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Author(s): Bruce McConachie
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Doing Things with Image Schemas:
The Cognitive Turn in Theatre Studies and
the Problem of Experience for Historians

Bruce McConachie

> Bad as it may sound, I have to admit that I cannot get along as an artist without
> the use of one or two sciences (Bertolt Brecht).[1]

Can historians know and explain the experiences of people from the distant past?
As performance historians, can we understand what Molière may have experienced
during his wrangling with the bureaucrats of Louis XIV over the production of
Tartuffe? Can we comprehend what working-class spectators in New York may have
enjoyed while experiencing the performance of an apocalyptic melodrama in the
1840s? What Janet Achurch experienced while rehearsing for the London premiere of
A Doll's House in 1889? Or, to frame these questions as a historiographical problem, is
there enough common ground linking the present experience of the historian to the
probable experience of people from the past (as understood from the available
evidence) to arrive at some truths about these past experiences sparked by perform-
ance events?

Before the "linguistic turn" in performance studies, the conventional answer to such
questions would likely have been a guarded "yes." Indeed, several forms of scholar-
ship drawing on a variety of epistemologies have long validated the ability of
historians to understand and explain how particular people and groups of people
thought, felt, desired, and acted in terms of human experience. At the turn of the last
century, Wilhelm Dilthey combined the insights of German idealism, historical
method, and phenomenology to argue for the necessity of understanding the experi-
ences of historically situated individuals. In the 1960s and 1970s, Raymond Williams,
working out of the Marxist tradition, developed the notion of an experience-based
"structure of feeling" to theorize historical change. More recently, Eric Lott combined
Lacanian theory with Fredric Jameson's historiography to explain the desires and

*Bruce McConachie is Director of Graduate Studies in Theatre and Performance Studies at the University
of Pittsburgh. He has written widely on theatre historiography and American theatre history, including*
Interpreting the Theatrical Past *(1989), with Tom Postlewait, and* Melodramatic Formations:
American Theatre and Society, 1820–1870 *(1992).*

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[1] Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, trans. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 73.

feelings—the experiences—of spectators at nineteenth-century minstrel shows.[2] All of these historians build their explanations on the assumption that there is enough universality to human experience, at both the conscious and unconscious levels, for them to construct valid history.

As historian Michael Pickering notes, however, "from the poststructuralist viewpoint, experience is the bridge which only asses cross. It is a bridge which is regarded as far too rickety to be worthy of repair."[3] Pickering singles out historian Joan Scott as the chief poststructuralist proponent of repudiating conventional notions of "experience." In brief, Scott attacks experience-based historical explanations for naïve epistemology. The typical conceptual use of "experience," she alleges, presupposes a foundational mode of being which exists prior to language. Scott would keep the term "experience," but redefine it as the product of "discourse." Like Pickering (and others), I will use Scott's ideas on experience as "a test-case of the poststructuralist take on the category."[4] Compared to some historians such as Mark Poster and Dominick LaCapra, Scott stakes out a version of poststructuralism in more opposition to traditional empirical and hermeneutic methods of doing history, but this position also makes her critique of experience more challenging.[5]

Several historians, including other feminists, some intellectual historians, and several materialists, have opposed Scott's undermining of "normal" history.[6] While each of the three opponents to Scott that I will examine offers important correctives to her work, none of them puts forward a position that fully meets the epistemological and empirical challenges of her assertions. Alternatively, I will argue that the cognitive

[2] On Dilthey, see his *Selected Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1976) and H. Stewart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought, 1890–1930* (New York: Vintage, 1958), 185–200. Raymond Williams first used "structure of feeling" as an analytic term in his book with Michael Orrom, *Preface to Film* (London: Film Drama Press, 1954). For a better example of his deployment of the term, see *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht* (London: Hogarth, 1987). Finally, Eric Lott's book is *Love and Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and The American Working Class* (New York: Oxford, 1993).

[3] Michael Pickering, *History, Experience, and Cultural Studies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 208.

[4] Ibid., 245, n.2.

[5] For Scott's use of "experience," see "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry*, 17 (Summer 1991), 773–97; "Experience" in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Judith Butler and Joan Scott (New York: Routledge, 1992), 22–40; and *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia, 1988). "Experience" attacks the position put forth by John Toews in his "Intellectual History After the Linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the Irreducibility of Experience," *American Historical Review*, 92 (1987), 879–907. On Poster's and LaCapra's attempts to merge poststructuralism and more conventional methods of history, see Mark Poster, *Cultural History and Postmodernity: Disciplinary Readings and Challenges* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) and Dominick LaCapra, "History, Language and Reading: Waiting for Crillon," *American Historical Review*, 100:3 (June 1995), 799–828; and LaCapra, *Soundings in Critical Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

[6] In addition to Pickering, see, for example, Lisa Duggan, "Vive la difference: Joan Scott's Historical Imperatives," *Voice Literary Supplement* (January-February 1989), 37; Paula M.L. Moya, "Postmodernism, Realism, and the Politics of Identity," in *Reclaiming Identity: Realist Theory and the Predicament of Postmodernism*, ed. Paula M.L. Moya and Michael R. Hames-Garcia (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 67–101; Bryan D. Palmer, *Descent into Discourse: The Reification of Language and the Writing of Social History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 78–86, 172–186; and John H. Zammito, "Reading "Experience:" The Debate in Intellectual History among Scott, Toews, and LaCapra," in *Reclaiming Identity*, 279–311. Scott replied to some of her early critics in "A Reply to Criticism," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 32 (Fall 1987), 39–45.

psychology of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, as presented in the "embodied realism" of their general approach to cognition, culture, and truth, provides a better foundation for historians interested in establishing the usefulness and legitimacy of experience in their work. Further, Lakoff and Johnson's philosophical realism, based in the empirical work of cognitive science, is consonant with the hermeneutic empiricism of much history writing. It also counters the validity of many of the working assumptions of poststructuralist history, including those of Joan Scott. Overall, the cognitive psychology of embodied realism extends the potential explanatory power of performance historians to make sense of past performance situations.[7]

The following essay is in three parts. First, I will outline Scott's poststructuralist objections to "experience" and the attempts of several historians to rescue the term for historical use. Next, I will present a brief overview of "embodied realism" focused primarily on the ways in which the "cognitive unconscious," as Lakoff and Johnson term it, structures experience. This section culminates in a discussion of Lakoff and Johnson's major challenge to theatre studies: the need to rethink conventional notions of aesthetics and rhetoric. In the longest section of the essay, I move from largely epistemological to methodological concerns to demonstrate the usefulness of Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive science by deploying their ideas about spatiality, projection, and subjectivity to understand a historically situated stage production. In particular, I will suggest how embodied realism can help the historian to analyze how cold war American audiences in New York may have constructed meanings during the production of *A Hatful of Rain* in 1955. As I will show, Lakoff and Johnson open the way for historians to understand the brain as the material site where ecology and culture join to shape history and performance.

<p style="text-align:center">I</p>

In *Gender and the Politics of History* (1988), "The Evidence of Experience," published in *Critical Inquiry* (1991), and "Experience," anthologized in *Feminists Theorize the Political* (1992), Joan Scott attacked historians for relying on naïve notions of experience as the foundation of their historical explanations:

> When experience is taken as the origin of knowledge, the vision of the individual subject (the person who had the experience or the historian who recounts it) becomes the bedrock of evidence on which explanation is built. Questions about the constructed nature of experience, about how subjects are constituted as different in the first place, about how one's vision is structured—about language or discourse in history—are left aside.[8]

Individual experience cannot be a "bedrock of evidence" for historical writing, says Scott, because the raw stuff of human action and perception only becomes experience through the mediation of systems of representation, such as visual signs and spoken

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[7] See Lakoff and Johnson's *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999). Also, Mark Johnson, *The Body in the Mind: The Bodily Basis of Meaning, Imagination, and Reason* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). Also relevant to the cultural functions of cognitive metaphors are Raymond W. Gibbs, *The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Gerald Steen, *Understanding Metaphor in Literature: An Empirical Approach* (London and New York: Longman, 1994); and Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

[8] Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," 777.

language. Because "discourses position subjects and produce their experiences," it is "not individuals who have experiences, but subjects who are constituted through experience."[9] Experience is grounded in and hence subordinate to systems of representation. If experience can be subsumed within discourse, as Scott claims, the cognitive science of Lakoff and Johnson (and of all other cognitive psychologists) has little to offer theatre studies. At stake for theatre scholars in the arguments over Scott's position, however, is not just the usefulness of cognitive psychology, but the epistemelogical basis for all truth claims in the field.

