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Author

Doty, Colin

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Ontologies enable us to describe and distinguish domains of knowledge so that they can be represented in information systems, particularly information storage, organization, and management systems such as archives, catalogs and databases. Among other things, ontologies help to identify what is essential about a domain of knowledge and to distinguish among those essential elements. This allows us to represent such knowledge in physical form. For example, identifying the title and author as crucial descriptive elements of a book allows a librarian to record those elements in a catalog, as does distinguishing the role of the author from that of the editor.

Ontologies for information organization and management are most easily applied to tangible objects such as library books or computer files. They are more difficult to apply to intangible objects such as embodied action, particularly when that action is ephemeral. This has considerable implications for record keeping, in that embodied actions such as live performances, as well as cultures that are represented through oral tradition, may seem to be beyond the reach of archives and records. Even to the extent that records of such events can be kept, such as through videotape, a useful classification of such records must identify as precisely as possible exactly what ephemeral event it seeks to record.

In particular, with regard to artistic works, such distinctions can be the very basis of a cataloging system. A library catalog entry for a non-fiction book, for example, may include a reference to the author, title, subject, and edition. With other kinds of works, however, such distinctions can be more difficult to make. For live theatrical performance, the concepts of author and edition are particularly complex. Who is the author of a performance of a play written by Shakespeare and directed by Peter Hall, when it is performed neither by Mr. Shakespeare nor Mr. Hall, but instead by a company of actors? Likewise, which edition of Hamlet is represented by the production at the Globe Theatre in the 17th century, or the production at the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in 1980?

Live performance presents unique ontological challenges. We have not truly experienced a play unless we have seen a performance of it, and yet we cannot point to any particular performance and correctly say, "There is the play," without having excluded something central. Likewise, the relationship between the elements of a live performance is not exactly reproduction and not exactly representation, terms that apply more easily to other kinds of works of art. Furthermore, the very liveness of live performance allows that every example of it may be slightly different from every other, making it difficult to speak of something like "the play" at all. Nonetheless, in this article we shall attempt to identify and name the elements of live performance, to describe the relationships between those elements, and to account for the variation between them. The primary subject for this ontology will be theatrical performance, but we will

attempt to apply the same principles to other kinds of performance, such as music performance, to test whether the conclusions hold.

The Text and the Performance

The first distinction to consider about theatrical events is an obvious one: the distinction between the performance and that which is performed (Wolterstorff, 1975). We may think of this as the distinction between the production and the play itself, for example, the distinction between the Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Hamlet* and *Hamlet* the play by Shakespeare. Similarly, the Los Angeles Philharmonic may perform a Mozart symphony. Our ontology must make a distinction, therefore, between the performance and the thing performed.

In the theatre, we usually refer to the thing performed as “the play.” This language is imprecise, however, in that we also speak of having gone to “see” a play, a characterization that seems to refer more to the performance (by the RSC) than to the text (by Shakespeare). Our first inclination might be to say that a play is a text. For example, a book containing “The plays of William Shakespeare” would be a collection of texts, not of performances. Likewise, when we speak of seeing a play, we speak of hearing the dialogue and seeing the actions that are recorded in the text. Furthermore, the elements that will be common to all productions of a play are those elements described in the text. If one did not use the text of *Hamlet*, one could not be said to be doing *Hamlet* at all. This suggests that when we speak of the play, we instead mean the text.

There is a serious problem with this formulation, however. As McLaverty (1984) noted, we cannot equate the tangible record of a work with the work itself, “because if we did it would follow that if that [record] were lost the work itself would be lost” (p. 83). Furthermore, when we attend a performance of a play, we do not experience written text. Rather, we perceive actors speaking lines and performing actions *described* in the text. We also perceive sets, lights, costumes and movements that are not described in the text at all. Thus, we should not equate the play with the text.

Instead, let us borrow a term from Wolterstorff (1975) and designate the thing that is performed in a theatrical performance as the *Performance-work*. It is important to note that the Performance-work is the thing performed; it is not the performance itself. In most cases, this refers to the dialogue and actions that have been created for the actors to perform, as well as such elements as characters and plot events. The Performance-work is an abstract concept, but the dialogue and action are usually notated in the concrete form of a *Script*. For simplicity, we may think of the Script as the work of the playwright, although Scripts are sometimes generated by collaboration or other means. In addition, not all theatrical

performances use written Scripts. Some performances are based on a plot outline or other plan, and some are improvised outright based on no more than a few elements. One might argue that in such cases, there is no thing performed, but only the performance itself. For the moment, however, let us consider the usual circumstance, in which an audience goes to a theatre to see a performance of a Performance-work.

