

Annotated Bibliography

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Banks, Marcus and Morphy, Howard, eds.

1997 *Rethinking Visual Anthropology*. London: Yale University Press.

Rethinking Visual Anthropology is a volume composed of a wide range of texts which aspire to rethink the place of 'visual anthropology' within the discipline of contemporary anthropology as a whole, and to reconsider the sub-discipline of visual anthropology itself, with a specific focus on the relationship between anthropology film and photography. The contributors to this collection call for visual anthropology to become an anthropology of "visual systems and visible cultural forms" (5), where the role of film and photography would be to contribute to anthropology as a theoretical discipline. They suggest that film and photography should be considered not merely as a means of recording data, but also, as data in themselves. (30) In addition to studying a people's own visual world, the contributors would like to see visual anthropology consider the role of representation within the cultural process. Most contributors to this volume believe that visual systems are to some extent socially and culturally constructed; therefore, the focus of visual anthropology should take into consideration the anthropologist's own representational systems in addition to the visual systems that are being studied. The topics covered in the book include Japanese quiz shows, television in Bali, computer software, Trobriand axe blades, the representation of Jain bodies, gardens in Great Britain and Japan, contemporary New Zealand art, and the histories of film, photography and anthropology. My reading of the text focussed mainly on the following contributors: Anna Grimshaw, Elizabeth Edwards, Peter Loizos, Françoise Dussart, Debbora Battaglia, Nicholas Thomas and David MacDougall.

Anna Grimshaw challenges the simplistic use of visual media as 'technique' without first considering its theoretical implications for anthropology. Elizabeth Edwards discusses 'realism' that is prevalent in anthropological photography, and its affinity with positivism. Looking at a series of innovative photographic techniques, Edwards suggests that modern anthropology should be on par with modern art photography and its 'aesthetic expressive'. Peter Loizos discusses four films that depart from the norms of an earlier style of 'observational' film making. He points to the relationship between the practices of film construction and meaning creation in film. Françoise Dussart demonstrates—with her example of Yuendumu-Aboriginal body painting—how the meaning of body painting design performed on three media (torso, canvas, and film) varies due to the disparate conditions in which it is viewed. Deborah Battaglia focuses on the illusory nature of what is present and visible, and also looks at how 'the absence of something' can be as crucial to the process of interpretation as is 'the presence of something'. Nicholas Thomas champions an anthropology of art that would focus on similarities as well as differences within the commonly categorized Western / non-Western art, because, as he argues, both Western and non-Western art share a common regard for "the imaging of nationality and ethnicity." (273) Finally, David MacDougall posits a visual anthropology that would strive to develop objectives and methodologies distinct from those of written anthropology. He argues that the principles of visual anthropology should spring from the practice of visual anthropology. (293)

Rethinking Visual Anthropology has been important in the development of my thesis, particularly because it is an extension of Johannes Fabian's argument that both performance as an event, and its content (both visual and oral texts), are aspects of a 'cultural process'. The essayists in

Rethinking Visual Anthropology perceive film and photography as not only a means of recording data, but also as data in themselves. (30) Similarly, like Fabian and the authors of *Rethinking Visual Anthropology*, I view performance not only as the purveyor of its content, but also as data in itself. I believe that it is crucial to begin considering performance as a system of representation instead of just focussing on the message it conveys and the purpose of the message. How the message is represented—to whom, by whom, where, and when—is also significant. Approaching performance as a representational system can inform us about the nature of power, because—as Fabian observed—performers, directors and the audience relate to others in terms of power. In this light, performance—as well as film and photography—can provide us with information about the power relations that define it.

Another aspect of *Rethinking Visual Anthropology* that is of particular importance to my work is Elizabeth Edward's position that modern anthropology should be aligned more with modern art and its 'aesthetic expressive'. While most contributors to the volume still maintain that visual anthropology must privilege the 'anthropological' over the 'aesthetic', Edwards' position is innovative. My own work—both in theory and practice—attempts to combine anthropology with art, and I do not view the two as mutually exclusive. I believe that the 'aesthetic expressive' can play a very significant role in both ethnographic film and drama, and should not be subordinated to—nor delineated from—the 'anthropological'; anthropology is no longer considered to be an objective provider of data, but rather, is viewed to be a means of communicating and exchanging ideas. In terms of communication, the aesthetic can make the exchange of ideas more exciting and politicized.

