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## Bauman's *Verbal Art* and the Social Organization of Attention: *The Role of Reflexivity in the Aesthetics of Performance*

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*In Richard Bauman's landmark study Verbal Art as Performance, reflexivity plays a small but important role. Combining ideas from Verbal Art with insights from phenomenology, this article uses the concept of reflexivity to re-examine basic facets of expressive interaction and explores the structure of intersubjectivity in performance. Field data on American heavy metal music and the promenade of central Italy are used to reveal the crucial role that reflexivity plays in the aesthetics of performance.*

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Three pursuers learn that a fugitive boarded a train for Philadelphia. To the first pursuer it's obvious that the fugitive has gone to Philadelphia. To the second pursuer it's obvious that he left the train in Newark and has gone somewhere else. To the third pursuer, who knows how clever the fugitive is, it's obvious that he didn't leave the train at Newark, because that would be too obvious, but stayed on it and went to Philadelphia. Subtlety chases the obvious up a never-ending spiral and never quite catches it.

—Rex Stout, *The Silent Speaker*

Could we be much closer if we tried?  
We could stay at home and stare into each other's eyes  
Maybe we could last an hour  
Maybe then we'd see right through  
Always something breaking us in two. . . .

—Joe Jackson, "Breaking Us in Two"

EXPRESSIVE CULTURE IS A PECULIAR THING. When someone tells a story, models new clothing, or plays music, the listeners, viewers, or audience members have aesthetic responses.<sup>1</sup> Such responses are instantaneous and can be endlessly nuanced and disarmingly potent. Evoking these responses may be the participant's goal in performance, or that evocation

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may itself be a means toward larger social, religious, or political ends. Yet, for all their power, or perhaps because of it, aesthetic responses are notoriously difficult to describe and analyze. Richard Bauman's classic work, *Verbal Art as Performance* (1977), made a profound contribution to the research on aesthetics by helping to ground the study of expressive culture in situated activity and by identifying the unique social dynamics of performance. Building on ideas suggested by Bauman's landmark text, the guiding notion of this paper is that the aesthetics of performance are tightly bound up with the issue of reflexivity—the performer's awareness of him- or herself as a participant in an interaction, his or her signaling of this awareness, and the reciprocal phenomena experienced by the audience.

The first part of this article suggests that the question of reflexive awareness is part of the larger problem of the organization of attention in performance events. That is, how one attends to oneself or to the other in performance is part of the larger question of how one arranges all of the diverse elements of one's experience (one's body, thoughts, percepts, memories, and experiences of the other participants) during the event. Using ideas from the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and the writings of contemporary performance theorists, we will examine these issues and discuss the relationship between reflexivity and metacommunication. Data from Berger's fieldwork on the metal, rock, and jazz scenes of northeast Ohio illustrates that the organization of attention and reflexivity is both actively achieved by the participants and deeply informed by culture and larger social forces. Having explored the dynamics of the organization of attention, we return again to Husserl and suggest that reflexivity is neither an optional accompaniment to performance nor the domain of highly ironic, fey, or experimental art. On the contrary, reflexivity is an unavoidable element of *all* forms of expressive culture, present and active even in its absence. Examples from Del Negro's fieldwork on the central Italian *passaggiata* (ritual promenade) show that cultures possess complex and contested ideas about appropriate and inappropriate forms of reflexivity in performance and demonstrate that these ideas are fundamental to the overall aesthetics of the performance event. Developing intellectual tools for examining the organization of attention and the reflexive dimension of performance leads to insights into the ways in which expressive communication achieves its aesthetic effects.<sup>2</sup>

### *The Notion of Reflexivity, Verbal Art as Performance, and the Study of Reflexive Language*

One of the main difficulties with the notion of *reflexivity* is the confusingly wide range of ways in which the term is used. Barbara Babcock has observed that in its most abstract sense, the term *reflexivity* refers to any kind of doubling back or self-reference (1980:2), and both she (1980, 1987) and Bauman (1989) have identified three distinct but related contexts in which the term is used. First, the term is used in the analysis of language and sign systems. In this case, *reflexivity* refers to the capacity of a language or sign system to refer to itself. A wealth of terminology has emerged to differentiate various types of reflexive language and language use, including *metacommunication* (communication about communication, Bateson [1972]), *metalinguage* (language specifically about language, Bateson [1972]), *metanarration* (talk about the act or content of narration in a

narrating event, Babcock [1977]), *metapragmatics* (talk about language use and the social and communicative functions of language, Silverstein [1976:48, 1993]) and *metafolklore* (folklore about folklore, Dundes [1975]). Second, the term has been used in the context of ideas like attention, consciousness, subjectivity, and interaction; in this case it refers to the capacity of subjects to be aware of themselves *as* subjects and to be aware that they are the focus of another's attention. Reflexivity in this sense has been of interest to phenomenologists (Husserl 1960; Merleau-Ponty 1989; Sartre 1956; Schutz 1967) and social psychologists (Mead 1967). We use the term *reflexive consciousness* in this connection. Third, scholars in the tradition of symbolic anthropology (Geertz 1973; Turner 1969) have used the term *reflexivity* to refer to the capacity of participants in rituals or display events to creatively employ stocks of shared cultural knowledge to explore, negotiate, comment on, or transform the culture itself. Beyond these three uses of the word, the term *reflexivity* is also used by scholars concerned with the effect of the scholar's own historically and culturally situated subjectivity on the practice of fieldwork and ethnographic writing (see, for example, Berger 1999; Briggs 1993a; Clifford and Marcus 1986; Feld 1990; Lawless 1992; Lucy 1993; Schechner 1985:55–65; Schutz 1967:220; Solomon 1994). Such methodological reflexivity is, we believe, actually a special case of Babcock's second use of the term. In this article, we primarily concern ourselves with reflexivity in sign systems and reflexive consciousness.

Many of the key themes in current folklore research on reflexivity were introduced or suggested in *Verbal Art as Performance*, and, while some of these ideas are familiar, it is worthwhile to explore this ground carefully once again. Synthesizing many threads of the then-emergent critique of text-based folklore studies, *Verbal Art* outlines the basic structure of the performance event and sets the program for future inquiry in this area. In his innovative work, Bauman's only explicit discussion of reflexivity occurs in his foundational analysis of "keying" or "framing." Bauman explains that one of the many techniques that may be used to mark a stretch of behavior as a performance is explicit disclaimers and denials of performance (1977:21–22). Deferential remarks, such as "I am not really much of a storyteller, but . . ." are often formulaic and serve to indicate that the performer recognizes her/his behavior *as* performance or artistic behavior. Explicitly referring to the both the speaker and the speech (as well as acknowledging the perceived critical evaluation of the audience), such remarks are clear examples of reflexive language.

More relevant to the subsequent scholarship and our present concerns is the *implicit* reflexivity suggested in *Verbal Art* and developed more fully in Bauman's later work (1989). Early in *Verbal Art* Bauman defines performance as a special mode of interaction in which the performer takes responsibility for displays of communicative competence (Bauman 1977:11). Following earlier scholars, he continues to explain that performance is always framed—introduced by metacommunication that establishes the behavior as a performance. While the act of framing may be brief, backgrounded, or taken for granted by the participants in a performance event, framing informs all of the behavior that follows and constitutes that behavior as performance. Such a perspective places implicit reflexive language and reflexive consciousness at the center of performance theory in two ways. First, as behavior specially framed for public scrutiny, performance draws attention to the fact that the performer is a participant in an interaction

and the focus of the audience's attention. Second, the act of establishing the performative frame refers to the communicative practice itself and, thus, at least implicitly, to the performer. More importantly, these features of performance blur the boundary between reflexive language and reflexive consciousness. Framing, like all metacommunication, *invokes* the reflexive consciousness of the participants. Whereas the performer may be unaware of himself or herself as an actor at the moment before the framing takes place, the act of framing, by definition, marks the performer as a performer, marks the audience members as audience members, and calls attention to the fact of interaction. In his 1989 *Encyclopedia of Communications* entry on "performance," Bauman makes the connections among the types of reflexivity more explicit. Not only does the formal framing of the behavior invoke reflexive consciousness for all the participants, as Bauman points out, the heightened attention to the performer's communicative competence foregrounds the expressive resources of the culture, which in turn makes performance the ideal instrument of reflexive commentary on that culture. These insights are important to our present concerns because they suggest that implicit reflexive language is a constitutive and unavoidable feature of performance (see the discussion of Bauman in Lucy 1993:21) and is crucial for the establishment of the subject.

Since Bauman's *Verbal Art* first appeared, this vision of reflexivity has informed folkloristic research in two ways. First, performance theorists have long sought to demystify the rhetorical power of verbal art by exposing the mechanics of performance, and the explicit or implicit analysis of reflexive language has played a crucial role in doing so. Building on the work of Alan Dundes (1975), Babcock's 1977 article on metanarration (reprinted as a supplementary chapter in the book form of *Verbal Art*) set the stage for much of this research. Babcock called on scholars to seek the power of folk narrative in the social interaction of the narrative performance, rather than in the narrative text alone. Case studies by other scholars of folklore and Bauman himself (1986) have illustrated how performers use metacommunicative techniques such as framing in, framing out, indexical reference to tradition or the situated context, direct and indirect speech, code switching, and various types of metapragmatic commentary to claim the floor, garner the authority to perform, assess their interlocutor's level of cultural knowledge, draw the audience into the performance, and establish the legitimacy of their narrative (Allen 1991; Briggs 1993b; Butler 1992; Moore 1993; Parmentier 1993). Richard Parmentier's careful study of a political speech in Belua, Micronesia, is a case in point: An ethnopoetic transcription of a particularly powerful example of political oratory is presented in this text, and Parmentier shows how the speaker creatively employs metapragmatic comments about the speech, such as carefully framed reported speech, stock phrases, and embedded narratives, to make the audience interpret a recent historical event in ways the narrator finds politically advantageous. Like other scholars, Parmentier is able to demonstrate how reflexive language frames discourse as performance and links that discourse to situated and larger social contexts.

