and its outcome as a single cultural-material or onto-epistemic structure. In contrast, from a practical perspective, when one is immersed in the details of planning or designing an experiment, it is precisely the complex and rigorously indeterminate relationship between the opening and closing cuts that generates interest in what might take place between them.

The project that inspired this writing was well-supported for humanities research, with ample technology and a paid team of three researchers. But an experiment in the sense defined here is constituted on a micro level every time that a precise relationship

is set up between initial conditions and the derivation of a trace via an experimental moment, regardless of whether a designated room or any specialized technologies are used. To further generalize the concept of laboratoriality, we need to go beyond the assumption that the closing cut of experimentation is always defined by measurement. Barad writes: "What we usually call a 'measurement' is a correlation or entanglement between component parts of a phenomenon, between the 'measured object' and the 'measuring device', where the measuring device is explicitly taken to be macroscopic so that we can read the pattern of marks that the measured object leaves on it" (2007: 337). I have already noted that that the "measured object" cannot appear for the "measuring device" unless an epistemically distinct opening cut has been made. Additionally, in our context, measurement will not usually be the most appropriate term by which to name the closing cut. Measurement, or *quantified tracing,* is a special case of the "pattern of marks" that may be generated through experimentation, which Rheinberger calls "graphematic concatenations" or "engravings" (Rheinberger 1997: 3). Although its vast power and impact through technology is undeniable, quantified measurement is by no means the only kind of tracing or inscription that can act as a closing cut for experimentation. Indeed, to take measurement as

the paradigm of the cut, as Barad does, is implicitly to center mathematical physics as the paradigmatic mode of knowledge.[2] We could go further and say that inscription itself is unnecessary for experimentation. Certainly, a kind of experimentation can take place without any type of inscription. The most basic experiment would take the form: *Let's do X and see what happens,* where "X" is the opening cut and "see what happens" is the closing cut. I will therefore call "laboratorial" a particular kind of rigor associated with the implementation of inscription at both cuts. According to that definition, "Let's do X and see what happens" would be experimental but not laboratorial,

2   This may be the most significant difference between the accounts of Rheinberger and Barad. While Rheinberger emphasizes "the fragmentation of the sciences into disunified areas" (1997: 179) and even acknowledges a debt to art history in formulating his theory (4), Barad's argument is based on a reading of quantum physics as a "completely general" theory that "supersedes" everything prior (2007: 110). While she intends to use quantum indeterminacy as a starting point for an ethical and political destabilization of ontology, her centering of physics as the paradigmatic form of research seriously undercuts this aim. Despite their commonalities, *Meeting the Universe Halfway* barely mentions Rheinberger except in a passing comment about copyright (382).

because its opening and closing cuts are not archivally traced. An experiment becomes a laboratory when both cuts are traced or inscribed archivally, so that those not present can have mediated access to both "what was done" (the opening cut) and "what happened" (the closing cut).

By defining laboratoriality in this way, I foreground experimentation that uses archival inscription —but not measurement —to establish the rigor of its cuts. I do this because I consider the investigation of non-quantitative archival inscription to be one of the core duties of academia in a technoscientific age. Accordingly, I offer three definitions: *Experimentality* is any kind of "trying out" (opening cut) coupled with observation (closing cut). *Laboratoriality,* or inscriptive experimentality, requires that both the "trying out" and the observation be archivally traced. (This makes the question of what constitutes an adequate tracing an essential part of experimental design). Finally, *technoscientific laboratoriality* pertains where the closing cut is not only archival but also quantitative, as in measurement. These definitions put technoscience in its epistemological place, as a uniquely powerful but onto-epistemologically narrow type of research. All three types of research are structured by an epistemic gap between opening and closing cuts. This gap is not simply an "edge" (Rheinberger) or singular

"cut" (Barad) between the known and the unknown, but a tiny open zone between two cuts that defines experimental, laboratorial, and technoscientific events. To adapt Barad: *It's all a matter of where we place the cuts* (2007: 348). Within any given moment of laboratoriality, a multiplicity of highly complex emergent phenomena are simultaneously opened, or instigated, and closed, or traced, in particular ways. When we decide where to place — that is, how to implement — the opening and closing cuts of an experimental system, we are limiting in advance what can happen inside it and what can be traced of that happening. These decisions are always intuitive to a degree, even in technoscience, where "the interaction between scientific object and technical conditions is eminently nontechnical in its character" and scientists "are, first and foremost, *bricoleurs* (tinkerers), not engineers" (Rheinberger 1997: 32). Yet these decisions also build upon vast bodies of knowledge that sediment as the domain of the technical in any given field.

A definition of laboratoriality based on two archivally inscribed cuts can be used to reexamine existing methodologies in artistic research and other emerging interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary fields. One can apply to any research method such basic questions as: What is the opening cut and how is it

archivally traced? What is the closing cut and how is it archivally traced? This framework replaces the technoscientific emphasis on measurement with a broader understanding of onto-epistemological cuts in relation to archives and their varied affordances. Noting that "the word *science* derives from the Latin *scientia,* 'to separate one thing from another,' which is related to the Indo-European root *skei,* 'to cut, split'" (Schneider 1997: 203n4), we could even attempt to reclaim the word "science" for non-quantitative cuts, such as those described in the rest of this book. If knowledge in a general sense is coextensive with life and has no need for archival inscription, we nevertheless must recognize the role played by archives and inscription in any institutionalization of knowledge that goes beyond direct interpersonal transmission. This is the point at which I would hope to intervene in the politics of knowledge, research, and academia. If scholarly institutions of knowledge are founded on particular relations with archives, rather than specifically on the medium of writing—by which I mean all forms of numerical, textual, and musical notation—then the advent of audiovisual research stands to radically transform the university and perhaps knowledge itself. At issue here is not only the forms that research can be understood to take, but also who can be recognized

as conducting research and what can be counted as knowledge.

Leaving these broader questions aside, I now turn to a specific new research method that is, in these terms, strictly laboratorial but not technoscientific. The method is named "Dynamic Configurations with Transversal Video" (DCTV), after the two sets of cuts that define it.

Dynamic Configurations: Notation

Imagine that three people take turns occupying the roles of practitioner, director, and videographer. As a starting point, the trio works according to a daily schedule in which each team member occupies each role for 90 minutes, with a 30-minute break between rotations. A complete rotation through three of six possible configurations, therefore, takes six hours. On some days, a shorter rotation schedule is used, such as 30 minutes per role with no breaks in between (90 minutes in total), to allow more time for discussion and for reviewing the video recordings generated by the process. In the project that led to the formalization of the method described here, I initially proposed such a structure of rotating roles as a way for three full-time "embodied researchers" to get to know each other and to start experimenting with the use of a video camera in studio practice. However, this approach soon led to a number of challenging questions: What exactly are the responsibilities and powers, the limits

and obligations, of each of the three named roles? How does the role of "director" here differ from that of a professional theatrical or cinematic director? What guidelines or rules should the videographer follow? How does the presence of the camera affect the practice? Does the trio need to agree upon a shared topic or focus before beginning each session? To what extent do the three roles imply hierarchical relations and to what extent can they function in a collaborative, horizontal, or micro-democratic way? How are these flexible or dynamic relationships affected by the more static and institutionally rigid power relations that structure the project and the institutions within which the research takes place? This section begins to answer these questions through a discussion of the notation system I developed, with Nazlıhan Eda Erçin and Agnieszka Mendel, to specify "dynamic configurations" in experimental practice. Another crucial question — what can be done with the videographic materials produced by this process — will be addressed in the second half of the book.

The three roles just mentioned were initially defined in the simplest of terms.[1] In our team, each of the three

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1   I am aware of several other triad structures for experimental
    or interactive practice, including Sandra Reeve's extension
    of Authentic Movement to include a "meta-witness"; a

researchers had a background in some kind of post-Grotowskian ensemble theater (this term is defined below), which gave us a degree of shared understanding as to the kinds of relationship that can exist between a performer or practitioner and someone who "directs" them. We also shared an overarching, formal investigative framework, aiming to explore the relationship between technique and identity by working practically with a particular set of songs (see Spatz 2019). However, it immediately became clear that the interactions between us were revealing differences as much as similarities, even with regard the most basic questions: What is a song? How does one begin to work with a song? What counts as practice? What is the task of directing? Each of us approached

mentoring practice at the Institute for Advanced Performance and Scenography Studies in Brussels (https://apass. be/); "Rewriting Distance," developed by Lin Snelling and Guy Cools (http://rewritingdistance.com/); and Katrina McPherson's "Human Camera" structure. Artistic researcher Sami Haapala is developing an audiovisual research method in which a performer and a participant, each wearing an action camera, are simultaneously recorded by an external videographer. It would be useful to compare the diverse ways in which each of these methods combine designated roles, relations, and technologies.

the act of singing in a different way, bringing with us many layers of personal and professional embodied knowledge. As these questions arose, we began to examine more explicitly the power dynamics at work, both inside and outside the studio. Within the studio, the continual rotation of roles worked to destabilize power relations, rendering them fragmented and circulatory. Rotation not only ensured that the power accruing to each role would move between the team members, but also tended to generate a sense of overall equality between the roles themselves. At the same time, the project was formally defined by an explicit "static configuration" according to which, as Principal Investigator, I was responsible as supervisor for the two Research Assistants (Erçin and Mendel). These dynamics were further ramified by differences of gender, race, nationality, immigration status, religious affiliation, linguistic competency, academic accreditation, professional experience, and more.

After a few weeks, two limitations of the basic rotating trio structure became clear. First, the practitioner was always alone in the space of prac-tice — undertaking solo practice — since the director and videographer were present in their own separate capacities, intervening only from outside. Second, the assumption that we would spend an equal amount of

time in each configuration prevented us from exploring the potential of any single configuration in greater depth. To enable a wider range and depth of possibilities, I invited each member of the team to offer a specific proposal for how the laboratory work should proceed. In which configurations, and according to what schedule? As an aid to sharing these proposals, and to support the ensuing conversations, I invented an apparently simple notation system that condensed each configuration to just a few marks on paper. I had previously toyed with the idea of developing a notation system for studio-based experimental practice, but this was the first time that the desire for notation had arisen directly out of the needs of practice. Significantly, I did not propose the use of notation in order to formalize the epistemic objects with which we thought we were working. My understanding at the time was that our primary epistemic objects were the songs, not the relationships between the researchers or between the roles. Only gradually, as our use of the notation became less descriptive and more prescriptive, did I come to understand the power of this notation system to formalize aspects of embodied practice that usually remain implicit. At this point, the relations formalized in the notation became objects of epistemic interest in a wholly new way.

The notation for dynamic configurations appropriates algebraic symbols and uses them to indicate formal relations between individuals, who are represented by letters. Using this notation, our initial "trio rotations" can be easily written out as formulae. For example, in the first session of the first day of work, I, Ben, was in the role of practitioner; Agnieszka was in the role of director; and Eda was in the role of videographer. Using our first initials, this configuration can be written as follows:

$$[B]<A/E$$

The same formula can be written in abstract form, without referring to specific individuals, by simply using letters in alphabetical order:

$$[A]<B/C$$

For a while, I understood this notation system as describing three roles. However, as I have thought more deeply about the function of these appropriated algebraic symbols in structuring practice, I have realized that the notation is better described as formalizing four relations:

SYMBOL	RELATION
_ (underscore)	the relation to memorized or incorporated materials
[ ] (square brackets)	the relation of practitioners within a shared space of practice
< > ^ (triangle or arrow)	the primary external or "directorial" relation
/ — (slash or bar)	the videographic relation

Each symbol can be understood as an opening cut that structures experimental practice. Indeed, they each enact a type of division or scission that polarizes and defines what happens in the practice. The first three relations are fundamental to a wide variety of embodied and performing arts. If we want to emphasize the aspect of caring that attends each relation, we might call these four relations of care. Each relation can be grasped in a very simple way, at least initially, but each is also philosophically rich and deserving of serious examination in its own right.

The underscore _ functions to cut a particular set of trained or memorized materials out of a practitioner's habitus, or sedimented embodiment, highlighting it as an explicit focus of the practice. These materials, such as a song, text, or exercise, are memorized or incorporated by the practitioner and the practi-

tioner is said to have responsibility, custodianship, or stewardship for them.[2] The brackets **[]** separate the space of practice from another space immediately external to it, from which what happens there may be witnessed, directed, or videographed. Although the space of practice is often literally spatial, it is more precisely defined by the intercorporeal relations of the practitioners within it and by their separation from the rest of the world; in theater, this is what we call the "fourth wall." The triangle or arrow **<** refers to the relationship between the practitioner and someone whom I tentatively call the "director," a term that will be further examined below. Finally, the slash **/** implements a technological cut defined by the presence of an audiovisual recording device, such as a video camera. When combined as a formula and taken as the premise of an experimental practice session, these four cuts operate as a single cut that "opens"

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2   My use of "stewardship" here comes from indigenous arguments around intellectual property. In contrast to a "commons" approach to knowledge, which combats commercialism by arguing for an open flow of materials, a stewardship approach recognizes a kind of propriety that is not property and which is based on care and responsibility rather than use and exploitation. Intellectual property issues are further discussed below.

laboratorial space and gives it a particular epistemic shape. The power of this notation system to specify such dynamic configurations is best demonstrated through a series of illustrations.

Figure 1 shows how three standard theatrical configurations can be notated.[3] In a rehearsal for a standard "scene study," two actors work together in a shared space of practice. Each of them is responsible for a chunk of memorized material in the form of "lines" learned from a script, while a third person C offers direction from outside the space of practice. When it comes time to perform the scene, the same structure **[AB]** obtains within the space of practice, but the director figure is replaced by an indeterminate number of audience members **CDE**... These people occupy the same position as the director, just outside the space of practice, but are not empowered to give direction to the actors. The third formula shows a different situation: a workshop or class in which one person, the teacher or leader, gives direction to a number of others. In the workshop configuration, the director is inside the space of practice and is responsible for introducing a specified chunk of memorized

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3   Figures 1–3 use LaTeX typesetting. Thanks to Ben Blum-Smith for helping with this.

Standard Theatrical Configurations

29 April 2018

$$[\underline{AB}] < C \qquad \text{(rehearsal)}$$

$$[\underline{AB}]CDE... \qquad \text{(performance)}$$

$$[\underline{A} > BCD...] \qquad \text{(workshop)}$$

Figure 1. Dynamic Configurations: Standard theatrical configurations.

material, which is the pedagogical content of the workshop.

Notating the implicit structure of three common forms of practice allows us to recognize the rigid and formulaic way in which we so often approach these vital relations. Indeed, one can study or teach acting, dance, singing, or other performing arts for years without ever substantially deviating from these three basic configurations. Most often, the roles and relations I have just defined never circulate within a given project. The person who is directing on the first day continues to do so until the moment of performance and all other roles remain static as well. I call this a static configuration. Frequently the role of director is also mapped onto other, even more rigidly established hierarchies. For example, in pedagogical contexts, the teacher almost always takes the role of director, with the students as performers. Rarely does a teacher — even a teacher of directing — put themselves in the role of performer to be directed by their students. Using notation to open a wider space of dynamic configurations reveals just how static many of our common working configurations are. Of course, one could argue that these basic configurations are ubiquitous because they are effective and that static configurations provide a degree of stability that is desirable in many creative processes. I do not contest

Working Configurations

Judaica Project

1 June 2017

$$\frac{[\underline{B}] < A}{E} \qquad (50\%)$$

$$\frac{[\underline{E} > A]}{B} \qquad (25\%)$$

$$\frac{[\underline{A}E]}{\widehat{B}} \qquad (25\%)$$

Figure 2. Dynamic Configurations: Lab design for the Judaica project, June 1, 2017.

that. However, once the implicit configurations underlying our practices are made explicit, we cannot ignore the invitation to question them and to consider what might happen if we worked more dynamically.