In my own art, I have been questioning the role of the observer and the role of the self in performance, which has always led me to participate—as director—in the actual performances; and I believe that it is an anthropological exposition of self (although, expressed through artistic modes of representation), in which I am situated within the visual relationship between the characters of the play, the actors, and the audience in an attempt to understand and question the terms of these relationships. I believe that art and anthropology can participate in a dialogic exchange which hopefully will contribute to the unmasking and critiquing of the disparate power relations that define both art and anthropology.

Barba, Eugenio

1995 *The Paper Canoe*. New York: Routledge.

The Paper Canoe follows and develops ideas about the 'pre-expressivity' of performance already formulated by Barba in his earlier writings. Barba understands the 'pre-expressivity' of performance to be a set of principles of performance that recur universally, constituting the foundation of the performer's art. Barba specifies these recurring principles as **altered balance** [*"the continuous amplification in the shifting of body-weight"* (19)], **dynamic opposition** [*"the utilisation of two opposing forces in performing an action"* (24)], **consistent inconsistency** [*"the*

compression into restricted movements of the same physical energies necessary to accomplish a much larger and heavier action" (29), and *reduction and equivalence* ["the breaking of automatisms by means of extra-daily equivalents" (32)]. Barba argues that these principles are constituents of the movement of the performing body which differs from the behaviours of daily life.

The 'canoe' of the book's title is a metaphor for 'theatre craft'. It is this canoe of theatre craft that Barba claims flows in accordance to the currents and cross-currents (principles) of 'pre-expressivity', upon which the different genres, styles, roles, personal and cultural traditions are all based. The book is an imaginative and highly personal work which draws from the work and research of Barba's theatre company Odin Theatre and his theatre anthropology institute (ISTA). The final chapter of *The Paper Canoe* includes the transcription of a week-long seminar involving dancers and choreographers facilitated by Barba in 1985, where he expounds on what he calls his 'empirical' research into the 'pre-expressivity of performance'.

The Paper Canoe has mainly impacted upon me as a theatre director. It is an excellent source book on the 'bio-mechanics of acting' and provides invaluable information about various forms of theatre. Barba's 'pre-expressive' technique is a unique approach to the art of acting as it can enhance the actor's theatrical presence, energy, and--what Barba calls--'SATZ' (often referred to as 'impulse' by Western theatre practitioners—a moment which precedes the action, in which the action is intimated/expressed in the actor's whole body, manifested through bodily tension, even in immobility).

However, I do not qualify Barba's work as 'theatre anthropology'—as he refers to it—but rather, as a methodology on the art of acting. My main criticism of the book is that Barba's theoretical framework, and the methodologies supporting it, rest upon a foundation of scientific positivism and naive empiricism. *The Paper Canoe* could be classified as a Western artist's utopian quest for a universal acting methodology but not a discovery of such a methodology. Barba's claims provoke such questions as:

- How is it possible to separate the 'pre-expressive' moment of a performer from her personal and cultural context and from the context of the performance in which it occurs?
- Are Barba's observations and postulates not framed by a specific cultural context?.

Additionally, I perceive Barba's 'pre-expressive' technique to be a set of fascinating ideas about the art of performance that could be taught to the performer, but not universally found in every performer, in every culture. Unfortunately, while modern anthropologists have long admitted that their own cultural and historical baggage influences and colours the research they conduct, and that this condition is unavoidable, Barba still attempts to deny this as he sits in his canoe, waiting for a-cultural and a-historical currents to push him forward. ✓

Classen, Constance

1993 *Worlds of Sense: Exploring the senses in history and across cultures*. New York:

Routledge.

Worlds of Sense by Constance Classen is a cross-cultural study in which the author examines historical and cultural constructions of the senses, and critiques the imposition of the West's notion of the human body's five senses onto other cultures. Classen explores how the ordering of the senses of a particular culture reflects the social structure of that culture. She suggests that any view of the body's senses is a cultural construction, arguing that the hierarchy of the senses can vary significantly from culture to culture.