Second, the analysis of reflexive language has been central for exploring the mechanics of subject positioning. In performance theory, case studies such as those by Corrine Kratz (1990), Ray Allen (1991), and Thomas Solomon (1994) do not merely show that performers use reflexive language to comment on the identity of the participants in the event. More importantly, such authors illustrate how reflexive language actually "positions"

the audience, implicitly locating the audience member in the social organization of the event and the larger society.<sup>3</sup> Kratz's careful analysis of girls' initiation rituals among the Ogiek of Kenya illustrates this line of inquiry. In the rituals, the girls and their close relatives trade off lines of sung verse in a long performance that precedes a harrowing clitoridectomy. Kratz shows how the girls are placed in the center of the performance event and situated in the larger community by the relatives' use of call and response patterning, emotionally resonant kinship terms, and carefully orchestrated metapragmatic exhortations to complete the ritual. Such positioning devices, Kratz argues, account for the persuasive power of the ritual. Following the deconstructionist program, recent analysts of reflexive language such as Steve C. Caton (1993) and Benjamin Lee (1993) have suggested that language and, specifically, reflexive and metapragmatic language, does not merely depict the subject but actually constructs it. For example, analyzing reflexive language in Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927), Lee's illuminating study shows that Woolf's novel does not merely describe the nature of subjectivity to the reader. Rather, the reader's consciousness is aware of the text, and the artistic use of reported speech and thought locates the reader-subject as a participant in a fictive world in which the perspectives of the various characters run together. Here, Woolf's use of language, and the larger social history embedded in that language, shapes and informs the reader's subjectivity.<sup>4</sup>

These studies have provided important insights into the mechanisms of performance and the relationship between reflexive language and subjectivity. Building on this work, we suggest three opportunities to enrich the performance perspective in folklore. The great advantage of contemporary scholarship in this area is that it allows us to look at the concrete social process by which the subject is constituted, rather than depicting consciousness as transcendent of and autonomous from history, society, and the world, as previous idealist philosophy had done (see Bauman and Briggs 1990 for a related discussion). One difficulty here, however, is the privileging of language, both in linguistically oriented performance theory in folkloristics and in the deconstructionist approaches to reflexive language. As we have seen, the reflexive capacity of language is responsible for its ability to position and constitute the subject. But this reflexive capacity is not unique to language; as Babcock (1980) suggests, all signs systems have the potential for self-reference. As a result, the subject can be positioned and constituted through nonlinguistic sign systems or through the interaction of linguistic and nonlinguistic dimensions of the expressive act. Such nonverbal constitution of the subject deserves much greater examination by folklorists. While our main focus in this article is on the aesthetics of reflexivity, subject positioning in performances of music and bodily display are both secondary issues. Our work connects the analysis of the subject with a persistent theme of post-sixties folklore scholarship that has called for attention to nonverbal lore and the integration of various expressive genres in the performance event (Glassie 1982; Toelken 1979; Yoder 1976). While some performance theorists have examined nonverbal performance (Fine 1984; Kapchan 1994; Schechner 1985; Stoeltje 1988), most performance-based analysis in our discipline has focused on language; therefore, our first point is that folkloristics can benefit by exploring the constitution of the subject by nonverbal means.

A second opportunity for new perspectives flows from another concern of post-sixties folklore scholarship—the creative nature of interpretation. While it is true, as the deconstructionists suggest, that the rhetorical structure of the text informs the constitution of the audience's subjectivity, it is also true that meaning making is an active process. Scholars such as Briggs (1993b), Parmentier (1993), Solomon (1994), Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1975), and Lee (1993) illustrate how authors and performers are determined not only by the linguistic resources of their language but creatively employ those resources to serve their larger ideological needs. For example, Lee's deconstructionist comparison of the rhetoric of Gottlob Frege and Virginia Woolf illustrates not that the language determines the author's constitution of the reader's subjectivity, but that two authors, both utilizing the same Standard Average European (SAE) linguistic resources, can differentially manipulate those resources to achieve radically different subject positionings.<sup>5</sup> While nondeconstructive performance theory has acknowledged the performer's use of expressive resources to achieve social business, most of these scholars have focused on the text that the performers create rather than the audience's interpretations. Thomas Solomon's study of insult exchanges in Bolivian song duels (1994) comes close to the issue of interpretation by illustrating how the singer's improvised insults interpret and criticize the disparaging innuendo suggested by his or her (for the sake of simplicity, let us say "her") opponent's previous remarks (in this connection, see also Briggs 1993b); however, a more direct focus on audience members (as suggested by Solomon's postscript) is required to appreciate the importance of the audience in the reception of reflexive language. Audience members and readers may misinterpret, creatively resist, or simply ignore the subject positioning promoted by the author. Further, audience members and readers actively organize their attention to an event, shifting focus between sense perception, thoughts, feelings, bodily perceptions, and the various elements of the performance event. As Berger has suggested (1997, 1999), the organization of phenomena in experience plays a key role in the constitution of the subject, and here we show the importance of these interpretive dimensions of reflexivity for the aesthetics of performance. In our view, reflexive signs alone do not determine reflexive consciousness; reflexive consciousness comes about through a complex interplay between the performer's creative employment of the culture's expressive resources and the audience member's active reception of the performance. None of this, of course, is to argue for a return to the transcendent subject that is merely described by communication and exists independent of history or society. On the contrary, examining the dialectic of performance and interpretation in the constitution of the subject more firmly grounds the subject in history and society.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, and most important to the overall aims of this article, we hope to suggest new ways in which reflexivity is important for the aesthetics of performance. Performance theorists have tended to see reflexive language primarily as a device for connecting text to situated context (Butler 1992), indexing tradition (Foley 1992), or negotiating the performers' roles (Briggs 1993b). Other authors have suggested that the exchange of reflexive signs themselves may be the focus of aesthetic evaluation (Silverstein 1993:52, 54; Stone 1982:97–121). While these indexical mechanics and aesthetics are important, our main goal in this article is to show that the *reflexive metacommentary by which a performer signals her awareness of herself as a participant in an interaction—and by which*

she signals her awareness of the audience's attention to her—colors and informs all of the “primary” communication in the performance and plays a crucial role in the overall aesthetics of the event. Further, each culture, subculture, or participant has an aesthetic ideology of reflexivity—a specific set of ideas about the kinds of reflexive stances that are appropriate and desirable in a given type of performance event.

Such a perspective has affinities with Roman Jakobson's Prague school semiotics. In his “Closing Remarks” in *Style in Language* (1960), Jakobson argues that the communicative act is comprised of six distinct dimensions (or functions), one of which is metacommunication; all six dimensions occur at once, and while the relative importance of any one dimension may vary from situation to situation, the full meaning of any utterance is a gestalt (synthetic whole) of these various dimensions.<sup>7</sup> Like the framing devices Bauman identifies, implicit or explicit commentary on the performer's or audience's attention to themselves and to each other is one kind of information that is transmitted along Jakobson's metacommunicative dimension. Because the various dimensions of the communicative act make up an indivisible whole, such signaling of reflexive consciousness informs the overall aesthetic and rhetorical effects of the communication.

The dialectics of metacommunication and reflexive consciousness are endlessly rich and complex. Metacommunicative signals of reflexive consciousness may be foregrounded or backgrounded in the flow of interaction; they may be intentionally or unintentionally exchanged and may depict the participant's reflexive consciousness with varying amounts of honesty or deceit. And, as we suggested above, while reflexive signs may invoke reflexive consciousness, such signs are also actively interpreted, and their interpretation plays a key role in determining the meaning that is finally experienced. To gain a richer understanding of this situation, we must see that reflexive consciousness is not merely plentiful or even vital, but is in fact a *dimension* of experiences of interaction; unavoidable in performance, reflexive consciousness is present and active even in its absence and is locked in a complex dialectic with its expression. Bauman (1989) and Caton (1993) have both observed that one pathway to understanding reflexive consciousness can be secured through the writings of George Herbert Mead and the Chicago school of social psychology (1967). While Mead's writings are indeed important, phenomenological work on the subject and intersubjectivity can provide a different route to these insights.

### *The Body, the Subject, and Intersubjectivity in Husserl's “Fifth Cartesian Meditation”*

Taken as an object of serious consideration, the idea of experiencing an “other” is paradoxical and enigmatic. Our experiences seem, by definition, to be our own and to be personal. How can it be, and what does it mean to say, that I experience an “other” subject? This problem is a more general statement of what, in Martha B. Kendall's felicitous expression, is the primary paradox of language and of dialogue, “How can your words be in my head?” (personal communication, 1988). Such a paradox is both a central problematic and a sustaining phenomenon of the discipline of folklore. To understand one phenomenological approach to this problem, a small amount of background

is in order. Responding to difficulties in idealist philosophy, Edmund Husserl sought to overcome the sharp and worrisome distinction that past philosophers have drawn between experience and reality. To do so, he said, we must place an *epoché* (set of brackets) around any claims that a particular experience is subjective or objective and investigate the data of experience in an unprejudiced manner. When we return to experience in this way, Husserl suggested, we make a startling discovery that nothing has changed. Strictly as lived experience, the desk before me, for example, is a genuine other, an autonomous entity in no way subject to my whims. As a result, we never need to remove the phenomenological brackets. The world—as autonomous and subject to rational inquiry as we know it to be—is there in and for experience. This is not to say, of course, that I cannot misdescribe my experience or that one momentary experience of the world exhausts all of its complexity and possibilities. When we examine the world in experience, it is given to us in direct evidence that the world possesses endless contingent details. That there is a world, however, and that that world is there for experience, is given with certainty.