The Production and Its Performances

In a very important sense, however, a Performance-work is incomplete (Carroll, 2001; Phelan, 1993). The point of a Performance-work is the performance. From this point of view, only the performance itself is the *Work* we are trying to name. Although Scripts are often published for reading, they are created with the intention that they be performed. If they were not, they would not be Performance-works, but poems or novels or some other literary work designed for silent reading. The fact that Shakespeare is often studied as literature is because of the quality of his poetry; it does not change the fact that his Scripts are texts for performance, unlike his sonnets. (Some plays are written for reading only, but these are not Performance-works and therefore are not the subjects of this ontology.) Importantly, when an audience attends a performance of *Hamlet*, they do not *attend* the Performance-work, but witness a performance of it. This suggests that we must think of the actual performance as the *Work*.

This is even easier to see in the case of music. A play's Script is analogous to the score of a piece of music, in that the score is a notation of the sounds that comprise the music. We may think of the score as a *Work* in the same sense in which we think of a play as a *Work*, as the thing that is performed in a performance. In this sense, Beethoven's fifth symphony is a *Work*. (It is even called an *Opus*, the Latin word for work.) Yet we cannot experience Beethoven's *Work* through the score alone. Many people cannot read the notations of the score, and even those who can do not actually hear the music when reading it; they merely imagine it. To experience the musical work *as* a musical work, one must hear a performance of it. Thus, there is some clear sense in which Beethoven's score is not the *Work*, but rather the performance of it is.

This immediately raises a difficulty articulated by Rohrbaugh (2005) that "one cannot identify...Peter Schaffer's play *Equus* with any one of its performances" (p. 305). Beethoven is not the author of any particular performance of his fifth symphony. Thus, if the *Work* Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* is equal to the performance of the score, then Beethoven is not the author of the *Work* Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*. This would also render absurd a statement such as "Karajan is conducting *Beethoven's Fifth Symphony*, because Karajan is certainly not conducting all performances of the symphony, but only an individual

performance or series of performances. Similarly, Karajan's performance cannot be identical to the Work *Beethoven's Fifth Symphony* because Karajan is not creating *Beethoven's Fifth Symphony* for the first time. The same applies, of course, to the RSC production of *Hamlet*. If the Performance-work *Hamlet* is not a Work, then Shakespeare is not the author of the Work *Hamlet*. Likewise, *Hamlet* could not be published in a book. Furthermore, if we wish to form an opinion about the quality of the RSC production of *Hamlet*, this is a different task than forming an opinion about Shakespeare's Work *Hamlet*. We are evaluating *how* the RSC presents the Shakespeare Work, (a presentation that is more than a copy, as we shall discuss further) and are thus evaluating the Work of the RSC. There seem to be reasons, therefore, to refer to both the Performance-work and its performance as Works.

This creates the need for an additional distinction, however. If Olivier performs *Hamlet* on Tuesday night and then again on Wednesday night, is each its own Work? Such a characterization seems problematic. While the two performances may be substantially identical, they will differ slightly, potentially creating a new *Hamlet* each night. Which *Hamlet* would we publish in our books? Similarly, while each night's performance requires new labor and the skill to make the performance appear fresh, it requires minimal new creativity. It seems preferable, therefore, to decide that each individual performance of *Hamlet* is not a new Work.

How then, do we account for the performance of *Hamlet* being a distinct Work from the Performance-work of *Hamlet*? We must distinguish between a *Production* of *Hamlet* and each *Individual Performance* of it.¹ The Production comprises the plan for a series of Individual Performances, including all elements of mise-en-scene: a cast, the blocking of actors' movements, a design for sets, lights, costumes, props, and so on. For simplicity's sake, we may think of the Production as the work of the director (overseeing the work of the designers and production crew), even though the role of the director is a relatively recent development in theatre history. The Production is what is designed and rehearsed during the rehearsal process, with the intention that it be repeated as nearly as possible during each subsequent Individual Performance. An Individual Performance, then, refers only to a particular event, a single enacting of the actions and sounds of the Production. The term Individual Performance (as opposed to the words performance or show) is needed to distinguish it from performance, in the sense of the *activity* of reciting or enacting something for an audience. For simplicity's sake, we may refer to the Individual Performance as the work done by the actors and crew in front of an audience. The distinction between

¹ Le Bœuf (2006) makes a similar distinction.

a Production and an Individual Performance is the distinction between the RSC production of *Hamlet* and Tuesday night's performance of *Hamlet* at the RSC.