In the opening chapter—"The Odour of the Rose"—Classen critiques the West's preoccupation with the sense of sight and its ^{ect}negligence of the other sense faculties. Citing the example of the Western cultural attitudes toward the rose, she concludes that the West has witnessed a significant decline in the reliance upon olfaction. She claims that in the pre-Modern West, the rose was valued for its smell, while during the Enlightenment—in which science gained prominence—florists began cultivating the rose for its visual beauty rather than its scent.

Chapter two ("Sensory Perception") is a further elaboration on sensory perception as a cultural construct. Classen presents the example of three children who had been completely isolated from societal influences, and demonstrated novel ways of using their sensory abilities. When the children were 'mainstreamed' into society, they realigned the ways in which they used their senses according to the sensory norms of their new culture.

In the chapter "Words of Senses" English sensory terms are discussed, providing the reader with examples of how sensory experience is communicated through language. Classen attempts to demonstrate how numerous sensory words have changed in semantics throughout history, providing an etymological sketch of each word to illustrate why word 'x' now connotes 'z'.

Chapter four ("The Odour of the Other: Olfactory Codes and Cultural Categories") presents the argument that olfactory symbolism can be used to categorize 'otherness' across cultures, and therefore, is often employed in the construction of social categories. This symbolic referencing helps to promote affinities with one's culture, or antipathies towards 'the other'. One example cited by Classen is the "white stereotypes of 'repulsive-smelling blacks in the American South.'"(80) Ironically, but predictably, these xenophobic labels are inverted and reflected back with similar conviction by the victims of derision.

In the fifth chapter ("Literacy as Anti-Culture: the Andean Experience of the Written Word"), Classen explores how the sensory order of the 'civilized West' is perceived as 'anti-cultural' by the Andean culture.

The final chapter ("Worlds of Sense") examines various cultures which have very distinctive cosmological constructions including the Tzotzil's thermal cosmology, the Ongee's olfactory cosmology and the Desana's cosmology based on colour.

Worlds of Sense is relevant to my work mainly because of its unique subject matter. Beyond novelty, the book is vastly generalized, universalized and lacks any critical argumentation. The book's premise is based on the simplistic dichotomy of the West—and its marginalization of olfaction—and other societies with exotic and heightened perceptions of smell.

Classen fails to address the Western obsession with fragrance, specifically, the cosmetics (perfume) industry which is a billion-dollar enterprise in North America, and the ubiquity of artificial aromas and flavours in Western food. Classen's pointed erudition regarding the metamorphoses of sense-words in the English language appears blunted if we consider the countless other English words—not related to the senses--that have undergone similar semantic twists and turns.

However, the book's subject matter—putting aside the generalizations and problematic assumptions of the work—provokes important questions that I would like to address in my own thesis. For instance, *Worlds of Senses* has inspired me—for my future projects—to delve into the role of olfaction in ritual. Perhaps smell could be approached as a medium employed to enchant and attract, confuse and mask, repel and dispel within ritual contexts. For example, in certain rites of passage where the sense of smell is found to be central, the connection between olfaction and transition could be forged, where smells are suggestive of a context of liminality.

I am also interested in looking at 'peripheral behaviour' and its connection to olfaction and power. Often, the grotesque body of 'peripheral behaviour' within ritual / performance has been not only associated with exaggerated movements and gestures, but also with an odour-emitting flesh. Such an odour-emitting peripheral body within the ritual / performance can serve—as postulated by Bakhtin—as a means of suspending a society's sensory hierarchies while celebrating corporeality, which is often ignored beyond the contexts of ritual and performance. In addition, Classen suggests that odour can serve as the progenitor of social identity and difference. Classen posits that the odour of 'the other' can serve as the justification for certain prejudices towards 'the other'. For example, many social groups on the periphery of our Western society have been considered as 'foul-smelling' by the dominant class of society. 'Peripheral behaviour' and its odour-emitting body has been often seen, by the Western dominant class, to represent disorder, and as a result it has been associated with the foul smell of decay. Many people on the periphery of society often have a tendency to attribute foul smells to themselves. In the case of 'spirit possession' in Hofryat as discussed in Janice Boddy's account, the women believe that they are overcome by a spirit because of their acrid body odour which results from performing physical and 'dirty' labour. In order to stave off the spirits, the women wear pleasant smelling perfumes and avoid 'dirty' labour. Associating oneself with a particular smell can perhaps—as in this case--be viewed as a means of empowerment.