Like many poststructuralists, Scott turns to Derrida's deconstructive use of semiotics to understand how discourse creates difference and meaning, and, consequently, helps to shape historical inequities. In her introduction to *Gender and the Politics of History*, she states:

> Any unitary concept rests on—contains—repressed or negated material and so is unstable, not unified. . . . Fixed oppositions conceal the heterogeneity of either category, the extent to which terms presented as oppositional are interdependent. . . . Contests about meaning involve the introduction of new oppositions, the reversal of hierarchies, the attempt to expose repressed terms, to challenge the natural status of seemingly dichotomous pairs, and to expose their interdependence and their internal instability. This kind of analysis, theorized by Jacques Derrida as "deconstruction," makes it possible to study systematically (though never definitively or totally) the conflictual processes that produce meanings.[10]

Thus Scott advises historians to use the methods of poststructuralism "in trying to understand the operations of the complex and changing discursive processes by which identities are ascribed, resisted, or embraced. . . ."[11] She is particularly interested in the othering of women through discourse and its material effects on their lives. Scott concludes her 1991 essay with the statement: "Subjects are constituted discursively, and experience is a linguistic event. . . . [Consequently,] language is the site of history's enactment."[12]

For anyone familiar with the insights of Michel Foucault, Scott's pronouncements are not surprising. Despite the materialism of some of his work, Foucault emphasized the power that circulated through systems of rules and procedures and, consequently, shaped whole areas of historical experience. Like Scott, Foucault may be criticized for a kind of linguistic idealism in which language itself becomes an autonomous system ungrounded in the material forces of history. And for Scott, as for Foucault, questions of experience outside the conventional workings of discourse are largely irrelevant because systems of representation and their epistemic shifts are the primary organizers of history.[13] On the other hand, practitioners of Foucauldian history need not separate their work entirely from realist and materialist premises. Joseph Roach, for example, whose genealogies of performance in *Cities of the Dead* trace the discursive

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[9] Ibid., 779.
[10] Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, 7.
[11] Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," 793.
[12] Ibid.
[13] See Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977* ed. Colin Gordon (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980). Also, see Pickering's linking of Scott to Foucault, 221–230.
[14] See Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia, 1996). For a recent example in theatre studies of a history that relies on Scott's poststructuralism for epistemological and

and institutional practices of racism over time, has been singularly effective in merging discursive and materialist approaches.[14] In her 1988 book, Scott recommends a similar genealogical approach for understanding historical constructions of gender. Her 1991 essay, however, pushes the idealist side of Foucault to argue that language, by itself, constitutes experience and hence makes history.

Not surprisingly, Marxists and other materialists were among the first to challenge Scott's linguistic idealism. Their position had been prepared by N. Garnham in his 1983 article insisting on "the irreducible material determinants of the social process of symbolic exchange."[15] Another Marxist, Bryan D. Palmer, took Scott to task for "following the logic of poststructuralism in a one-sided reification of language and stubborn refusal of the multitude of structurally embedded historical factors that, while related to discourse, are indeed separable."[16] As Palmer points out, Scott, even as she recognizes (with Derrida) that such Saussurian dualities as strong/weak, rational/emotional, and material/spiritual that populate historical texts and shape definitions of gender are inherently unstable and immaterial, nonetheless gives them the caus-ative power of material forces in her narratives. Although Palmer utterly rejects this position, he has little to offer as an alternative to Scott's understanding of experience. Building primarily on non-experiential assumptions about the material determinants of history, Palmer believes that human experience plays a minor part in historical dynamics.

Historian John Zammito, on the other hand, sees experience as central in construct-ing historical explanations. Zammito bases his opposition to Scott's poststructuralist project on the postpositivist realism of Satya Mohanty.[17] Mohanty is concerned that the relativism preached by postmodernism is annulling the possibility of finding common ground on which genuine dialogue among scholars may occur. Contra Mohanty and Zammito, Scott asserts that commonality based on experience is a dangerous mirage. According to Scott, historians who look to their own experience to know the experience of historical Others engage in a kind of solipsism that allows them to claim objectivity and rhetorical power. The concept of experience, she believes, "provides an object for historians that can be known apart from their own role as meaning makers and it then guarantees not only the objectivity of their knowledge, but their ability to persuade others of its importance."[18] From Scott's Nietzschean point of view, the consensus of a scholarly community about the relative truth of an historical asser-tion—a consensus necessarily based on broadly shared experience—could only come about by repressing conflicting points of view.

Mohanty and Zammito challenge the notion that systems of discourse involving difference necessarily create experience and subject positions that cannot be changed.

methodological guidance, see Elizabeth Reitz Mullenix, *Wearing the Breeches: Gender on the Antebellum Stage* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000). My review of *Wearing the Breeches*, which focuses on the shortcomings of Scott's premises for historical explanation, is forthcoming in *American Historical Review*.

[15] Garnham, "Towards a Theory of Cultural Materialism," *Journal of Communication* 33:3 (1983).

[16] Palmer, *Descent into Discourse*, 179.

[17] See Satya P. Mohanty, *Literary Theory and the Claims of History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997) and Mohanty, "The Epistemic Status of Cultural Identity: On *Beloved* and the Postcolonial Condition," in *Reclaiming Identity*, 29–66.

[18] Scott, "Experience," 32.

"Just how other, we need to force ourselves to specify, is the Other?" asks Mohanty.[19] Drawing on Donald Davidson's rebuttal of Kuhnian relativism,[20] Mohanty elevates the capacity of humans to evaluate actions, purposes, and experiences and hence to arrive at contingent positions of cross-cultural commonality. Human agency, in other words, may modify old experiences and create new ones, closing the distances among experiential differences and even facilitating a kind of objectivity among scholars. Mohanty's position may be an attractive one—a new humanism beyond the essentialisms and grand claims to objectivity of the old version—but is it credible? Perhaps human will and reason can modify subject positions embedded in discourse, but historians and others looking for empirical proof of such a claim have a right to be skeptical.

Unlike Mohanty and Zammito, Pickering draws on the historiographical past to challenge Scott's poststructuralist reduction of experience to discourse. In addition to outlining useful hermeneutic and empirical definitions of experience in the work of Dilthey, Williams, and others, he invokes E.P. Thompson and Anthony Giddens on the importance of historical context in the production of meaning. According to Pickering, Scott makes the mistake of assuming that experience is individual and not "collective,"[21] as he asserts. States Pickering, "It is the socially organised production of culture that needs to be emphasized, not the decoding of cultural texts. Any act of signification or representation is always embedded in the social fields in which it is made and assimilated, in ways which involve cultural practices at work upon as well as within the social relations in which they occur."[22] From this position, Pickering is willing to meet Scott halfway on the importance of language. He recognizes, he says, "that the realisation of such experiences intersects pivotally with language, for how else can we have any mutual recognition of them [i.e., experiences]?"[23]

Nonetheless, systems of representation are not ontologically prior to experience for Pickering. Language, he says, "is what experience is 'pressed out' into, the communicative forms in which they attain cultural meanings."[24] The notion that discourse gives form to some amorphous substance called experience, as a factory mold might shape molten plastic or steel, is an intriguing one and reverses Scott's assumption that experience only exists after discourse has shaped it. Despite asserting that various forces of historical context constitute this primal, prelinguistic experience, however, Pickering can arrive at no clear understanding of what this amorphous substance might be. He cites Janet Wolff's view that the historian can demonstrate the constituted nature of experience in the process of its exploration"[25] through normal empirical and hermeneutical methods enhanced by theoretical insights. This may seem commonsensical enough, except that it leaves "experience" as a woolsack into which the historian can stuff whatever conclusions about historical context she or he might arrive at. What if prelinguistic experience is not amorphous at all, however?

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[19] In Zammito, "Reading 'Experience'," 303.
[20] See Donald Davidson, "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme," in *Inquiries Into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 183–98.
[21] Pickering, *History*, 222.
[22] Ibid., 229.
[23] Ibid., 228.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid., 242.

What if structures mostly hard-wired in the mind shape experience before it emerges as language? If these structures are generally the same for all people in all historical periods, the historian can reach valid conclusions about the experiences of humans in the past.

Each of these objections to Scott's poststructuralism raises important questions for the historian, but none adequately addresses the challenges posed by her understanding of discourse and experience. Following Palmer, the historian is right to ask about the general significance of experience, however it might be defined, in explaining historical dynamics. For some kinds of history—explorations of demographic shifts and changing modes of economic production or, in performance history, investigations of box office receipts and attendance fluctuations—the subjective side of human experience is unlikely to play an important role in the historian's construction of causation and explanation. But how can the historian know when subjective experience might be relatively unimportant in crafting history? Zammito, following Mohanty, raises the question of experience constituting some common ground that all humans might share, despite their lived differences. If this were so, human experience might provide for the possibility of widely shared, even "objective" knowledge (assuming an epistemologically realist definition of objectivity). Pickering would rightly ask Zammito, however, about the formative influence of historical context in shaping this collective experience and whether Mohanty's assumption of common ground could survive it. Finally, Pickering's insights force the ontological question of how humans process their interactions with the world and come to understand them as "experiences": does discourse shape experience or are there prelinguistic structures in the mind that constitute all experience, including discourse?

