

EDUCATION 806: NARRATING THE SELF (Fall, 2005)

WED 2:00-4:20

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Many have claimed that the self gets constructed in narrative discourse. This seminar explores *how* narrators might partly construct themselves in self-narrative. The seminar addresses three questions: What is the linguistic structure of narrative discourse? How might we construct ourselves by telling stories about ourselves? If narrative is central to self-construction, what is “the self”?

The seminar does not attempt to cover all relevant literature on narrative and self—an impossible task in one course. Instead, it makes a specific argument about narrative and self: if the self is partly constructed through narratives we tell about ourselves, then the *interactional functions* of narrative discourse play an important role in narrative self-construction; furthermore, the *interrelationship* between interactional and representational functions of narrative discourse can in some cases be critical to narrative self-construction. In order to make this argument, the seminar first examines approaches to the representational and interactional functions of narrative discourse. Then it applies these approaches to self-narratives, in order to see how we both represent and position ourselves in self-narrative. Finally, the seminar explores what the “self” might be, if interactional positioning in self-narrative partly constitutes that self.

Because this topic is not well worked-out in the literature, much of the learning in this seminar will happen in classroom discussions. For this reason students must consistently do the reading and come to class. Students will do two types of assignments during the term: (1) a written report and in-class presentation on one week’s worth of readings (with particular weeks assigned early in the term); (2) gathering and analysis of self-narrative data, including a written interpretation of both the denotational and interactional functions of the narrative(s) and of how denotational and interactional patterns might be contributing to the narrator’s self. The narrative(s) may be told either to an interviewer, in a traditional interview setting, or in some other cultural context where self-narratives typically occur. Students should have some experience as an ethnographer with the narrator’s culture and with the cultural setting in which the self-narrative(s) get told. Students should begin planning to gather their data early in the semester. In order to facilitate this second assignment, I have established several preliminary deadlines:

September 28: a one-page description of plans for gathering self-narrative data, including descriptions of: the narrator; the setting for the narrative(s); plans to gain access and get written permission from the narrator; previous ethnographic experience with the narrator, the narrator’s culture(s) and the setting. Each student must do this assignment individually.

October 12: an analysis of denotational text in part or all of a narrative. This assignment can be done in pairs: if you have narrative data available, find someone who does not, and vice versa. If you do not do this assignment on the data you will use for the final project, be sure that you analyze the denotational text in your own narrative sometime relatively soon.

October 26: an analysis of voicing in part or all of a narrative. This assignment can be done in pairs, but be sure to analyze voicing in your own data relatively soon.

November 9: an analysis of ventriloquation in part or all of a narrative. This assignment can be done in pairs, but be sure to analyze ventriloquation in your own data relatively soon.

November 23: an analysis of interactional text in part or all of a narrative. This assignment can be done in pairs, but be sure to analyze the interactional text in your own data soon.

December 21: the final report, analyzing denotational text, voicing, ventriloquation, interactional text and their interrelationships in your self-narrative data, plus how these patterns might contribute to constructing the narrator's self. Normally these reports will be 25-30 pages.

Books available for purchase at the Penn Bookstore

Atwood, Margaret. *Alias Grace*.

Bakhtin. *The dialogic imagination*.

Csordas, Thomas. *Body/Meaning/Healing*.

Freeman, Mark. *Rewriting the self*. (This may be out of print, but there are 2 copies on reserve)

Freud, Sigmund. *Dora: An analysis of a case of hysteria*.

Holland, Dorothy & Jean Lave (Eds.). *History in person*.

Ochs, Elinor & Lisa Capps. *Living narrative*.

Wortham, Stanton. *Narratives in action*.

Books on Reserve at Rosengarten

Atwood, Margaret. *Alias Grace*.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The dialogic imagination*.

Bamberg, Michael. *Narrative development*.

Csordas, Thomas. *Body/Meaning/Healing*.

Csordas, Thomas. *Language, charisma, and creativity*.

Desjarlais, Robert. *Body and emotion*.

Flanagan, Owen & Rorty, Amelie. *Identity, character and morality*.

Freeman, Mark. *Rewriting the self*.

Heller, Sosna & Wellbery. *Reconstructing individualism*.

Hermans, Hubert & Kempen, Harry. *The dialogical self*.

Holland, Dorothy & Jean Lave. *History in person*.

Holland et al. *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*.

Linde, Charlotte. *Life-stories*.

Mandler, Jean. *Stories, scripts, and scenes*.

Mattingly, Cheryl & Garro, Linda. *Narrative and the cultural construction of illness and healing*.

Neumann, Anna & Peterson, Penelope. *Learning from our lives*.

Ochs, Elinor & Capps, Lisa. *Living narrative*.

Polkinghorne, Donald. *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*.

Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the folktale*.

Rosenwald, George & Ochberg, Richard. *Storied lives*.

Schafer, Roy. *Retelling a life*.

Shotter, John & Gergen, Kenneth. *Texts of identity*.

Silverstein, Michael & Urban, Greg. *Natural histories of discourse*.

Taylor, Charles. *Sources of the self*.
Wortham, Stanton. *Narratives in Action*.