Graham, Laura R.

1995 *Performing Dreams: Discourses of Immortality Among the Xavante of Central Brazil*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Performing Dreams is a study of the dreams of the Xavante indigenous people of a heavily colonized area in central Brazil. These dreams serve as a medium for contact between the living and the dead, becoming an important source of song and myth performances. Laura Graham refers to her work as a study of 'discourses of immortality'. The book is based on her research among the Xavante indigenous community which—as she notes—has been undergoing

considerable changes since its first encounters with anthropologists nearly thirty years ago. Graham notes that the Xavante now live in settled communities as rice cultivators due to massive government-sponsored agriculture projects. Graham's account stresses that despite the profound changes the Xavante have undergone, they strive to preserve their unique identity by the performance of ritual practices, through which the ancestral wisdom is transmitted by 'dreamers' to the larger community. Graham argues that for the Xavante—within the context of social change—this practice of the transmission of messages from one generation to another sustains a feeling of cultural continuity, even though the content of the messages may change through time. According to Graham, this feeling of cultural continuity in turn creates a sense of fortitude. Each chapter, even though making more general assumptions about Xavante history, social organization and discursive practices, always returns to the elder Warodi's personal life and dream performances. While Graham pays close attention to the lives of specific individuals, she undeniably views the individual as inherently social. She deals explicitly with discursive practices—such as dreaming—and examines their social nature contrary to the traditional Western assumption that dreams are a predominantly individual phenomenon. Graham also mentions how the Xavante performances were affected by her own tape-recording and photographing presence.

Performing Dreams makes an important contribution to my own research on ritual and power. Until now, the majority of post-colonial discourses that I have encountered view ritual as a complex battleground on which the struggle for hegemony—or a counter-hegemonic enactment of social collective memory—is staged. But even those discourses on ritual often stem from the Western notion of the individual as a private, rational being, autonomous from the social. Specifically, discourses that view ritual as the enactment of a collective social memory divorce the performer—who enacts these memories—from the present social context, and only pay attention to the social context of the past. Graham's account of the individual as inherently social can lead to many different readings of 'peripheral behaviour'. For instance, it would be difficult to deny that social context influences how 'peripheral behaviour' is publicly presented. It would be erroneous to discuss 'peripheral behaviour' in terms of it only being the enactment of the collective memory; it is also necessary to look at it as the enactment of the 'collective present': memories and their re-presentation are indubitably influenced by the present.

Another aspect of Graham's study that is very significant to my research is her concern with not only particular individuals and their inherently social nature, but also with the social whole and its infusion with the subjectivity of an individual. Graham describes how the elders create a sense of solidarity by collectively participating in Warodi's spoken portion of the dream. This observation is relevant when considering 'possession trance' which not only involves 'the possessed', but also permits participation of other members of the community, fostering a sense of solidarity within the group; for instance, the participating 'non-possessed' women can publicly share part of the 'possessed women's inner-selves'. In terms of my own thesis and work, the book inspires an important question:

- If the enactment of 'peripheral behaviour' is to be considered—at least partially—as a means of preserving a group's unique identity, then how does this attempt at maintaining the group's identity become a commentary on the conditions of contemporary life?

Loizos, Peter

1993 *Innovation in ethnographic film: From innocence to self-consciousness, 1955-85.*
Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Peter Loizos, in his book *Innovation in Ethnographic Film*, selectively discusses and analyses the changes that ethnographic film has undergone between 1955-1985—from ‘realism’ to ‘reflexive participatory’ and ‘collaborative strategies’ (particularly prevalent in a number of ethnographic films in the mid-eighties). In the book, Loizos—as anthropologist and filmmaker—aims at providing an analytical study of selected representative films.

The first chapter focuses on the differences between ethnographic documentaries and fictional films, and Loizos—although suspicious of such rigorous categorizations—attempts to provide certain guidelines for distinguishing documentaries from fictional films. Loizos then discusses the period of filmmaking from the 1950's to the early 1970's, which he labels as the era of ‘ethnographic film’s innocence’ to illustrate the naivety of these films and the very notion of an objective record. The author’s survey of this period is illustrated with the early films of John Marshall, the Yanomani films of Asch and Chagnon, and the Jero Tapakan Project. Although Loizos critiques these films’ conviction of ‘scientific objectivity’, he argues that some of the films that have been categorized as ‘observational’ begin exhibiting a tendency toward ‘reflexivity’, as they attempt to include evidence of the film’s production methods.