"There is no social experience apart from people's perception of it," states Scott and most of her critics would agree.[26] Apart from behaviorist models of human action and history, trying to explain what people thought they were doing often plays a significant role in understanding their experiences. And it is especially important for narratives of performance history which seek to understand why historically situated playwrights, performers, and audiences made the choices they did. Perhaps the crucial initial question, then, is the nature of perception. Does the way in which people perceive themselves and the world allow for the common ground of experience hoped for by Mohanty? Might the workings of perception and the mind facilitate enough commonality to override the fracturings of perceived experiences resulting from historical context? And how, finally, might perception and cognition shape, even help to constitute what historians and others may logically and empirically understand to be human experience?

II

Understanding how human beings perceive the world and construct their experiences is the goal of cognitive science. A growing number of humanists have been using

[26] Scott, "Experience," 40. The exceptions to her position are Palmer and other Marxist critics who distinguish between perceived experience and behavior, which for them is largely unlighted by conscious perception. If perception were mostly conscious, Lakoff and Johnson would agree; but, as we shall see, it is not.

the insights of cognitive science to open up their disciplines to new modes of investigation and explanation. In film studies, Jan Simons deploys narrative theory derived from Lakoff and Johnson's work to describe and analyze Dutch political campaign films. Similarly, Warren Buckland, in the *Cognitive Semiotics of Film*, crafts a "cognitive semantics" of film to understand the normative processes of film comprehension.[27] Buckland's study, which focuses on viewers' relation to the film screen in a darkened auditorium as a projection of the cognitive schema of "containment," has particular relevance for performance historians interested in the cognitive effects of the proscenium arch in realistic and expressionistic productions.

A recent overview by Mary Thomas Crane and Alan Richardson, "Literary Studies and Cognitive Science: Toward a New Interdisciplinarity," summarizes the current influence of cognitive psychology in the field of literature. As in film studies, most scholars applying the insights of cognitive science to texts have been theorists and critics, not historians. Nonetheless, several of the literary studies discussed by Crane and Richards have suggestive uses for performance historians. *Memory in Oral Traditions* by David Rubin (1995), for example, uses cognitive science to analyze how memory shapes oral poetry. His synthesis suggests the potential for new historical insights into oral poetry meant for the stage, from Aeschylus to Eliot. Cognitive science helps Ellen Spolsky's *Gaps in Nature* (1993) account for creative innovation and gender differences in the uses of language. Her work, which suggests a biological basis for *écriture feminine*, may help historians to distinguish more carefully between male and female actors as well as writers. Several narratologists, including Marie-Laure Ryan (*Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory*, 1991) and Raymond Gibbs (*The Poetics of Mind: Figurative Thought, Language, and Understanding*, 1994), have used cognitive science to challenge old assumptions about narrative structure and open up new understanding about the ubiquity of narrative imagining. Historians interested in rescuing narrative history for public use may find confirmation and insight in such studies. Finally, the books and articles of Mark Turner, who has collaborated with cognitive scientist George Lakoff, delineate a "cognitive rhetoric" which relates modes of historical as well as literary experience to foundational schemas and metaphors of cognition. Turner, who has called for the reconstitution of literary studies to incorporate cognitive science, would no doubt invite historians to reconfigure their discipline along the same lines.[28]

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[27] See Jan Simons, *Film, Language, and Conceptual Structures: Thinking Film in the Age of Cognitivism* (Amsterdam: Academisch Proefschrift, University of Amsterdam, 1995) and Warren Buckland, *The Cognitive Semiotics of Film* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 39–51.

[28] See Mary Thomas Crane and Alan Richardson, "Literary Studies and Cognitive Science: Toward a New Interdisciplinarity," *Mosaic* 32:2 (June 1999), 123–40. Crane and Richardson summarize David C. Rubin, *Memory in Oral Tradition: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out Rhymes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Ellen Spolsky, *Gaps in Nature: Literary Interpretation and the Modular Mind* (Albany: SUNY University Press, 1993); Marie-Laure Ryan, *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence, and Narrative Theory* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991); and about twenty other books and articles. In addition to Mark Turner's *The Literary Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), see *More than Cool Reason: A Field Guide to Poetic Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), written with George Lakoff, and "Cognitive Science and Literary Theory," *Bridging the Gap: Where Cognitive Science Meets Literary Criticism*, special issue of *Stanford Humanities Review*, 4:1 (1994), 110–12; and *Reading Minds: The Study of English in the Age of Cognitive Science* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

While I am not prepared to urge that all performance historians reconstruct performance history within the parameters of cognitive science, I do want to give it a nudge in that direction.[29] Cognitive scientists investigate what they call a "cognitive unconscious" that shapes all perception. As Lakoff and Johnson explain,

> Conscious thought is the tip of an enormous iceberg. It is the rule of thumb among cognitive scientists that unconscious thought is 95 percent of all thought—and that may be a serious underestimate. Moreover, the 95 percent below the surface of conscious aware- ness shapes and structures all conscious thought. . . . The cognitive unconscious is vast and intricately structured. It includes not only all of our automatic cognitive operations, but also all of our implicit knowledge. All of our knowledge and beliefs are framed in terms of a conceptual system that resides mostly in the cognitive unconscious. Our unconscious conceptual system functions like a 'hidden hand' that shapes how we conceptualize all aspects of our experience. . . . It constitutes our unreflective common sense.[30]

The cognitive unconscious consequently informs all systems of language and repre- sentation. Like Freudian and Lacanian theory, but with better empirical credentials than either, cognitive science asserts that cognition structures all experience, including the experience of discourse. As we will see, however, this insight does not simply collapse all of history and culture into cognitive psychology.

Among cognitive scientists, Lakoff and Johnson have worked out one of the most systematic and sophisticated understandings of the implications of the "cognitive turn" on other forms of knowledge, including poststructuralism. They and others have discovered that the human mind works to validate the truth of perceptions primarily through metaphors. From a traditional historical and philosophical point of view, of course, metaphors provide a poor road to truth. In Cartesian and empiricist thinking, metaphorical language deviates from the language of verifiable representa- tion. Conventionally, if metaphors are to have any validity beyond poetic evocation or rhetorical flourish, they must express preexisting similarities between phenomena. In short, the traditional notion of metaphor relegates it to a matter of words, not truth. Drawing on thirty years of experiments in cognitive psychology and a desire to construct empirically responsible philosophy, Lakoff and Johnson completely reject the conventional view of metaphor in their philosophy of "embodied realism." Their investigations demonstrate that all thinking relies on metaphor; scientific and human- istic truth is impossible without it.

Lakoff and Johnson's embodied realism holds that mental concepts arise, funda- mentally, from the experience of the body in the world. As "neural beings," humans must make meaning within certain "basic-level," "spatial relations," and "bodily action" schemas, plus other concepts resulting from the interplay of experience and patternings in the brain. "Primary metaphors" flesh out the skeletal possibilities of

[29] Actually, I have nudged the field before through two previous essays, "Metaphors We Act By: Kinesthetics, Cognitive psychology, and Historical Structures," *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism* 8 (Spring 1993), 25–45 and "Approaching Performance History Through Cognitive Psychology," *Assaph* 10 (1994), 113–22. Also working in this emerging interdiscipline of performance studies and cognitive science are Wojciech Baluch, "The Process of the Creation of Meaning in the Theatre: A Cognitive Approach" (PhD Diss, Jagiellonian University, 2000), and Jeff Friedman, a PhD student in dance at the University of California, Riverside.

[30] Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, 13.

many of these foundational schemas. Social stereotypes, prototypical examples, and other modes of categorizing extend basic-level concepts. Regarding spatial relations concepts, the "source-path-goal" schema, for instance, which humans learn at an early age by crawling from a starting point to an end point, undergirds numerous metaphors that organize certain events in our lives as narratives with a beginning, a middle, and an end. "Balance," a bodily action schema, provides many metaphors for mental health, ethical behavior, and public justice. These primary metaphors are "creative," in the sense that they create an analogy linking two phenomena through similarity; they do not rely on the recognition of an inherent, objective similarity between two phenomena—a recognition which embodied realism (like other philosophical realisms) assumes to be humanly impossible. Because these and numerous other primary metaphors link everyday experience to sensorimotor phenomena, most conceptual thinking cannot occur without metaphors. Metaphors originating in the cognitive unconscious structure the human perception of all experience.

The foundational schemas and primary metaphors identified by Lakoff and Johnson provide content as well as form to human thinking. Each of their concepts, together with their associated metaphors, constrains the kinds of meanings that can follow from it. The bodily action concept of "counterforce," for example, entails images that involve a head-on meeting of material forces. This schema helps to organize our perceptions of ice hockey, historical revolutions, and similar phenomena, but it could not be made to fit the content usually organized by other bodily action concepts, such as "full-empty" and "iteration."

