

English 870: Seminar in Folklore

The Ethnography of Performance

Autumn 2004
MW 11:30-1:18
Denney 262
08309-2
Dorothy Noyes
Denney 545, 2-0387
noyes.10@osu.edu
T 3:30-5:30, W 9:30-11:30

Since the 1970s, the performance turn in folklore, anthropology, and related disciplines has illuminated our understanding of agency and efficacy in cultural production. In a major revision of the modern culture concept, it focuses on cultural forms as process and practice: not texts exemplifying a static shared worldview but historically situated, conventional transactions among persons. As part of the philosophy of language's critique of reference, it looks at how language is used to construct reality; reacting to the focus on deep structure in most grand theory, it insists on the significance of material and interactional surfaces. Today it is newly relevant as a corrective to the mystique of "values" and/or identities in contemporary cultural politics.

This seminar will examine both programmatic texts and selected case studies in the ethnography of performance: that is, an approach based in "thick description" of instances. While theory in the field has tended to develop within genre specializations, we will examine verbal art, cultural performance (ritual, festival, spectacle) and the performance of self together in the attempt to illustrate common issues and a general paradigm. Students will share in preparing for discussion and write a research paper: literary and historical topics are welcome as well as field-based projects.

Requirements

Response papers and general participation, 50%

By 9:00 PM of the night before each class meeting, students will post to the class listserv a short reaction to the assigned readings (a substantial page or two), posing issues for discussion the next day. Leave yourselves some time to read each other's reactions.

You may miss one response paper without being penalized. Absences will, obviously, affect your participation grade. I won't grade the response papers; a bit before the middle of the quarter, I will send you on e-mail a general evaluation of your participation in the class.

Final paper, 50%. Proposal due on Wednesday, 9/29.

The final paper may take one of several forms, depending on your current needs and interests:

- a case study of a specific performance or set of performances, informed by some of the theorists we are reading

- a literature review going more deeply into some aspect of the course
- a research proposal

Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own: it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. And remember: to plagiarize convincingly is much more difficult than to do the work yourself.

The Office for Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS at 2-3307.

Texts

The following books have been ordered at SBX only:

- Bauman, Richard 1984 (2d ed.). *Verbal Art as Performance* Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press.
- Basso, Keith. 1979. *Portraits of "the Whiteman."* Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Scott, James C. 1990. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance.* New Haven: Yale University Press.

Readings marked ONLINE are available through the journal databases on the library Web site: do a search in Oscar under the journal title, then search the article from there. Other readings are on closed reserve in the library. (The coursepack with copyright permissions was estimated at \$168, so I opted for this less convenient but more affordable system.)

9/22 Introduction

9/27 The performance turn in folklore, linguistics, and anthropology

Read Hymes, Dell. 1974. "Social Anthropology, Sociolinguistics, and the Ethnography of Speaking." *Foundations in Sociolinguistics*, 83-117. Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press.

Hymes, Dell. 1975. "Folklore's Nature and the Sun's Myth." *Journal of American Folklore* 88:345-69. ONLINE

Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs 1990. "Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19:59-88. ONLINE

Also rec. Clifford Geertz 1983. "Blurred Genres: On the Refiguration of Social Thought." In *Local Knowledge*, pp.19-35. New York: Basic Books.

Sherry Ortner 1984, "Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26:126-66.

José Limón and M. Jane Young 1986. "Frontiers, Settlements, and Developments in Folklore Studies, 1972-1985." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 15:437-60.

9/29 Form, function, emergence

Read Bauman, *Verbal Art as Performance* (Bauman essay only)

Due Paper proposal

10/4 Genre

Read Ben-Amos, Dan 1976. "Analytical Categories and Ethnic Genres." In Ben-Amos, ed. *Folklore Genres*, pp.215-242. Austin: U of Texas Press.

Gossen, Gary 1976. "Chamula Genres of Verbal Behavior." In *Verbal Art as Performance*.

Abrahams, Roger D. 1976. "The Complex Relations of Simple Forms." In Ben-Amos, ed. *Folklore Genres*, pp.193-214. Austin: U of Texas Press.

Morson, Gary Saul, and Caryl Emerson 1990. "Theory of Genres." *Mikhail Bakhtin: Creation of a Prosaics*, pp.271-305. Stanford: Stanford U.P.

Charles Briggs and Richard Bauman 1992. "Genre, Intertextuality, and Social Power." *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 2:131-172.

10/6 Frame and metacommunication

Read Jakobson, Roman 1960. "Linguistics and Poetics. In *Style in Language*, ed. T. Sebeok, pp.350-377. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Bateson, Gregory 1972 (1955). "A Theory of Play and Fantasy." In *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, pp.177-193. New York: Ballantine.

Babcock, Barbara 1976. "The Story in the Story: Metanarration in Folk Narrative." In *Verbal Art as Performance*.

Hymes, Dell. 1981. "Breakthrough into Performance." In *In Vain I Tried to Tell You: Essays in Native American Ethnopoetics*, pp.79-141. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

10/11 Reflexivity

Read Babcock, Barbara 1980. "Reflexivity: Definitions and Discriminations." *Semiotica* 30:1-14.

Basso, *Portraits of "the Whiteman."*

10/13 No class: American Folklore Society meetings

10/18 Transformation

Read Turner, Victor 1969. "Liminality and Communitas"; "Humility and Hierarchy." In *The Ritual Process*, pp.94-130, 166-203. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Turner, Victor 1974. "Religious Paradigms and Political Action." In *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors*, pp.60-97. Ithaca: Cornell.