The subsequent chapters of the book look at independent filmmakers, including Jean Rouch, Melissa Llewelyn-Davies and Robert Gardner. In these chapters, Loizos discusses and justifies their use of what he refers to as ‘empathetic documentation’, ‘collaboration’, ‘prioritization of the voice of indigenous subjects’, and ‘improvisational technique’.(47) For example, Loizos purports that Rouch’s improvisational technique—based upon the enactment of the dreams and aspirations of the subjects—comes closer to the ‘truth’ than a ‘film of record’ might have done.

Similarly, the chapter on Gardner attempts to justify his rejection of realism in filmic technique. Loizos argues that Gardner’s films cannot be judged on the criterion of realism, but rather, on the basis of their symbolic content; thus, his films should be considered in aesthetic – not ethnographic—terms.

In Loizos’ analysis of Llewelyn-Davies’ films, he discusses the influence of feminist theory upon the visual and spoken text of her films.

In chapters four, five and eight Loizos looks at numerous filmmakers who attempt to portray ‘life stories’ on film while trying to move away from an ‘observational’ style of filmmaking toward a more personal and participatory methodology. Specific attention is paid to the films of David and Judith MacDougall.

The final chapter of the book focuses on the Australian context and the problem of the representation of Aborigines in Australia.

The book’s epilogue is devoted to exploring emergent trends in ethnographic film in Australia and beyond. Here Loizos widens his scope to include television documentaries and

other types of film that cannot be considered as ethnographic in any respect.

Despite the fact that I have not seen the majority of films discussed in Loizos' book, I have found his choices to be wide-ranging and inclusive of societies which are traditionally positioned at the bottom of the world's social hierarchy. Such judicious choices appear to be aimed at exposing the privileged position of the filmmaker / anthropologist, whose interactions—even in a highly collaborative work—always reflect the unbalanced power relations between 'those being filmed' and 'those doing the filming'. Moreover, the book is very relevant to my own work because it looks at issues of 'truth' and 'representation' in film. Here I share Loizos' enthusiasm for the 'self-reflexive', 'non-realistic films', but I disagree that they are closer to 'truth' than the traditional 'films of record'. Loizos contradicts his critique of the notion of an objective record, because his analysis of film still takes into account notions of 'objectivity' or the 'closeness to truth'. If Loizos asserts that any ethnographic representation is merely a 'narrative of reality' which is highly subjective and personal, then how can he talk about it being closer or further from the truth? Did he not just state that we do not have access to the truth? In my own approach to performance as a system of representation, I have been less concerned about the accurate representation of 'reality', and more concerned about how it takes aim at the massively unequal power relations that usually define it. Similarly, I believe that ethnographic film should not be judged on how accurately or truthfully it represents something because it would be a return to the 'old anthropological claims'; instead, ethnographic film could be judged on how effectively it aims at exposing the economic and political conditions that underlie the project, and how it attempts to effect change.

Contrary to Loizos' opinion, I do not consider Jean Rouch's films to be particularly innovative by merit of his inclusion of subjects' dreams, footage of spirit possession rituals or shocking images of people experiencing altered states of consciousness—these touches do not yet distinguish Rouch's films from the 'film of record tradition'. Rouch's films—as described by Loizos—still seem to aspire primarily to be ethnographic documentaries and not acts of political resistance to colonialism. I believe that grotesque, shocking images of others should be included in both ethnographic film and performance only if they engage in a political struggle; otherwise, the indigenous cultures presented can become mere objects of amusement and entertainment.

In the production of my play *Name Day*, I have utilized a grotesque, illustrative style of representation of 'peripheral people' in order to expose and critique the exoticization and objectification of these people by Western dominant culture.

Middleton, David and Edwards, Derek, eds.