According to Lakoff and Johnson, these submerged schemas and their metaphorical extensions are nearly universal to human experience: "Much of a person's conceptual system is either universal or widespread across languages and cultures. Our conceptual systems are not totally relative and not merely a matter of historical contingency, even though a degree of conceptual relativity does exist and even though historical contingency does matter very much."[31] Within embodied realism, cultural relativity and the historicity of experience occur in two ways. Lakoff and Johnson note that cultures typically differ in their "worldviews," which they define as a "consistent constellation" of foundational concepts and primary metaphors over one or more cultural domains, such as politics, morality, psychology, etc."[32] Certain basic schemas and metaphors, in other words, organize significant areas of a culture. Secondly, new "complex metaphors and other conceptual blends" can arise that facilitate shifts in thinking and historical change.[33] The complex metaphor "time is money," for instance, helped to structure the rise of capitalism in the West—a metaphor largely absent from cultures with less quantifiable conceptions of time.

Hence, for Lakoff and Johnson, all mental operations are built on transhistorical, though not transcendental, sources. That is, cognition emerges from every individual's experience with the material world and structures all historical cultures, but it is not a part of some ahistorical, immaterial human nature. The same might be said of such concepts as narrative, gender, and hierarchy—terms that can be shown to derive from

[31] Ibid., 6.
[32] Ibid., 511.
[33] Ibid., 97.

basic-level categories and foundational schemas, and which are also, consequently, universal to all human cultures. Human biology and the material world are logically prior to cognition for Lakoff and Johnson. In the source-path-goal example above, for example, babies must have some experience of human interaction and the pull of gravity to learn to crawl. "At the heart of embodied realism," state Lakoff and Johnson, "is our physical engagement with an environment in an ongoing series of interactions."[34] Thus they reject a strict subject-object dichotomy which results either in an epistemology of disembodied objectivity or intersubjective relativism. Their philosophy has affinities with the realism of John Dewey, Hilary Putnam, and Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Lakoff and Johnson's embodied realism views several of the assertions of poststructuralism as "empirically incorrect."[35] Like other philosophical realisms, embodied realism does not claim a God's eye notion of objectivity, but it does reject the anti-foundationalism of poststructuralism. Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive semantics also counters a claim of Saussurian semiotics, upon which deconstruction rests, that the relation between signifiers and signifieds is completely arbitrary. Rather, they state, most language "is neither completely arbitrary nor completely predictable, but rather 'motivated' to some degree."[36] That is, the parts of most words, their morphemes, "motivate" the meaning of the word as a whole. Lakoff and Johnson give as an example the word "refrigerator." If the meanings of the parts of "refrigerator" were added together, the word would mean "something that makes things cold again," an approximate meaning that is neither arbitrary nor predictable but can be said to be motivated by the morphemes of the noun (464). They also dispute Derrida's notion of "différance," likewise based in Saussure—the doctrine that signs come in oppositional pairs which consequently force interpreters to define one sign in terms of its opposite (e.g., male/female, black/white), even though any final designation of meaning is impossible. According to the semantics of cognitive science, "there is nothing in the world or people that fixes these interpretations" (466). Lakoff and Johnson demonstrate that interpreters of signs have many more choices than the oppositional pairings that Saussure and Derrida assume, including ironic reversals of apparently opposite meanings. Finally, as already noted, Lakoff and Johnson dispute the historical and cultural relativism of poststructuralism. Representational systems across cultures and historical time periods are not incommensurable, they assert. Anthropologists and historians may translate and interpret among different cultures and time periods because certain spatial relation and bodily action concepts are universal to human perception and experience.[37]

Consequently, embodied realism resolves the major epistemological problems facing historians eager to continue using "experience" for their historical explanations and historiographical justifications. Even Bryan Palmer, who has little historical use

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[34] Ibid., 90.

[35] Ibid., 464.

[36] Ibid.

[37] F. Elizabeth Hart, in her "Matter, System, and Early Modern Studies: Outlines for a Materialist Linguistics," (Configurations, 6.3 [1998], 311–43), uses cognitive science to present a compelling critique of Derrida's latent formalism and ahistoricism, but does not abandon all of the claims of poststructuralism. Her article, as she states, "demonstrate[s] how a cognitive-based poststructuralism better enables us to model the vision of a materialist dialectic of material and cultural exchange" (313).

for subjective experience, could applaud the materialist basis of Lakoff and Johnson's embodied realism. For Zammito and Mohanty, embodied realism provides a solid empirical foundation for much of their postpositivist realism. Its cognitive science demonstrates how cross-cultural commonality is constituted and provides for the possibility of scholarly objectivity of the realist variety based in the universals of embodied experience. Because these universals occur at the unconscious level, however, they do modify Mohanty's optimistic claims for human agency. With ecology—specifically human interaction with the environment that shapes the neural development of the brain—preceding history for Lakoff and Johnson, embodied realism also limits the determining effects of historical context that concern Pickering. To synthesize the insights of Pickering and of Lakoff and Johnson, it appears that experience might best be understood as occurring at two levels, the cognitive and the historical. The universals of the cognitive level always shape how people experience their lives in history but because of the many possibilities of cognitive experience, the cognitive level, though it constrains, never determines the historical level. In effect, it may be possible for historians to incorporate the cognitive unconscious in their explanations of experience and context in much the same way that some historians have used a Freudian or Lacanian unconscious as a foundation for their history writing. To paraphrase Marx, people, not texts, make history, though they never make it in ecologies and with brains of their own choosing.

To understand how the cognitive level has constrained the historical experience of theatregoing, embodied realism requires that the performance historian rejoin theatrical rhetoric and aesthetic style. In conventional theory, the rhetoric/aesthetic distinction assumes a radical dichotomy between experiencing subjects and objectively knowable objects. Although Lakoff and Johnson do not comment directly on this analytical separation in theatre studies, their discussion of the errors of "disembodied scientific realism" is relevant to it. This disembodied way of doing science, they state, "create[s] an unbridgeable ontological chasm between 'objects' which are 'out there' and subjectivity, which is 'in here.'" They continue: "Once the separation is made, there are only two possible, equally erroneous, conceptions of objectivity: Objectivity is either given by the 'things themselves' (the objects) or by the intersubjective structures of consciousness shared by all people (the subjects)."[38] As Lakoff and Johnson point out, what "disembodied realism," like most aesthetic and rhetorical theory, "misses is that, as embodied, imaginative creatures, *we never were separated or divorced from reality in the first place.*"[39] Restated in theatrical terms, the "response" of the audience was never separated or divorced from the "reality" on stage at all. Consequently, humans can gain no objective understanding about the formal properties of theatrical objects on the stage or of a separable, discrete response to them from members of the audience. The relationship connecting spectators to the stage and events on the stage to the audience must be understood as a single phenomenon.

Cognitive science provides insight into the psychological mechanism that makes this relationship possible in all performances. Although I will limit the following discussion to dramatic theatre for the sake of clarity and concision, it will be evident that this mechanism engages "spectators" with "actors" in all modes of performance.

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[38] Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, 93.
[39] Ibid., 93. Emphasis in original.

Drawing on experiments from several researchers, Lakoff and Johnson discuss the primary means by which humans imaginatively identify themselves with others in fictitious, "as if" situations. The ability to imitate another person that is learned in childhood involves imagining oneself as inhabiting the body of the other—metaphorically projecting the self onto someone else. This, of course, is the basis of theatre, for both actors and spectators, and it occurs in two primary ways: advisory projection and empathetic projection. In advisory projection, state Lakoff and Johnson, "I am projecting my values onto you so that I experience your life with my values. In the other type, empathetic projection, I am experiencing your life, but with your values projected onto my subjective experience."[40] In theatrical terms, both kinds of projection involve spectators imaginatively occupying the bodies of actors (and potentially others) in the performance. The difference involves "values," one's own or another's.

While the mechanics of projection are simple enough, the results are often quite complex. Most performances of drama involve the audience in numerous moments of advisory and empathetic projection, a distinction that is further complicated when the spectator's values are nearly identical with the values of the figure identified with on the stage. And who or what is this figure? In realist plays, in which the presence of the actor mostly "becomes" a fictitious character for the audience, spectators will primarily imagine themselves projecting their subjectivity onto the body of the "character." In some modes of theatre that encourage the audience to separate the actor from the character, however—productions of Brecht's and Pirandello's plays are obvious examples— spectators may mix their projections between actors and characters. But characters, of course, have no bodies without actors; the possibilities for complexity in advisory and empathetic projection multiply.

The approach to theatrical rhetoric embedded in Lakoff and Johnson's philosophy comes closest to the phenomenological materialism advocated in *Theatre and Everyday Life: An Ethics of Performance* by Alan Read and *The Fate of the Object: From Modern Object to Postmodern Sign in Performance, Art, and Poetry* by Jon Erickson.[41] Read locates the process of theatre in the interplay of spectating and performing bodies. "Theatre is an expressive practice that involves an audience through the medium of images at the center of which is the human body," he states.[42] *Theatre and Everyday Life* draws on theatre history to remind readers that actors and spectators shared the same auditorium light until very recently, for example. For Read, the dynamic of interacting bodies in the same space continues to be a prerequisite for any viable definition of theatrical performance.