With this new characterization, there seem to be good reasons to refer to a Production and a Performance-work as Works, but not to use that term to describe an Individual Performance. This, however, leaves unresolved many aspects of the complex relationship between these three elements of theatre. If an Individual Performance is not a Work, how do we wish to characterize it? What is the relationship between the Performance-work and the Production?

Relationships between Elements of Live Performance

The first consideration is whether the relationship between any of these elements is one of reproduction. It is impossible for a Performance-work to be a copy of its own Production or Individual Performance, because it precedes them. Is either a Production or an Individual Performance a reproduction? A Production certainly does not seem to be a copy of the Performance-work, in that the word copy implies a degree of sameness that a Performance-work and its Production do not share. While it might happen that a Production incorporates all of the content of the Performance-work, it will also have additional content—such as design elements and line readings—that the Performance-work does not have (Osipovich, 2006). For the same reasons, it seems correct to conclude that an Individual Performance is not a copy of a Performance-work. It does seem correct, however, to describe an Individual Performance as a copy of a Production. Even though any particular Individual Performance will be an imperfect copy of the Performance-work, it still may be appropriate to conclude that an Individual Performance attempts to copy a Production by executing the Production's plan as exactly as possible.

This leaves the matter of the Script. Wolterstorff (1975) has noted that “a copy of the script for a drama is not a copy of the drama, but instructions for proper performances thereof....The drama has no copies. All it has is performances” (p. 119). The same applies to music, where “the marks in a copy of a score are not instances of sounds but rather instructions for producing sounds” (p. 119). Thus, the copy relationship seems problematic. Instead, Wolterstorff proposed that Works are *kinds*, “whose *examples* are the performances or objects of those works” (p. 126). This is similar to the most common model of performance as a type/token relationship wherein a Work is a type performed by its tokens. This configuration, of course, distinguishes between a Work and its performance, but not between Individual Performance and Production. Saltz (2001) and Osipovich (2006) are among those who made the distinction, identifying Individual Performances as tokens of the Production. This apparently also indicates that Productions would be tokens of the Performance-work,

complicating the type/token binary by asking the Production to serve both as token (of the Performance-work) and as type (for the Individual Performance).

The more common criticism of the type/token model for live performance is the way in which performance-tokens instantiate their work-types. One proposed characterization is that the theatre Work is only locatable in space and time as the sum of all of its tokens. *Hamlet* is that which is printed in each copy and performed in each Individual Performance. This is similar to defining a Work as that which is shared by all of its instantiations. Svenonius (2000) was among the proponents of a similar idea that a Work is comprised of the set of its copies. This set-theoretical model, however, faces the difficulty that it is defined by its members. Hence, any change in the membership of a set necessitates a new set (Wetzel, 2006). If the Work *Hamlet* equals the set of its Individual Performances, it is a new work on each night it is performed. This seems an unsupportable idea, because the Work *Hamlet*, as reflected in a book on a library shelf, is certainly not altered one night as a result of Laurence Olivier having played the role that same night. Davies (1991) examined a similar theory for musical performance, only to reject it:

Find the lowest denominator common to all authentic (accurate) performances of the work, discard those common factors which, according to one's theory, are not relevant to its identity—that all performances took place in the evening, for example—and what one has left is the work. (p. 30)

This model fails, Davies noted, when the Performance-work is comprised of variable elements that would not be common to all performances, such as the improvisational portion of a jazz performance.

Several scholars have suggested variations on the type/token binary that attempt to alleviate its problems. Stevenson (1957) proposed the idea of a megatype, stating that “two tokens will belong to the same megatype if and only if they have approximately the same meaning” (p. 337). Thus, because an Individual Performance of *Hamlet* and a Production of *Hamlet* share the same meaning, they would belong to the same megatype. This does not account for the Performance-work of *Hamlet*, however, as the Production and Individual Performance may have many meanings that the Performance-work does not have, such as when Orson Welles produced *Julius Caesar* as a statement about Fascism (Saltz, 2001). Wilson (1968) applied the concept of a family to the relationship between Work and text. This concept might account for the elements of performance by characterizing the Production and the Individual Performances as descendants of the ancestor Performance-work. Svenonius (2000) proposed the similar idea of a *superwork*, whose members all descend from a common origin, just as a Production of *Hamlet* and all of its Individual Performances descend

from the Performance-work. These concepts may have some use to us, though none are designed specifically to apply to performance.