1990 *Collective Remembering*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

The book *Collective Remembering* is a compendium of a diverse range of texts which inquire into the faculty of human memory. While much of contemporary literature in the social sciences either treats memory as a natural human domain or occasionally addresses the influence context has on what people remember, the essays in this volume consider remembering and forgetting as

inherently social activities, arguing that remembering and forgetting need to be viewed as modes of social agency rather than as merely cognitive functions. The contributors postulate that the content and organization of memories cannot be defined solely in relation to cognition, and that they must also be considered in the contexts of ideology, social action, collectivity and culture, and everyday communication. The writers argue that the social nature of memory probes even deeper into the very processes of remembering.

The individual chapters of the book are enquiries into topics such as the social practice of commemoration (the social nature of a collective memory as in relation to the past, present and future); the disremembered reputation of former American President Ronald Reagan (revealing the popularity of Reagan as a socially constructed memory); sharing knowledge as a form of collective memory in the workplace; the work of Soviet psychologists and philosophers who have challenged Western paradigms of dualism, such as mind / body, individual / social, biological / environmental.

This book is relevant to my own work because the assumptions made by the writers about memory, and its social character, can serve as a point of departure for my own enquiries into ‘peripheral behaviour’ and the possibility of it being an enactment of social memory. If ‘peripheral behaviour’ is to be understood as a communicative code that extends beyond the mimesis of words and relies mainly upon gestures, movements and sounds, then, as any other language, it should be viewed in affinity to memory. A human being must refer—consciously or unconsciously—to the ‘habit memory’ of the body in order to perform a gesture or movement. Unfortunately, the contributors to the volume only focus on cognitive memory in its social context; however, it seems equally plausible that body-habit memory—its constituents and organization—cannot be accounted for by referencing either cognitive processes or bodily actions alone—they should also be understood within the contexts of social action and ideology; for example, certain societies of Southern Brazil have developed a code of gestures that can be understood in the absence of words only within those particular cultures, while, to an outsider, the very same gestures without the accompaniment of words seem incomprehensible.

I found the chapter “Social Memory in Soviet Thought” by David Bakhurst particularly relevant to my own work. The author draws from the Soviet academic theories of memory, including the works of Vygotsky, Voloshinov, and Ilyenkov which challenge Western dualisms. Although the chapter is highly generalised and redundant, and lacks any sound arguments for its contestation of dualisms, it can still provoke important questions.

- If the social nature of memory extends deeper into the very processes of remembering, is it possible that ‘peripheral behaviour’ is an enactment of social memory encoded in the performer’s body?
- If we are to dispute the dualism of mind-body, what is then the alternative to the dichotomy of mind-memory and body-memory?
- Is the social nature of memory influenced not only by the past social context, but also by the present social context and by the consideration of the possible-future social context?

Ruby, Jay

1980 Exposing yourself: Reflexivity, anthropology, and film. *In Semiotica*, 30,1/2:153-

179.

In the article *Exposing Yourself*, Jay Ruby inquires into the relationship between reflexivity, anthropology and film. He argues for reflexive anthropology and reflexive film as a means in the communication of anthropology. He defines the notion of 'reflexivity in anthropology' by referring to terms such as 'producer', 'process' and 'product': by 'producer' Ruby means a 'sender'(155), a creator of a message; by 'process' he means "methods, channels, etc., whereby the message is encoded and sent" (155); and by 'product', he means the text and what the receiver achieves. (155) To be reflexive, according to Ruby, is to form and present a product in such a way that it becomes evident to the audience that "the producer, process and product are a coherent whole."(155) What Ruby is championing is a reflexive anthropology in which anthropologists would expose "their methodologies and themselves as the instrument of data generation" (153), and a reflexive ethnographic film, where the film itself would be presented as data in itself rather than an objective way of recording data.

Ruby also examines what he refers to as the "paradoxical situation of anthropology." (158) He argues that although anthropologists consider the discipline to be a science, their ethnography is not founded on methodological statements. Ruby sees this as the paradox, because any science—he argues—should reveal its own methods of research. He further argues that anthropologists have been—to date—merely "recording machines who, in following naive, empiricist and positivist tenets aimed at personal detachment...lacking of value judgements...and negating political, economic and moral stances"(165), they aimed at "negating all traces of their own culture so that they can study someone else's culture."(161) He states that both anthropology and film are products of a particular culture, framed by the distortions of subjectivity. Ruby ends his article with a call for the construction of a new theory of "pictorial communication" (173) which would satisfy the particular needs of a self-reflexive anthropology, for he believes that neither formalist nor realist modes of "pictorial communication" are adequate.