At first blush it would seem that such a philosophy, grounded radically in one's own experience, could never come to terms with the existence of others let alone provide insights into the reflexive awareness of one's self as a partner in an interaction. This serious concern—that phenomenology might be a kind of solipsism—is central to Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* and is explored at length in the well-known "Fifth Meditation" (1960:89–150). Later, existential phenomenologists took exception with elements of Husserl's discussion, and we will not take the time to recapitulate Husserl's dense and technical argument here.<sup>8</sup> While largely abandoned by Jean-Paul Sartre (1956), elements of Husserl's argument were carried over by Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1989). Interpreting Husserl in the existential spirit of Merleau-Ponty,<sup>9</sup> we will review ideas from Husserl's discussion of the body and space relevant to the problem of reflexivity.

Seeking a direct and unprejudiced inquiry based strictly on the givens of experience, Husserl says that if we are going to address the problem of the other, we must create a second epoché; within this second epoché all one can admit are experiences that are one's alone. When one applies this epoché, what Husserl calls the reduction to the "sphere of own-ness," one discovers that one's body is uniquely experienced as one's self. Explicit in his rejection of Cartesian mind/body dichotomies, Husserl observes that one experiences oneself, not solely as a consciousness that constitutes experience, but as an "empirical ego"; this "empirical ego" is referred to by Husserl in different places as an "animate organism" and is experienced as a "psycho-physical unity" (Hammond et al. 1991:213)—a body whose actions and responses are one's own. After elaborating what it means to experience one's self as a body in the world, Husserl explains that it is through our embodied nature that we understand the existence of others. When I see the body of another person, I have what Husserl calls an "analogical apperception"—an experience of that other body, not merely as object, but as an "other" subject. Apperception occurs in all instances in which someone recognizes a thing as one of a type, and, confusingly, it does *not* consist of reasoning by analogy, nor is it even a "thinking act" (1960:111). Husserl illustrates with the situation of a child learning about scissors; once the concept of "scissors" is assimilated, each later act of experiencing

an object such as scissors happens in a prereflective manner. The child grasps the basic sense of the concept of scissors (which we can roughly describe as a thing which uses opposable motion to cut), and, confronted with kitchen shears or any other double bladed cutter, the child constitutes them in experience as scissors. Apperception occurs in any experience of things as examples of a type, but the apperception of other subjects is unique. The type "subject" emerges from the most primordial level of our experience—the sphere of own-ness. While I recognize the individuality of my own subjectivity and the individuality of you as a subject, as subjects, your body and mine are inherently "paired" in experience. One implication of this idea is that the concept "subject" establishes the apperception of both "self" and "other," that the subject is not radically my own, but inherently social.<sup>10</sup> As a result, our awareness of others as subjects, and of ourselves as a subject in a social world, is at the very foundation of experience.<sup>11</sup>

Just as Husserl's account of the subject emerged from an examination of experiences of the body, Husserl's account of social interaction emerges from a discussion of the experience of space. Early in the "Fifth Meditation," Husserl explains that we experience the world as inherently intersubjective. When I look at a physical object, I directly experience the surfaces that face me; I do not, of course, experience the details of its back (the color and texture of the back of this desk, for example), but I am aware that the back is there and could be open to future viewing. While I cannot know the color, texture, or any other contingent details of the back of the desk without moving my body, I experience the fact that it has a back as I look at its front. In Husserl's terminology, the back of the desk is *presentiated* to me. Two important ideas stem from this analysis. First of all, the fact that the physical world admits other perspectives is important because it shows that the physical world is an intersubjective world. Built into my experience of the physical world is an awareness that it possesses surfaces and features that are beyond my immediate grasp but may become the focus of future experiences—experiences for myself at some other point in time or experiences for others situated at a different location in the same space. Second, the notion of presentiation applies not only to the other facets of physical objects, but to the experiences of other subjects. In the same way that my experience of the front face of the desk presentiates the existence of the back of the desk, so does the body of the other subject presentiate a realm of particular experiences with which I do not have direct access but that I know with certainty is there.<sup>12</sup>

Taken together, the analysis of the body and of space shows that experience is, at its base, social, and the complex dialectics of self and other that flow from this fact form the basis of our phenomenology of intersubjectivity and folklore performance. While I cannot know all the details of the other's experience, I do know that the performer is a subject in a world of subjects, and I have the potential to partially share some of her particular experiences. While there is a world of contingent facts about the other that I may not know, I *do* know that she is a subject in the world, that she experiences the world from a particular perspective in space, and that those experiences are never complete. In sum, I cannot know all the details of the other's experience, but I can know the most abstract structure of her subjectivity, and I have the potential to partially share her particular experiences. Though Husserl's insistence on the centrality of the subject

in philosophy may sound like older, problematic forms of idealism, his grounding of subjectivity in the body in the “Fifth Meditation” and Merleau-Ponty’s more elaborated body phenomenology (1989) serve to situate the subject in the physical and social world.

Moving from Husserl’s philosophy to more social scientific concepts, we can observe that with the awareness that the other is a subject comes the awareness that any of the other’s actions may be signs. These signs become part of the dialectic of intersubjectivity, facilitating or obfuscating the partial sharing of specific experience in the complex ways with which folklorists are so familiar. While two subjects can never completely share an experience, making connections between your specific experiences and mine—in Alfred Schutz’s celebrated terminology, *partial sharing* (1967)—is possible. Schutz’s massive *Phenomenology of the Social World* presents a systematic attempt to account for the dynamics of partial sharing; brilliant, and in some ways problematic, his analysis goes beyond the needs of the present article. Here we need only observe that between your experience and mine, concrete similarities and differences, reciprocities and linkages, and conjunctures and disjunctures develop.

Mediating between these general, phenomenological notions of subjectivity and experience and the various ways in which a particular subject may experience herself at any given moment are the factors of “attention” (the arrangement of phenomena in experience) and reflexivity.<sup>13</sup> In everyday experience, the subject is confronted by a world dense with phenomena. Numerous individual experiences vie for her attention, and the physical context that surrounds her exists as a kind of potential experience. Emotions, thoughts, sights, smells, tastes, and so on bombard the subject, and, at each moment, she organizes this motley of phenomena into a dynamic structure of foreground and background (Berger 1997, 1999). For example, as I (Berger) work on this paragraph, my thoughts are foregrounded while my typing hands and the sensation of hunger in my stomach are backgrounded. These varied phenomena form a gestalt, mutually informing one another in the same way that figure and ground do in painting. While only an expert meditator can manipulate the shape of experience willy nilly, all subjects have some control over the organization of attention. As I type, for example, I constantly focus my attention, now foregrounding my typing hands as I search for a rarely used key on the keyboard, now focusing on the upcoming sentence, now actively backgrounding the distraction of my hungry stomach.

Our ability to organize the phenomena of experience is crucial for the constitution of reflexive consciousness, and here we can begin to tie together the various threads of the discussion so far. Mead (1967) observes that in situations of effortless activity, experiences flow from one to the next with little or no awareness of ourselves or reflective guidance; when we confront a difficulty, we stop to think, and this linguistic flow of thoughts constitutes a reflexive “me,” distinct from the acting “I.” Connecting the contemporary analysis of language to Mead’s classic model, Steve Caton has observed that the “me” of reflexive consciousness is an effect of reflexive language. Reflexive language in thought (such as, “I am hungry; I should stop working and have lunch”) does not merely describe but actually constitutes the subject, and greater or lesser amounts of explicitness in reflexive language map to a more foregrounded or backgrounded subjectivity (Berger 1999; Caton 1993). We suggest, however, that it is not

only reflexive language that determines this subject positioning. All actors have the ability to actively organize the elements of their experience, and performers (verbal artists, musicians, *passeggiata* [ritual promenade] participants) are particularly adept at these skills. As we illustrate below, good musicians know how to control the “talking voice inside the head,” quieting reflexive thought and losing themselves in the flow of sound or invoking that reflexive voice to solve problems on stage. As argued above, while the performer’s use of reflexive language may inform the constitution of the audience’s reflexive consciousness, nonverbal communication and the audience’s active interpretation also play key roles in such a performance situation.

All of this leads to the threshold of our analysis of the foundational role of reflexivity in the aesthetics of performance. As we have tried to show in our discussion of performance theory, the participant’s experience of reflexive consciousness and subjectivity emerges from a complex dialectic of “text” (verbal and nonverbal reflexive signs, expressive resources available to the participants) and interpretation (the organization of attention and other processes that constitute the experience of the text). Husserl’s phenomenology is important for the analysis of performance because it reveals that the idea of the subject is necessary for the constitution of both the self and the other and that the subject establishes the very possibility of interaction. If this is true, then reflexivity is not an optional accompaniment to interaction, but a *dimension* of interaction, active even in its absence, and any kind of reflexivity, even the absence of reflexivity, will inform the aesthetics of performance. Before we examine the role of reflexivity in the aesthetics of performance, it will be useful to explore the ways in which the participants in performance events organize the elements of their experience and their attention to one another. Such organization is not capriciously individual; as a kind of social practice, it is both informed by situated and larger social contexts and actively achieved. We use the term *organization of phenomena* to refer to the culturally specific ways in which the participant of a performance event arranges the various elements in her experience. We use the term *organization of attention in an event* to refer to the typical patterns of partial sharing among the participants in a performance event and *ideology of attention* to refer to ideas about partial sharing that participants employ there. Some examples from Berger’s research (1997, 1999) illustrate these concepts.