Schechner, Richard 1988, "From Ritual to Theatre and Back." In *Performance Theory* (rev.ed.), pp. 106-152. New York: Routledge.

10/20
Read

Inversion and the carnivalesque

Geertz, Clifford 1973. "Deep Play." In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p.412-453. New York: Basic Books.

Abrahams, Roger D. and Richard Bauman 1978. "Ranges of Festival Behavior." In Barbara Babcock, ed. *The Reversible World* pp.193-208. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

da Matta, Roberto 1991. "Carnivals, Military Parades, and Processions." In *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes: An Interpretation of the Brazilian Dilemma*, pp.26-60. Notre Dame: U. of Notre Dame Press.

Stallybrass, Peter, and Allon White 1986. "Introduction." *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*, 1-26. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

10/25
Read

Trope, persuasion, representation

Burke, Kenneth 1966. "Definition of Man." *Language as Symbolic Action*, pp.3-24. Berkeley and L.A.: University of California Press.

_____ 1957. "Literature as Equipment for Living." *The Philosophy of Literary Form*, pp. 253-262. New York: Vintage.

_____ 1945. "The Five Key Terms of Dramatism" and "The Four Master Tropes." *A Grammar of Motives*, pp.xv-xxii and 503-517. Berkeley and L.A.: University of California Press.

Fernandez, James W. 1986 (1972), "Persuasions and Performances: Of the Beast in Every Body and the Metaphors of Everyman." In *Persuasions and Performances*, pp.3-27. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

_____ 1986. "Convivial (and Ironic) Attitudes: A Northern Spanish Kayak Festival in its Historical Moment." In *Persuasions and Performances*, pp.264-295. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

10/27
Read

Formalization

Maurice Bloch 1989. "Symbols, Song, Dance, and Features of Articulation: Is Religion an Extreme Form of Traditional Authority?" In *Ritual, History, and Power: Selected Papers in Anthropology*, pp.19-45. London: Athlone.

Briggs, Charles 1988. "Hymns and Prayers." *Competence and Performance*, pp. 289-340. Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press.

11/1
Film
Read

Stewart, Susan 1995. "Lyric Possession." *Critical Inquiry* 22: 34-63. ONLINE.

Flow and virtuosity

Scratch. Doug Pray, 2001

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. 1975. *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety : The Experience of Play in Work and Games*, pp. 24-54. San Francisco : Jossey-Bass Publishers.

- Royce, Anya Peterson. "Virtuosity: The Masque of Nonchalance." In *Anthropology of the Performing Arts: Artistry, Virtuosity, and Interpretation in a Cross-Cultural Perspective*, pp. 19-36. Walnut Creek: Alta Mira.
- 11/3**
Read **Epistemology and performative knowledge**
Fabian, Johannes 1990. *Power and Performance: Ethnographic Explorations through Proverbial Wisdom and Theater in Shaba, Zaire*, Chs. 1-5, 14. Madison: U. of Wisconsin Press.
- 11/8**
Read **Normal appearances and the self**
Goffman, Erving 1967. "On Face-Work" and "The Nature of Deference and Demeanor." *Interaction Ritual*, pp. 5-95. New York: Pantheon.
- Milosz, Czeslaw 1981 (1953). "Ketman." *The Captive Mind*, pp.54-81. New York: Vintage.
- 11/15**
Read **Manipulating normal appearances**
Garfinkel, Harold 1967. "Passing and the Managed Achievement of Sexual Status in an Intersexed Person." In *Studies in Ethnomethodology*, pp.116-185. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.
- Butler, Judith 1988. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory." *Theatre Journal* 40:519-531. ONLINE
- Bauman, Richard 1986. "'Any Man Who Keeps More'n One Hound'll Lie to You': A Contextual Study of Expressive Lying." In *Story, Performance, and Event*, pp.11-32. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Noyes, Dorothy 1998. "*La maja vestida*: Dress as Resistance to Enlightenment in Late 18th-Century Madrid." *Journal of American Folklore* 111: 197-217. ONLINE
- 11/22**
Read **Reputation and style**
Bauman, Richard 1986. "Performance and Honor in 13th-Century Iceland." *Journal of American Folklore* 99:131-50. ONLINE
- Noyes, Dorothy 2000. "Authoring the Social Drama: Suicide and the Performance of Self in a French Political Scandal." *Narrative* 8:210-231.
- Mendoza-Denton, Norma 1996. "'Muy Macha': Gender and Ideology in Gang-Girls' Discourse About Makeup." *Ethnos* 61: 47-63.
- 11/24**
Read **Public order, hegemony, and appearances**
Scott chs 1-4
Due Paper update
- 11/29**
Read **Undermining the performative order**
Scott chs 5-8
- 12/1**
Read **The thinkable and the doable: values and forms in cultural practice**
Feldman, Allen 1999. "Commodification and Commensality in Political Violence in South Africa and Northern Ireland." *Etnografica: revista do Centro de Estudos de Antropologia Social* 3 (1): 113-29. TO BE DISTRIBUTED

_____. 2000. "Violence and Vision: The Prosthetics and Aesthetics of Terror."
In *Violence and Subjectivity*, ed. Veena Das et al., pp. 46-78. Berkeley and L.A.:
University of California Press.

Abu Ghraib documentation. TO BE DISTRIBUTED.

12/6

Final paper due