Figure 2 shows some of the concrete possibilities that are immediately opened by DC notation. The three formulae make use of the same relations that structure standard rehearsal, performance, and workshop situations, but here the relations are approached more freely, using their formalization in notation to specify other kinds of practice structures. In addition, a fourth relation, the videographic, is added. The first configuration **[B]<A/E** is the one already introduced above: a "triangle" in which each of the researchers occupies one of the basic roles. Here, the practitioner is alone in the space, working in relation to some specified materials. (It is important to note the difference between this configuration and a standard filmmaking configuration, where the director is empowered to direct both practitioner and videographer.) In the second configuration **[E>A]/B**, Eda directs Agnieszka from inside the space of practice. Moreover, it is Eda who is responsible here for introducing specific embodied materials into the practice. Eda in this configuration is a kind of practitioner-director, while Agnieszka is a practitioner-improviser, who is responsible neither for introducing specific materials

Working Configurations

Judaica Project with Caroline Gatt

26-29 June 2017

$$\frac{[\underline{B}C] < A}{E} \qquad (1)$$

$$\frac{[\underline{E} > AC]}{B} \qquad (2)$$

$$\frac{[\underline{C} > BE]}{A} \qquad (3)$$

Figure 3. Dynamic Configurations: Lab design for the Judaica project, June 26–29, 2017.

nor for offering direction but simply for sharing the space of practice with Eda. (See below for a further discussion of improvisation.) In the third configuration **[AE]**/<**B**, Eda and Agnieszka are together in the space as practitioners, with only Agnieszka responsible for particular materials, while Ben is outside the space as both director and videographer.

Writing these configurations out as formulae allows us to analyze them in relation to each other and as part of an overall design. For example, we can see that, in this three-part lab design, each configuration is centered around the materials (in this case, songs) for which one of the practitioners is responsible. However, the way in which these materials are introduced and explored differs significantly. Ben's songs are introduced in solo practice; Eda's songs in duo practice which Eda herself directs; and Agnieszka's songs in duo practice with an external director. On the right side of the page, we see a proposal for differential allotment of time: 50% for the top configuration and 25% for each of the other two. This may refer to the proportion of time spent in each configuration on a given day, week, month, or any other period. Both the configurations and their proportional time allotment can be changed as often as needed, creating an iterative cycle of research that moves between two temporalities — that of the lab

and that of video editing and lab design — as I discuss at length later on. Finally, in **Figure 3**, a fourth team member is added. In this case, visiting anthropologist and performer Caroline Gatt joins the team in three different four-person configurations.

Dynamic configurations are most easily implemented, at least initially, through a metaphorical spatialization involving concentric circles. In this mapping, we conceive of an inner space occupied by the practitioner(s), which is surrounded by the intermedial zone of the director, and then further out the external space of the videographer, all of which together constitute the laboratory as a contained space. Alternatively, we could reverse the direction of spatialization and describe the practitioner as moving outwards on a kind of journey, which is linked via the director back to a here-and-now in which the videographer remains. Either way, implementing such techniques of spatialization can be useful as a way to begin working with dynamic configurations. However, it is important to remember that these spatial relations are ultimately only metaphorical. In fact, an important function of the DC notation is to free these relations from the spatial structures and other trappings that attend institutionalized performing arts. Accordingly, the space of practice **[]** need not be physically inside, outside, or even separate from that of the whole

laboratory. Moreover, the laboratory itself need not be an enclosed room, because it is the dynamic configurations themselves that produce the opening cut of DCTV's specific laboratoriality. Once this is grasped, the researchers can move freely in shared physical space without breaking the DC relations. Eventually, the space of the studio can also be abandoned for more richly emplaced "site specific" locations, all while retaining the rigor of dynamic configurations as DCTV's opening cut.

It is important to emphasize that the DC notation system as described here is not fixed or final, but merely a trace of a process that can be used to structure or inspire other processes. Like many (if not all) notation systems, it revealed its significance through prescriptive rather than simply descriptive application, allowing us to imagine and specify practice structures that we would not otherwise have considered. The nine configurations notated here only scratch the surface of what is possible with dynamic configurations. Many other possible configurations for three or four researchers are not pictured here, let alone configurations involving more participants. A larger audiovisual embodied laboratory structured by DC notation would have tremendously rich options for structuring practice sessions. Even prior to specific configurations, a five-person research team contains

sixteen possible groups of three or more (one quintet, five quartets, and ten trios), while a six-person team affords forty-two such groups (one sextet, six quintets, fifteen quartets, and twenty trios). Each subgroup can be arranged in countless configurations using the four essential DC relations. From this perspective, a group of five or six researchers working with dynamic configurations offers an incredibly wide landscape for experimental practice — virtually all of which is left untouched by a standard production process that locks a single static configuration in place across weeks, months, or years of practice.

As proposed here, the DC notation contains some ambiguities. Even in the most basic formula **[A]<B/C**, it may not be clear to what extent the videographer should record the director. The director is not inside the space of practice, but the camera itself defines another space, which may or may not be understood as identical to that defined by the practitioner. Other intriguing questions arise from the notation itself. For example, is it possible for someone outside the space of practice to be responsible for embodied materials? Could an external director have materials **[A]<B** and in what sense would they be responsible for them if not through practice? (Perhaps this configuration describes the work of a master teacher of a highly codified form: Such a teacher makes detailed

corrections on their student, not as a creative helper or composing artist but as one who bears greater responsibility for that which is being practiced.) The same question can be asked about the videographer: Can a person bearing the videographic relation have materials **[A]**/**B** and to what would this refer? The videographer could sing while recording, but equally the movement of the camera could be linked to a choreography. Thinking in such a formalized way about embodied and experimental practice may be experienced as limiting, restrictive, or exasperating. On the other hand, it may be radically exhilarating. This is not algebra and there is no suggestion here that the future of this notation can be worked out on the page. Rather, the point is that the formalization of these relations, which are so often left implicit and static, raises questions that might be worth exploring.

To avoid some of the notation's ambiguities, we could implement a default "order of operations." In that case, for example, we could decide to assume — unless specified otherwise, using parentheses as in algebra — that the four relations take precedence according to the order in which I have introduced them. This clarifies the formula **[A]**<**B**/**C**, which now refers unambiguously to a situation in which the videographer records both the practitioner and the director. We could then use parentheses to specify a

configuration **[A](<B/C)** in which the videographer records only the director. But how would we specify a configuration in which both director and videographer relate only to the practitioner (which is actually how I most often introduce this work)? We might have to resort to a complex formula like **[A]<B + [A]/C**, which specifies two separate and simultaneous configurations. Nor have I yet even mentioned configurations that involve multiple directors or videographers, although these and many other possibilities are implied by the notation. Building on the previous example, we could perhaps write **[AC] + [A]<B + [C]<D** to specify two practitioners working together in a shared space of practice, with each receiving separate direction from one of two directors. If there are multiple videographers, we could use the position of the / to specify how they relate to each other. Thus, **[ABC<D]/E/F/G** might suggest that three videographers occupy three nested layers around a directed trio, so that **G** is intentionally recording a recording of a recording. On the other hand, **[ABC<D]///EFG** might suggest three videographers working in the same layer of recording, simultaneously documenting the director and practitioners in three different ways.

We could also try to build up DCTV from the beginning, step by step:

A	a person with no set material and no separation from "everyday life"
[A]	solo practitioner with no set material
[A̲]	solo practitioner with set material
[AB]	duo practitioners with no set material
[A̲B]	duo practitioners with one having set material
[A̲B̲]	duo practitioners with both having set material
[A]<B	directed practitioner with no set material
[A̲]<B	directed practitioner with set material
[A̲<B]	duo practitioners with internal direction from the one without set material
[A̲>B]	duo practitioners with internal direction from the one with set material
[A]/B	back to the solo practitioner with no set material, but now with video recording

and so on...

These affordances of the notation may be worth exploring. However, I will not attend any further here to the specification of the notation or the question of how to make it more comprehensive, more complex, or more unambiguous. The distinctive characteristic of DC notation is in the choice of what gets notated, that is, in terms of laboratorial epistemology, *where the cuts are made.* DC notation cuts into embodied

practice at a point that is very often ignored: the modes of relation, interactivity, and power that obtain amongst people who are working together around and within a shared space of practice. In doing so, it opens up concrete new possibilities for structuring such relations.

The same room, the same song, the same body, can suddenly take on different meanings because the implementation of the cut has been changed. Processes that we usually call "training," "rehearsal," or "improvisation" now offer different tracings of bodies and powers than they did before. DC notation can even be interpreted as an alternative mapping or alternative theory of embodiment, insofar as it slices embodiment differently, considering a set of roles and relations as the relevant constituent elements of embodiment, rather than a set of body parts, anatomical systems, tasks, gestures, or choreographies. Rather than dwell further on the notation itself, the next section examines each of the four basic relations, taking a deeper dive into their practical and philosophical implications. This discussion is not required in order to begin practical experimentation with the DC notation and can be skipped by readers wishing to explore these tools on their own. In fact, the notation itself is unnecessary when getting started. To jump right in, just start working with the roles of practitioner, direc-

tor, and videographer. It is only when the limitations of a "three roles" approach are encountered in practice that a more complex way of specifying configurations, through four relations, might be needed. At the same time, a deeper wrestling with the meaning of these core relations—freeing them as much as possible from the ways they are conventionally instrumentalized in performing arts—may help us to understand just how radical such a reconstruction of the theater laboratory can be.

Dynamic Configurations: Elements

This section examines, in greater depth, the four key relations specified by dynamic configurations. As noted above, each of these relations is philosophically rich in its own right. When we begin to look more closely at them and to ask what they really entail, it becomes clear that each is a microcosm with fascinating links to contemporary debates around embodiment, representation, identity, power, and knowledge. It may be perceived as reductive or even positivist to notate these relations using symbols appropriated from algebra. On the contrary, the formal narrowness of these symbols can help us to open up a richer discussion about what each of the relations they denote involves. Keeping in mind that the symbols here are not actually algebraic — they specify relations between people rather than between numbers — allows us to undertake a philosophical investigation of their content. Thus, we begin from the question of what it means to be responsible for

specified material, rather than the presumed role of actor, dancer, musician, or performer; from the question of what it means to be inside a space of practice, alone or with others, rather than assumptions about rehearsal, performance, and the stage; from the question of what is the primary external relation to that space, rather than conventional ideas about the director, choreographer, or conductor; and from the question of audiovisual recording itself, rather than assumptions about performance documentation or filmmaking. By seriously investigating these relations, we can arrive at a new understanding of embodied arts as fields of experimental research.

The choice of materials with which to work — whether a dramatic script, musical score, set of songs, movement combination, interview transcripts, prior films, newspaper articles, personal memories, or any other embodiable material — is often understood as the single most important decision in a performing arts process. For that reason, the actual selection of material is not discussed at length here. Whether or not performance is understood as an instantiation of a pre-existing musical or dramatic "work" (Goehr 1992), the choice to nominate a particular set of embodied materials for practice or performance is central to nearly all embodied arts. Even in situations of apprenticeship, where the primary commitment

may be to a specific teacher rather than what they teach, there will unavoidably be some reference to exercises, forms, technique, repeatable sequences, compositions, combinations, scores, repertoire, scripts, roles (in the sense of scripted characters or improvised archetypes with particular "bits"), songs, or other embodied materials. Likewise, every practice called improvisation defines itself in relation to certain other practices and their reliance upon explicitly specified materials. The choice of repeatable embodied material applies as much to popular musical concerts and sports as to theater, dance, and performing arts. Indeed, most performance notation systems, from written dramatic scripts and musical scores to various forms of dance and movement notation, notate this kind of material. It can further be argued that what we understand as performance material is often defined retrospectively by our capacity to notate. Such notation systems specify, in more or less detail, what someone in the role of performer or practitioner should do. Periodically, new notation systems are invented to augment existing ones. (For example, conversation analysis notation further specifies the rhythms of speech; new forms of musical notation specify aspects of music that are not captured by standard European musical notation.) Notation systems usually originate from the descriptive impulse

Figure 4. Relation of practitioner to material, **A**. Ben Spatz in the Judaica Project, May 3, 2017.

to record and thus archivally remember what people are doing; they then go on to open up new possibilities as prescriptive scores.

In DC notation, all of the materials just mentioned are indicated by a simple underscore **A** (illustrated in **Figure 4**). In my own embodied research, this underscore most often refers to a song or set of songs, but it can just as easily refer to a memorized text, a choreographic sequence, a musical work, or a scripted or improvised role or character. The condensation of such widely varying material into a single symbol marks a significant shift in the placement of the opening or "technical" cut, which distinguishes DCTV from most performing arts practice. Within DC notation, we do not find anything representing particular songs, exercises, actions, rhythms, melodies, gestures, characters, or words. All of that is notated instead as a relationship between a practitioner and the materials for which they are responsible, a relationship in which exploration and investigation depend upon responsibility and stewardship. At the same time, this relation is a kind of "care of the self" (Foucault 1986a), understood not as a turning inwards but as a complex engagement with embodied materials that contributes to an individual's growth, development, personal discovery, cultivation,

self-discipline, and holistic health. Why do I call these chunks of technique "materials" when, from a physics or biology perspective, they are exactly the opposite of matter? By formalizing this relation, I call attention to the distinctive ontologies of embodied and performing arts, which share with philosophical new materialisms an understanding of materiality as relative reliability (see Spatz 2015: 32, 42). From this perspective, the reliability with which one can return to a song over and over across many years, or track a gesture across hundreds of miles, justifies attributing to such things a degree of materiality. The fact that we cannot localize a song or movement at the physical, biological, or neurological level then only highlights the incommensurability of diverse knowledge fields and the incompleteness of technoscientific approaches to embodiment.[1]

The relationship of a practitioner to specified materials **A** also potentially generates what I am calling a "space of practice," indicated by square brackets **[]**. As explained above, a space of practice need not be physically separated from the rest of the world, although, as countless descriptions of liminal

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1   In other words: If we cannot physically isolate a song within a body, we must conclude not that songs are immaterial, but that physics and biology incompletely map embodiment.

and liminoid practice since Victor Turner (1969) suggest, spatial separation can be used to clarify and deepen the experience of entering and exiting such "spaces." Whether or not the cut is spatialized, what distinguishes the frame of practice from the rest of life is its relationship to particular kinds of technique. This is very clear in situations like **[AB]**, where the space of practice is organized around work on specified materials. It is less clear in an apparently improvised situation **[AB]**, where two performers meet in a space of practice without being responsible for any particular material. But evidently, the difference between this meeting and any other interaction is based upon a shared sense of what it means to practice together. The two practitioners here could be two dance improvisers, two jazz musicians, or even a dancer and a musician improvising together. The difference between **[AB]** and **[AB]** should not be seen as a strict division between scripted and improvised performance, since no such clarity exists. Rather, it is a question of whether the lab design requires a practitioner to be responsible for introducing particular materials into the session. Take the example of a dancer and a musician improvising together. If we notate this as **[AB]**, we are nominating the individuals as their whole selves, without specifying any particular material that they will be investigating. Each will necessarily draw

on their own training and expertise, but they may also feel free to respond to each other in ways that go beyond what they think of as their own practice. On the other hand, if particular choreographic and musical materials are specified as in **[AB]**, then the practitioners' overall approach will be more constrained, even if they are still improvising in relation to each other. Correspondingly, we can specify a configuration **[AB]** (illustrated in **Figure 5**), wherein one practitioner has specified materials and the other is improvising with and alongside their partner.

[] is a space of practice defined by a zone of technique, while _ is a specific chunk of material, whether notated or not. A space of practice is relatively broad in comparison to what we understand as practicable materials. In some circumstances a practitioner might lie down and take a rest, or even fall asleep, and still be understood as remaining within the space of practice. Although it is impossible to specify in general what counts as being inside or outside that space, it is not difficult to trace this demarcation across a wide range of embodied and performing arts. Practitioners are precisely those who have a shared sense of what it means to be doing a particular kind of practice. While any given division between inside and outside will be culturally specific, the basic fact of an inside/outside division would seem to approach universality, or at

Figure 5. Relation of practitioners within a space of practice **[AB]**. Nazlıhan Eda Erçin (left) and Agnieszka Mendel (right) in the Judaica project, June 5, 2017.

least can be applied very widely. A particular dance happens within a space of dancing; a song happens within a context of singing or music; ritual actions are performed at an appropriate time and place; topics or ideas are discussed and debated within a discursive or institutional frame; embodied materials **A** can be distinguished from the space of embodied practice [A] in which they are invited to appear. By the same token, the singer initiates a space of song through the act of singing. The dancer, by dancing, transforms the space around them into a space of dance. One can recognize immediately the difference between practicing a song, dance, or martial art in its designated space of practice and practicing some aspects of it in everyday life, such as by using breathing techniques to calm oneself in a stressful situation. The relationship of the practitioner to the embodied material and to the space of practice involves both obligation, or "work," and freedom, or "play." Within the lab, the practitioner is required to practice, but also given the gift of being allowed to practice. Working with a song does not simply mean repeating it constantly, just as working on a character from a dramatic script may not be limited to speaking their scripted lines. One can work on a song by remembering it, thinking about it, inviting it, testing it out, or treading around it, even in silence. One can improvise in a space of practice, with

or without specified materials. DC notation does not specify *how* to work with embodied materials. This is exactly where, unlike many other forms of notation, DC notation does not make a cut.