Readings

(Note: I have inserted some extra readings, marked with a *, that are not essential. Read these only if you are interested. Most of these can be located on the course website. Almost all required articles and chapters are in the bulkpack, available at University Copy Service, except those few I have left out to reduce the cost of the bulkpack. These few omitted readings are available on reserve, either on the website or in an edited collection. In addition, edited books containing many required and optional chapters are also on reserve. All required books are on reserve.)

September 7. Introduction.

September 14. A Literary Example.

Atwood, *Alias Grace*

September 21. NO CLASS

September 28. A Psychoanalytic Example.

Freud, *Dora: An analysis of a case of hysteria*

*Ramas, "Freud's Dora, Dora's hysteria"

*Moi, "Representation of patriarchy: Sexuality and epistemology in Freud's Dora"

October 5. Denotational Text in Narrative.

Propp, *Morphology of the folktale*

Polkinghorne, *Narrative knowing and the human sciences*, ch. 1,2,6

Mathews, "The directive force of morality tales in a Mexican community"

*Stein & Policastro, "The concept of a story"

*Mandler. 1984. *Stories, scripts, and scenes*. Lawrence Erlbaum.

October 12. Voicing and Ventriloquation.

Labov, "The transformation of experience in narrative syntax"

Bakhtin. 1935/1981. "Discourse in the novel." In *The dialogic imagination* (pp. 259-422). University of Texas Press.

*Mishler. 1995. "Models of narrative analysis" *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 5, 87-123.

October 19. Interactional Text in Narrative.

- Davies & Harré, "Positioning"
Koven, "An analysis of speaker role inhabitation in narratives of personal experience"
Sands, "Narrative analysis"
Wortham, *Narratives in action*, ch. 2-3
*Goodwin, M. "Toward families of stories in context"
*Ewing. 1987. Clinical psychoanalysis as an ethnographic tool. *Ethos*, 15, 16-39.
*Riessman, "Even if we don't have children [we] can live"
*Robben. 1996. Ethnographic seduction, transference, and resistance in dialogues about terror and violence in Argentina. *Ethos*, 24, 71-106.

October 26. Self-narrative and Self-construction: Classic perspectives.

- Lamb, "Being a widow and other life stories"
Rosenwald & Ochberg, *Storied lives*, introduction
Sarbin, "The poetics of identity"
Widdershoven, "Identity and development"
Wortham, *Narratives in action*, ch. 1
*Schafer, *Retelling a life*. 1992. NY: Basic Books.

November 2. Linguistic Accounts of Self-Narrative.

- Linde, *Life-stories*, ch. 1,2,4
Ochs & Capps, *Living narrative*, esp. Ch. 1-2, 8.
**Miller, Fung & Mintz, "Self-construction through Narrative Practices"

November 9. Denotational Text and Interactional Text.

- Cain, "Personal stories"
Harding, "The afterlife of stories"
Schiffrin, "Narrative as self-portrait"
Narayan, "According to their feelings"

November 16. Ritualized Parallelism.

- Hill, "The Voices of Don Gabriel"
Wortham, *Narratives in action*, ch. 4
Wortham, "Accomplishing identity in participant-denoting discourse"
Parmentier, "The Pragmatic semiotics of cultures" (sections 1 & 2)
*Crapanzano. 1996. "Self-centering narratives." In M. Silverstein & G. Urban, *Natural histories of discourse* (pp. 106-127). Chicago: University of Chicago.

*Silverstein & Urban. 1996. "The natural history of discourse." In M. Silverstein & G. Urban, *Natural histories of discourse* (pp. 1-17). Chicago: University of Chicago.

November 23. Embodiment and Language.

Csordas, *Body/Meaning/Healing*.

Kray, "The Pentecostal re-formation of self"

*Csordas, *Language, charisma, and creativity*

*Desjarlais, *Body and emotion*

November 30. Conceptualizing the Self.

Vollmer, "The narrative self"

Martin, "Real perspectival selves"

Falmagne, "On the constitution of 'self' and 'mind'"

Tappan, "Domination, Subordination and the Dialogical Self"

Gillespie, "Malcolm X and His Autobiography"

December 7. The Narrative Self.

Freeman, *Rewriting the self*

McAdams, "The case for unity in the (post)modern self"

*Flanagan & Rorty. 1990. "Introduction." In O. Flanagan & A. Rorty, *Identity, character and morality* (pp. 1-15). Cambridge: MIT.

*Rorty & Wong. 1990. "Aspects of identity and agency." In O. Flanagan & A. Rorty, *Identity, character and morality* (pp. 19-36). Cambridge: MIT.

*Mattingly. 1998. "The self in narrating suspense." In Mattingly, *Healing dramas and clinical plots*. NY: Cambridge University Press.

December 14. Dialogic Theories of Self

Dreier, "Psychotherapy in clients' trajectories across contexts"

Hermans, "The dialogical self"

Taylor, "The dialogical self"

Wortham, *Narratives in action*, ch. 5

**Gergen, K. 1989. "Warranting voice and the elaboration of the self." In J. Shotter & K. Gergen, *Texts of identity* (pp. 70-81). London: Sage.

*Gilligan, C. 1986. "Remapping the moral domain." In Heller, Sosna & Wellbery, *Reconstructing individualism*. Stanford University Press.

*Taylor, C. 1989. *Sources of the self*. Harvard University Press.

*Hermans, H. & Kempen, H. 1993. *The dialogical self*. Academic Press.

December 21. PAPERS DUE.