### *The Social Organization of Attention in Metal, Rock, and Jazz*

In ongoing fieldwork, Berger has explored the onstage experiences of four groups of musicians in northeast Ohio: Cleveland’s African American jazz musicians, largely in their thirties, whose styles are related to the post-bop jazz of players such as McCoy Tyner or Chic Corea; Akron’s European American jazz musicians, largely in their forties and fifties, whose styles are related to the post-bop jazz of George Shearing or the Modern Jazz Quartet; Cleveland’s commercial hard rockers, largely in their twenties, whose styles are related to those of bands like Def Leppard or Poison; and Akron’s underground heavy metal musicians, also largely in their twenties, whose styles range from those of well-known metal bands like Pantera to those of death metal bands like Morbid Angel. For ease of expression, we use the capitalized term *Rock* to refer collectively to the commercial rock and metal scenes and the capitalized *Jazz* to refer collectively

to the two jazz scenes. This usage refers specifically to these two pairs of scenes in northeast Ohio and is not intended to indicate rock or jazz in general.

Like all phenomenological ethnographers, Berger sought to richly share the experiences of his research participants and to gain insights into the social processes through which those experiences are constituted. One stage of the inquiry focused on how the participants arrange the various elements in their experience. In performance the musician is presented with an enormously wide range of phenomena—the sound of the instrument(s), the sounds of the other players, the audience, bodily sensations, thoughts, feelings, fantasies, and so on. If the performance is to be successful, these phenomena cannot merely emerge in experience but must be organized; that organization is profoundly informed by the situated context of performance and the musician's immediate musical goals, as well as other, larger social projects—in short, the practical world of the music scene.

Discussing the organization of phenomena in experience with the musicians, a wealth of information emerged, and here we only focus on those data immediately relevant to our theoretical concerns. As Mead observed (1967; see also Schutz 1976:64), the organization of experience is practical, and, comparing all of the musicians, certain commonalities were clear. For example, all of the musicians say that, in an ideal performance, the sound of the music inhabits the foreground of their experience. In most performances, however, problems arise and, when they do, other phenomena vie for the center of attention. For example, all of the musicians say that, ideally, the physical body should lurk in the background of experience; only when the player is physically exhausted or incapable of performing a desired part does the body become foregrounded. Across the scenes, those players who “push the envelope” of their bodily capacity are the ones most likely to be aware of their bodies in performance. For example, the heavy metal drummers explain that long passages of 16th notes on the bass drums can be a tough workout for the legs; when playing a particularly demanding passage toward the end of a performance, the drummer's feet and calves may get tired, and these aching limbs inevitably steal into the center of the player's experience. Similarly, Jazz pianists explain that they are constantly pushing the limits of the physical technique; if their fingers feel weak or stiff, they become focally aware of their hands and are forced to adjust their improvisations to compensate.

While some problems in performance are common to all the musicians most are specific to each scene as are the techniques of organizing attention that the musicians employ to correct them. With the cheap amplification found at Rock bars, for example, the Rockers often have a hard time hearing the other musicians in the band. The drummer's playing, however, is almost always audible on stage, and the nondrummer Rock musicians focus on the drums to coordinate their performance with that of the inaudible band members. Following the drummer's tempo and using the drum parts to guide them through the song's form, the Rockers use their drummer as an implicit conductor and frequently supplement this conducting by conjuring in imagination the musical lines that are absent in perception. While audibility is a far less frequent concern for the Jazz musicians, occasionally the achievement of basic coordinations with the other musicians becomes an issue. Ideally, all of the members of the band agree on the chord changes and have synchronized their tempi; in such a situation, each player's

attention is free to flit effortlessly among the elements of the band's sound, now foregrounding one instrument, now the next. Occasionally, however, the chord changes, tempo, or voice leading become problematic. When this happens, the Jazz musicians must actively manage their experiences. For example, Jazz bassists and drummers feel a special responsibility to maintain a constant and swinging tempo; if they detect a problem, bassists and drummers will "lock in" on one another, mating the sound of their own instrument with that of their partner and holding the two in the center of their attention to correct the rhythmic difficulty. Such a technique of organizing attention is basic to Jazz but is used only sporadically in Rock. In sum, while each music scene has its own set of typical problems and techniques of attention, the fact of attending to the problematic is true of all scenes.

Some features of the organization of attention, however, cannot be captured under such a universal rubric, and this fact speaks to larger questions about the nature of the subject. For example, the Akron jazzers, the commercial hard rockers, and the metalheads all explain that their onstage experience is ideally composed of an effortless flow of sound and that they would actively reflect on the performance only if a problem presented itself. Any kind of thinking that did not solve a problem on the bandstand is treated as a distraction, and players from these three scenes make efforts to quiet such thoughts or move them to the margins of experiences. But this was not true for the Cleveland jazzers. In ways similar to the players from the other scenes, these musicians foreground the musical sound and actively reflect if there is a problem on the bandstand. But unlike the players from the other scenes, however, the Cleveland jazzers reflect even when there are no immediate problems. On an ideal night these players may accompany their effortless flows of perception and performance with an effortless flow of thoughts; such thoughts may map out the overall form of the solo or plan chord substitutions, rhythmic superimpositions, instrumental techniques, or other devices. The players say that while they enjoy "getting lost" in the music, and while flows of reflection should never occur at the expense of attention to the sound, effortless, creative reflection can make for a great performance and is a pleasure in itself. Such reflective practices are deeply influenced by the larger "art music" ideology that is common in the Cleveland jazz scene but are anathema to the more romantic ideologies of the Rockers and Akron jazzers. Whether pro- or antireflective, musicians from all scenes agree that the organization of phenomena in experience has an active component. While Cleveland jazzers enjoy both reflective and nonreflective performances, they can exert a level of control over this reflection, quieting the flow of thoughts if they want a more direct performance and conjuring reflections if they fancy a more cerebral approach; similarly, the antireflective Akron jazzers and Rockers speak of actively silencing the reflective voice and "losing themselves" in the flow of sound.

These data bear powerfully on the question of the constitution of the subject. While the rhetorical structures of a text strongly inform the positioning of the subject, the participants' active management of reflection also plays a key role in their constitution of themselves as subjects. For example, the streams of reflective thought that accompany the musical perceptions of the Cleveland jazzers constitute a kind of reflective subject. While it is true that the constitution of the subject in this case is deeply informed by the art music ideology of contemporary progressive jazz, that constitution is

not determined or accomplished by the culture. On the contrary, it is the musician's achievement. In fact, the performer's agency in the constitution of the subject is manifested in several different ways and on several different time scales.

On the time scale of an individual performance, the Cleveland jazzers actively choose whether or not to "lose themselves" in the flow of sound or to accompany their performance with reflective thought. When they do choose to reflect during performance, those reflections rarely emerge effortlessly; instead, attention to reflective thought must be carefully and actively balanced against attention to the musical sound if the player is to achieve an effective performance. On the time scale of their overall musical careers, the Cleveland jazzers work hard to hone and develop their improvisatory skills. Endlessly rehearsing scales, arpeggios, rhythmic approaches, stock phrases, and other devices, these jazzers seek to have so profoundly assimilated the raw materials of improvisation that they may spontaneously spin out improvised parts or engage in reflection without having their reflective plans disrupt the flow of performance.<sup>14</sup> Finally, while the jazzers' attitudes toward reflection are deeply informed by larger social contexts, they are not the static product of an underlying art music ideology; across the span of their career, the jazzers' attitudes toward improvisation grow and develop, and players frequently assess and reassess their attitudes toward the role of reflection in improvisation. And even among the staunchly antireflective Akron jazzers, quelling the reflective voice is not a passive affair. On many nights, the Akron jazzers have to work to quiet the reflective voice, and some speak of learning to focus solely on the body and the sound as a lifelong project akin to meditation. In sum, we can see that the organization of phenomena in experience, and thus the constitution of the subject, are both actively achieved by the participant and profoundly informed by the participant's culture.<sup>15</sup>

All of this leads us to the issue of the player's attention to the listeners and the larger patterns of partial sharing that take place between the performers and the audience members. Distinctions between Rock and Jazz are most acute in these interactions. In interviews, the Rockers are adamant about the importance of attending to the crowd. Their goal in performance, they say, is to *compel* the audience's attention, to draw them away from the distractions of the bar, the pool table, or their everyday concerns and command the focus of every eye and ear. An evening of commercial hard rock, for example, is more an elaborate stage show than a simple concert. Set in the cavernous spaces of Cleveland's major nightclubs, such shows involve elaborate props, dazzling lights, and, on occasion, live pyrotechnic displays. Mostly in their teens and twenties, audiences of several hundred gather at these performances to court and flirt, enjoy the show, and rub shoulders with musicians they believe are poised for stardom. Part Chippendale dancer, part burlesque clown, the commercial hard rockers deploy flashy costumes, catchy melodies, pounding rhythms, richly distorted guitar timbres, and goofy or macho stage antics in an ongoing attempt to draw the audience into the show. Interactive techniques play a key role as well, and the commercial hard rockers describe how eye contact, facial gestures, sing-along sections, and various kinds of stage banter invite audience response and pull the listeners into the performance. Not merely attentive to the crowd, these musicians are also aware of the crowd's attention to them, and they constantly monitor the crowd's response level to "get a fix" on how their antics

are invoking the experiences of the listeners. While the metalheads employ different imagery in their stage persona, they too attend to the crowd and seek to draw audience members into the performance. Compulsion, achieved with various amounts of success by different performers on different nights, is the ideology of attention in the commercial hard rock and metal scenes. Such an ideology is shared by Rock listeners as well, and most Rock fans go to shows seeking to be “swept away” by the music.

The organization of attention between audience and performer in Rock events displays a dynamic typical of feedback loops. On a good night the musicians and the audience members attend to one another in a powerful fashion; their mutual attention and interactive exchanges spur each other to ever more intense partial sharing and enjoyment. Conversely, Rock performers who fail to attend to and interact with the crowd receive a distracted or apathetic response, which in turn may demoralize the musicians and further limit their engagement with the music and the crowd. The dynamics of attention in Rock performances exist in the space defined by these poles of either complete engagement or complete disengagement, and, across the span of a performance, the level of mutual attention constantly varies. It is important to keep in mind here that the audience members’ active interpretations play a key role in these dynamics. While the best Rock band may be able to compel the attention of even the most hostile and distracted audience members, listeners also have the ability to decide whether or not to attend to the music. Even if the band makes every effort to engage the crowd, a display of disattention by particular crowd members sometimes can serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy, dissuading other crowd members from engaging with a failing band. In fact, the crowd’s reflexive monitoring of their own engagement is the primary yardstick by which listeners and critics rate Rock bands. While some fans and critics judge bands by specific musical techniques, performances are primarily deemed successful or unsuccessful on the basis of whether the band is able to compel the audience’s attention, pulling them irresistibly into the flow of the music and giving them their money’s worth.