Much more could be said about the _ and [] relations from the specific perspective of DC. Yet this might be superfluous here, since precisely these relations have been the focus of so much attention in theater and performance studies, from phenomenologies of dance and actor training to discussions of liminality and, more recently, immersivity. Most broadly, these relations can be analyzed in terms of technique (Spatz 2015), as well as through notions of habitus and performativity. I will therefore move on to what I consider the most challenging DC relation and that which most requires theorization: the < relation. The fact that < is the algebraic sign for inequality immediately suggests a relation of hierarchy and unequal power. In fact, theorizing this relation will also allow us to reexamine the other three relations as distinctive modes of power and to draw an important distinction between power and hierarchy. Is a director one who commands and controls a situation? DC notation pushes against this assumption, not just in theory but practically, by removing from the director the most important power to which in modern and contemporary European-influenced theater they have become

Figure 6. Primary external or "directorial" relation **A<B**. Agnieszka Mendel (left) and Nazlıhan Eda Erçin (right) in the Judaica project, May 4, 2017.

attached: the power to determine *future* practice. As defined by DC notation, the directorial relation has nothing to do with the power to decide what will be done at any future time. In other words, the director in DC is not responsible for composing or rehearsing any kind of score that the practitioner would then be obliged to reproduce later on. Cutting off the director from this overarching compositional power immediately grounds them in the temporality of the practitioner. Their role is reduced, or clarified, to that of making present interventions towards another person's practice. Such present-tense directing is a craft or technique in its own right, which must be distinguished from the shaping of a final composition. While the potential for domination and abuse is always present, this clarification will allow us to understand the fundamental < relation in a different way, as an intensive relation of focus and care (see **Figure 6**), which can include directing in the sense of giving directions but can also incorporate other qualities such as watching, perceiving, witnessing, supporting, enabling, facilitating, questioning, intervening, guiding, conducting, provoking, and more.

In the basic triangle configurations described above, when the director is outside the space of practice, this role is defined by its separation from

that space. The director does not join in with what the practitioner is doing, but relates to it from outside. If we wanted to get away from the hierarchical connotations of conventional directing, we could call this simply relational externality, or the primary external relation, a relation that is defined by its proximity-with-externality to the space of practice. However, just as the space of practice does not have to be physically separate from the laboratorial frame in which it exists, the < relation does not have to be located physically outside the space of practice in order to be practically external. Cases of "directing from within" are common rather than exceptional. However, these situations do occasionally lead to comic or frustrating moments of confusion, when the externality of the directorial relation becomes indistinguishable from the relation between practitioners. A brief example illustrates this point: Think of a workshop in which a teacher has been leading by demonstration, with the participants copying their movements. At a certain point, the leader does something which is perceived as ambiguous by the participants, or which the participants respond to in divergent ways. For example, the leader might gesture for the participants to come into a circle, only to have some of the participants copy or respond to the gesture itself, rather than following it as an instruction. The leader then has to clarify, probably

in spoken language: "No, don't copy that gesture. I meant for you to come into a circle." The point is that, if the other practitioners cannot tell the difference between an action that is part of the practice and one that is intended as an external instruction or comment, then the relational structure collapses. Thus, the externality of the director does not ultimately rely on spatialization but on the mutually defined boundaries of shared practice **[]**. In a configuration like **[_A_>B]**, there is both a relation of shared embodied practice and a directorial relation. While the two relations may be closely intertwined, mixing them up will usually be experienced as a mistake.

With this in mind, I want to theorize the **>** relation in several steps, gradually developing an understanding of this relation that far exceeds the conventional role of the director, choreographer, composer, or conductor in performing arts.[2] I begin from Polish theater director and visionary Jerzy Grotowski's lifelong investigations into the actor–director relation.

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2   In score-based music performance, the role of conductor is most structurally similar to that of director, because this person gives indications and instructions within the temporality of practice. However, this role may be narrowly constrained by the written score, embodied material _ that is often treated as a type of direction.

As Kris Salata writes, Grotowski was most interested "in what uniquely can happen between two people" when they relate to one another through these roles (Colin and Sachsenmaier 2016: 183). Grotowski famously described this potentiality in the following highly evocative terms:

> There is something incomparably intimate and productive in the work with the actor entrusted to me. He must be attentive and confident and free, for our labour is to explore his possibilities to the utmost. His growth is attended by observation, astonishment, and desire to help; my growth is projected onto him, or, rather, is found in him—and our common growth becomes revelation. This is not instruction of a pupil but utter opening to another person. (Grotowski 1982: 25)

Grotowski's strong language and historical renown can lead one to read this passage as if it applies only to highly virtuosic or at least very long-term partnerships. Yet within DCTV there is a "threshold" version of Grotowski's approach to directing, a reduction of one of Grotowski's major discoveries to a key technical element, which can then become a principle for widely varying practices. This key or threshold, which I have already mentioned, is the removal from the director the power to structure future practice. Once

the director role is divested of this power — such as the power to tell an actor to "keep" something between one session and the next — they become a "director without a future" and are free to dwell in the present moment of the embodied relation. This simple step immediately moves the actor–director relation into post-Grotowskian territory, where what might seem on the surface to be a strictly hierarchical relation actually manifests as a partnership of equals or peers.

The post-Grotowskian actor–director relation is conceived here as one of equality without symmetry. The partners accept a kind of polarization according to which each works in a different mode or zone. This polarization is defined by an agreement: that the primary site of practice and research will be located within the body of the performer. The resulting phenomenon of two people focused on one body also approaches universality in its breadth of application and could even be seen as a basic affordance of human existence. Whether the director offers instructions, invitations, questions, or poetic interventions, the < relation structures a partnership in which both partners are focused upon the body of just one of them. In performing arts, we are accustomed to this kind of directorial or choreographic impulse: the desire for someone else to make a certain movement, to speak in a certain way, or to perform a certain action,

which we tend to justify in terms of a future artistic composition. In pedagogical contexts, analogous impulses are described in terms of a process that is intended to benefit the student by increasing their knowledge or ability. Such motivations are essential to those contexts, but we misunderstand embodied relationality if we do not also recognize an aspect of desire, or even eroticism, that is unrelated to any future compositions or benefits and arises instead as an intuitive impulse that finds its primary meaning within the moment of encounter. In performing arts, this aspect of eroticism does not refer to anything sexual. Instead it implies that no pedagogical or compositional logic can fully account for the intuitions of the director towards the practitioner. One can never be entirely certain that what happens will in fact contribute to a future artistic work or provide a future benefit to a student. All one can be sure of, in the moment of practice, is the impulse itself, which arises from the encounter and presents itself at least partly as interpersonal desire.

To further theorize this relationality, I return to a set of analogies that I first developed in an earlier article ("This Extraordinary Power" [2010], reprinted in Spatz 2020), according to which the actor–director relation can be compared with that of the "bottom" and "top" in BDSM or kink culture. As just noted, this

analogy absolutely does not suggest a reduction of the < relation to sexuality, which is just one of the many zones of embodiment in which such impulses may arise. I turn to kink not to sexualize the < relation, but in search of a relevant ethics for it. In a society where sexual and gendered abuse is rampant, subcultures that play sexually with power dynamics are immediately suspect, their practices easily conflated with real abuse. As a result, kinky communities have put tremendous effort into clarifying the difference between consensual exchanges of power and situations of abuse. That some people still confuse kink with abuse, or believe that the border between them is more vague than in other practices, is a symptom of a dominant culture that has not seriously grappled with its own patriarchy and misogyny. In fact, the standards of ethical kink, often summarized in the phrase "safe, sane, and consensual" (SSC) (Bauer 2014: 145), are arguably more rigorous than the implicit notions of consent that govern performing arts contexts. As a result, we can use kinky terms like "topping" and "bottoming" to think further about the interpersonal ethics of the < relation, and especially to understand how the "bottom" may be empowered by such dynamics.[3]

3   BDSM, or kink, is now a broad cultural phenomenon that goes far beyond what I can introduce here. Within some

In that earlier article, I compared the relationships that Grotowski developed with his most important performers to those that existed, on the one hand, between female medieval visionaries and their male spiritual directors in medieval European Christianity; and, on the other hand, to the roles of "top" and "bottom" in ethical kink—examining all of these through a queer feminist understanding of gender. In the medieval Christian context, the two polarized roles are entirely static with respect to gender: If a male visionary was uncommon, a female priest was impossible. Grotowski's work with his primary actors then suggests a partial queering of this dynamic, insofar as the actor–director configuration, while remaining interpersonally static (those practitioners never di-

kink communities, there are important distinctions between the "bottom," the "sub(missive)," and other roles. I do not address these here. Similarly, in drawing on kink ideas and terminologies, I do not wish to offer a romanticized view of those scenes. Kinky relationships are no more inherently ethical than others. However, I contend that kink communities have developed valuable techniques for negotiating power relations, which can be applied to embodied arts more widely and which have a great deal to offer fields like commercial theater, which have grappled much less deeply with their own ethical problems and lineages of abuse (see, for example, Malague 2012).

rected Grotowski), was most often mapped across the bodies of two men. In the example of contemporary kink culture, the configuration of dyadic roles is made fully "dynamic" in our sense, as "top" and "bottom" expressly signify polarized roles in contradistinction to gender. One can now specify male tops, female tops, male bottoms, female bottoms, and more recently also nonbinary tops and bottoms who do not fit into either binary gender.[4] In each of these examples, I note that a specific kind of power accrues to the person who occupies the role of practitioner, actor, visionary, submissive, or "bottom," that is, the person who becomes the embodied center or focal point of these laboratories of power. To situate this power and empowerment in more explicitly feminist terms, I now turn to a critical perspective on performance art offered by Rebecca Schneider.

4   BDSM is not inherently queer or feminist in this way, but it has the potential to be (Hale 1997; Weiss 2011; Bauer 2014). An accessible introduction to the idea of topping and bottoming, from which I borrow the concept of polarization, is offered by Easton and Hardy: "The nature of the dance of BDSM tends to polarize our roles to a greater extent than might be possible or healthy in the rest of our lives" (2003: 17). See also Call (2012: 5–9).

Schneider examines "the space between masculinized subject (given to know) and feminized object (given to be known)" through a close analysis of several female performance artists including Carolee Schneemann, Annie Sprinkle, Karen Finley, Ana Mendieta, and the Spiderwoman ensemble (1997: 22). Schneider reads these artists, exemplified by Schneemann, as having seized the means of production by which their bodies are objectified and commodified in patriarchal capitalism. Rather than merely switching to the role of director and to what Schneider identifies, following Jonathan Crary, as the externalizing "techniques of the observer" (69), these artists actively "wrestle with the legacies of subjectivity and objectivity" (182), "explicating *while* illustrating" their own positionality (184), becoming a "political whore" or "unruly commodity" (108) who speaks out from the position of objectification. These artists' simultaneous occupation of both object and subject positions leads to what Schneider calls "strategic binary explosion" (13) or the "strategic implosion of binaried distinctions" (18), wherein the practitioner becomes "both artist and object, both eye and body at once" (29). In our terms, these artists solve the problem of gendered hierarchization by integrating both sides of the < relation within their own body. We could write this as **[A<A]** or perhaps just **[A<]**. The practitioner

becomes their own director and, in this way, creates a new ethical-political position that straddles and explodes the < division or polarization.[5]

The unification of subject and object within a single artist is one way of responding to the predicament of bodily objectification. Dynamic configurations work in a different way. Rather than rejecting hierarchy, DC further splinters these dualistic roles, detaching them from individual bodies and identities in order to systematically and strategically recombine them. Instead of combining practitioner and director in a single body, DC disaggregates some of the elements that constitute these roles and puts them into a more complex and fragmentary circulation. This is another way of defusing the potential for directorial abuse, without having to eliminate the role of the director or downsize to solo practice. According to Schneider,

5   Further considerations of how gender constitutes itself technically can be found in the work of Talia Bettcher, who shows how gender is constituted by "interpersonal spatiality" in conjunction with the "differential distribution of vulnerability" and invulnerability across differently gendered bodies (Bettcher 2014). The specific potential that DCTV affords for the practitioner to speak videographically from a position of structural vulnerability is discussed in the second half of this book.

the static configurations of patriarchal capitalism ensure that communication and exchange "across the visual field cannot admit mutuality, reciprocity, or even complicity" (1997: 70). It then becomes the "project of postcolonial and cultural critical studies to ask: What can reciprocity look like? How can we do it?" (177). In DCTV, the process of alternating between roles, as well as the basic premise of making these configurations explicit, works to produce mutuality, reciprocity, and complicity amongst the researchers by encouraging them to serve in each role as they would wish to be served. Most importantly, the powerful authorial function, the one who composes public works, is detached from the role of director and postponed to a later temporality in the role of editor (discussed below).

This is the sense in which, genealogically, DCTV can be understood as a synthesis of post-Grotowskian experimental practice — in which the actor–director relation is seen as a valuable source of energy and knowledge — with a post-Judson, queer feminist approach to performance art, which has tended to reject the classical performer–director relation as intrinsically hierarchical if not intrinsically abusive. An actor, dancer, performer, or practitioner working with a director, choreographer, or similar figure undeniably experiences a particular kind of vulnerability. This vulnerability is structural, deriving from their commitment

87

to remaining focused on their own flow of practice while receiving and accepting interventions from someone whose body is not reciprocally focalized. There is an interpenetration of impulses emanating from two bodies, but the nexus of this interpenetration resides within one of those bodies, rather than in both, and this means that one of those bodies is more fundamentally at stake in the practice than the other. The terms "subject" and "object" are insufficient to name this mutuality for exactly the reasons Schneider provides: They are tied to a specific history of gendered and racialized capitalism and colonialism and therefore do not suggest the range of positive potentialities that can also be found in historical and contemporary actor–director, visionary–priest, student–teacher, client–therapist, disciple–guru, bottom–top, and other such relations. Indeed, any theorization of the core dyad in terms of conventional or professional roles will likely be too reductive if our aim is to imagine the potential of the ‹ relation in its widest possible sense. Therefore, at the risk of further digression, I will take this discussion one step further via the work of Giorgio Agamben.

If object–subject names the predicament in which we find ourselves as inheritors of European Cartesian modernity, then Giorgio Agamben's term for a

possible way out of this philosophical and political trap is the pair *zoe–bios*. This pair of terms may help us conceptualize the < relation in a more abstract form, far removed both from the object–subject division and from actor and director as professions, and figured instead as what Agamben calls "an ontological relation." In the earlier volumes of Agamben's twenty-year, nine-volume Homo Sacer project (2017), *zoe* and *bios* are introduced as differing ancient Greek terms for life: the bare life (*zoe*) and the full political life (*bios*) of the citizen. In *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (1998), the paradigmatic site at which this distinction is drawn in modern times is the concentration camp. In the context of Nazi death camps as "laboratories in the experiment of total domination" (120), the generative capacities of embodiment, to which performing arts and embodied research are devoted, are hardly in evidence. It seems difficult then to establish any link between Agamben's foundational focus on "the body's capacity to be killed" (125) and our understanding of embodied research as a process that aims to unfold the plenitude of embodied capacity. However, a more generative and nearly Grotowski-an treatment of *zoe* can be retrieved from Agamben's work. Traces of it appear briefly near the end of *Homo Sacer,* in the figure of the Roman priest Flamen Diale, for whom life is "an act of uninterrupted celebration

at every instant," such that "all of the Flamen's *zoe* has become *bios*; private sphere and public function are now absolutely identical" (1998: 183); as well as that of a certain biochemist who "decided to make his own body and life into a research and experimentation laboratory" (185). In both of these examples, as in those provided by Schneider, the *zoe–bios* tension is ethically resolved by uniting them within a single body. But Agamben further develops the positive potentiality of the *zoe–bios* relation in the final volume of Homo Sacer, *The Use of Bodies* (2016).