Although Erickson's *The Fate of the Object* leaves unquestioned the conventional subject/object dichotomy of conventional rhetoric and aesthetics, the author's understanding of an actor's "presence" is useful for teasing out an implicit theatrical rhetoric within embodied realism. Actors, says Erickson, can never fully become nor

[40] Ibid., 281.

[41] Alan Read, *Theatre and Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, 1993) and Jon Erickson, *The Fate of the Object* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995). Significantly, Lakoff and Johnson recognize that certain insights of phenomenology and materialism coincide closely with embodied realism (*Philosophy of the Flesh*, 108–109). Johnson, in fact, refers to his position as "descriptive or empirical phenomenology" (*The Body in the Mind*, xxxvii).

[42] Read, *Theatre and Everyday Life*, 10.

fully erase a spectator's perception of them as both corporal beings and signs of some Other person; they are, consequently, both bodies and characters, simultaneously. In fact, alleges Erickson, "the tension between the *body as object* and the *body as sign* gives birth to an awareness of *presence* as the tension between basic corporal being and the becoming of signification."[43] Following Lakoff and Johnson, one might emend Erickson's statement to note the gestalt nature of audience projection. That is, spectators project themselves onto the "presence" of actors, a presence constituted both by the body of the actor and by the actor's significance in the performance. This significance might range from the meaning of the persona a Brechtian actor presents to the audience as "herself" to the meaning of a fully embodied male "character" portrayed by a Method actor. Hence, spectators project their subjectivity onto the presence of an actor on stage. In advisory projection, the spectator reads his or her own values into that presence. When the projection is empathetic, spectators take what they perceive are the values of that presence and read them into their imaginative experience of it.

Projection onto the presence of an actor is the first step in the dynamics of dramatic rhetoric and response on stage. Spectator projection of a metaphor binding these actor-characters together in a narrative is generally the second. Narrative imagining is a foundational part of human cognition. As literary-cognitive theorist Mark Turner notes, "storytelling is a constant mental activity . . . essential to human thought." The urge to narrate proceeds from the source-path-goal image schema and frames numerous events in everyday life, from pouring a cup of coffee to imagining a journey. Rather than being optional or merely literary, narrativity "appears to be inseparable from our evolutionary past and our necessary personal experience,"[44] states Turner. This human proclivity to imagine stories prompts theatregoers to look for narrative links among the events on stage and connect them into cohesive series and wholes. As with projections onto the presence of actors, the preferred forms and genres of narrative imagining often vary widely among periods and cultures. Hence different kinds of actor-characters and specific stories about them have gained popularity in specific historical periods. A wily hero and his voyage home had significant relevance for ancient Greeks listening to the story of Odysseus. Eighteenth-century Londoners, on the other hand, eagerly watched stories that separated true "men of sentiment" from false ones.

If imaginative projection couples spectators to the presence of actors embedded in stories, how can the theorist-historian forge a new synthesis of rhetoric and aesthetics to account for this linkage between audiences and performers? Rhetoric in this larger sense must now encompass not only how, but what audiences projected themselves onto and what stories were told through these actor-characters on the stage. Plays will be aesthetically successful and rhetorically persuasive, then, insofar as they encouraged spectators to project themselves onto "figures that mattered," to adopt a phrase from philosopher Judith Butler—figures involved, as well, in "stories that mattered."[45] This sense of rhetoric approaches Kenneth Burke's understanding that persuasion is

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[43] Erickson, *The Fate of the Object*, 62. Emphasis in the original.

[44] Mark Turner, *The Literary Mind*, 12, 25.

[45] See *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993). In general, Lakoff and Johnson would agree with Butler that humans learn to perform sexuality, although they would disagree with the Lacanian premises of her argument. Much of this learning occurs at an earlier age and happens through processes that Freud and Lacan did not recognize.

always preceded by identification; for rhetoric to work in the theatre, spectators must be able to identify the story they are watching and be able to identify with it—in Lakoff and Johnson's terms, to project themselves onto it.[46] Burke's sense of rhetoric gets us closer to embodied realism, but the notion of projection as identification still involves subjects operating on objects. For the kind of interaction that Lakoff and Johnson envision, the figures projected onto must, in effect, push back; the specific content of the actor's presence—both his/her corporality and significance in the narrative—must both empower and constrain the kinds of identification and projection possible for spectators in the theatre. Because of this interplay of projection and actorly content embedded in narrative, rhetoric is always a local affair, difficult to generalize about beyond groups of theatrical events in which certain kinds of audiences meet specific kinds of figures and experience particular stories on the stage. As a result of this interaction, certain kinds of plays fashion certain groups of spectators and vice versa.

III

The specificity of aesthetic and rhetorical dynamics in the theatre necessarily throws theatrical production and response, aesthetics and rhetoric, into the arena of history. Nonetheless, although embodied realism offers epistemological reassurance for most historians, its methodological implications for the practice of history, specifically the writing of performance history, are far from clear. As Lakoff and Johnson recognize, humans use basic level categories, schemas, and primary metaphors thousands of times each day to make sense of their world. With so many category types and metaphors at play, how can the historian know which ones achieved more relative importance than others during a specific historical period? Luckily for the performance historian, performances tend to be "condensational events" in which certain primary metaphors, condensed from cultural-historical interaction, emerge as significant.[47] Watching a modern football game, for example, involves the spectator in thousands of cognitive processes, but among these the spatial relations concepts of containment and part-whole and the physical action concepts of compulsion, iteration, and counterforce recur with enough regularity and complexity to shape and even constitute what most spectators would call their experience of the game. The performance historian interested in understanding the role of football in the context of contemporary America might begin with this relatively formal understanding of how the game is played and investigate other public events in which these spatial relations and physical action schemas predominate. This method begins by assuming that Lakoff and Johnson's terminology describes real interactions in the material world of a performance and then it uses empirical and hermeneutical techniques to find and investigate the same events in similar performances.

[46] See *A Rhetoric of Motives*, 3rd edition (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969). Robert Wess's insights into Burkean rhetoric, in *Kenneth Burke: Rhetoric, Subjectivity, Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), are particularly relevant in this regard. Also significant for spectatorial meaning-making is what Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson have termed "the principle of relevance." From their point of view, audience members will process new information in the theatre only if it contributes to their understanding of the dramatic/theatrical context and if the processing effort is small. See *Relevance: Communication and Cognition* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

[47] The term "condensational event" is Roach's. See his *Cities of the Dead*, 28–30, et passim.

Before getting very far in the above example, however, the historian will need some help in making sense of the many other public performances that are like football games. She or he will need a larger explanatory scheme to relate football games and similar performances (say, political contests and corporate takeovers) to the larger processes and traditions of American history and its cultures. At this juncture, the historian must choose from among a variety of theories that relate a culture-historical part to its larger whole. Systems theory, social practice theory, hegemony theory—and their many combinations and variations—are all possible, as long as their claims and procedures are adequately fitted to the empiricism and hermeneutics of embodied realism. Following Lakoff and Johnson, for example, the hegemony of a dominant culture may now be defined as mutually supportive "constellations" of concepts and metaphors legitimating the power of certain social groups and classes. Given the biological reservoir of cognitive possibilities in the brain, however, hegemonic containment is always structurally unstable. As theorist Michael Ryan once noted in another context, cultural hegemony, read through the lens of Lakoff and Johnson, would become "a blanket thrown over a tiger rather than a windowless prison." In the terminology of Raymond Williams, the cognitive reserve of concepts and metaphors beyond the constellations of the dominant culture constitutes a potentially enormous "residual culture," some of which could become "oppositional," given the right agents and circumstances.[48]

Using the insights of embodied realism assisted by a modified version of hegemony theory (and assuming adequate evidence), it is possible to derive a valid method for explaining the normative experiences of most spectators at the production of a specific play in history. Let us suppose that the historian is interested in exploring the audience's experience of the production of *A Hatful of Rain*, by Michael Gazzo, which played on Broadway in 1955 and 1956. *Hatful* opened at the Lyceum Theatre on 9 November 1955 with Ben Gazzara in the leading role and ran for over two hundred performances. Many questions might be asked about spectators' experience of the show, but for purposes of this methodological exploration we will limit the discussion to initial explorations of their experience of the theatrical space, the narrative of the play, and the presence of actor-character Ben Gazzara–Johnny Pope. Determining whether the experience of *Hatful* worked within, outside of, or perhaps against the dominant culture of the period is the general task of the historian interested in fusing hegemony theory with the cognitive psychology of Lakoff and Johnson.

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[48] Michael Ryan, "The Politics of Film: Discourse, Psychoanalysis, Ideology," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 485. On cultural hegemony, see Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, ed. Quinton Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971); Raymond Williams, "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980), 31–49; and Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). For useful interpretations of Gramsci and Williams, see Ernesto Laclau and Chantel Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: New Left Books, 1985); T.J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *American Historical Review*, 90 (June 1985), 567–93; and my essay, "Using the Concept of Cultural Hegemony to Write Theatre History," in *Interpreting the Theatrical Past: Essays in Historiography and Performance*, eds. Thomas Postlewait and Bruce A. McConachie (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 1989), 37–58.