Theatre scholars seeking a specific ontology of performance usually refer to the Script as a set of instructions for performance, and the relationship between the performance and the thing performed as one of interpretation. In other words, according to Saltz (2001), the prevalent theory is that “performances interpret plays” (p. 299). Some scholars define interpretation as “excavating what is already ‘in’ the work” (p. 300), and other scholars as the additions a Production makes or the elements that make one Production different from another.² While it seems obvious that this means that performances interpret Scripts, it is less obvious whether it means that Productions interpret Performance-works or that Individual Performances do. Carroll (2001), however, clarified that the Individual Performance itself is not normally an interpretation, but is generated *from* an interpretation, namely, the Production. This does not exclude, however, the possibility that new interpretations may arise during the act of performance, but such innovations are then presumably added to the plan of the Production and repeated in the next Individual Performance. It is not the Individual Performance, therefore, that interprets the Script. Rather, the Individual Performance executes the Production’s interpretation of the Script.

Existing Categorization Models

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) provided another characterization that may be useful to an ontology of live performance. FRBR (IFLA, 1998) introduced the concept of *expression*, defined as “the intellectual or artistic realization of a work” (p. 13). The model explicitly designates performances as expressions, but makes no distinction between Productions and Individual Performances and could be referring to either. In addition, the FRBR model notably limits the application of the term event to those that are the subject of a work (such as when a novel is about an historical event) and not to events as expressions of works. This seems to eliminate Individual Performances from consideration in the model, at least as entities distinct from Productions. FRBR’s *manifestation* entity, defined as “the physical embodiment of an expression of a work” (IFLA, p. 13), seems at first to describe Individual Performances (allowing that the word expression refers to a Production), if we interpret “physical embodiment” literally to mean the physical bodies of actors. None of the examples of manifestations given in the FRBR model, however, refer

² Saltz disagrees with this formulation, calling it the “interpretation fallacy,” but his arguments are beyond the scope of this paper.

to Individual Performances. Instead, all of the references to specific performances designate them as expressions, thereby collapsing the distinction between Production and Individual Performance.

Miller and Le Bœuf (2005) attempted to clarify the application of the FRBR model to live performance. They designated as an expression *both* the Script and the performance of it, because both can be said to express the Performance-work. From there, they “map[ped] the Manifestation notion to the idea of ‘production’ or ‘run’” (p. 170), based on their analogy between a run of a certain number of performances and a publisher’s decision to produce a certain number of copies of a book. This means that the FRBR entity item, described as “exemplifying a manifestation that embodies a live performance Work” is the entity that designates “one given performance” (p. 170). Interestingly, a year later Le Bœuf called his 2005 model “wrong” and stated that “the FRBR model can’t apply to the peculiar field of performing arts collections,” citing among his reasons the “restrained sense” of the term event and the ill-fitting definition of manifestation (Le Bœuf, 2006, p. 4).

The object-oriented version of FRBR (FRBRoo), developed partly by Le Bœuf, among others, includes designations for performance, performance work, and performance plan (Doerr & Bekiari, 2008; Riva, Doerr, & Zumer, 2009). These correspond to Individual Performance, Performance-work and Production, respectively, although it is not clear whether performance plan makes a distinction between the abstract plan as a collection of ideas and a concrete representation of that plan, such as a director’s annotated script. FRBRoo (Doerr & Bekiari, 2008) also outlined the relationships between the various elements of live performance. According to FRBRoo, a Production realizes a Performance-Work and is performed in an Individual Performance. Most interestingly, FRBRoo defines the relationship between a Production and a Script as one of incorporation, wherein a Production incorporates a Script. (The model categorizes a Script as an expression.) As Doerr and Bekiari explained:

This property expresses the fact that the text of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* or the musical notation of Mozart’s *Symphony No. 41* becomes a ‘part’ of a given performance plan, while the conceptual aspects of both performance and pre-existing material remain independent. (p. 10)

This description of the relationships between the elements of live performance may be the most satisfying of all. Like the other models, however, it leaves unresolved the problem of variation between the various elements of live performance.