Agamben introduces his later examination of the *zoe–bios* relation through the ancient Greek understanding of the relation between master and slave. This reference to slavery is jarring for a contemporary reader, especially given that the definition of slavery and its specific historical link to colonialism and racism remain contested today (Beutin 2017). Agamben asserts that ancient Greek slavery "called for a conceptualization completely different from ours" and that this concept of the slave is not an oppressed laborer, but on the contrary a "human being without work who renders possible the realization of the work of the human being" (2016: 7, 22–23). It seems that what Agamben intends with the terms master and slave — linked to *bios* and *zoe* respectively — is not at all the dehumanizing violence of enslavement, which

derives from the permanent or static configuration of bodies locked into these roles. Instead, these terms point for Agamben toward a politics founded on another principle, such as the free circulation and equality of *zoe* and *bios* as distinct but complementary zones of power. If the words master and slave are not easily applied to such complementarity today, the exception is once again that of BDSM/kink culture, in which those terms are precisely detached from their static political meanings and allowed to circulate as zones of technique. In this sense, slavery as "juridical institution" can be understood as "the capture and parodic realization" of a prior, implicitly queer or kinky, use of the body (Agamben 2016: 78). Picking up an under-analyzed thread in Foucault's life and work, Agamben describes BDSM as "a ritualized re-creation of the master/slave relation, insofar as this relation paradoxically seems to allow access to a freer and fuller uses of bodies [...] beyond the subject/object and active/passive scissions" (35–36).[6] Moreover, as

6   The potential of BDSM already appears briefly in *Homo Sacer*—"Sadomasochism is precisely the technique of sexuality by which the bare life of a sexual partner is brought to light" (Agamben 1998: 134)—but it is much more fully examined throughout *The Use of Bodies*. Elsewhere, Agamben explores something like the < relation through reference to

an "experiment in fluidifying power relations," BDSM "cannot fail to entail a transformation on the level of ontology." Not ultimately about sex or even pleasure, Agamben asserts, the technique of kink, "with its two poles of mutual exchange, is an ontological relation" (107–8). It is therefore Agamben who gives us the most ambitious understanding of the < relation as that through which fundamental ontological dynamics of life and embodiment might be explored.

The aim of Agamben's master–slave relation is not only that the slave "renders possible the realization" of *bios* or political life for the master, but equally that the master enables the slave to enter deeply into the world of *zoe,* understood as the positive or generative landscape of bare life, flesh, or embodiment. What does it mean to dwell in *zoe*? On the one hand, this is a field of infinite potential, literally the (re)opening of the question of what a body can do. On the other hand, we can formulate it quite simply, reducing loaded concepts like plenitude and presence to

ancient Greek theater and ethics, in terms of the relationship between the actor and the mask or persona, where the latter is understood as having been assigned by an author, and posits a "glorious" body that resembles nothing so much as a queer "Performer" in Grotowski's sense (Agamben 2010: 48, 98–103).

threshold techniques. When one is singing, dancing, acting out a character, or following a line of actions, one is displaced from techniques of externality, distancing, and observation. The more fully one enters into a zone of repeatable, embodied material, the less one's attention remains on whatever else is happening nearby and elsewhere. The technique itself becomes its own world: a world of song or dance, of movement and play. Moreover, this world creates its own space into which others can enter. This is the positive sense of *zoe,* emerging here not as the traces of dignity under oppression — as in Alexander Weheliye's (2014) important critique of Agamben — but in a context of rigorous care and attention. The difference between *zoe–bios* as conceived here and *zoe–bios* in places of deadly violence is then exactly the difference between kink and abuse, or BDSM and torture. Similar techniques of restraint and command may be used, but the meanings are diametrically opposed because the valuation of *zoe* is reversed. Rather than the abjected and dirty animal body, this *zoe* is the cared-for animal body (Grotowski's "organicity"), in relation to which the director temporarily holds a kind of stewardship.[7]

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7   The animal and ecological connection is appropriate here. *Zoe* in colonial modernity is abjected and "domesticated" (Hage 2017) along with all of nature, nonhuman animals,

What Agamben helps us to name is the way in which the < relation, when implemented as role or technique rather than as static identity, can — far from being a channel for abuse and oppression — enable the practitioner to access potentialities that might never be found through even the best-integrated solo practice. In the context of artistic and embodied research, this suggests a need to reintegrate ethical approaches to power by carefully distinguishing their generative potential from that of exploitation.

There is much more to explore and contest in Agamben's account of relationality and embodment, as it pertains to embodied research, than can be addressed here. What we can immediately take forward is the challenge, which comes at the end of *The Use of Bodies,* to undertake "a radical transformation in the mode of conceiving the work of art" (2016: 245), based on a shift towards "deactivation" and "inoperativity." What I call embodied research is analyzed by Agamben under the sign of inoperativity, a mode of

and ecology. But in the processes described here, it is instead protected, valued, and encountered as a respected other. There is then a sense in which the positive cultivation of *zoe* is intrinsically aligned with movements for ecological sustainability and indigenous custodianship of land (see Spatz 2020).

"relation with a pure potential in a work [...] in which *zoe* and *bios,* life and form, private and public enter into a threshold of indifference" (247).[8] In this mode, "the artist is no longer the author (in the modern, essentially juridical sense of the term) of the work nor the proprietor of the creative operation." How can we accomplish such a "deactivation," which transforms a teleological process into an open-ended one? If this is the promise of artistic research, through what forms

8   There is no question that embodied research is precisely what Agamben arrives to at the end of his Homo Sacer project: "The reversal of the relation between organ and function amounts to liberating use from every established teleology. The meaning of the verb *chresthai* here shows its pertinence: the living being does not make use of its body parts (Lucretius does not speak of organs) for some one predetermined function, but by entering into relation with them, it so to speak gropingly finds and invents their use. The body parts precede their use, and use precedes and creates their function. / It is what is produced in the very act of exercise as a delight internal to the act, as if by gesticulating again and again the hand found in the end its pleasure and its 'use', the eyes by looking again and again fell in love with vision, the legs and thighs by bending rhythmically invented walking" (2016: 51). What is this, if not a description of "blue skies" embodied research as the technique of *zoe* and a leverage point for a new politics?

can it be realized? I suspect that the answer to this question has to do with how the powerful < relation is itself witnessed and intervened upon by forces and powers external to it. In performing arts, a rehearsal process is contained and given closure — in precisely the sense of a closing cut — by the requirement to produce a repeatable score that can be shown later to spectators who were not privy to the process out of which it emerged. This requirement is sometimes understood as ensuring that the pleasurable aspects of the process do not take over, leading to self-indulgence. On the other hand, in abusive situations, the same requirement to produce a show may be used as justification to ignore the needs of practitioners. In the Christian religious context mentioned above, the assessment and protection of the disciple and their spiritual director would be referred to the church or to the divine.

In a DCTV laboratory, with its two sets of cuts defined by two different kinds of archival inscription, none of these modes of closure are operative. There is no final public performance according to which the practice could be justified or critiqued. Instead, the DCTV lab implements closure through a distinctly contemporary technology. To the core dyad formed by the < relation (which is surely as old as performance, as old as kink, as old as politics), we add another role

and relation: the videographic. The videographic relation (illustrated in **Figure 7**) is unlike the others in that it is defined by the use of a specific technology. While DC notation can be used without videography—adding complexity and flexibility to rehearsals or workshops and/or with the use of other types of documentation such as writing, drawing, or audio recording—the full DCTV method cannot be implemented without transversal videography. This closing cut effects a major onto-epistemological change, fundamentally transforming what is happening in moments of experimental practice. From a post-Grotowskian perspective, the crucial "betrayal" of the DCTV approach—the abandonment of a principle that was previously considered fundamental—is not so much the introduction of the video camera into the intimacy of studio practice, but what this implies: namely, the elimination of the central principle of the repeatable performance score.[9] Repetition in the sense of deepening technique of course does not go away, but the composition of a single, presentable score becomes superfluous once videography is fully integrated within the experimental practice.

A fuller discussion of transversal video will be the focus of the next section. To conclude this section,

9   On betrayal, see Grotowski (2008a: 39).

Figure 7. Videographic relation
A/B. Nazlıhan Eda Erçin (left)
and Ben Spatz (right) in the
Judaica project, June 5, 2017.

let us return to the idea of three roles suggested at the beginning and see how each of them can be understood in terms of a gamut of possibilities for action that range from minimal to maximal. The practitioner's minimum is doing what counts as nothing, taking a rest, even napping on the floor. Their maximum is dynamic flow, becoming so absorbed in their own world of practice that they are only minimally receptive to external interventions. This range of potential is complemented by that of the director, who may match the energetic output of the practitioner or complement it. The director's minimum is silent witnessing, without intervention, while their maximum would include frequent, forceful, or repeated interventions. Grotowski's own practice as director and teacher offers a compelling illustration of this range, showing how both extremes may be used in different moments and contexts.

Grotowski was well known for his capacity to observe endlessly, without intervention, waiting and watching for an impulse in the actor that would provoke a reciprocal impulse in himself. Recalling his longest and most extraordinary theatrical process, he wrote, "I had then only one rule: if someone is in action, in the course of a creative process, if he is not harming anyone, I may not understand anything, but I have to look. I have to let him do and for as long as

his need dictates, as long as he wants" (Grotowski 2008b: 42). In other moments, however, Grotowski's directorial force could be enormous. Thomas Richards recalls an early impression, during a workshop, in which Grotowski "entered the space like a volcano and began giving indications to the actor — again, again, asking him to repeat his score, driving the actor without any hesitation, like a rider guiding a horse" (Richards 2008: 3). Here we have both the minimum and the maximum of the directorial relation, complete with an animalization of the practitioner that invokes both the animality of *zoe* and the erotic dynamics of BDSM. Nor is it possible to understand Grotowski's life and work without understanding that he pursued these two extremes — depth of witnessing and depth of intervention — perhaps more intensively than any other theatrical director in recent times. By expanding the range of his own directorial practice, he was able to expand in the same way the range of the practitioner.

The videographer's range of action is no less wide than those of the other roles. Their minimum includes turning the camera off. When the camera is on, the videographer can attempt to faithfully document the work of the practitioner (a task that always requires making some compositional choices) or, more actively, can choose to compose a flow of audiovisual

material that includes the practitioner, the director, the physical location, and whatever else may be in range. The videographer in DCTV, freed from the kinds of control that dominate videography in commercial filmmaking, can develop their own embodied dramaturgy within the shared temporality of the lab.

Assuming that a session of laboratory work is defined by the presence of individuals occupying all three roles, such a session has its own dynamic range. All three roles might be at their minima: the practitioner rests in stillness, the director watches silently, and the videographer waits patiently with the camera off. At another point, all three roles might be at their maxima: the practitioner is absorbed in a flow of practice, with the director making precise and effective interventions that provoke unexpected developments, while the videographer traces a line of audiovisual recording around and through the space of practice. Importantly, this maxima situation is not utopian. High intensity is not the same as intimacy or discovery; indeed, high intensity interaction may bring greater risk of unintentional harm, while developing trust and care may require periods of low intensity. Moreover, for each role, the range from minimum to maximum is not a simple linear spectrum, but a complex territory of energetic possibilities and emergent feedback loops, especially given the nonlinear ways in which

the roles interact with each other. Sometimes a calm, still, or silent director accompanies the most vigorous performance. Even within the scope of basic trio or triangle configurations, where one person occupies each role, there are vast energetic landscapes to be explored. More complex configurations offer still more varied possibilities and, of course, the space of possibility specified by any given configuration is uniquely realized by the encounters of individual researchers in a given moment.

4

Transversal Video:
Somaticizing the Camera

The dynamic configurations described above, through the role of videographer and without requiring any secondary or external documentation strategy, generate what we can recognize as a new kind of audiovisual material.[1] To grasp the significance of this material, we need to consider the very different ways in which both live performance and performance documentation can bring closure to an experimental process. Katherine Profeta identifies the projects of Ralph Lemon, on which she has long worked as dramaturg, as laboratories: "Performance was a laboratory for everything else: ontology, epistemology, anthropol-

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1   Here, as above, "material" refers to the relative reliability of audiovisual data — that which makes it possible to watch, edit, replay, and transmit — rather than to a notion of materiality grounded in mechanical physics.

ogy, sociology, politics. I understood 'performance as research' before that phrase took on its current cachet" (Profeta 2015: xi). I quote here at length a passage in which Profeta observes the inadequacy of the conventional closing cut of performing arts — the staging of a more or less repeatable work before an audience understood as public — when it comes to tracing the content of such laboratoriality:

> [I]t is possible for intercorporeal work to be radical on a radically small scale. If the knowledge gained in the rehearsal room is not effectively disseminated, the collaboration will have been very meaningful for a very small number of people. Its impact could easily be limited to the owners of the bodies in question. And thus the dance dramaturg, spending her time thinking about intercorporeal exchange, still eventually shifts back to that old question of audience. How might other bodies, beyond those bodies in the room, feel the reverberations of this physical work? Could simply demonstrating the results ever be enough? [...]
>
> One response to that question is to demonstrate more than just results. This relates to my gut feeling that the dialogues, tensions, and provisional solutions of our process, all of which I was attempting to archive in my notebook, were always going to be more interesting than any scene we might stage inside a proscenium

frame. It likewise relates to Ralph's decision to publish his artists' journals on the *Trilogy*'s process and to publicly define the *Trilogy* not as a collection of three proscenium stage events but as the larger constellation of performance events, research events, visual art installations, journal writing, cast interviews, and the unruly work that wove them all together. By a simple act of public redefinition — declaring that the larger process and all its many by-products were, collectively, the product — Ralph did much to shift thinking, within the rehearsal room, among his presenters, and among his long-term audiences.

Yet it nevertheless cannot be denied that the economics supporting all this process dictated that the largest number of people experiencing the work would be experiencing whatever part we put forward on the proscenium stage. (205)

The more a practice relies on dynamic interactions of the kind described in the previous section, the less adequately the cut of live performance will be able to trace its discoveries. Indeed, the idea that live performance can be a "work" like a painting or a sculpture depends upon a complete objectification of the performer in relation to the audience, as if what is being witnessed were not a chunk of life at all, but some kind of static object. This does not

mean that live performance is without value. The question, rather, is what such events are understood to accomplish. Making live public performance the closing cut for an experimental process ensures that experimentality — the openness to the unknown that defines the epistemic integrity of a process — cannot be prioritized. Instead, experimentality is channeled into rehearsal, in the sense of preparation for a more substantive event that can only take place once the audience arrives. A live performance is a moment, an event, an encounter. If it unfolds with most of the people present in the passive role of audience, that is only because of specific, often Eurocentric, histories of presentation and spectatorship. If, on the other hand, we want to prioritize the epistemic or research dimensions of embodied practice, then the closing laboratorial cut needs to be implemented transversally across that practice. This requires us to implement a different kind of cut, one that can be made transversally from the beginning to the end of the process. In the DCTV method, that cut is audiovisual.

Transversal video is, first of all, a turn away from performance documentation. Performance documentation brings archival stability to the closing cut of live performance, producing an inscription that captures some aspects of the live performance

event. As debates over liveness and documentation have shown (Phelan 1993; Auslander 1999; Reason 2006; D. Taylor 2007), this means that performance documentation is always asymptotically chasing what it can never have, namely the wholeness of the live event as experienced by those who were present. This remains true even when new technologies like motion capture and digital animation are brought to bear on performance practices (Delahunta and Whatley 2013; Jürgens and Fernandes 2018). One can set up the most interesting event in the world, but if one's closing cut does not manage to trace what is interesting about it, then those aspects cannot be shared or assessed by anyone who is not physically present. One avenue of exploration suggested by this impossibility is the desire to collapse the fourth wall and bring the audience into the space of practice, a transformation that can range from the spatial (immersive theater) to the interactive (participatory theater) to the epistemological (applied theater). Frank Camilleri has recently called for a "post-psychophysicality" that "actively embraces" new technologies and would be "engaged in working with (thus relating rather than eschewing or bypassing) aspects of the real made perceptible and possible through new technologies" (Camilleri 2015: 121). Yet for Camilleri and others, the synthesis of video and theater still seems beholden to the

assumption of a public theatrical event as the closing cut of these processes. Here, I am more interested in alternative cuts. If neither live performance nor performance documentation can adequately trace the emergent discoveries of experimental practice and embodied research, then what alternative closing cuts might be implemented and how might this transform the entire endeavor? More simply, if we do not document performance events, then *what do we document*?