In contrast, the ideology of attention for nightclub Jazz is one of *invitation*. Discussing audience–performer issues, the Jazzers say that they enjoy an attentive crowd, but the patrons of the clubs where they play rarely come just to listen to the band. Because of this the musicians must focus on the music, creating sounds that invite the patrons’ attentions. If the crowd listens to the music, good; if the crowd ignores the performance, the players simply accept this disattention. While a few of the Akron musicians are careful to quote the composed melody during improvisation and use other techniques to make their playing accessible to the listeners, all of the Jazzers agree that actively drawing the crowd into the music is difficult and undesirable. Some say that jazz improvisation is so demanding they cannot play their best if they have to focus on the audience and try to make them listen; others say that if the crowd does not make the effort to listen, why should they expend effort trying to draw them in? Led by this ideology of invitation, the Jazzers explain that, on an ideal night, musical sound is situated in the foreground of the experience, and an attentive audience rests in the defining background; lurking just outside the center of attention, an appreciative crowd shades the focal sounds with excitement in the same way that a dull headache rests on the margins of a bad day, shading all of the foregrounded experiences with a quality of

annoyance. On most nights, however, the players are aware that few people are listening, but the chatter of the drinkers and the bustle from the bar are seen as distractions to be ignored.

The nightclub audience's ideology of attention cogs into that of the Jazz musicians. Although some Ohio jazz fans go to nightclubs with the expressed intent of listening to the music, most of the patrons of the nightclubs where Berger's research took place attend to the musicians only sporadically. For most of the night, the music lurks in the background of their experience and sets a mood. The ideologies of the Jazzers and their audiences produce an organization of attention in the event that has greatly differing dynamics from those found in Rock. While attentive crowds can inspire the players, many great Jazz performances have occurred in empty bars or while an oblivious crowd drinks and chats. On most nights, the partial sharing of experience for Jazzers is intense among the musicians on the bandstand and among each individual group of chatting patrons; the crowd as a whole serves as a background in the performers' experiences, while the band and the other patrons in the bar serve as a background for each individual group of chatting drinkers. Like the organization of phenomena in experience, the larger patterns of attention and partial sharing in an event emerge as a dialectic of social context and agency, informed by the practical contingencies of the performance, larger cultural beliefs about the uses of music, and the participant's own creative agency.<sup>16</sup>

### *The Reflexive Dimension of Experiences of Interaction and the Aesthetics of Reflexivity*

The issues examined in the last section are significant for performance theory and the larger interests of this article because they show that the organization of experience is neither capriciously individual nor merely peripheral to expressive behavior; on the contrary, the effective organization of experience is a necessary condition of interaction in general, and performance in particular. Within this area the participant's reflexive attention to herself and metacommunicative signaling of that attention forms a specific set of subproblems. Participants in a performance do not simply arrange the elements of their experience and attend or disattend to the others in the event. On the contrary, *the participant may be aware of herself as the focus of another's attention, and that participant may partially share how her actions are emerging in the experience of the others*; as phenomena, awareness of this type may be foregrounded or backgrounded in experience and metacommunicatively signaled in a variety of ways. Such reflexive consciousness and metacommunicative signaling play a key role in the aesthetics of performance. We can gain insights into this process by returning briefly to the metal, rock, and jazz data. As they monitor the audience's attention, for example, the Rockers do not merely share with the crowd the meanings of the words and the emotions portrayed by the music; the players are also partially aware of the intensity and affective tenor with which the crowd is listening to them (for example, distracted appreciation or riveted disgust). We use the term *reflexive dimension of experiences of interaction* to refer to a performer's or audience member's awareness of herself as a participant in an interaction, her awareness of the other's attention toward her, and any additional higher-order reflexive awareness that is present in the experience.

The dialectics of this reflexive consciousness and the participant's metacommunicative signaling of that consciousness are rich and complex. Such signaling may be intentional (when a rocker actively makes eye contact with a front row audience member to try engage her attention) or unintentional (when the same musician may inadvertently yawn during the hundredth performance of the same song); obvious in the flow of interaction (as when a derisive musician turns his back to a listening crowd), subtly stated (as when a jazz drummer plays a bossa nova flavored phrase to acknowledge the attention of a Latin music fan in the club), or implicit (as when a piano player drops his dynamic level during a bass solo); an honest representation of the participant's attention (as in the rapt stares of an entranced audience member); or a dishonest representation (as when a tired rocker suppresses a yawn to obscure her boredom).

However they relate to a performer's actual awareness, metacommunicative signals of the performer's reflexive consciousness play a key role in the audience's experience of the meaning of the performance, informing all of the other elements of the communication in a holistic fashion reminiscent of that described by Jakobson in his analysis of language functions (1960:11). Rock guitar players explain, for example, that creating a good performance is not only a question of playing the right songs or having a good light show; to entertain the crowd, they say, the musicians must display the fact that they are having a good time, engaging with the music, and attending to the crowd. Such metacommunicative expressions of reflexive awareness form a gestalt with the other elements of the performance, infusing them with affect and meaning. In rock guitar technique, subtleties of vibrato, pick attack, and string bending are taken as signs of the performer's engagement; such techniques in a guitar solo infuse that solo with a quality of energy and vitality. Audiences interpret weak vibrato, dull attack, and inaccurate bends as a sign of the guitarist's distraction, and such metacommunicative signaling informs the listener's overall experience of the solo, making dull a performance of even the most stunningly composed melody. Further, even those soloists who are able to provide nuanced vibrati, strong attacks, and accurate bends in a distracted state must accompany their solos with facial expressions, gestures, stage antics, and other metacommunicative signals that indicate their engagement with the music. Such signaling is the mark of a professional. Jeff Johnston, a stalwart of the Cleveland rock scene, explains to Berger that the musician is paid to excite the crowd; to do the job, rock musicians must display intense engagement regardless of whether or not they enjoy the music or can even hear their instruments above the sound of the other performers. Regardless of the quality of the composition or the techniques used, a bored and distracted stage demeanor colors the audience's interpretation and ruins the aesthetic and rhetorical effect of the performance.

While performance is experienced as a gestalt of metacommunicative signs and the other expressions in the event, audiences may constitute such gestalts in a variety of ways. Alternative rock listeners, for example, relentlessly criticize commercial hard rock musicians for their facial expressions, bodily gestures, and instrumental techniques. While the commercial hard rockers feel that such metacommunicative signaling displays deep involvement with the music, the alternative fans believe that such exaggerated signaling reflects an obnoxious self-consciousness rather than an intense involvement with the music. Further, while metacommunicative signals play a key role

in positioning the subject, the mere existence of these signs—the mere fact of textuality itself—does not guarantee subject positioning; such signals are actively employed by the performers and actively interpreted by the audience. In the rock data, for example, the high decibel levels, pyrotechnics, bodily gestures, flashy costumes, and displays of virtuosity are all intended to serve a positioning function—to literally transform the variously drinking, flirting, and chatting bar patrons into a music audience. But this transformation is not guaranteed by the fact of performance. While the best rock bands on their best nights may be able to fully compel the crowd's attention, the ability to do this only comes about through great effort and must be achieved anew in each performance. Further, as we have shown, bar patrons actively interpret rock performances—ignoring the band if they are involved in a serious conversation, foregrounding mistakes and backgrounding positive features of the performance if they choose to be difficult, or actively silencing the critical voice and losing themselves in the music if they wish to support the band.

Finally, such signaling and interpretation may be highly multilayered. For example, the angst-ridden singer/songwriter who stares into a rapt crowd with an expressionless visage signals "I know you are listening, but I am singing these songs for myself and do not care about your attention"; such multilayered metacommunication colors the confessional narratives and meandering melodies in the foreground of the crowd's experience and is crucial to the overall aesthetic effect of the performance. Like the "never-ending spiral" to which Rex Stout alludes in the first epigraph of this article, reflexive signals and reflexive interpretations have a nearly infinite potential for layering and self-reference.

The examples used so far might suggest that reflexive signaling is only important in popular culture or in situations where the performer's style and persona are foregrounded, but this is not the case. Reflexivity is crucial for all types of performance. Metacommunicative signaling may be embedded in the "text" (as in the vibrato and pick attack of the guitar solo), presented in accompanying communication (such as facial gestures, kinesics, or proxemics), or both.<sup>17</sup> At certain moments in the history of Western art music, for example, audience members and performers were expected to attend to the musical sound and disattend to gesture, kinesics, costume, and so on. Although signals of the performer's reflexive consciousness were primarily embedded in the musical sound (timbre, embellishment, dynamic, tempo, and so on), such signaling was still plentiful. Further, adjectives used to describe the performer's reflexive awareness were (and are) omnipresent in the vocabulary of the classical music critic. It is common, for example, in that discourse to refer to a pianist's ornamentation or a singer's timbre as "self-conscious," "intimate," or "precious." And while muted gestures and facial expressions may be taken for granted in performance and highly backgrounded in the audience's experience, they are still crucial for the participants' experiences of the event.