The Problem of Variation

The problem of variation is the problem of how, if a Work is defined by all the examples of it, we can determine that two examples that are not identical are nonetheless part of the same Work. This problem is especially pronounced in live performance, which, by its very nature, has the potential for each of its examples to be unique. Certainly no two Productions of *Hamlet* are alike (unless one is intentionally re-staged with the same cast and design, in which case it is really the same Production re-mounted) and most theatre artists would argue that no two Individual Performances are exactly alike. Indeed, many consider this unique potential for variation to be exactly what is desirable about live performance (Phelan, 1993). How then do we designate two widely variant Individual Performances as deriving from the same Performance-work?

Of course, there is the potential for variation between versions of a Script, but this is identical to the problem faced by literary Works. Likewise, the variation between any two Individual Performances based on the same Production is likely to be comparatively minimal, given that it is the intention of each Individual Performance to repeat the Production plan as closely as possible. More significant is the potential for considerable variation between two Productions of the same Script. Indeed, that variation is often exactly the point of doing another Production of a play. Variation at the level of Production is unique to live performance in that it involves what Rohrbaugh (2005) called an “extra interpretive act” not present in other forms of Work (p. 7). For a literary Work, the variation between any two editions is likely to be a variation of form (for example, typeface, binding, etc.) with some small content changes. The content of any two Productions of a Performance-work, in contrast, includes all the elements of the mise-en-scene and is likely to vary considerably between Productions. *Hamlet*, for example, takes four hours to perform in its full form. Most Productions, therefore, will make cuts in the text. Notably, these cuts are not all the same from one Production to another, although they probably all share the motivation of cutting what is inessential about the Script. This leaves unanswered the question of what exactly is essential to *Hamlet*. The “to be or not to be” soliloquy is probably the play’s most famous scene. If a Production includes all of Shakespeare’s Script, but excises that soliloquy, is it still a Production of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*? Given the number of other resemblances between the Production and the Performance-work, the answer is probably that yes, we would consider the Production without the soliloquy to be Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, albeit performed with the unusual and perhaps perplexing stylistic choice to cut the most famous part of the play. Certainly, if an actor inadvertently omits the soliloquy from a particular Individual Performance of *Hamlet*, it would seem the actor is still doing *Hamlet*. Similarly, if a Production incorporates Shakespeare’s Script but adds additional words, it is probably still a Production of *Hamlet*. On the other hand, a production that has the same characters and the same plot events, but does

not use Shakespeare's dialogue, is usually considered to be an adaptation of *Hamlet* rather than a Production of *Hamlet*.

Only film, which is itself a Production of a Script, seems to have a stage analogous to the Production of a Performance-work. The analogy to film breaks down, however, at the level of the Individual Performance. It is the nature of live performance that each Individual Performance is uniquely created and can vary, however slightly, from every other Individual Performance. Indeed, this is the very definition of liveness. Each Individual Performance is unique in a way that each copy of a book, each reproduction of an image, and even each screening of a film, is not. As Carroll (2001) has noted, once a film has been completed, each token performance is *mechanically-mediated*, generated by a machine, whereas Individual Performances are *mind-mediated*, generated by intentional, human processes. The same is true for each copy of a book or image, which is mechanically-mediated. Indeed, when a painting, for example, is re-created through intentional, human processes, it is considered an inauthentic forgery; whereas with performance, the opposite is true. A mechanically-mediated Individual Performance is considered less authentic than a mind-mediated one, and indeed is not an Individual Performance at all.

The Ideal Version

In an effort to resolve this difficulty of variation between tokens, Wolterstorff (1975) and Rohrbaugh (2005) both discussed the concept of correct and incorrect instances of a Work. This concept enables us to designate certain variations between tokens, such as a typographical error in a print edition or a performance of *Hamlet* without the "to be or not to be" soliloquy, as incorrect tokens of the Work. The concept also helps to define the Work itself as a kind of author's ideal against which correctness and incorrectness can be measured.