"Transversal" means that the cut is made laterally across the entire research process. This is true first of all in a temporal sense: Audiovisual traces are produced on the first day of laboratorial practice in the same way as on the last and, even though the latter may benefit from many discoveries along the way, in retrospect the former may well be uniquely interesting in their own right. Such a transversal cut effects a horizontalization of the research process, displacing any cumulative embodied work that might eventually be documented with a potentially unlimited quantity of audiovisual output, a new kind of audiovisual data. A parallel transversality also applies spatially, in that the videographer is invited — once the initial spatial mapping of the roles has been abandoned — to enter physically into the space of practice. Again, this marks a significant deviation from conventional performance documentation, which tends to locate

the camera physically outside the space of practice in order to replicate the perspective of a live spectator. Transversal videography abandons the closure of the work both temporally and spatially, cutting into and across what would usually, from a performance documentation perspective, be treated as a closed object. Moreover, in addition to such temporal and spatial transversality, there is also an epistemic transversality, which changes the very definition of that which is documented.

Transversal video does not provide a more faithful, objective, or comprehensive trace of any given moment of practice or performance. Instead, it jettisons the desire for objectivity as externality and brings videography inside the research process. The role of the videographer is extremely powerful, insofar as it has the most direct influence on the audiovisual traces generated by the research. However, this role is not all-powerful and its control over the audiovisual output is limited by the same factors that limit the potential tyranny of the director: First, the videographer is not in charge of what happens, but only of what is recorded, which is necessarily delimited by what happens. Second, the videographer has no special privilege when it comes to making editorial choices about how to publish the recorded material (just the opposite, in fact — see below). Third, the role of the

videographer circulates dynamically within the research team, so that videographic power is separated from the power of any individual. The audiovisual material generated by DCTV is best understood as rigorously co-authored within the temporality of an experimental practice session. Without the interacting choices and actions of all participants in a configuration, the audiovisual material could not exist. And because this temporality is rigorously separated from that of the editor, these audiovisual documents stand on their own as a kind of experimental or even empirical research data.

Transversality has a long history in film and video. Journalistic and documentary film, experimental and ethnographic film, and reality television have all made use of mobile cameras that cut through a space to produce a transversal tracing of a complex event as it unfolds. Transversal approaches to cinema developed alongside the birth of the medium (Vertov 1984) and continue through visual ethnography (Rouch 2003; L. Taylor 2014), experimental filmmaking (Geuens 2001; Mouëllic 2013), and the "film essay" (Papazian and Eades 2016). Psychological and sociological research methods have also used audiovisual recording in a variety of ways to produce experimental data (Knudsen and Stage 2015; Vannini 2015), a process explored further in transversal accounts of durational artistic

research (Arlander 2018). Recent technologies such as body-mounted action cameras and 360° cameras have extended the capacities of video as a research tool, leading some ethnographic researchers to "focus on the notion of the video trace: the idea that such cameras do not so much offer us the possibility to objectively capture the world as it appears in front of the camera lens, but instead record a video trace through the world as created by our movement in specific environmental, sensory and affective configurations" (Cruz, Sumartojo, and Pink 2017: 39). Today, video is increasingly used as a research method across the social sciences and beyond (Harris 2016).

The DCTV research method can be contextualized alongside these developments insofar as it relies upon the epistemological power of recording technologies to access practice in a way that combines the archival capacity of an inscriptive medium with the audiovisuality of embodiment. Nor is there anything to prevent a DCTV lab from working with body-mounted cameras or other more recent recording technologies. However, the specificity of DCTV does not reside in any particular recording technology, but rather in the way these are deployed within an experimental practice that is structured by dynamic configurations. It is the dynamic circulation of videographic power across bodies and in relation to other modes of power that

gives DCTV's audiovisual outputs their epistemological status. In particular, the de-linking of both directorial and videographic power from editorial and authorial power gives DCTV a specific kind of experimental rigor. The strict separation of the temporality of the lab from that of editing works against deeply ingrained assumptions about what it means to make a film or video. In some approaches to experimental film-making, transversal videography is directed at the life of the filmmaker, either through archival footage or self-documentation (Gaycken in Papazian and Eades 2016: 256-74). In others, improvisation is allowed — empowering actors to respond spontane-ously and in some cases thereby also transforming the work of the videographer — yet the process is still controlled overall by a director who retains final authorial power (Mouëllic 2013). New critical approaches to ethnography may go even further in distributing directorial and editorial power, aiming to develop "an ethics for working toward thoroughly collaborative film and video research" (Harris 2012: 14) similar to that proposed here, yet without this distributive ethics reaching all the way into the means of production and the structure of encounter.[2] DCTV is

2   The "ethnocinema" proposed by Harris as a synthesis of
    ethnography and arts-based research (2012: 145–48) may

recognizably unique in the extent to which it disaggregates powers and roles, both within the shared interactive temporality of the lab and between the temporalities of experimental practice and of editing. This disaggregation owes everything to embodied research in collaborative creation, which has been conducted in fields of experimental theater and dance and of which most filmmakers and social science researchers remain unaware.

Each individual in a DCTV configuration is empowered to act freely within a particular domain, but none are in charge of the overall meaning of what happens. There is no final authority on what happens, what is audiovisually traced, or what might later become a publishable work. The videographer is empowered to make a videographic tracing of a particular moment

come closest to DCTV in its ethics. This is a research method developed from the idea "that films made collaboratively are documents of *relationship* and are not representative of whole communities, 'authentic' individuals or unassailable 'truths' and that they trouble the very notion of authenticity itself" (14, italics original). The alternative and experimental narrative films studied by Mouëllic, on the other hand, demonstrate how actors and videographers can be partially empowered to improvise while still remaining firmly within the grip of autocratic or even abusive directorial control (2013: 121–29).

of practice. They make a series of cuts, first quite literally by turning the camera on or off. (The camera then also makes its own cuts, at 30 or more photographic frames per second and perhaps 44,100 audio samples per second.) The decisions of the videographer are at once momentous and mundane, determining which moments of practice will be audiovisually traced and how. Once the camera is on, a variety of videographic choices become available through the physical movement of the camera as well as shifts in focus, zoom, and other parameters. Once the roles are no longer rigidly spatialized, as described above, the videographer is free to move around, between, through, and even away from the practitioner(s) and director. This allows the mobile, active camera of the videographer to cut through space both visually and sonically. The visual effect of the moving camera is obvious, but its parallel auditory effect can be equally significant. Both the visual and audio tracks of the resulting audiovisual material trace not a separable object, but a set of shifting relations between the videographer and the interactions unfolding around them.

In the DCTV labs I have led, the active engagement of the videographer has often extended towards a kind of athleticism resembling that of the practitioners. This is not only because the videographer

responds to their movement, but also because the circulation of roles over time means that whatever physical skills are cultivated by the researchers as practitioners will gradually permeate their work as videographers. However, intensive videographic engagement does not have to be realized through physical movement, just as the work of the practitioner(s) need not be athletic or virtuosic. A videographer who is not able to move quickly in the space, or carry a heavy camera, can produce tracings that are just as epistemically valid and potentially valuable. Perhaps, then, rather than an "athleticism" of the videographer, a more appropriate term would be that suggested by Maria Kapsali when she referred to the DCTV method as a way of "somaticizing the camera."[3] As I have

3   The Judaica project lab worked with a professional photographer and videographer in 2017, inviting him to move around in the studio with us while holding a moderately heavy DSLR camera (Nikon D750). His first comment after working with us was that he found it exhausting and that, as a videographer, he had not expected to be undertaking constant physical labor over several hours, as the three researchers in the project team often were. Kapsali used the phrase "somaticizing the camera" during a 2017 Judaica project event at the University of Leeds. For a related investigation in visual anthropology, see Claire Loussouarn's guided practice audio track "Dancing with the Camera" in the

emphasized throughout, the crucial distinction here does not depend on any particular skill, but on the way in which the roles are conceptualized through dynamic configurations and the kinds of relationality this generates. Recording technologies in DCTV do not arrive from elsewhere to document a prior constituted event, or even a prior constituted ensemble, but instead are fully metabolized within the space and process of the laboratory, leading to a new way of relating to and handling the camera.

As with the role of director, the videographer does not need to have any special skills in order to enter into the particular ethics of relationality that define DCTV. They only need to be detached from the future power of the editor and thereby grounded within the shared temporality of practice, within which each member of the team is empowered to be creative but not to control. This shift makes it difficult to distinguish "good videography" in two different senses: one linked to the kinds of purely audiovisual qualities with which we are all now so familiar through movies, television, and advertising, and another referring to video that has a meaningful relationship to unfolding events, regardless of its independent audiovisual quality.

online Somatics Toolkit (http://somaticstoolkit.coventry.ac.uk/loussouarn-dancing-with-the-camera/).

Aesthetic and epistemic choices become inseparable and the usual standards by which audiovisual material is judged are displaced, although not disregarded. This onto-epistemological shift will become clearer in my discussion of the editor role below, but a simple comparison of two extremes may be useful here. First, of course, there are some "audiovisual moments" in which everything seems to come together: Bodies, actions, and meanings are traced in a recording wherein color, image, sound, and movement are strikingly composed. This may be due to the expert skill of the videographer, who manages to pay attention simultaneously to what is happening and what is being recorded, so that the latter captures the former with as much richness as the audiovisual medium allows. Or it may be a happy accident, a wonderful coincidence of technology and moment. On the other hand, it can happen that an extraordinary moment of practice is traced only roughly or glancingly by the recording device. The audio track may be noisy or clipping, the image jumpy or out of focus. Yet in the context of an important moment, such material cannot be judged purely on aesthetic grounds. Instead, it may be more like a fragment of documentary footage, such as a recording made accidentally within range of a momentous event. (The Zapruder film is a famous, forensic example.) This kind of material may require

more editorial work in order to become legible, but its overall value is no less for its poor audiovisual quality. Because DCTV is simultaneously aesthetic and epistemological, the most valuable footage it produces may not be the most visually or sonically effective.

As these examples reveal, the distinctive quality of DCTV's videographic outputs is not ultimately audiovisual at all. While one can point to videographic choices that arose from momentary complicity and might not have been conceived by an external director or videographer, there is no strictly videographic technique available to the videographer in DCTV that could not in theory also be used in conventional cinema. Indeed, there are many ways in which temporal, spatial, and even epistemic transversality can be faked, so that audiovisual material is generated to look as if it arose from an experimental context when it was, in fact, precisely planned. The difference is onto-epistemological: It is a difference in the provenance of the material—how it was generated—which translates to a difference in its potential, in what can be done with it. The fact that one could stage a rehearsed moment in such a way as to make it look as if it were produced by DCTV is analogous to the fact that one can make beautiful charts whether or not the underlying data is accurate. The epistemological

value of a beautiful or compelling graphic display of data resides in its ability to convey the meaning of the data it visualizes, which cannot be separated from its effectiveness as a visual image. Composition is important, but only in relation to the question of what happened. This means that, in editing and reworking DCTV's audiovisual materials, while we can feel free to draw upon all the design techniques of contemporary video editing, each technique must be reinvented from the ground up, in relation to the specific onto-epistemology of DCTV.[4]

At the beginning of the first DCTV laboratory process, we asked ourselves: Does the camera change

4   An intriguing question, beyond the scope of this book, is what it might look like to analyze narrative cinema from the perspective of DCTV. This seems to have the potential to open a radically different mode of analysis, one in which even mainstream films are no longer treated as coherently authored works, like books, with the director in the position of author, but instead could be analyzed in terms of collaborative dynamics and fractional identities. Where the *auteur* director exercises strict control over the performer, videographer, and editor, we might now see this as a specifically narrow and restrictive approach that actually conceals and prevents us from accessing what is most interesting in the work, namely the divergence in perspectives amongst the co-authors as enacted through their various roles.

what happens in the space? Does its presence make us behave differently? Later on, others asked us the same question. This question is understandable, but it is a red herring. Asking how the camera changes the practice puts us back in the domain of performance documentation and the familiar subject–object split, according to which the freedom of practitioner and director ought not to be affected or influenced by the presence of the camera. Instead, we should be asking: How does the camera, as a closing cut defined by a particular kind of archival inscription, participate in the construction of meaning in this laboratorial space? As Barad writes: "Which cuts are enacted" is "not a matter of choice in the liberal humanist sense; rather, the specificity of particular cuts is a matter of specific material practices through which the very notion of the human is differentially constituted" (2007: 217).[5] In the method described here, the human

5   Rheinberger makes the same point, focusing on technologies of archival inscription rather than the more abstract notion of the cut: "The research laboratory is a place where new knowledge comes into being leaving behind it a trail of rough notes, scrips and scribbles, and revised write-ups that offer insight into concrete processes of knowledge formation" (2010: 244). These are "graphematic traces" that, following Derrida, "have the capacity to become detached not only

(and not only the human) is constituted through a closure that is fundamentally audiovisual: audiovisual embodiment or *the audiovisual body*. The audiovisual body in DCTV is not the same as that produced by the cinema industry, reality television, documentary films, surveillance cameras, or video art. For all its variation and history, the history of audiovisual recording has been dominated by those who control the recordings generated by these technologies. With few exceptions, the people whose bodies are traced by recordings — whether professional actors or ethnographic subjects — have had little control over what is done with their audiovisual bodies. In most cases, the person designated as director is charged with directing not only performers but also videographers (or

from their initial referent, that to which they originally referred, but also from the one who writes, the one who produces the trace." They "lie *between* the materialities of experimental systems and the conceptual constructs that leave the immediate laboratory context behind in the guise of sanctioned research reports" (245). The difference between Barad and Rheinberger is again instructive: While the idea of the onto-epistemological cut is powerful, the relationship between this cut and specific technologies of archival inscription requires careful investigation as part of any politics of knowledge.

cinematographers) and editors. DCTV disaggregates these powers and in this way constitutes a radically different audiovisual body. Yet the power to cut, edit, frame, and publish that body cannot be eliminated, it can only be postponed. After any DCTV lab session has finished, the question of what can be done with the resulting audiovisual materials brings us into a different temporality and role: that of the editor.

Transversal Video:
The Editor Function

As noted above, dynamic configurations can be used to structure practice without transversal video, if the videographer role is removed or replaced. Similarly, transversal videography has often been implemented without dynamic configurations. But the combination of these two cuts in DCTV leaves behind a particular kind of audiovisual material. This material is intimately linked to the individuals who produced it, while also having significance independently of them, insofar as it does not claim to represent "what happened" objectively, but only as a particular audiovisual tracing produced by the intersection of multiple contributions. The question of what can be done with this material must be asked across several registers: technological, legal, ethical, political, and so on. On a technological level, the material can be edited and widely shared with increasing ease, thanks to the availability of

desktop video editing software and internet streaming platforms. While editing and publishing videos is not yet as technologically accessible as writing and distributing textual documents, the gap between these types of media grows ever narrower. From the perspective of a university or other institution, the material generated by DCTV falls somewhere between artistic production and research data, which may be treated differently by intellectual property law. The system of contracts that determines legal relations between members of the research team and their host institution may or may not map easily onto the ethical commitments researchers feel towards each other or their political commitments. All of these potential contradictions meet at the editing desk.

The epistemological rigor of DCTV arises largely from its postponement of the compositional power that organizes artistic and knowledge production, which Foucault famously called the "author function" (1984). Banishing this power from the laboratory allows the dynamic configurations to produce a genuinely experimental event, within which the author function is postponed and all participants meet together in the temporality of emergent interaction. However, the author function cannot be fully dissolved in any project that engages with contemporary cultural and political contexts, especially if it aims

to produce circulating documents or works. The videographic materials generated by DCTV labs are extraordinarily rich as well as radically open-ended. The question of how to organize and edit them, as well as how and where to publish or share them, is displaced from the temporality of the lab only to return later with a distinct temporality of its own: that of the "editor function" or the role of the video editor. This is another role, another power, which is parallel in some way to the roles and relations defined previously, but which exists in a separate temporality from that of the DC-based laboratorial practice. The editor has the power not only to select and order fragments of audiovisual material but also to juxtapose these with textual and spoken language and other materials. It is well-known that juxtaposing even a single word with an image can radically alter the meaning of both (Rancière 2007). Titles and subtitles, voiceovers, annotations, and other layers of textuality and montage can entirely transform the meaning of a video document. The DCTV editor, therefore, unlike editors who merely implement a prior directorial vision, has the power to make fundamental choices about meaning.