The methodology appropriate for this task is theoretically informed hermeneutics. Assuming the validity of Lakoff and Johnson's insights, it is clear that certain image schemas predominated in the mainstream culture of the 1950s. Were these mostly the same schemas that organized the spectator's perception and experience of spatiality, narrative, and presence at the production of *Hatful*? If so, the historian could conclude that the production largely worked within the dominant American culture of the 1950s. Determining the image schemas of both the production and the culture involves hermeneutics, a process by which the historian moves back and forth between the evidence and the image schemas available for interpreting and explaining that evidence. This process gradually eliminates some of the two dozen or so major image schemas identified by Lakoff and Johnson as the basis for probable explanations and focuses on the few that can account for more of the available evidence.

With regard to the dominant culture of the 1950s, the historian must assess a wide variety of evidence to discover the key image schemas that shaped the decade. Wide reading among many cultural histories that survey several domains of the culture, coupled with close attention to several significant primary sources, will be the primary tool here. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the historian will find that many Americans experienced the dominant culture of the 1950s much as they experienced a football game; the image schemas of containment, part-whole, compulsion, iteration, and counterforce shaped significant domains of everyday lives. Among these relevant images, the schema of "containment" will likely draw the interest of most American historians who know anything about the U.S. in the 1950s. "Containment" named the foreign policy of the United States during the early Cold War and continues to shape the explanations of several significant cultural histories, including Robert Corber's *Homosexuality in Cold War America* (containment in the homosexual closet), Alan Nadel's *Containment Culture* (an analysis of several narrative responses to the Atomic age), and Elaine Tyler May's *Homeward Bound* (the suburban family as container).[49] From this general overview, the historian might suspect that the schema of containment could have been a potent nucleus of the dominant culture of the decade, around which swirled other schemas in significant fields of cultural force.

To investigate this hunch more thoroughly, the historian would then check Lakoff and Johnson's understanding of the dynamics of "containment." According to Johnson, five entailments are embedded in this schema:

> (i) The experience of containment typically involves protection from, or resistance to, external forces. When eyeglasses are in a case, they are protected against forceful impacts. (ii) Containment also limits and restricts forces within the container. When I am in a room or in a jacket, I am restrained in my forceful movements. (iii) Because of this restraint of forces, the contained object gets a relative fixity of location. For example, the fish gets located in the fishbowl. The cup is held in the hand. (iv) This relative fixing of location within the container means that the contained object becomes either accessible or inaccessible to the observer. It is either held so that it can be observed or else the container itself blocks or hides the object from view. (v) Finally, we experience transitivity in containment.

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[49] Robert J. Corber, *Homosexuality in Cold War America: Resistance and the Crisis of Masculinity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); and Alan Nadel, *Containment Culture: American Narratives, Postmodernism, and the Atomic Age* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995).

> If B is in A, then whatever is in B is also in A. If I am in my bed and my bed is in my room, then I am also in my room.[50]

With this definition in hand, the historian can look more closely to see how thoroughly "containment" penetrated and organized several domains of the culture. Clearly, it was a part of the thinking that underlay the National Security Act of 1947, which established the CIA and the security protocols of the era. Taken as a whole, the act maps the nation-state as a unit of containment; inside the U.S. is secret knowledge requiring protection. Regarding Johnson's first entailment above, the act is designed to protect this knowledge from external forces, chiefly the Soviet Union, although theoretically any force in the rest of the world might become an antagonist. In terms of (ii), containment not only limits the ways in which the security establishment will handle these secrets, it also puts severe restrictions on the freedoms of all other citizens within the boundaries of fortress America. The other three entailments also organized the 1947 act, including the transitivity of containment, which, under the logic of McCarthyism, meant that citizens in all private organizations within the U.S. must be suspected of aiding Communism. A parent in a local PTA was also a citizen in the nation-state and might be an innocent participant in a cell of subversives.

Other "containers" pervaded cold war culture. Americans during the 1950s tended to regard the self as a container, typically an ego of innocence and vulnerability. Thus, popular media analysts like Vance Packard (*The Hidden Persuaders*, 1956) convinced many Americans to worry that advertising was piercing the mental boundaries of American selves and injecting them with false values (i) and psychoanalysts, never before (or since) as popular in the United States, analyzed their patients' dreams to understand the hidden memories within their selves (iv). Talking heads and Hollywood films typically understood the white, suburban family as another container, especially insofar as it exerted sexual restraints on its husbands and wives (ii). Imagining the nation as the Chosen People of God encouraged many citizens to fixate on the presumed qualities of the "American character" during the 1950s (iii). Nonetheless, goodness could harbor sin, a hidden but very real threat within the Chosen People (iv) that led to much popular interest in repentance and salvation during the early Cold War. For many Americans, marital "togetherness," the Family, and the Chosen People provided imaginative, transitive boxes (v) within which American morality could be protected and vindicated as a model for the "Free World." Teasing out the entailments of these and other cold war containers could easily consume several volumes of cultural history. In short, the historian can find numerous instances in which Americans mapped the schema of containment onto their laws, their families, their literature, their religion, and other domains of their culture to explain significant experiences in their lives. "Containment" was as ubiquitous in the dominant culture of cold war America as was the spatial relations schema of "balance" in the culture of Enlightenment France.

Having established the general dynamics of what the historian might begin calling "containment culture," s/he next turns to the production of *Hatful*. Did most spectators' experience of its spatiality, its narrative, and the presence of its star performer also legitimate and hence reinforce containment cognition? Turning first to

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[50] Johnson, *The Body in the Mind*, 22.

spatiality, the historian will recognize the Lyceum Theatre as a conventional Broadway auditorium. Like all other theatre buildings in the Broadway area during the 1950s, the Lyceum mandated that spectators in orchestra and balcony seats look at a production on a stage that was framed and visually contained by a proscenium arch. This common spatiality had important implications for the reception of every Broadway production. In addition to the schema of containment, simple observation and deduction reveal that the schemas of "center-periphery," and "near-far" organize this spatial dynamic in the unconscious minds of humans. Proscenium spatiality draws on what Neil Smith and Cindi Katz term the "absolute space" of Euclidian geometry and Cartesian philosophy.[51] Historically, the positioning of the audience in proscenium staging developed from the perspectivism of Renaissance painting. As idealized in the Teatro Farnese, for instance, the all-seeing eyes of the Renaissance Prince at the center of the auditorium gazed toward a horizon line behind the proscenium and fixed objects in space according to their distance from his vision. With the proscenium arch as a picture frame organizing stage objects for this type of panoptic vision, the West discovered a means of transforming the assumptions of Cartesian philosophy into theatre architecture and viewing experience. As Daniel Dennett has noted, Descartes conceived of thinking as a mental theatre in which a single, silent spectator observed metaphorical objects illuminated by the inner light of reason. Hence, human under-standing could arrive at objective insight secure in the knowledge that "his" [sic] mental representations were a true picture of the external world.[52] Following from its foundation in the concepts of containment, center-periphery, and near-far, Cartesian thinking organized a world in which people believed they could gaze objectively at passive objects.

This legacy partly shaped the modern realist theatre, with the apparent objectivity of the photograph standing as the guarantor of truth on the realist stage. Other conventions of modern viewing in the theatre also reinforced the Cartesian assump-tion that spectators could separate themselves from the realities on stage and gaze at them as the ideal jailor in Jeremy Bentham's "Panopticon" might have gazed at his prisoners. The dimming of house lights, for example, discouraged spectators from believing that they might be co-producers of theatrical enjoyment with the actors and led to a more privatized theatrical experience for the audience. Likewise, the disap-pearance of the prompter and the partial or wholesale erasure of the technical means of production from the view of spectators (such as changes in scenery and lighting) also reinforced their belief that they could separate themselves from the "objects" on stage. These conventions shaped most forms of bourgeois theatre in the twentieth century, including the viewing experience of all Broadway spectators in the 1950s.[53]

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[51] N. Smith, and C. Katz,"Grounding Metaphor: Towards a Spatialized Politics," *Place and the Politics of Identity*, ed. M. Keith and S. Pile (London: Routledge, 1993), 75.

[52] See Daniel Dennett, *Consciousness Explained* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1991). The cognitive science case against Cartesian thinking is well argued by Antonio R. Demasio in *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: Putnam, 1994).