As Wolterstorff (1975) put it, "the concept of an art work is intimately connected with the concept of a correctly formed example of the work" (p. 125). In the case of performance, this means that a Production and an Individual Performance are considered a part of the same Performance-work if they *intend* to create a correct example of that Work:

To perform a work one must have knowledge of what is required for a correct example of the work; and one must then try to act on such knowledge in producing an occurrence...It is not necessary, though, if one is to perform a work, that one *succeed* in one's attempt to act on one's knowledge of what is required of a[n]...occurrence if it is to be a correct example of the work. (p. 132)

By this characterization of instances, the actor who inadvertently skips the soliloquy while performing *Hamlet* has still performed the Work, but the

Production that intentionally omits the soliloquy has not performed the Work, even if all other aspects of the Production are correct. Rohrbaugh (2005) had a slightly different characterization: “A feature common to instances of a work may not be that all are F, but that all should be F (or would be, if they were correct)” (p. 6). By this description, both the intentional and the unintentional omission of the soliloquy would constitute instances of the Work.

But how exactly do we make these evaluations of correctness and incorrectness? If, as Wolterstorff said, we “must have knowledge of what is required for a correct example of the work” (p. 132), then how do we come to have such knowledge? Speaking of a composer of music, Wolterstorff stated that “there are at least two activities involved in composing a work of music: The artist determines what constitutes correctness of the performance, and he makes a record of his determination” (p. 137). This second activity is key, because presumably it is against the record that we compare correct and incorrect versions of a Work.

In the case of live performance, what exactly is this record? Two records can assist in determining the correctness of an Individual Performance. The Script can help us to determine the correct memorization of the dialogue, and the production book of the director or stage manager can help us evaluate how correctly an Individual Performance realizes many aspects of the Performance plan, including where to walk and stand, when light changes occur, and so forth. Yet with what record can we evaluate the correctness of the Production itself? For example, how can we evaluate the correctness of a costume design, or the correct way to deliver a line? Wolterstorff’s prescription for a correct performance seems to enable us to evaluate only whether a performance is a correct recitation of a Script, but not whether it is a correct interpretation of it. Thus, we cannot have the knowledge that Wolterstorff requires “of what is required for a correct example of the work” (p. 132). This seems to mean that, according to Wolterstorff, we can never perform nor interpret *Hamlet* correctly.

It is also important that we do not confuse the idea of an ideal Work against which correctness can be measured with the idea of a *perfect* realization of a creator’s vision for a Work. No Work captures exactly what an author wanted. No creator intends to do “bad” work, and yet bad Works exist. This must be because the creator has unknowingly failed to express his ideal work, believing, for example, that the closing scene is sufficiently moving when in fact, as it will turn out, no one is moved by it at all. Often an author cannot create exactly what he or she hoped to be able to create. This is true both of the original Work and of any of its instances. A director’s ideal Production, for example, is a collection of moments from different rehearsals that are unlikely to have coincided in any single Individual Performance. Thus, the concept of an ideal version of a Work is never fixed, at least not during its creator’s lifetime. The ideal version is revised

and re-imagined with every correctness test that the creator applies. In the end, as the saying goes, works of art are never finished; they are abandoned. Once its creator dies, and perhaps even thereafter, the Work with which we are left is nothing more than the best we could do so far.

Conclusion

In order to most accurately represent a live event, a record should reflect as many of the elements of this ontology as possible. For example, the program booklet handed to the audience at a live performance is a record of the Production in that it identifies the parties involved, but it is an incomplete record because it includes almost no information about the Script or any Individual Performance. A more complete catalog record would need to include a reference to the Script and the Production, at minimum, and, to be most accurate, a notation regarding which Individual Performance it records. It might also identify the creator of each of these elements by listing Shakespeare as the author of the Script, Peter Hall as the director of the Production, Olivier as the actor who plays Hamlet, and as many other members of the cast as possible. It might further identify the designers of sets, lights, sound, and costumes as elements of the particular Production. Failure to include any of these elements in the catalog record might result in confusion about exactly what work is reflected in the record. For example, there are many editions of the text *Hamlet*, many Productions of it, and even Mr. Olivier appeared in more than one production.

When information is contained in embodied practice, the challenges of recording it are considerable because neither the bodies nor the actions themselves can be archived or stored. Records that embodied action took place, therefore, must be based upon a rigorous underlying ontology that distinguishes which elements of the event are essential to record, and which elements distinguish one event from another. While the preceding ontology has focused primarily on live theatrical performance, a similar (though obviously not identical) ontology could be applied to describe dance, performance art, and even oral histories and culture.

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Author

Colin Doty is a Phd Candidate in Information Studies at UCLA and a former theatre artist. He studies information and society with a particular interest in misinformation and the evaluation of evidence.