The editor's choices in this context are epistemic. They are not merely different ways of representing what happened in the lab, but more like a distinct mode of writing or thinking, with the responsibility

to craft meaning from experimentally generated audiovisual materials. Catherine Grant, quoting Annette Michelson, has described the feeling of "ludic sovereignty" that she experiences at the editing table, when crafting video essays as a form of film criticism.[1] Working with extracts of well-known movies, Grant describes how the "experience of repeatedly handling the sequence in and out of its original context" led to "new affective knowledge" (2014: 52–54). The care with which Grant describes handling these audiovisual materials, and the affective charges they

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1   On videographic film criticism, see the Vimeo group Audiovisualcy (https://vimeo.com/groups/audiovisualcy) and the online journal *[in]Transition* (http://mediacommons.org/intransition/). It is interesting to note that, although there are more and more videographic journals, apart from my own *Journal of Embodied Research* (http://jer.openlibhums.org/), these do not focus on embodiment. That we do not think of video as being intrinsically linked to embodiment tells us which side of the camera has historically held structural power. If we were to assume that the person who is recorded owns the recording — rather than the person holding the camera — then we would have to think of video as a medium that is deeply and fundamentally related to embodiment. Instead, most of the work that understands video as a medium for thought locates this thought in the work of the videographer, director, or editor, rather than that of the embodied practitioner.

carry, resonates with the task of the DCTV editor to frame and contextualize experimentally generated audiovisual data. Yet the DCTV editor is working with audiovisual material that they themselves have co-generated as part of an experimental configuration. Even more importantly, the DCTV editor is creating what is likely to be the first and perhaps the only public form these materials will take. Whereas the audiovisual film essayist is creating a secondary work that in no way displaces its (usually better known and higher status) object of analysis, the DCTV editor is actively shaping the primary output of the laboratory process. The choices they make about how to compose this material may therefore become definitive of its meaning in the public sphere, making the responsibility of the DCTV editor in some ways more similar to that of a visual ethnographer. Overall, the work of the DCTV editor combines elements of both the ludic play found in videographic film criticism and the sense of responsibility associated with ethnographic video, without being reducible to either of these.

A comprehensive breakdown of video editing tools that might be used by such an editor is beyond the scope of this book. As noted above, the full range of editing techniques wielded by contemporary video editors is available to the DCTV editorial role, with the caveat that the meaning of these techniques must be

reworked and rediscovered in relation to the specific nature of the material being edited. Certainly, there is a huge range of possibilities between simple and complex editing strategies. In the context of a newly constituted DCTV lab, it might be wise to begin from the narrowest and most restricted palette of editorial choices, in order to gradually uncover and face the ethical, political, and hermeneutic issues that the process raises. In the first complete DCTV lab process, the team's initial publication was an online catalogue of clips to which strict limitations on editorial power were applied. The editorial stage in this process consisted of just two steps for each item in the catalogue: first, the selection of a single uncut fragment of audiovisual material, and second, the choice of a title for that fragment. Each item in the Songwork Catalogue (Spatz, Erçin, and Mendel 2017) is uncut in the sense that there are no editorial interventions between the "in" and "out" points. One benefit of this approach is that each item could be approved through a fully collaborative process. Because they each only involve three editorial choices — in-point, out-point, and title — the research team could discuss those for as long as needed to reach consensus. Most often the initial set of choices was proposed by a single person, but the whole trio could then debate, if necessary, until consensus was reached. This sometimes involved

moving the in-point or out-point, revising the title, or even rejecting a proposed selection. As a result of this process, the Songwork Catalogue is fully co-authored in a way that corresponds to the co-authorship of the lab work underpinning it.[2] Taken together, the more than three hundred clips in the Songwork Catalogue offer an epistemologically rigorous transversal window onto six months of full-time DCTV practice.

Much more is possible once the editor is freed to make use of additional video editing tools. Initially this might be limited to a chronological montage of single-session materials: the selection of multiple excerpts from a single practice session, which allows, for example, a three-hour lab session to be condensed into a much shorter video essay. To allow greater complexity, such limits can be abandoned as excerpts from multiple sessions can be used or the chronological ordering of moments can be broken. Multiple visual fragments, as well as photographs and other images, can be juxtaposed within a single frame, using visual cues such as size and position to establish

2   This co-authorship applies to Songwork I, II, and III, the main sections of the Songwork Catalogue, which curate selections from the 2017 Judaica project laboratory. Songwork 0 is a selection of clips from my earlier projects, which include many other co-authors who did not participate in the editing phase.

a relationship between them. Audio layers can also be combined, although superimposed audio tracks are not as perceptually separable as juxtaposed images. Voiceovers provide a common if mundane way to introduce additional perspectives and contexts around audiovisual material. Beyond this, a whole world of editorial framing is afforded by the possibility of layering written text alongside or on top of audiovisual materials. While a video's actual title sits outside the audiovisual work and names it more or less concisely, the audiovisual medium can hold all manner of textuality within its frame, from title cards (as in old silent movies) and subtitles or captions to vertically or horizontally scrolling text; or even textual annotations intentionally placed within the frame. The color, size, and position of text in relation to the audiovisual material involves its own semiotics. Finally, the editor has the power to open up the audiovisual form to all manner of other sources, from archival footage to contemporary cinema and journalism. Through such a choice, DCTV-generated material can be set alongside other materials circulating in today's audiovisual universe and within film and video history.[3]

3   All of these techniques except the last have been explored in video essays generated by the Judaica project. The project's

Once edited, video documents can be placed in digital archives, submitted to peer review, made available for citation, and posted publicly online, where they instantly become available to millions of viewers. Ethical, political, and legal frameworks for intellectual property are increasingly ambiguous or contradictory in the digital age, often failing to make sense of the new modes of copying and creation afforded by the internet (Coombe 1998; Coombe, Wershler, and Zeilinger 2014; David and Halbert 2014). One of the generative possibilities of DCTV is its ability to speak back to these discourses from the perspective of experimental practice as understood in performing and embodied arts. In this context, we bring to wider audiovisual debates a commitment to honor what I call the "contestable privilege" of the practitioner-researcher (Spatz 2020: 116) as someone who moves between various positions in the creative process: practitioner, director, videographer, editor. While this commitment has precedents in video art and artistic research, the disaggregation of roles in DCTV allows

first two peer-reviewed video articles are Spatz, Erçin, Gatt, and Mendel (2018) and Spatz, Erçin, Mendel, and Spatz-Rabinowitz (2018). For an updated collection of Judaica project video publications, visit the Urban Research Theater website (http://urbanresearchtheater.com/judaica/).

us to examine the ethics of audiovisual co-authorship in greater detail and perhaps also to contest conventional editorial hierarchies by prioritizing the ethical relationships that obtain between these roles. Accordingly, one might begin from an ethics of vulnerability whereby the practitioner — the one whose audiovisual body is most explicitly featured in the videographic trace — has priority when it comes to editorial power. In other words, we could assume that in DCTV the editor function is first assumed by the individual who occupies the role of practitioner in the footage being edited. The foregrounding of vulnerability is first an ethical premise, but then also an epistemological claim, owing much to feminist standpoint theory and the notion of first-person authority (Bettcher 2009); and a political claim, linking the vulnerability of the researcher to a broader politics of vulnerability (see Butler et al. 2016). The contestable privilege of embodied authorship in relation to audiovisual material accrues secondarily to those who, like the director, are outside the core space of practice but may also be traced visually or auditorily by the camera; thirdly to those who, like the videographer, have contributed to the practice and its recording without their own body being audiovisually traced; and only much later

to those who might wish to make use of this material without having participated in its generation.[4]

An ethics of vulnerability reverses common assumptions about how audiovisual material is produced and edited, including those that underpin most intellectual property law. It suggests that the videographer who physically makes the image should have the least control over it, precisely because of the structural power and disembodiment inherent in that role. Meanwhile, the practitioner — who is structurally vulnerable not only because their body is traced but also because they are least able, from within the space of practice, to cognize exactly what is being recorded as the recording is made — retains the greatest share of editorial privilege and control. By asserting this logic, DCTV pushes back against the historical disempowerment of the practitioner role which, if we follow Schneider and other theorists of

4   As suggested above, an ethics of vulnerability cannot be separated from a queer feminist analysis of gender. Scheman (2012) develops the idea of vulnerability as standpoint epistemology and the particular knowledge that comes from vulnerable positionality. See also Talia Mae Bettcher on the "first-person authority" of trans experience (2009), as well as the reclaiming of the gendered, queered, and racialized position of "bottom" in Stockton (2006) and Nguyen (2014).

both directorial and videographic power, incarnates and enacts the disempowerment of feminized, racialized, and queer bodies, as well as Agamben's *zoe*. Of course, taking on the role of practitioner, director, videographer, or even editor within a DCTV process cannot circumvent a lifetime of experience or a whole world of statically structured systems of injustice that forcibly objectify certain bodies. I am not suggesting that the circulation of roles within a DCTV lab erases or escapes the sedimented identities of the researchers; it would be a mistake to attribute such a utopian power of remaking the world to any method. On the other hand, neither should we underestimate the onto-epistemological power of laboratorial cuts by assuming that whatever happens within the lab space merely repeats or reiterates existing structures and identities. If technologies of notation and audiovisual recording carry any discursive, argumentative, or rhetorical power, that is because they are capable of instituting and tracing spaces of experimentation in which the circulation of powers can intersect in unexpected and even unprecedented ways, including those that can only be articulated in multimedial forms.

I do not claim to know what can be done with DCTV's audiovisual materials, either ethically, in terms of what ought to be done, or aesthetically-politically-epistemologically, in terms of what kinds of effects

this material could potentially have when published in academic, artistic, or public spheres. All I want to do here is to outline a few principles, or provisional starting points, for the development of video works generated through this method. First, I want to stress again that the raw archive of video generated by a DCTV lab should be understood as fully co-authored by all the participants in a given configuration, as each role and relation make an essential contribution to the experimental process. (Even a silent and invisible director shapes the practice through their decision not to intervene.) That said, the practitioner's position incarnates a unique combination of structural vulnerability and epistemic privilege. The practitioner's account of what happened, or what a given session was "about," should therefore take priority whenever there is a conflict between editorial visions — although, if possible, a better solution is to encourage and support the development of multiple editorial perspectives generating diverse videographic works.

At one extreme, DCTV video data could be fed into a qualitative or even quantitative analytic process by tracking words, gestures, eye movements, or other discrete elements across bodies, space, and time. At the other extreme, it could be made into a kind of video art, perhaps analogous to screendance, where the audiovisual material stands alone on its aesthetic

merits, without explicit methodological framing.[5] I am personally most interested in a third possibility, which I will call hermeneutic research. This refers to the kind of research undertaken in the humanities under the banner of critical theory and poststructuralist philosophy. Could DCTV generate critical interventions, in the sense of persuasive and affective arguments that unfold through a precise juxtaposition of textuality and audiovisuality? Pertinent questions for a hermeneutic approach to DCTV data would include: What happened? What did it mean? How can that meaning be articulated and shared? These are interpretive questions. They do not assume that the meaning of the video is hidden within it through a positivist link to the truth of the documented practice, but neither do they treat the video as freestanding "found footage" unrelated to that practice. Instead, they work the tenuous and multiplicitous links between practice and document, tracing back and forth between them, interpreting this relationship and building that interpretation into a series of editorial choices that are simultaneously aesthetic and hermeneutic.

Edited videos produced using DCTV materials should also be understood as co-authored. However,

5   On screendance, see *The International Journal of Screendance* (http://screendancejournal.org/).

there are different types and degrees of co-authorship at the editorial level. We might recognize, for example, a spectrum of co-authorship that runs from collaboration to consent, where the former refers to a substantive process of co-creation within the editorial process itself (as described above through the example of the Songwork Catalogue) and the latter to the granting of permission for editorial choices.[6] This spectrum suggests the need for a precise credit taxonomy when it comes to the attribution of edited video works. In the case of fully collaborative co-authorship, the names of all authors would presumably be listed alphabetically. On the other hand, co-authors who are involved via lab participation and subsequent consent, but without substantive input to the editorial process, might be listed after "with," as has been done in the case of the two Judaica project peer-reviewed video articles cited here. In these examples, I am

6   With present technologies, collaborative video editing still necessarily takes place via a back-and-forth process mediated by a technological object, rather than through real-time interaction. Collaborative writing is usually done this way too, although online tools like shared Google Docs now make real-time collaborative writing possible. Before too long, such a real-time collaborative video editing process might also become technologically feasible.

listed first to indicate my primary editorship of the material, which nevertheless included multiple rounds of comments and feedback from the other named authors. The need for such distinctions shows how the complex co-authorship of audiovisual outputs in a DCTV process can raise important legal, ethical, and political questions appropriate to an audiovisual age. With these complexities in mind, we can turn to a broader consideration of the onto-epistemological interventions made by DCTV.

DCTV follows Grotowski's fundamental commitment to an ethical "poverty" that consists in prioritizing embodiment through embodied practice, embodied knowledge, and embodied research. Grotowski's earliest manifesto, "Towards a Poor Theater," begins from questions about the relationship of embodied practice to the audiovisual: "What is the theater? What is unique about it? What can it do that film and television cannot?" (Grotowski 1982: 18-19). At that time, the economic realities of audiovisual recording prohibited a post-Grotowskian "poor" grappling with audiovisuality. The means of production were simply too expensive.[7] Today, in contrast, we live in the era of the "poor image":

7   In the same year that the article "Towards a Poor Theatre" was first published in Polish (1965), video artist Nam June

The poor image is a rag or a rip; an AVI or a JPEG, a lumpen proletarian in the class society of appearances, ranked and valued according to its resolution. The poor image has been uploaded, downloaded, shared, reformatted, and reedited. It transforms quality into accessibility, exhibition value into cult value, films into clips, contemplation into distraction. The image is liberated from the vaults of cinemas and archives and thrust into digital uncertainty, at the expense of its own substance. The poor image tends towards abstraction: it is a visual idea in its very becoming. (Steyerl 2012: 32)

The newly accessible production and circulation of "poor" images make it possible to short-circuit experimental practice and audiovisuality. In the era of the poor image, we can bring audiovisual recording into the space of the poor theater and in this way offer a third alternative to the two potentialities between

Paik purchased one of the first Sony portable video cameras available in New York. "Suddenly, after many years of development within the broadcast industry, the technology of television production became available to non-broadcast users—the means of televisual production could finally be appropriated" (Marshall 1979). This was a key moment in the development of video art, which nevertheless has not yet had much crossover with post-Grotowskian practice.

which Grotowski's work gradually moved, namely a performing arts practice oriented towards public presentations and an embodied research practice with personal or esoteric aims. Poor video enters the space of embodied encounter as a fourth relation and instantiates a different kind of link with the "outside" of laboratorial space, the surrounding world from which the laboratory is set apart.

Bringing audiovisual recording into the space of poor theater is topologically, and hence ontologically, distinct from bringing skilled embodiment into the rich laboratories of technoscience. In cognitive studies and neuroscience, an increasing interest in skilled and expert practice has led to the development of many new kinds of laboratory setups in which the activities and bodily states of practitioners are measured and recorded (e.g., Leman 2016; Kerr and Schmalzl 2016). Yet the economic and epistemological parameters of such studies inevitably place embodied practice at the service of technoscientific methods and measurements. As a result, and despite what some proponents might claim, neuroscientific studies of skilled practice tell us more about brain scanning machines, and the disciplines they afford, than about skill, practice, or embodiment. Even laboratory designs that aim to place "training and the development of artistic skills" on even footing with "empirical experimentation"

through an interdisciplinary framework (Hansen and Barton 2009: 132) have to grapple with the much greater institutional, economic, epistemological, and political power of the sciences in comparison to embodied arts. DCTV, in contrast, does not aim to be interdisciplinary in this sense. It does not bring embodied practice into technoscientific laboratories or even bring technoscientific methods, or scientists themselves, into the space of embodied practice. Rather, building on the economies of the poor image, DCTV appropriates the relatively old technology of the video camera and brings it into a space of dynamic configurations structuring embodied roles and relations, with the aim of overturning established hierarchies of knowledge and reinventing audiovisuality from the perspective of embodiment.