The importance of reflexivity for all types of performance leads us back to the notion of the phenomenology of intersubjectivity and the central point of this discussion: Reflexive consciousness and metacommunication about that consciousness are not optional accompaniments to interaction; all experiences of interaction with an other—even the most naive, nonreflexive interactions—have a reflexive dimension. This reflexive

dimension is inherent in the very notion of subjectivity. Husserl's examination of the body shows that the concept of the subject is necessary for our awareness of both self and other, that self and other are two examples of this larger, more basic notion. Husserl's discussion of space also shows that, because of the richness of perception, our experience of objects in the immediate physical environment directly implies the possibility of other subjectivities—our own future subjectivity and the subjectivity of others; this richness secures the very possibility of intersubjectivity and social interaction. The notion of interaction implies that the participants have a mutual orientation toward each other's experience; as a result, when two people (Tina and Tom) interact, Tina's participation in the interaction implies her awareness of herself as a subject and her awareness of Tom as another subject attending to her. In other words, the very definition of interaction entails that each subject at least has the *potential* to be aware of how she is emerging in the other's experience. Because the awareness of the other's experience is the necessary condition for interaction to occur at all, reflexive awareness is a dimension of all experiences of interaction, not an optional accompaniment, and the apparent absence of reflexivity is merely a type of reflexivity. In situations where I am oblivious to how I emerge in your experience, my failure to be mindful of your attention to me is not an escape from the reflexive dimension but a position within it. The bore who blathers on, even when her interlocutor is clearly dozing, has not transcended the reflexive dimension but simply found an unfortunate place in its continuum. Likewise, the rocker who fails to display engagement with the music and awareness of the audience has not escaped the reflexive continuum because the very (apparent) absence of reflexivity informs the audience's experience of the event. Just as the spatial dimensions of height, width, and length are irreducible to one another and are necessary for providing a full description of the location of any physical object, all interaction (and, therefore, all performance) involves a reflexive dimension that is irreducible to the other dimensions and must be accounted for if we wish to fully describe any given interaction.

These ideas are important to performance in several ways. Like much theoretical work on expressive culture, this discussion has sought to provide ethnographers with intellectual tools necessary for achieving richer insights into the experiences of their research participants. We hope that ethnographers of performance, understanding reflexivity in the way we have suggested here, will attend to the subtle and pervasive ways that reflexive consciousness and metacommunicative signaling inform performance. None of this is to suggest that performance is merely about the participants' attention to one another. Performance has "content" beyond mere reflexive signaling. (In fact, the hallmark of preciously hyper-reflexive art is that it, like the insular relationship described by Joe Jackson in the second epigraph of this article, seems to be about nothing more than endless self-reference.) The point of our discussion of Husserl has been to show that one's awareness of oneself as a partner in an interaction and one's orientation toward the other's experience are constitutive of interaction; as a result, reflexivity is present in all performances, even the most text-centered or unselfconscious, and is crucial for the overall aesthetics of performance. But while reflexivity is a universal feature of performance, attitudes toward reflexivity in performance vary greatly. Each culture, subculture, and event participant has an aesthetic of reflexivity, a set of ideas that dictate

the desiderata of reflexive consciousness and its metacommunicative signaling in performance. A brief description of Del Negro's research (1999) on the Italian passeggiata illustrates how these ideas may be useful in the analysis of performance.

### *The Aesthetics of Reflexivity in the Ritual Promenade of Central Italy*

Del Negro's ongoing research focuses on Sasso,<sup>18</sup> a rapidly industrializing town of 3,000 people on Italy's Adriatic coast. In the local view, Sasso has been seen as a cosmopolitan village with close affinities to the nearby coastal centers. The townsfolk affectionately call it *la piccola Parigi dell' Abruzzo* (the little Paris of the Abruzzo) and point to its attractive *piazza* (downtown area) and well-known passeggiata as a sign of the town's *civiltà* (civility). More than a source of local identity, the passeggiata serves as the main occasion for public sociability and expressivity in the town. Set in the lively, cinematic atmosphere of the piazza, the passeggiata involves an array of greetings, glances, gestures, and costumes that intertwine to create a richly textured canvas of meanings (Silverman 1975). The main activity of the event is strolling, and on summer evenings and weekend afternoons a cross-section of the population descends into the piazza to pace their *vasche* (laps or circuits) up and down Vittorio Emanuele, the town's main street (*corso*). While the term *passeggiata* literally means "promenade" and specifically refers to the period of piazza strolling between 5:30 and 8:00 p.m., Sassani often use it as a broad concept to refer to any kind of leisure or play. The weekday passeggiata announces the end of the work day and serves as a moment of shared public culture before the private family meal. A condensed version of the passeggiata occurs after church on Sunday, during which families, kin groups, and factions of the local political elites walk together, often strolling arm in arm, and dominate *il corso*.

The ideology of attention in the passeggiata is one of spatially organized, interactive scrutiny, and a variety of beliefs and practices inform the typical patterns of organizing phenomena in experience that the participants employ. While Sassani view the entire event as a performance, townsfolk can frame their actions as more or less performative by their choice of clothing and the location of their strolling on the street. Maximally performative participants "dress to the nines" and stroll down the center of the street, while those who desire less public attention walk along the side of *il corso*. Participants who choose to watch the proceedings are largely segregated by gender, with the men viewing the event from the sidewalk bars and the older women and widows observing from terraces and stoops. Dress and comportment are carefully monitored, and while those observing from the bars and porches are not considered to be promenading, to even appear in the piazza between 5:30 and 8:00 p.m. is to submit oneself to a sophisticated aesthetic of public performance and scrutiny. In interviews Sassani explain that the good stroller has upright posture and a forward-oriented gaze; sideward glances are considered to be bad form, especially for young women. As a result of these shared ideas about behavior, the focus of the stroller's attention constantly shifts from person to person in the oncoming stream of promenading townsfolk. Like the sound of a car radio in the experience of a sight-seeing driver, thoughts about the other stroller's performances and the conversation of one's immediate strolling companions rest in the near background of the stroller's experience. In the more distant background, but no

less important, are those Sassani walking on the side of the street or sitting on the porches and in the bars. Their presence in the piazza and their careful attention to the event informs the experiences of those in the center of the street, coloring those experiences with energy and transforming the simple act of walking into a performance. The observers focus on the ongoing parade of strollers, now admiring Paolo's new jacket, now noting Maria's flirtatious glance. The commentary of one's immediate companions rests just off the center of attention, while a background awareness of the performance as a performance constitutes the very possibility of the event.

The organization of attention in the *passeggiata* event that flows from these ideas and practices is rich and complex. As in the Rock events, the partial sharing among the participants displays the dynamics of a feedback loop. On the best nights in the piazza, the gaiety and grace of each participant's display is reflected back to her in the admiring gazes of the other strollers, amplifying both her and their enjoyment, making the event come alive. On slow nights, the paucity of other strollers to see and by whom to be seen limits the performative potential of even the most elegant Sassani. Unlike the participants in the Rock events, however, most of the *passeggiata* participants are both performers and audience members, with the greatest attention focused on the participants in the center of the street. As a result, partial sharing is focal and bidirectional among the numerous strollers walking along the center of *il corso*. Partial sharing between the street crowd and the sidewalk crowd is also interactive, with the strollers in the center and the observers on the margins of both the physical and the phenomenal space.

In a highly interactive event such as this, seeing and being seen are significant, ongoing activities; indeed, they are the very point of the event. The manner in which a stroller looks at others signals her attention to them; acknowledging the attention of others is not merely a feature of the interactive mechanics of the event. On the contrary, the style with which these practices of observation and signaling is achieved is one of the primary aesthetic criteria by which performance is judged. In the experience of the other participants, a stroller's metacommunicative signaling of her reflexive consciousness forms a gestalt with her clothing, coif, and gait, and informs the overall aesthetic effect she generates. To gain insight into this process, Del Negro videotaped examples of the event and conducted feedback interviews about those tapes with the townsfolk. In the interviews, the concept of *disinvoltura* (poise or ease of manners) emerged as one of the main aesthetic standards by which performance is judged; in fact, *disinvoltura* is, at least partially, an aesthetic of reflexivity. During the event, the criteria of *disinvoltura* is most strictly applied to the maximally performative participants—those strolling in the center of the street or wearing especially fine clothing. To achieve *disinvoltura* the performer must acknowledge that she is performing and that others are paying attention to the performance without drawing undue attention to either fact.

The concept is best illustrated by negative example. In the feedback interviews, a woman stroller was sharply criticized by all of the interviewees. Parading down the center of the street in a skirt, sweater, blazer, and pumps, her proud, mechanical gait marked her walking as a very self-conscious performance. At the same time, she conspicuously failed to make eye contact or greet passersby, a fact that the interviewees interpreted as active and ostentatious disattention to others. As a result, her walk performed

contradictory messages—"I am performing, pay attention" at the same time as "I don't see you; I am alone on il corso." This metacommunicative dissonance is experienced as rudeness and haughtiness, the opposite of *disinvoltura*. While this stroller did not exhibit disheveled hair, clashing accessories, or an unsightly slouch, her metacommunicative signaling of her excessive awareness of herself as a performer colored her overall performance and produced a display that drew the ire of Del Negro's respondents.

This example involves very obvious metacommunication, but unintentional meta-communication by a performer may also play a key role in the observer's experience of performance. In another piece of footage, a woman in her twenties, whom we shall call the "distracted walker," promenades down the center of the street in a beige, fine quality, tailored suit. As she walks along, however, this stroller constantly glances from left to right in a bored fashion, as if searching for a person in the crowd. Though her dress is impeccable, she completely fails to achieve *disinvoltura*. Her clothes and location in the street frame her behavior as a performance and call out for the other participants' attention; however, her unconcealed distraction tells the audience that we are not appearing in her experience. She could eliminate this faux pas in one of two ways. If she strolled on the side of the street or the sidewalk she would no longer attract the critical attention of others and would be free to search for her friend. In so doing, she would not achieve *disinvoltura*—this term is usually reserved for those in full performance mode—but neither would she *fare una brutta figura* (cut a poor figure) and draw opprobrium from the crowd. If she wishes to stay in the center of the street, she must keep her head forward, gracefully acknowledge the attention her performance prompts, and glance about for her friend with greater subtlety. But calling out for the attention of all and sundry and clearly disattending to the event, this stroller cannot achieve *disinvoltura*, no matter how fine her tailored suit or how well coiffed her hair. Independent of her distraction, or even because of it, this women's dress would almost certainly be considered stylish by onlookers at a jazz nightclub in Akron, Ohio. But in an event dominated by an aesthetic of *disinvoltura*, such a performance was widely seen as a failure.<sup>19</sup> With respect to our earlier theoretical analysis, it is worth noting that it is exactly this stroller's *failure* to achieve a reflexive awareness of herself as a participant—the absence of the accepted kind of reflexivity—that transforms the performance into a failure. The reflexive dimension of performance cannot be transcended.