[53] As Foucault noted, the Panopticon extended Enlightenment principles of objectification. On panoptic vision in performance, see Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Objects of Ethnography," *Exhib-iting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, ed. I. Karp and S.D. Levine (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 401–34. W.B. Worthen, *Modern Theater and the Rhetoric of Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 12–98, makes a similar point about objectification as

From the point of view of Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive science, however, the attempt to induce an objectifying gaze from spectators can never completely succeed because it posits auditors as subjects and the stage as a world of objects, a dichotomy that does not exist. The question for the historian, then, is what kind of projection from its audience did proscenium viewing encourage, advisory or empathetic? Put this way, it is apparent that the panopticon effect of the proscenium arch primarily induced advisory projection, because its tendency toward objectification made empathy, the projection of an actor-character's values onto the self, more difficult. On the other hand, proscenium spatiality cannot rule out empathy. As a fundamental human attribute, empathetic projection cannot be erased from theatrical interaction, though it may be made less desirable for spectators. Consequently, the historian's conclusion about the likelihood of advisory projection dominating the spectator's experience of *Hatful* can be only tentative. It must be tested against other evidence.

Did the script of *Hatful* primarily evoke advisory projection for Johnny Pope, the protagonist of Gazzo's melodrama? In conventional rhetorical terms, does Gazzo construct his play so as to induce his audience to take Johnny's values as our own or do we rather pity his emptiness and confusion and project our own values onto him? The exposition of Gazzo's realist play reveals that Johnny Pope fought in the Korean War, received psychological treatment after his return, went to college on the GI Bill, took a job as a machinist, and got married. In the present time of the drama, however, he has lost the last of several jobs, stopped attending college, and refuses to make love with or even talk seriously to his wife, even though she is about to have their baby. Near the end of the first scene, the audience learns the reason for his recent behavior— Johnny has become a heroin addict. The rest of the drama explores his attempts to break the habit, mend his marriage, and reconcile with his father and brother. It climaxes in a tempestuous scene when Johnny, hallucinating and badly in need of a fix, breaks out of his bedroom and must be restrained by his family. In the last moments of the drama, his wife calls the police to take Johnny to the hospital.[54] An initial reading of the play suggests that advisory projection, not empathy, is the primary dramatic hook of *Hatful*.

Contextual considerations of some of the reviews sparked by *Hatful* also point to the dominance of advisory projection shaping the experience of spectators. In his review of *Hatful*, Brooks Atkinson called Ben Gazzara's Johnny "a manly performance, moody but free of whining."[55] *Boston Globe* critic Elliott Norton noted that Gazzara's Johnny "carries a burden of anguish manfully except in those moments when the drugs wear off." To designate a performance as manly or a moment on stage when a

inherent to realist theatre. As previously noted, however, objectification caused by the spatiality of realist theatre (or anything else) can never be complete. Other factors in the performance may spark in spectators an empathetic relationship that spatial dynamics cannot control or override.

[54] For the Broadway script of the play, see Michael Vicente Gazzo, *A Hatful of Rain* in *Famous American Plays of the 1950s*, ed. Lee Strasberg (New York: Dell, 1962), 313–84.

[55] The following New York reviewers wrote about *Hatful* after opening night: Chapman, *Daily News* (10 November 1955); Watts, *New York Post* (10 November 1955); McClain, *Journal American* (10 November 1955); Kerr, *New York Herald Tribune* (10 November 1955); Atkinson, *The New York Times* (10 November 1955). Other reviews, including Elliot Norton's for the *Boston Globe*, are in the "Ben Gazzara" and "*Hatful of Rain*" Clipping Files at the New York Public Library of Performing Arts.

manful performance slips into something else suggests that the play evoked some anxiety about gender roles. Any actor performing a credible Johnny Pope might have induced this kind of dubious praise from a critic because the character was posed at a crisis point of cold war masculinity. Since adult masculinity was synonymous with the role of breadwinner, notes social historian Barbara Ehrenreich,

> The man who failed to achieve this role was either not fully adult or not fully masculine. In the schema of male pathology developed by mid-century psychologists, immaturity shaded into infantilism, which was, in turn, a manifestation of unnatural fixation on the mother, and the entire complex of symptomatology reached its clinical climax in the diagnosis of homosexuality.[56]

Johnny Pope is a case study of this type, an adult boy tending toward infantilism and homosexuality who cannot reach authentic manhood until his childhood and wartime traumas are resolved. His drug addiction, while the focus of the drama, is not the source of his problems, which are mired in his search for the mother he never had and the Oedipal rage he still feels toward his father.

To plumb the depths of Johnny's psychology, Gazzo deploys three male pushers who both supply and harass him. When read in the context of cold war paranoia, the interactions between Johnny and the pushers replicate a cold war narrative of compelling concern to many Americans in the mid-1950s. Two of the pushers, Apples, an infantile, giggling homosexual who plays with weapons, and Chuch, an ape-like, slow moving zombie who crushes his victims, are partly alter-ego emblems of Johnny's disintegrating personality. The third, Mother, a reptilian figure in an exquisite suit and dark glasses, is a metaphor for the real mother Johnny lost as a young child. Their names are ironic signifiers of their true nature: "Apples" connotes a fall from grace, a perverted innocence; Chuch, close in sound to "church," is the bestial opposite of a churchman; and Mother, whose only milk is the white powder of heroin, encourages a dependency that could lead to death. Together, they are like a family of pod-people, the desiccated, zombie-like figures from Hollywood's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956). Mother, Apples, and Chuch are the alternative family that could replace Johnny's wife, brother, and father unless he can resolve his problems. More immediately, they suggest that Johnny has regressed to a substitute mother who is turning him into a perverted monster. Johnny may look normal on the outside for much of the time, but on the inside the pod people are destroying his authenticity.

The subtext of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* centered on subversion from within by Communists. Gazzo's family of pushers probably reminded spectators of the same radical Other in the American cold war imagination. In the early 1950s, novelists, politicians, churchmen, and others imagined a variety of "Commies" that continued to circulate in the culture long after the ravages of McCarthyism had passed into memory. Communists were likened to robots such as Chuch, infantile homosexuals like Apples, Mafioso hoodlums similar to Mother, even—in the words of Cardinal Spellman—to "the world's most fiendish, ghoulish men of slaughter,"[57] a designation

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[56] *The Hearts of Men: American Dreams and the Flight from Commitment* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1983), 20.

[57] Quoted by Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 2nd ed. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 96.

that easily applies to all three of Gazzo's grotesques. Senator McCarthy had conflated homosexuals and intellectuals with Communists in such phrases as "dilettante diplomats" and "the prancing mimics of the Moscow party line."[58] In the immensely popular novels by Mickey Spillane in the early 1950s, "commies" were the opposite of wholesome, healthy, and tough Americans. They were decadent, degraded, and soft— "dumb as horse manure," for instance, and easily deserving to die in *One Lonely Night* (1951).[59] Spillane's rhetoric of kill-'em-all machismo travelled widely, infecting even the sober political analysis of *The Vital Center* (1949), by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Schlesinger praised the "new virility" that American postwar leaders had brought to public life, contrasting it to the "political sterility" of the old-guard leftists and the emasculated ruling class. For Schlesinger, Communism was "something secret, sweaty, and furtive, like nothing so much . . . as homosexuals in a boys school."[60]

Like Schlesinger, most anti-Communists agreed that the Red Menace brought with it sexual perversion and chaos. To heighten the latent sexual threat already posed by his monsters, Gazzo introduces Putski, a strung-out, rich young woman wearing nothing more than shoes and a fur coat, into the final appearance of his pushers. The audience probably classified Putski as a nymphomaniac for her sexually suggestive body language. A picture from the souvenir program for the Broadway production shows her sitting in profile on a kitchen chair, her downstage foot propped up on another chair revealing a bare leg, bent at the knee, thus opening a view of her crotch to the three men sitting and standing above her. The pushers, however, remain numb to her proffered charms.[61] Putski's presence on stage pointed up Johnny's precarious sexual relationship with his wife. His addiction-induced impotence is driving his wife into the arms of his brother, a problem both are resisting but neither seems able to resolve. Because of Johnny's boyhood traumas and dependencies, sexual chaos is subverting the domestic happiness of an American family. If he turns passive and soft, this American boy, a key to future national strength, could fatally weaken American society from within.

While the critic-historian can read these concerns into *Hatful*, how can s/he be sure that they were also a part of the cold war audience's experience of the play? There's no evidence in the reviews and or in other material from the production (advertising, photos, press releases, etc.) directly linking the response of the audience to fears about subversion. Here is where the embodied realism of Lakoff and Johnson can assist the historian in moving beyond a narrow empiricist approach to the evidence and help him/her to understand the narrative imagining of historically situated spectators. Following the logic of Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive psychology, if humans are effectively hard-wired for constructing narratives and if containment thinking domi-nated many narratives in the 1950s, it is counter-intuitive not to suppose that spectators, given many inducements to map containment onto the narrative of *Hatful*, would not do so. Spectatorial narrative imagining, which like other cognitive pro-

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[58] Quoted by Lawrence Wittner, *Cold War America: From Hiroshima to Watergate* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), 95.

[59] Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War*, 36.

[60] Quoted by Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 98.