To return to a point made in the first section of this text, the opening and closing cuts that define DCTV's laboratoriality are not separated in time. Dynamic configurations (when they incorporate the videographic relation) generate transversal video not eventually but immediately, in each moment that the camera records. The epistemic gap between the two cuts is not a temporal delay. Rather, it is a mutual agreement by the research team to operate according to a specific configuration of relations, which opens up a space of unknown in which no one can predict

exactly what will happen. Even or especially if the team has been working together for years; even or especially if they know each other very well and have many shared habits; even or especially if they have explicitly agreed to work on certain materials — the disaggregated powers specified by dynamic configurations ensure that the interactions between the researchers will always be unpredictable. Of course, the unpredictability of one given configuration may be more or less interesting than another, but as in any lab process, this is a matter of intuition as much as positive prediction. By the same token, the closing laboratorial cut never comprehensively traces what happens in any moment. Rather, one tries to implement it in such a way as to have a reasonably good chance of tracing whatever is most likely to prove valuable, which is, again, a matter of guesswork as much as established knowledge. Reading the experimental process backwards, as Barad does, we must then acknowledge that transversal video does much more than document an event that would have taken place regardless. In other words, the presence of the camera absolutely does change what happens — not in the sense of a reduction, as might be expected, but through a radical transformation and expansion of the onto-epistemological status of the experimental moment. By generating audiovisual traces that will

later be available for reworking and dissemination, the presence of the camera ensures that what happens ceases to be training or rehearsal and becomes instead a kind of ongoing and iterative audiovisual research grounded in embodied practice.

The two cuts of DCTV can be used to structure any practice session, even on a one-time basis or over the course of a few days. However, DCTV's true value as a research method is only revealed when it is used over a period of weeks or months, with enough time to allow for the development of an iterative cycle of alternation between its two distinct temporalities: the temporality of the lab and the temporality of lab design and the editor function. The second of these is continuous with the temporality of life outside the lab, with everyday life, or what is often called the "real world," within which the lab is located. This temporality obtains both before and after the laboratorial moment or cut (a cut that is understood to be two cuts). Before the cut, laboratory sessions are designed, perhaps with reference to written proposals using DC notation. Additional details, such as the choice of materials to be practiced and the time, location, and duration of the session, may also be agreed upon. After the cut, the audiovisual outputs of the lab are viewed and discussed, in whole or in part; their meaning is analyzed and debated; selections, titles, and other editorial choices

are made; and audiovisual catalogues, essays, and other works may be published. In an iterative process, these "before" and "after" tasks merge, as discussions prompted by the audiovisual materials feed into decisions about the next round of lab design. Of course, the role of lab designer, like that of editor, should not be held entirely by an individual. There may be a project leader, who proposes lab designs in accordance with project goals, with the rest of the team contributing on a collaborative or consensual basis. Alternatively, the role of lab designer could circulate between individuals, or it could emerge from a fully collaborative process. Over time, it is the back-and-forth, iterative process of moving between these two temporalities that gives DCTV the potential to short-circuit the poor theater and the poor image, perhaps revealing a new approach to the relationship between embodiment and audiovisuality.

Towards a Queer Laboratory

Bruno Latour writes, "a laboratory has to put itself at risk" (2004: 216). The appearance of DCTV as a research method completely overturned many assumptions around which I had been working for years. In the context of daily experimental practice, what at first had been a simple strategy of rotating roles quickly evolved into a flexible system for designing practice sessions and then revealed itself as a radically new research method. As the lab work became messier and more apparently chaotic, the epistemological significance of the opening and closing cuts emerged, leading to further clarification of the method and, in turn, a greater abundance of possibilities. Eventually it became possible, sometimes, even to blur the boundaries between the roles as specified by DC notation. This happened by prior agreement when, for example, we modified the notation so as to indicate a director who can move in and out of the space of practice at will. It also happened

spontaneously, in moments of transgression — such as when, without prior arrangement, a director suddenly gave an order to a videographer; a practitioner suddenly took hold of the camera and turned it on herself; or a videographer spent a long time recording the details of a new physical site without ever pointing the camera towards the practitioner. Such transgressions were often passionately discussed afterwards, in relation to how they did or did not break the agreements underpinning the method and what kinds of audiovisual material they generated. When these moments seemed to be going too far, so that the lab sessions began to feel messy in an unproductive rather than a generative way, I suggested that we return to the basic configurations and adhere more strictly to the notation as a prescriptive score. Through many iterative cycles, between the temporality of discussion and editing and the temporality of the lab, more and more possibilities opened up.

At the beginning of this process, I held a completely different idea about how to establish rigor in embodied research. Influenced by Grotowski and his legacies, I had the research team begin in an empty studio, hoping to develop new technique of "song-action" through an almost purely embodied practice. I realized that DCTV was a powerful new method only when it blew away many of my assumptions about

embodied research. This began to occur with our abandonment of the spatial metaphor, as the research team gradually discovered that the three basic DC roles need not occupy separate physical spaces in order to retain their epistemic differences. A further set of discoveries occurred when anthropologist and performer Caroline Gatt visited the lab, bringing her research on the "liveliness of books" (Gatt 2017) into contact with our studio practice. Gatt invited us to bring books into the laboratory and—influenced by anthropological and indigenous research engagements with place (e.g., Tuck and McKenzie 2014)—to pay more attention to our physical milieu. Her visit prompted us to invite a series of guests into the lab over the following weeks, including performers, visual artists, and musicians, some of whom were also friends or family of the team members. Eventually we realized that the studio enclosure itself was not strictly necessary and that the method could function just as well in a variety of sites. It was during this period that I began to suspect that we were dealing not with embodied research in general but with a very specific new kind of audiovisual embodied research.

Timothy Lenoir identifies this kind of rapid epistemic expansion in research as a positive feedback loop:

> [O]nce the system has become familiar to those who inhabit it, its own momentum may take over. The more the experimenter learns to manipulate the system, the better the system comes to realize its intrinsic capacities: in Rheinberger's terms the experimental system starts to manipulate the researcher and to lead him or her in unforeseen directions. (Foreword to Rheinberger 2010: xvi)

Where at first a narrow focus on embodied technique had seemed necessary in establishing the rigor of the research, the DCTV laboratory increasingly became a wildly open place in which it sometimes felt that anything could happen and be accommodated. This process was revelatory because the two cuts of DCTV, which were only identified weeks after they had first been implemented, made visible a multitude of explicit and implicit cuts that were no longer necessary, such as the architectural cut separating the lab space from the rest of the world; the "embodiment" cut separating song and movement from books and clothing; the professional academic cut separating friendship and kinship from research; and the basic subject–object division that still underpins many theorizations of research. All of these, we found, could be discarded. The laboratory, no longer a physical

site but instead a designated time and place defined by methodological laboratoriality, could now become a true heterotopia (Foucault 1986b): a place in which not only bodies and songs but also individuals, objects, books, histories, places, guests, family relations, prior collaborations, and much more could come together in genuinely unpredictable and experimental ways. The collapse of these boundaries increasingly conspired to make each lab session a joyful mess, but only and precisely because, despite this apparent messiness, the underpinning laboratorial structure did not collapse. The epistemic gap designated by the combination of dynamic configurations and transversal video was rigorous enough to hold all of this queer mess together through increasingly complex lab sessions (**Figure 8**), including site-specific labs (**Figure 9**) and performance labs (**Figure 10**), as well as workshops (**Figure 11**).[1]

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1   In addition to four months of studio lab sessions in Huddersfield, UK, the AHRC-funded Judaica project organized a series of more than twenty events in 2017, including site-based labs, open (public) labs, theatrical performances, and workshops in the United States, United Kingdom, and Poland. Hosting organizations included The Grotowski Institute and White Stork Synagogue (Wrocław); POLIN Museum (Warsaw); Grodzka Gate / NN Theater Centre (Lublin); Galicia Jewish

Figure 8. Complex lab session, August 3, 2017. From left: Nazlıhan Eda Erçin, Elaine Spatz-Rabinowitz, Ben Spatz, and Agnieszka Mendel. Photo by Garry Cook. For a video essay created with materials from this session, see "Diaspora" (Spatz with Erçin, Mendel, and Spatz-Rabinowitz 2018).

Figure 9. Site-specific lab session, September 8, 2017. Ruined synagogue, Działoszyce, Poland. From left: Ben Spatz, Agnieszka Mendel, and Nazlıhan Eda Erçin. Still from a video essay in progress, edited by Erçin.

Figure 10. Performance lab session, September 23, 2017. POLIN: Museum of The History of Polish Jews, Warsaw, Poland. From left: Agnieszka Mendel, Nazlıhan Eda Erçin, and Ben Spatz. Photo by Ewa Chomicka.

Figure 11. Workshop, September 22, 2017. Ilona Krawczyk as practitioner, seen through the videographic lens of a mobile phone. The Grotowski Institute, Wrocław, Poland. Photo by Piotr Spigiel.

I invoke "queer" here to indicate the onto-episte-mological significance of the circulation of roles and powers in the DCTV lab, as well as the sense of mess and chaos that this method can rigorously support, contain, and make publishable. Ethnographic studies of queer lives have long raised "questions about the place of conventional research techniques in examinations of messy and unstable subjectivities and social lives" and asked what might constitute a queer method or methodology (Browne and Nash 2012: 3). Obviously, a method, on one level, is just a tool. A method is not a politics or a substitute for a politics. Like a theater laboratory, a technoscience laboratory, or a kinky play space, there is nothing that can absolutely prevent a DCTV lab from being run in

Museum (Kraków); NYU Department of Performance Studies, NYU Steinhardt School, the Martin E. Segal Theater Center at CUNY, CUNY Center for Jewish Studies, SITI Thought Center, and Leimay/Cave (New York City); The Institute for Somatics and Social Justice, Jewish Voice for Peace, The Whole Shebang, and FringeArts (Philadelphia); Wesleyan University (Middletown); Tufts Hillel and Studio@550 (Boston area); JW3 Jewish Cultural Centre, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, and Goldsmiths (London); University of Kent; University of Manchester; and University of Leeds. A calendar and further details about these events are available on the Urban Research Theater website.

an autocratic or even abusive way. What DCTV does is make certain power dynamics more perceptible and evident, by formalizing them as the fundamental structuring principle of its embodied research. With DCTV, one can never move invisibly from the role of director or videographer to that of editor, taking along with them another person's audiovisual body. Instead, one remains bound to a complex negotiation of co-authorship amongst all research partners, in which the configuration of power relations is more explicit. For those wishing to develop an ethical practice linked to a wider politics, DCTV offers an alternative set of tools for working with and transforming both embodied practice and audiovisual embodiment. More specifically, the method crystallizes a structural and methodological queerness through the circulation of roles and powers that are conventionally and historically gendered as well as raced.

In classic feminist film theory (Mulvey 1989), there are two gendered positions: the feminine object of the gaze and the masculine subject who is at once director, videographer, editor, and eventual spectator. In DCTV, videography and editing are not subsumed within a (masculine) directorial vision and powers are not stacked but instead disaggregated. This produces a multiplicity of gendered positions within and outside the temporality of practice, each of

which can circulate across the bodies and identities
of the researchers. At a simple level, following what
we might call a sociological or activist understand-
ing of identities as relatively stable, this means that
the genders embodied by the researchers are able
to mix and match with the gendering of the various
roles and relations they take on during the process.
Going further, we might even find that the genders of
the researchers are at least temporarily destabilized
by this process, since gender itself is constituted by,
and not merely generative of, precisely these kinds of
techniques and relations. The techniques of external-
ity, observation, direction, gaze, and desire that make
up the roles and relations defined by DC notation are
not simply gendered in the sense of being marked by
or linked to gender, but are themselves components in
the construction of gender.[2] By making these elements
explicit, DCTV works with gender methodologically,
even when gender is not an explicit focus of the

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2   For a more detailed consideration of how gender is materially
    discovered, invented, and transformed through innovations in
    embodied technique, see Spatz (2015), Chapter 4: "Gender
    as Technique." I am not suggesting that a few days of DCTV
    practice can substantively alter someone's gender identity.
    On the other hand, neither can embodied research be seen as
    merely expressive of a prior identity.

research. In fact, DCTV queers the gendering of inter-personal relations in concrete and formalized ways, inviting the "creative production of new, alternative gender formations" (Hale 1997: 234).

My use of queer here obviously does not refer to binary homosexuality, but is closer to what Eliza Steinbock calls "trans-inter-queer," precisely in the context of cinematic production: a kaleidoscopic and "shimmering" range of negotiations with "divided embodiment, illegible sexualities, and indistinct morphologies" (Steinbock 2019: 19–21). In this case, the divisions, illegibilities, and indistinctions I am refer-ring to cannot necessarily be independently located within the bodies of the researchers. Rather, they arise from the fragmentation and recombination of roles, powers, and relations, through an iterative process that destabilizes the meanings of audiovisual bodies, opening them up as epistemic objects.[3] Steinbock's

3   Notably, Steinbock also uses typographic symbols to formalize and abstract modes of relation that she identifies as both trans-inter-queer and cinematic: "The forward slash [/] echoes with queer deconstruction moves; the hyphen [-], with hybrid culture and sexed identities; and the more recent asterisk [*], with digital inclusion through profusion" (2019: 21). However, in the context of Steinbock's critical spectatorial film analysis, these formalized elements refer, on

reference to a "surgeon/film operator" who "brings a transformed subject to life through cuts and sutures on a material strip" (153) suggests the kind of entanglement between embodiment and audiovisuality that DCTV attempts to implement. While Steinbock and others wonder to what extent cinema itself might be "paradigmatically trans* in its somatechnical capacities" (Keegan, Horak, and Steinbock 2018: 2), I am interested in how trans-inter-queer knowledge and practice can be rendered technical in order to enact transformations that extend beyond, without displacing, activist movements that rely upon stable notions of identity. If cinema as a medium "is ripe for a somatechnical approach," this cannot only refer to a mode of critical analysis that recognizes the entanglement of embodiment and audiovisuality. It must also suggest the development of concrete pathways into future experimentation.

With this in mind, and by way of conclusion, I want to consider some of the concrete, methodological techniques or principles through which DCTV supports the implementation of a queer laboratory. First, at

> the cinematic side, primarily to the completed film or video work and its audiovisual montage, rather than, as in DCTV, to the interactive relations of production that structure the generation of raw video material.

the heart of the method, is auto-experimentation or what Paul Preciado calls the "principle of the auto-guinea pig," according to which "anyone wishing to be a political subject will begin by being the lab rat in her or his own laboratory" (2013: 348, 353). Indeed, the subject–object cut implemented by most social science methods remains one of the most difficult problems for queer and feminist researchers, continuing to generate a tension between the desire to foster genuine collaboration and solidarity with communities and the need to maintain the epistemic distance of the researcher. How can one get a handle on anything that resembles knowledge, without placing a sharp cut between the researcher and the researched? For Preciado, "All philosophy is intended to be a form of autovivisection — when it isn't a form of dissection of the other. It is an exercise in self-cutting, an incision into subjectivity" (2013: 259).[4] As we have seen, the

4 Preciado highlights post-pornography, among other cultural-aesthetic movements, as an "epistemological inversion, a radical displacement of the subject of pornographic enunciation," in which "those who had been passive objects of the pornographic and the disciplinary gaze ('women,' 'porn actors and actresses,' 'whores,' 'fags and dykes,' 'perverts,' 'crips,' etc.) become subjects of representation, thereby putting in question the (aesthetic and somato-political)

turn to auto-experimentation often pushes artists into solo practice, where the problem of hierarchy is resolved by bringing powers together in a single body. DCTV supports a kind of auto-experimentation that is fractionally distributed across multiple bodies, allowing each member of the team to circulate through several versions of experimenter and experimentee. This process leaves traces in the form of experimental audiovisual bodies, which each researcher can then encounter and reframe in the editing process.