The aesthetics of reflexivity suggested by these examples is deeply informed by the larger ideas about gender in central Italian society, and the politics of the *passaggiata* is fraught with power relations and contradictions. As Deborah Kapchan has argued (1994; see also Del Negro and Berger 2001), it is not uncommon in world cultures for posture to be given a moral value. The Sassani proscription against glancing to the side, for example, is taught to girls from a young age and explained in terms of the biblical injunction to *fare la strada diritta* (walk the straight path). Unconcealed sideward glances are interpreted as sexually suggestive, as if the woman in question were looking for sexual partners, and those women who promenade with a straight posture and literally "walk the straight path" are seen as chaste and proper. While women's performances are regulated by an almost panoptic public scrutiny, some female participants actively contradict the conventions of the event, and others use those conventions to explore and even resist prevailing ideas about gender and local identity. For example, a few

young women—dressed in short skirts and low-cut tops and glancing about flirtatiously—openly disregard the norms of *passeggiata* performance and are routinely criticized for their display. In a rather different vein a number of middle-aged, professional women actively co-opt the local value of cosmopolitanism to garner for themselves an image of power and respectability. Attired in markedly conservative designer clothing, these women use fashion to reference both the urbane sophistication so highly valued in the town and their own status as bourgeois professionals; in so doing, they earn for themselves a measure of respect outside of the traditional roles of debutante, wife, or mother. While their demeanor and comportment conform to a fairly standard version of Sassani *disinvoltura*, their display of respectability is so potent that they are free to comment on the displays of other performers with an openness that would be unacceptable for most *passeggiata* participants. Our final example goes beyond these relatively straightforward dynamics and illustrates how one local *passeggiata* participant creatively manipulates local ideas about gender, cosmopolitanism, comportment, and reflexivity to achieve a subtle, multilayered performance that is interpreted in a variety of different ways by local observers.

A popular woman in her early twenties, Rosa Di Roma is well known throughout the town for her unconventional clothing and style. While she sometimes wears short skirts, her *passeggiata* performances are not especially sexualized, and she is best known in the piazza for her heavy, thick-soled Jean-Paul Gauthier shoes and the sharp contrast of her naturally pale complexion with her raven-dyed hair and black, Cher-inspired eye liner. A conventional top, jacket, and haircut round out her look. Such elements of style make a statement in themselves; while the shoes, eye liner, and hair color reference the contemporary and assertive fashions of Rome or Milan, her unexceptional clothing downplays the significance of style, suggesting a cooler attitude to the event and the high value the town places on it. But the clothing never appears in the *passeggiata* by itself, and the metacommunicative signals that accompany the performance color and transform the larger aesthetic effect generated by Rosa's strolling. An infrequent participant in the *passeggiata*, Rosa does not achieve *disinvoltura* in the conventional sense. While she fails to acknowledge the passersby in the traditional manner, she is not oblivious to her surroundings in the way the distracted walker is. Instead, her gaze registers the fact that others are watching but communicates neither anxious concern for the others' reactions nor haughty disdain for their attention. Her reactions to the other strollers' performances are equally bland, betraying neither pleasure nor disgust. In sum, Rosa is indifferent to the attentions and the performances of others.

The interpretations of this multifaceted display vary. Many traditional Sassani see Rosa as a clown. While designer clothes are popular on the *passeggiata*, Chanel suits and tailored outfits are the styles that appeal to the more conservative townsfolk. Though her heavy shoes and retro-sixties eye liner may reference the fashionable styles of Italy's major cities, Rosa's detractors see her bored demeanor and un presupposing top and skirt as a criticism of Sasso's cosmopolitan pretensions and restrictive sexual mores. More importantly, these participants see little distinction between Rosa's indifference and the haughty walker's failure to acknowledge others; both are affected displays and both fail to achieve *disinvoltura*. Others in the town, however, take a different view. While these residents see her shoes, eyeliner, and hair as a stylish, daring

statement, such objects would be meaningless without the proper comportment and the metacommunicative signals such comportment provides. Locating Rosa's indifferent gaze in the context of her occasional participation in the event and her common top and skirt, Rosa's supporters interpret her indifferent glance at face value—as a genuine reflection of indifference. From this perspective, Rosa is experienced as her own person, a cosmopolitan figure who enjoys style (the shoes, eyeliner, and so on) but is neither mired in the time-consuming rituals of shopping and pre-passeggiata primping and preening nor impressed by the displays of the other townsfolk. If Rosa completely ignored the presence of others or wore aggressively cheap or disheveled clothing, she would almost certainly lose these supporters and be interpreted as nothing more than an obnoxious *poseur*. But her combination of stylish and common clothing and the (perceived) effortlessness of her indifference serve as metacommunicative signals of a genuinely partial engagement with the event; such signals inform the overall aesthetic effect of her performance, producing a sense of stylishness that resists the more restrictive options of Chanel-suit respectability and come-hither sexuality. Such fine points of performance are, of course, open to interpretation, and it was for this reason that Rosa was frequently the topic of debate in the Sassani passeggiata.

### Conclusion

In all of these displays, we see clear examples of Bauman's 1989 notion of performance—heightened, aesthetic action oriented toward an other. Implicit in Bauman's definition is the fact that performance is not merely the creation of text or the transmission of signs; performance is grounded in an underlying awareness that both the self and the other are subjects, that both the self and other have the potential to experience the world and share their experiences with others. Mediating between this grounding potential, this fact of subjectivity, and the particular experiences of performers and audiences are the contingencies of each individual situation and the endless layers of sedimented social practice and belief. Ideologies of attention and reflexivity inform the participants' practices of organizing their experiences, partially sharing those experiences with others and signaling their awareness of themselves as actors and objects of attention. The aesthetic effects that emerge in this complex space are never simply the outcome of the referential meaning of the words, the sensual appeal of the sound, or the abstract structural relations of the parts, although such factors may indeed play a key role. For performance to occur at all, the participants must have an awareness of one another as experiencing subjects, and this fact constitutes the reflexive dimension of experiences of interaction, a continuum where even the absence of self-awareness is merely a kind of self-awareness. Such reflexive consciousness and its metacommunicative signaling interacts with the other elements of the performance to produce a complex whole, a gestalt in which each element informs the other and contributes to the overall aesthetic and rhetorical effect of the performance.

It is important to note that metacommunicative signals of the performer's reflexive consciousness are transmitted through both transitory and durable media. While gaze and comportment may reflect a participant's immediate attention to others, expensive clothing and carefully applied makeup indicate that the participant has thought about

the event beforehand and is committed to the act of display. In the distracted walker example, the very care that went into her choice of clothing serves as a signal of her concern for the attention of others, but it is the tension between her highly performative outfit and her highly distracted demeanor that produces the overall aesthetic effect. The various media of passeggiata performance range in their durability, from the physique (which is achieved through ongoing effort and remains relatively stable during a performance event), to wardrobe (also achieved through ongoing effort and only fully displayed across several performances), to the clothes and makeup donned for a particular occasion, to the ever-changing details of comportment, demeanor, and gaze. In fact, it is the interplay of metacommunicative signs of varying degrees of durability that constitutes the overall aesthetic effect of the performance.

The potential of durable media to indicate the participant's reflexive consciousness makes the ideas in this article applicable to the study of recorded music, foodways, literary studies, material culture, and other performances that do not take place in face-to-face interaction. The overproduced recording, the novel dense with allusion, the carved box covered with too much decoration all signal their creator's precious, reflexive attention to herself as one creating an object for the heightened, aesthetic attention of others. The rich dialectics we have explored throughout (the interplay of reflexive consciousness and its metacommunicative signaling, the dialogue of text and interpretation) apply in more mediated communication as well, but the nature of the media and the attendant generic and practical constraints bring about different dynamics of reflexivity. Take the example (partially inspired by the film *Big Night*) of an Italian food critic dining in an Italian American restaurant. Here, the pasta sauce lightly flavored with garlic and served especially for the critic not only signals the chef's awareness that the patron is a connoisseur, such flavoring also signals the chef's awareness that Italians feel that Italian Americans stereotype the Italian board as nothing more than a platform for garlic and olive oil. As in face-to-face interactions, interpretation plays a key role in the participants' aesthetic responses. Thus, the critic's experience of the sauce may be positively informed by the chef's implicit reflexive awareness, metacommunicatively signaled by the muted garlic; alternatively, the critic may also interpret the paucity of garlic as a self-conscious and ostentatious reference to Italian tastes. Further, the interaction of the chef and the patron is influenced by the dynamics of the media. Unlike the face-to-face interactions of the passeggiata or the Rock and Jazz performances, the more slowly mediated interaction of the kitchen-bound chef and dining critic allows feedback to occur only between courses or when the restaurant review appears in print. But like the face-to-face interactions, highly mediated interactions still involve partial sharing, reflexive consciousness, metacommunicative signaling, and a mutual orientation of the subjects to each other's experiences. It is beyond the scope of the current article to explore how the dynamics of media and genre impact on the aesthetics of reflexivity, but it is our hope that these concepts will be useful in the interpretation of all manner of folklore and expressive culture.