[61] *Hatful* file.

cesses occurs at largely unconscious levels, would not likely lead reviewers and others to comment directly on its dynamics; most narrative construction is simply a part of the cognitive and cultural taken-for-granted. The application of this historical method cannot produce certainty, of course, but it can lead to valid judgments that rely on a kind of cognitive probability.

The historian can turn to Lakoff and Johnson's discussion of the contained self for partial validation of this interpretation of spectator experience. In their chapter on cognitive conceptions of the self in *Philosophy in the Flesh*, Lakoff and Johnson note that the metaphor "the self as container" is but one of several conceptions that individuals and cultures may use to structure "self" understanding; other metaphors include the "physical-object self" and the "social self."[62] When people look at themselves and others as containers, they often look for one or several features within that self to represent its essence. Hence containment thinking typically leads to essentialist thinking, the belief, note Lakoff and Johnson, that "every entity has an 'essence' or 'nature,' that is a collection of properties that makes it the kind of thing it is and is the causal source of its natural behavior."[63] Lakoff and Johnson term this the "folk theory of essences" and discuss its pervasive influence in the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle.[64] The "folk theory of essences" structured much cold war thinking, including the psychologized, authentic self at the center of *Hatful*. The main story of Gazzo's melodrama pits Johnny Pope's psychological authenticity against those who would subvert its essence. Like *The Catcher in the Rye* and *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit*, influential novels of the decade, *Hatful* is a narrative that centers on authenticity, and such narratives typically work within the cognitive logic of containment.

Turning to the presence of Gazzara-Pope in *Hatful*, the historian would want to know how the spectator's experience of "method" acting might have shaped her/his interaction with the performance. When audiences identified with Johnny Pope, they projected themselves onto Ben Gazzara, already renouned in the mid-1950s as a new "method" star. In an interview in *Cue* magazine in 1955—one of several given by Gazzara in the mid-50s—the actor credited Strasberg for his success. Lee, he said, was "a bonafide genius" and "working with him was equivalent to studying with Stanislavsky in an earlier period." The article introduced Gazzara as "typical" of the new Method stars: "They noisily eschew glamour, dress carelessly, are intensely intense. They endless discuss motivation, integrity, the search for values, tab our times the age of anxiety." As if to confirm the cliche of the method actor, Gazzara admitted his therapeutic need to find relaxation through painting: "These are tense times and we are all taut."[65]

Walter Kerr's review suggests how Gazzara used method technique to develop his embodiment of Johnny Pope:

> Ben Gazzara's hopelessly "hooked" veteran is a brilliant tour de force. The alarming tensions of the evening are his to elaborate and to control. Whether he is cocking his head

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[62] Lakoff and Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh*, 267–89.

[63] Ibid., 363.

[64] Ibid., 364–90.

[65] See *Cue* (March 13, 1955), 13 in the "Ben Gazzara" Clipping File, New York Public Library of Performing Arts.

> to one side and twisting his mouth into a sick, self-pitying smile, or diving headfirst into a bed in anguish, the control is there. The spine-tingling eruptions are violently credible; the ordinary man behind them is credible too.[66]

Gazzara's control as a performer allowed for sharp contrasts between Johnny's generalized goodness and decency within and the Monster Addict without that threatened to overwhelm his true self.

Colin Counsell's semiotic reading of method performing helps to locate Gazzara's performance within the containment culture of the Cold War. Counsell notes four general attributes of method signification from actors on stage and film: a physical ease that audiences understood as a sign of naturalness and authenticity; eruptive and often unpredictable emotions (e.g., anguish, trauma, joy, etc.) usually read by spectators as psychological intensity and/or disturbance; and signs from the actor such as behavioral tics, "spontaneous" vocal inflections, and nuances of gesture that indicated a complex inner life. These "three consistent features of the Method performance," states Counsell, "form the core of its iconography, for although Strasbergian actors often employ their own unique performance personae, their mannerisms nevertheless fall into predictable categories, proffering the same orders of meaning."[67] These mannerisms were so readily observable in the performances of Brando, Gazzara, and numerous other method actors that they could be parodied by the end of the 1950s.

Counsell's fourth attribute of "method" acting confirms its ties to the contained, psychologized self of cold war culture, and thus to the self of Gazzara-Pope in *Hatful*. According to Counsell, the struggle of the essential self to break free—from social codes, a tortured past, drug addiction, a restrictive conscience, or any of numerous other oppressions—constituted the primary conflict of method performance. Counsell calls the signs of this conflict "the iconography of neurosis,"[68] explaining:

> When we see characters wrestling with language, fighting to communicate their emotions and failing, we read this as an indication that language is inadequate to convey them, that their thoughts and feelings run deeper than words can express. In inferring the existence of 'blocked' feelings, then, the failed attempt at expression signals to spectators that the character possesses dimensions which cannot be seen.[69]

The result, says Counsell, is that spectators perceive a fractured character, divided against himself—Counsell notes that the "method" actor of public perception was always male—in the grip of neurotic struggle.

Counsell may be mostly correct regarding the experience for spectators of method performance, but it is unlikely that audiences classified the presence of method actor-characters as neurotic. Following Counsell, Gazzara-Pope in *Hatful* may have seemed somewhat crazy, but, more importantly, most spectators probably viewed his psychological intensity and eruptions in a positive light. Kerr, for example, found Gazzara's

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[66] Kerr, *New York Herald Tribune*, 10 November 1955.

[67] Colin Counsell, *Signs of Performance: An Introduction to Twentieth-Century Theatre* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 59. See also my essay, "Method Acting and the Cold War," *Theatre Survey* 41:1 (May 2000), 47–67.

[68] Counsell, *Signs of Performance*, 66.

[69] Ibid., 67.

"stammering vernacular" to be "sharp, urban, honest in the best Actors Studio style," but sympathized with the character's attempt to fight through his psychological problems and regain his sanity, his wife, and his family. Likewise, none of the critics dismissed the figure as a hopeless neurotic; all believed the struggle of an innocent, authentic self to break free from drug addiction was worthy of sympathy and admiration. More likely, Gazzara-Pope's apparent emptiness, his absence of a clear psychology, invited audiences to fill in the blank through advisory projection with ethical attributes that they ascribed to themselves. From the spectator's point of view, method actor-characters like Gazzara-Pope could be sympathetic victims, fellow sufferers, and even stars.

The historian's initial investigation of *Hatful* using Lakoff and Johnson's cognitive psychology and a modified version of hegemony theory, then, will likely lead to the tentative conclusion that the production did induce many of the same experiences for spectators as the dominant culture of the 1950s. There is significant evidence that the experience of containment provided the main tie linking the spatiality, narrative framework, and star acting of *Hatful* to the cold war culture of the era. Other links joining the narrative of the play to the larger culture of containment might also be adduced to support this claim—hypodermic models of influence (from drug addiction to brainwashing), images of a vacuumed-out self, and the narcissism of consumerism to fill this empty self, among them. Significantly, the dominant culture also understood the method actor as a type of narcissist, even as it celebrated his self involvement.[70] These links increase the cognitive probability that audiences processed much of their enjoyment of *Hatful* through the image schema of containment.

As suggestive as these links are, however, other questions must be answered before the historian could claim that the production of *Hatful* worked primarily within the dominant culture for its audience. First, the historian must know more about the social demographics and dynamics of mid-50s Broadway spectators. Were most of them a part of the hegemonic culture? Second, containment thinking, though a significant part of the dominant culture, cannot have been the whole of it. Which other image schemas played a significant role in the cultural imagining and how did they intersect with *Hatful*? Productions of plays like *Hatful* rarely achieve cultural influence by themselves. What other plays (and films, novels, and other performances) from the period were doing similar cultural work and how significant were their general effects? Also, how were some theatrical events of the 1950s able to problematize and perhaps even oppose the hegemony of containment culture? It may be that the Williams-Kazan collaboration of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, which shared many similarities with *Hatful* (including a starring role for Gazzara), will provide a telling contrast. Finally, while the cognitive categories of Lakoff and Johnson can help to describe and

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[70] To establish these links, see Gazzo's play, the reviews, and several cultural and theatre historians, including Philip Cushman, *Constructing the Self, Constructing America: A Cultural History of Psychotherapy* (Boston: Addison, Wesley, 1995); Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1979); Catherine Lutz, "Epistemology of the Bunker: The Brainwashed and Other New Subjects of Permanent War," *Inventing the Psychological: Toward a Cultural History of Emotional Life in America*, ed. Joel Pfister and Nancy Schnog (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 245–67; and Steve Vineberg, *Method Actors: Three Generations of an American Acting Style* (New York: Macmillan, 1991).

interpret a dominant culture, they cannot take the historian very far in explaining where it came from. What schemas constructed the hegemonic culture in the U.S. before the 1950s and why did containment culture take its place? The historian eager to explain this shift would need to deploy modes of doing history consonant with the embodied realism of Lakoff and Johnson. There are several possibilities here, but Joan Scott's linguistic idealism is not among them.