The principle of auto-experimentation in DCTV is supported by the technique of dynamic configurations, which from a queer or kinky perspective we might also call "switch as method." In BDSM and kink culture, the "verb 'switch' has become a noun which names those who frequently change roles: the

codes that make their bodies and sexual practices visible and produc[e] the impression of the natural stability of sexual relations and gender relationships" (2013: 273). Possible post-pornographic or counter-pornographic applications of DCTV are beyond the scope of this book. However, there is no reason why a DCTV lab could not work with sexual as well as nonsexual dimensions of embodiment, ideally in a queer and transfeminist context. Something along these lines this has even been called "ethnopornography" (McNamara et al. 2015: 47). See Marks (2002: 38).

switches" (Call 2012: 8). Moreover, as Lewis Call suggests: "The unique structure of switchy desire makes the switch an important political figure." There has been surprisingly little theorization of switch even in studies of BDSM. Like bisexuality and nonbinary gender, it tends to be overlooked in favor of more apparently coherent identities, in this case top and bottom, or dominant and submissive. When switch is discussed, it is still usually understood as a role or identity, rather than as an epistemic standpoint or method. But Katherine Martinez, noting the statistical tendency of kinky roles to follow conventional gender identities — with men more often playing as tops and women more often playing as bottoms — has noted the potential of role fluidity in BDSM to deconstruct and destabilize hegemonic binaries of gender and sexuality (2018: 1304; see Califia-Rice 1994). In DCTV, switch is more than a behavior or preference; it is a methodological principle. By constantly inviting, through the formalization of its opening cut, the redistribution of powers and relations across bodies, the method calls into question the assumption that an individual can or should permanently identify as a director, performer, or videographer, and therefore also the genders those techniques help to construct.

While auto-experimentation and switch as method appear immediately in the DCTV lab through the

structuring invitations of dynamic configurations, a deeper and richer kind of queerness arrives only over time, through a queer iteration between the two temporalities of the method: the temporality of the lab and that of editing and lab design. This is because DCTV disaggregates powers not only synchronically, in dynamic configurations, but also diachronically, through the iterative relationship between these two temporalities. In this context, Elizabeth Freeman's discussion of both film and BDSM as sites for queer grapplings with history and knowledge is relevant. Following the "corporeal turn" in film studies (Keegan, Horak, and Steinbock 2018: 5), Freeman sees film and video as privileged media for wrestling with power and identity because of the tactile and flexibly indexical way in which the editor works with the audiovisual material: "[T]o pause on a given image, to repeat an image over and over, or to double an existing film in a remake or reshoot become productively queer ways to 'desocialize' that [patriarchal and/or colonial] gaze and intervene on the historical condition of seeing itself" (Freeman 2010: xviii). Linking filmmaking to BDSM is Freeman's assertion that "history may enter through the bottom" (163)—in other words, that knowledge may be generated through sensual and sensory play; that pleasure as well as pain is a valid mode of engagement with the past; and that such a

"bottom historiography" (120) importantly queers the assumptions of positivist historiographies that attempt to pin down the past in masculinist terms (162).[5] In Freeman's historiographic discussion, the past refers to the historical past as it is reconstructed and reinvented in both film and BDSM. This is what she means by "the temporal aspect of sadomasochism" (169). DCTV certainly traces, investigates, and plays/works with this kind of past or history as it appears

5   Analyzing power relations in a short film by black queer artist Isaac Julien, Freeman provides another possible name for the > relation, *attendance,* where the attendant is one who is in a position "to wait for, to expect, but also to go, follow, accompany, wait on, to be in constant motion on behalf of another" (2010: 148). A bit later, quoting Saidiya Hartman, Freeman links this to an act of "re-membering" that "takes the form of *attending* to the body as a site of pleasure, eros, and sociality, and articulating its violated condition" (162, italics in original). Previously, in the same chapter, she identifies the sadist in BDSM as "witness to as well as executor of violence," who "secures a different 'will have been'" for the bottom (142). These can all be appreciated as further ramifications and resonances of the > relation as it attends to the affects emerging from the practitioner, which as Freeman highlights are never only a matter of individual pain or pleasure but always also linked to cultural histories of trauma and survival, shame and pleasure and celebration.

both through the bodies of the researchers and in the emplacement of the lab work in a particular site.[6] But DCTV brings a further development of this queerness insofar as the relationship between its two temporalities is ongoing and iterative.

The DCTV editor — whether that function is fulfilled by one person or several — is materially, audiovisually, embodied in the materials they are editing. They are playing/working with their own audiovisual body. If poststructuralism and queer theory have revealed the essentially and not merely contingent fragmentation of the subject, DCTV implements that revelation as

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6   I have introduced DCTV through a series of roles and relations, all of which define human positions in the onto-epistemic space of the lab. This could be taken to imply that DCTV is a humanist method in which the primacy of the human is sustained. However, in the audiovisual closing cut, site and emplacement are as fully present as embodiment, sometimes even more so. Video as a medium affords no strict cut or division between body and place. There is then no reason why dynamic configurations should not be understood as an experimental relation to place as much as to the embodied materials designated by the underscore _. This post-humanist aspect of DCTV remains to be further explored. On relationships between place, indigeneity, and "audiovisualizing," see for example Jessica Bissett Perea (2017).

method by placing the researcher in a position to work videographically with audiovisual fragments of their own past. Further, in DCTV, this iterative process does not emerge from a solo endeavor (as in much of the performance and video art studied by Schneider), but from a process of structured and collaborative co-authorship. This means that the fragments of one's own audiovisual body that one works with as editor are always already shot through and entangled with the audiovisual bodies of others, as well as of the place of those encounters. There is an auto-ethnographic aspect to this process, yet the video material one encounters as editor is in no way equivalent to one's own phenomenological recollection of experiences had during the recorded sessions. Whatever one did in that moment — let's say, as practitioner — was done in relation and response to others. My body, as I encounter it through the editor function, is made up of elements and traces of my being as they were summoned and selected in that moment by my companions. Our practicing, directing, and videographic bodies mingle in the resulting video material in a way that is both documentary and aesthetic, both critical and erotic. At the same time, history proper is present in the gendered, racial, educational, and other backgrounds and inheritances that make up our more sedimented layers of embodiment and place.

Even in the initial moment of editing, after just a few lab sessions, it is already impossible to disentangle these sedimented histories from those that emerge through our embodied interactions. As the process iterates between lab sessions and editing, the degree of entanglement increases. Each lab session generates new material to be watched, discussed, and edited. Outside the laboratory, we look backwards, through the video footage, as well as forwards, through the notated configurations that will structure future sessions and the audiovisual outputs that will testify to the world about what happened there.

The two temporalities never meet. (Perhaps they could, in theory, but new cuts might then be needed to prevent the laboratoriality of the process from collapsing.) Yet they continually inform and transform each other. As a result, instead of a single moment of bottom historiography, in which sedimented histories are unearthed and queerly reworked, the transit between temporalities happens over and over again, back and forth. History in both major and minor senses — the history of the world, which is carried in the bodies and places that meet in the labs, and the history of the iterative research process itself — is continually being opened and played/worked with. But it is also continually being edited, composed, and brought into a montage. There is not one moment of

"fabulation," a single "temporal duration interposed between negative and print, between a film's shoot and its projection before an audience" (Nyong'o 2019: 51), but a fabulative process that happens again and again: shoot, projection, shoot, projection, shoot, projection… The iterative intermingling of these two temporalities queers both by linking them in a process of indefinite entanglement. Of course, this kind of queer iteration can be found in various forms across many different film projects, communities, and time periods, as in the works of queer film theory cited here. What makes DCTV a queer *method,* however, is its determination to sustain the entanglement of individuals and traces across time and space.

This entanglement is the final queer aspect of DCTV that I want to consider, addressing two of its most important implications: the entanglement of authorship and the end of the audience. The entanglement of authorship begins in the lab and continues through the editor function, as described above. Although the experimental setup admits no over-arching author, the editor does have the power, with consent, to impose a kind of coherent vision that may be required to generate a legible work of art or scholarship. Yet DCTV generates an especially intensive and challenging entanglement through its production of open-ended audiovisual material from

experimental practice. In conventional performance documentation, the meaning of the video is referred back to the intentions of the live or theatrical project. This means that the power structures organizing the live project carry over to the video. Even when there is video of rehearsals as well as performances, it can usually be assumed that the participants agree at least on what is being rehearsed. Indeed, when participants are interviewed to provide commentary on the documentary footage, they most often talk not about the specifics of a recorded moment, but about the overall process or project and its aims. Individual audiovisual moments are then used in an illustrative way, as part of a coherent narrative. In contrast, the audiovisual recordings from a DCTV lab are radically open-ended. They are videographic shards, available to radically divergent interpretations. With the assumed links between director, videographer, and editor broken, participants are not just audiovisually but also epistemically and ethically entangled through these recordings. On the one hand, every moment is potentially available as raw data to be interpreted and composed according to a particular editorial vision. On the other hand, the requirement of consent and the invitation to collaborate mean that no one is empowered simply to do whatever they like with this material. Subsequent reworkings and new montages

will bring different interpretations of what happened, which will need to be discussed and agreed upon by all the authors of a given moment, before being shared more widely.

Furthermore, this entanglement fills the space of any DCTV lab, encompassing everything and everyone present and demolishing any possibility of a "fourth wall" that could allow a conventional audience to witness such a lab in action. This is unavoidable in a social and technological context where, no matter how large the live audience, the digital one is potentially thousands or millions of times larger. As all genres of live performance increasingly recognize, "the" audience can no longer be present in a general way, as a "general" audience representing a "general" public. Instead, everyone who is physically present becomes recognizable as a contributor, if not a full co-author, of the unfolding event. The era in which it could be imagined that a live event attains the status of artistic work by being performed "in public" is over. This means that the era of "the" audience is also over, because the presence of even a single video camera potentially incorporates the audiovisual bodies of everyone who is present. The role of the spectator is easy enough to define in DC notation. They are like a director who cannot intervene, or a videographer without a camera: someone who has an external

witnessing relation to the practitioner, without any inscriptive power of their own. But incorporating such a role ethically requires a complete rethinking of the nature and extent of their entanglement in what takes place. Is it permissible to record such spectators? If so, do they then to some extent become practitioners, since their audiovisual bodies are traced? If they do, should they then be given access to the resulting video recordings? Are they permitted to edit and publish their own versions of those recordings and to make their own interpretations and claims about what happened? Are they permitted to make their own recordings of the event, becoming independent videographers?

Video cameras entangle bodies in ways we are only beginning to understand and which pose significant aesthetic and epistemic problems for live performance. This has been true for decades but is increasingly apparent today, in an age of omnipresent surveillance and casual violations of privacy, when a printed sign on a door may be taken as implicit consent to be recorded. DCTV offers no final or complete answers when it comes to adapting the existing structures of live spectatorship for a digital age. It simply offers an alternative perspective from which to approach such questions, beginning from the premise that everyone who is present has a role

to fill, a power to wield, and a share in the authorship of resulting documents. Topologically, from a DCTV perspective, it is not at all that the audience is excluded from the lab, as opposed to being invited to the theater. Rather, everyone is invited into the lab, with the understanding that the presence of the video camera fundamentally changes our relations to each other and to place, resulting in ethical and epistemic entanglements that extend indefinitely across time and space, linking us by invisible threads as long as those video materials exist somewhere to be taken up, interpreted, edited, composed, and re-shared. Those techniques of observation by which the idea of the general audience was invented—such as having a large number of participants at an event sit together silently in darkness—are obsolete in a world of omnipresent audiovisual recording. In this sense, the end of the audience does not mean their banishment but the queering of those gendered and racialized distances that formerly made the differences between practitioners, directors, videographers, editors, and spectators so apparently clear.

I have now elaborated a few of the principles underpinning my claim that DCTV implements a queer kind of laboratory: auto-experimentation, switch as method, queer iteration, the entanglement of authorship, and the end of the audience. Many of these can

be applied to other practices and increasingly also to new research methods emerging at the edges of inter-disciplinary research in academia. None of them were entirely invented by me or my colleagues. DCTV brings them together in a particular crystallized form, giving methodological rigor to a set of discoveries about power and knowledge that have been developed over many years in queer, feminist, and decolonial practice, critical theory, experimental performance, and countless lineages of performing and embodied arts. In this short book, I have tried to give due credit and to honor some of those sources, while laying out the basics of DCTV for those who might want to make use of it. I hope that for some readers the next step will be to implement DCTV in your own contexts, which of course may also mean changing and adapting it according to your needs. This particular introduction to DCTV as a research method derives from my own institutional context in academia, which hopefully will not unduly limit the uses to which these ideas and techniques can be put. One can thematize or even formalize power relations without using the DC notation; one can introduce transversal video into experimental practice without conceptualizing it as a closing laboratorial cut; one can develop an iterative, cyclical relation between video generation and video editing without treating the video material that links

these two temporalities as open-ended research data; and so on.

Perhaps the most obvious large-scale implementation of DCTV would be the development of laboratory models for academic practice research and artistic research in performing arts. Whether at undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral, or advanced research levels, this would immediately allow for more rigorously collaborative processes of a kind that are commonplace in the sciences, but which remain uncommon or unavailable in the arts, where the argument for "research" still relies heavily on methodologies drawn from the humanities. Beyond this and in the longer term, I am sure that more far-ranging institutional implementations could be found. DCTV could be part of a multi-modal complex that incorporates more conventional performing arts processes such as training, rehearsal, and public performance. Although none of these are required to implement a DCTV lab, there is also nothing to prevent laboratoriality in my sense from interfacing with or returning to standard performing arts conventions from the new angle articulated here. On the other hand, perhaps something like DCTV could be used to make a new kind of movie — one in which not only the narrative or editorial composition, but also the substantive directorial and videographic powers, would emerge

unpredictably from the process, so that no single director, documentarian, or ethnographer maintained control over the resulting work.

We could go even further and call DCTV a method for the invention of micropolitics; a strategy to develop "countervisuality" (Mirzoeff 2011); a site for cyborg decolonization between "cinema and the university" (la paperson 2017: 36); or a "situated aporia" designed to "invert the gaze" afforded by the audio-visual (Gómez-Barris 2017: 62, 98). From my own experience, I can say that within and around a DCTV lab it is possible to generate a kind of radical abun-dance: not the abundance of capitalist expansion and research "excellence," but a joyful, ethically sensitive, critical oriented abundance that links us palpably, materially, and archivally to "the unmediated, priceless realms that have not succumbed to scarcity" (Rasmussen 2002: 92). This is, above all, because the DCTV method does not allow one to maintain standard distinctions between technique, identity, and place. The queer entanglement described above means that the "visible identities" (Alcoff 2005) of the participants and of the physical site or location of each lab — precisely those relations of embodiment and emplacement that have been concealed by the supposed universality of positivist thought — can no longer be hidden away. Whatever embodied material

is being researched, whatever knowledge is brought into the lab, the audiovisual tracing of practice always reveals its indelible connections to particular bodies, identities, and places, slicing through the objectifying cuts that continue to structure so much academic research. If technique, identity, and place — or knowledge, power, and ecology — are no longer separable, then what is research? Perhaps what we are looking at here is not just the potential for research methods to extend beyond academia, but also their potential to transform academia by redrawing its most fundamental internal and external boundaries.

Further connections might be drawn, for example by reclaiming the lost link between "laboratory" and "labor" in the Marxist sense and in this way "deactivating" (Agamben 2016: 247) and radicalizing the laboratory as a site for the transformation of university and world. In its short-circuiting of embodiment and audiovisuality, the DCTV lab seems to invent something that is not merely interdisciplinary, but which pertains to the technological era in relation to the life of the species. This is a "video way of thinking" (Spatz 2020), a possibility to reshape social institutions through a fundamentally different relationship with embodiment than that which is afforded by the technology of writing and the corresponding "writing way of thinking." Returning for a moment to the

question of what kind of video DCTV generates, let me affirm again that the videos produced by such experiments and iterations should never be compared to live performance in terms of what they do or do not capture or make available. Such comparisons only shore up writing as the hidden term, the unmarked medium of thought, since we do not (any longer) worry that writing about life will replace or erase it. Instead, the short-circuiting of embodiment and audiovisuality that DCTV achieves should be used to decenter writing and to counter logocentrism, putting into practice what has been suggested by critical theory at least since Walter Benjamin. This is the heart of the DCTV method's politics and the basis for its claim to queer, feminist, decolonial, or any other kind of ethical-political intervention. For decades, it has been argued that cinema and video constitute their own modes of thought. Yet the "thinker" of this thought has always been behind the camera, as director/videographer/editor, separated by the lens from the structurally vulnerable, yet epistemically privileged, racialized and gendered role of the performer or practitioner. DCTV is above all a proposal for a kind of videographic thinking in which the body that is traced audiovisually is understood as enacting primary thought. In DCTV, this happens not by collapsing all the cinematic roles into a single body that unites subject and object, but

by further splitting or disaggregating the roles and powers that enable videographic production and allowing them to circulate in queerly iterative and entangled ways.

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