It is our argument that reflexivity is not some optional addition to oversophisticated and highly ironic performances but that, on the contrary, it is built into the very structure of intersubjectivity and is essential to the aesthetics of performance. Do you like Barbra Streisand's music? The question, we argue, does not turn solely on your evaluation

of her vocal quality, choice of repertoire, or arrangements. To us—and, we suspect, to most people—Streisand's performances are supremely self-aware; each note is accompanied by a reminder that she knows you are watching, that she wants you to share her emotions, and that she believes her performance deserves the greatest attention. If you find this reflexivity to be the justifiable honesty of a great artist or a refreshing feminist self-confidence, then you probably will like her music. If you prefer singers who generate the impression of intimacy, who engage in Bauman's denial of performance, you will probably find Streisand to be stagy and affected. We hope other scholars will find these concepts useful. We believe that folkloristic attention to the reflexive dimension of experience can substantially enrich our understanding of the aesthetics of performance. Our larger goal has been to further the central program of Bauman's performance theory—the grounding of folklore studies in the lived experiences of expressive culture.

### Notes

This article was based on a paper presented at panel entitled "Towards New Perspectives on *Verbal Art as Performance*: Contemporary Visions and Alternate Directions at the Twentieth Anniversary," presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society in Austin, Texas, on 31 October 1997. Jack Santino, Richard Bauman, and Keith Sawyer read earlier drafts of this article and we gratefully acknowledge their input and perspectives.

<sup>1</sup>Just as the aesthetic effect of a song or a story is difficult to describe, so too is the notion of "aesthetics" highly resistant to theoretical formulation. While it is well beyond the scope of this article to define this concept, we are able to articulate the kinds of experiences we have in mind when we use this word. Folklorists commonly talk about the "meaning" of folklore, and by *aesthetic* we (Berger and Del Negro) refer to an experience of meaning as it is enmeshed with some valual quality—affect, style, desirability, and so on. Such a definition includes the qualities traditionally associated with the word *aesthetic* (beauty and ugliness) but does not draw distinctions between the different domains of the valual; further, this definition emphasizes the links between those qualities and other dimensions of meaning in experience. By *aesthetic response* and *aesthetic effect*, we simply mean experiences of meaning-value constituted by a subject as she engages with expressive culture.

<sup>2</sup>Several factors have gone into our choice of examples for this article. Northeast Ohio and central Italy have been long-standing field sites for the authors and our long familiarity with these regions has provided a rich source of materials for discussion. More importantly, however, we have chosen to explore these highly divergent examples to emphasize the fact that reflexivity is central to all performance and communication, independent of the media and genres involved. Limited to neither music nor bodily display, popular culture nor traditional folk custom, reflexivity is an issue whenever an individual takes responsibility to display artistic competence.

<sup>3</sup>For a theoretical analysis of the role of reflexive language in subject positioning, see Silverstein's notion of indexical creativity (1976:34).

<sup>4</sup>Approaching performance theory from theater studies, Richard Schechner (1985) engages with these issues in a different fashion. Analogous to the folklorists' discussions of reflexive language is Schechner's sophisticated analyses of framing. Schechner's comparative work on theater and ritual illustrates how different types of framing constitute different types of "performance systems" (ritual, theater, historical reenactments, theme parks; 1985:95) and how the subtle meanings of performance are established through the use of multiple levels of framing (1985:92–93, 280). Focusing on space rather than language, his work shows how the physical setting in which an event occurs—the total environment of the "village" or "town" in historical reenactments, the traditional theater with its framing proscenium arch (1985:94–96), or the complex spaces of experimental theater (1985:266–270, 302–307)—establishes the performative frame.

Further, Schechner's interpretation of the idea of framed behavior has interesting implications for the problem of subject positioning. Building on the work of Gregory Bateson and Victor Turner, Schechner suggests that the performance frame is essentially unstable, producing a situation in which "multiple selves coexist in an unresolved dialectical tension" (1985:6). While Schechner does not explore the microlevel mechanisms of reflexive language and reflexive consciousness through which these selves interact, his emphasis on the ludic and flexible nature of subject positioning is consonant with the approaches we develop here.

<sup>5</sup>In fact, Lee's (1993) own stance on agency and subject positioning is ambivalent. In most of the article, Lee depicts the text or the rhetorical structures of language as the source of subject positioning. For example: "Frege's work allows us to see very clearly how a *genre of philosophical discourse* uses mathematics and logic as its guiding ideal for analysis and creates an image of subjectivity which is the product of both that ideal and the particular metalinguistic structures available in SAE [Standard Average European] for representing subjectivity" (1993:366, emphasis added). While Lee does not attend to the reader's role in the constitution of the subject, he does have passages in which he represents the authors' creative uses of language as the agent of the subject positioning. For example: "Both Frege and stream-of-consciousness writers create their views of subjectivity by utilizing the metalinguistic structures of SAE" (1993:390). Likewise, employing agentive terms to discuss Woolf's innovative use of rhetorical devices, Lee suggests that "in the hands of such artists as Virginia Woolf, the very act of narration and act of thought become intertwined and inseparable" (1993:389).

<sup>6</sup>This dialectical model of subject positioning is consistent with the notion of the *decentered*, as distinct from *deconstructed*, subject (see, for example, Giddens 1990:38–48), but we feel that this term has problematic implications. The subject only needs to be removed from the center of analysis in the intellectual context of a radical idealism that views the subject as the root of all meaning. In the contemporary academic scene, however, few scholars subscribe to such a radical individualism, and the term *decentered subject* (evocative, as it is, of deconstruction) has antihumanistic connotations that we feel run counter to the themes of agency and interpretation we wish to emphasize here.

<sup>7</sup>Jakobson's work has been fundamental to the analysis of reflexive language. See his discussion of shifters and his exploration of the reflexive relationships between message and code in the article "Shifters, Verbal Categories and the Russian Verb" (1971).

<sup>8</sup>While Sartre believed that Husserl was unable to save phenomenology from solipsism (1956), the problem of solipsism is tangential to our present concerns. Husserl's aim in the "Fifth Meditation" was not to construct an argument that would defend phenomenology against the charge of solipsism but to rigorously describe lived experience and discover in that experience the apodictic certainty that other subjects exist. Whether or not Husserl's descriptive method is a successful response to these criticisms, his descriptions of our experience of the other and the intersubjective nature of the world are valid in the terms that Husserl intended—as rigorous descriptions of experience. Our goal is not to address the problem of solipsism, but to use those descriptions as a grounding for the larger arguments about reflexivity and aesthetics that we develop.

<sup>9</sup>Such an interpretation follows what James Schmidt has called Merleau-Ponty's "existentialist Husserl" (1985:36). Throughout, our reading of Husserl has been informed and inspired by Hammond et al. (1991), as well as Schmidt (1985) and Kohák (1978).

<sup>10</sup>This is, of course, to arrive at Mead's social subject from a bodily and experiential, rather than a linguistic, route.

<sup>11</sup>For an existentialist approach to these issues, see Merleau-Ponty's discussion of pairing in child development (1989:354).

<sup>12</sup>This raises the problem of how one can know if a particular other body is a subject and how one can partially share specific details of the other's experience. Husserl addresses these issues by distinguishing between the animate bodies of genuine subjects and mere "pseudo-organisms" (such as robots) and suggesting that the activities of genuine other subjects are "harmonious" (1960:114).

<sup>13</sup>The notion of attention must be understood in a phenomenological fashion. Attention is not a substantial thing, not an entity whose deployment causes the physical world to become "experience." Such a view would go against phenomenology's basic goal of understanding the world as experience. However, interpreted phenomenologically the notion of attention can be used to account for the fact

that experience usually contains multiple phenomena at once and that the placement of those phenomena is ordered. (For a parallel argument about the notion of consciousness, see James 1967.) Seen in these terms, our discussion of the organization of attention can be understood as an analysis of the ways in which subjects arrange phenomena relative to one another in experience (see Berger 1999).

<sup>14</sup>For a landmark treatment of improvisation as a set of skills developed across the span of a lifetime, see Paul F. Berliner's *Thinking in Jazz: The Infinite Art of Improvisation* (1994). On the role of reflection in jazz improvisation, see Berliner (1994) and Ingrid Monson's *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (1996).

<sup>15</sup>As Berger has argued elsewhere (1997, 1999), the organization of attention can be understood as *social practice* in the practice theory sense of the term. In Giddens's view (1984, 1990, 1993), practice is any conduct that comes about through a duality of social context and the agency of its practitioner. Informed by the contingencies of the performance event, the ideologies of the player's music scene, and the player's own agentic involvement in the event, the organization of attention is an exemplar of Giddens's notion of practice.

<sup>16</sup>For a more detailed discussion of the organization of attention in Rock and Jazz, see Berger (1999).

<sup>17</sup>Both of these kinds of framing are examples of Michael Silverstein's "reflexive calibration" of metapragmatic signs (1993:50). In his formulation, signs that frame or comment on other signs can be "calibrated" to their semiotic objects in a variety of ways. In reflexive calibration, the framing signs occur simultaneously with the signs they frame and achieve their framing function in an implicit manner. Silverstein provides two examples: the use of rhyme and meter to frame a piece of text as poetry (Jakobson's poetic function, 1960), and the use of prosody, contour, gesture, and so on to frame speech in face-to-face conversation. Although Silverstein primarily addresses himself to language and does not give names to these two different kinds of reflexive calibration, his two examples correspond with what we have called "embedded" and "accompanying metacommunication."

<sup>18</sup>Because of the sensitive nature of some of the fieldwork data, the town's name and the participants' identities have been changed.

<sup>19</sup>This situation is similar to Hymes's perfunctory performance (personal communication from Hymes to Bauman, in Bauman 1977:26–27).

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