Ruby's article has been very significant to my own work in terms of both theory and practice. My most recent work, which is currently being developed, is an attempt to create a self-reflexive theatre event parallel to what Ruby argues for ethnographic film to become. Aside from Johannes Fabian's book *Power and Performance*, there is a dearth of theoretical treatises on reflexivity and performance. Scholarship in the discipline of performance studies has a tendency to focus on 'autobiography' and 'performance', or 'self-reference' and 'performance', neglecting the concept of 'reflexivity', which Ruby terms as the self-conscious practice which aims at revealing to the audience aspects of the artwork's 'creator' to expose the viewer to the process employed and the product of that process, and make him "recognize that the exposition of the self was intentional and not narcissistic or accidental."(156) In order for the audience members to become aware of the self-reflexive tone of the performance, the illusion of the theatrical event and its reality need to be juxtaposed in such a way that the audience recognises this juxtaposition. In my performance piece *Name Day*, I am—as a director and researcher—present on the stage. I appear in the performance not as an actor who plays an artist and a researcher, but as myself—the

artist and the researcher. Additionally, the male character of *Anthropologist* appears in the play intermittently, questioning me about the progress and process of my research on ‘peripheral behaviour’. It would be ideal if I was able to have an actual anthropologist on the stage. I have been trying to structure the performance in a way that the audience becomes aware of my relationship to the subjects of my research, the characters of the performance, the performers on the stage and the audience. In creating a theatrical piece that looks at the phenomenon of ‘peripheral behaviour’, I have been attempting to expose the unequal power relations that define this particular theatrical process and which are reflected in the relational dynamics of ‘me/creator/researcher’ ← ‘subject of research/character’ ← ‘performer’ ← ‘audience’ ← ‘society’. While I share Ruby’s position on reflexivity in film and anthropology, I do not agree with his postulate that ‘formalist’ and ‘realist’ modes of pictorial communication are inadequate for a reflexive anthropology, and that a new theory of ‘pictorial communication’ needs to be formulated. I believe that both a ‘realist’ and ‘formalist’ pictorial communication can be adequate in reflexive anthropology, provided that they reveal and critique the unbalanced power relations that bind them.

Shohat, Ella and Stam, Robert

1994 *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the media*. New York: Routledge.

Unthinking Eurocentrism focuses on the notion of ‘Eurocentrism’ in contemporary popular culture. The authors Ella Shohat and Robert Stam attempt to delineate and challenge ‘Eurocentric’ modes of thought—and their reification in the media—and juxtapose them with the concept of ‘polycentric multiculturalism’. The authors define ‘Eurocentrism’ as a form of thinking which normalizes the hierarchical power relations generated by colonialism and imperialism. They critique the ‘Eurocentric’ justification of the means in which European states have historically acquired and maintained positions of hegemony throughout the world. As an alternative to ‘Eurocentrism’, the authors propose a ‘polycentric multiculturalism’, a notion that broadens multiculturalism and views any history in relation to social power. The book interweaves theory and critical analysis, and contains reviews of numerous films—from the 1890’s to present-day cinema—citing a wide range of scholarship.

In addition to ‘Eurocentrism’, the authors also address issues of racism, colonialism, imperialism, post-colonialism, hybridity, syncretism, and the Third World / Fourth World in the context of the media. Furthermore, the authors engage in the critique of the metaphors—including ‘infantilization’ and ‘animalization’—through which ‘Eurocentric discourse’ has patronized its ‘others’. In their critique of dominant media, the authors address the politics of language and film-casting, and they examine the various styles of representation in the media, from ‘realism’ to ‘carnavalesque’. The book also discusses concepts such as political correctness, identity politics, and spectatorship.

This volume is particularly relevant to the performative aspect of my work, especially the chapter “Stereotype, Realism, and the Struggle Over Representation” in which various styles of

representation are examined. In my work as a theatre director, I have utilized a physical, grotesque and—somewhat—expressionistic style of acting which I have labelled as *Illustrative Acting*. Shohat and Stam's critique of realism has been very illuminating and inspiring to me, since I have always been suspect of realism as a style of representation in theatre, not only because of personal aesthetic preferences, but also—similarly to Shohat and Stam—because I have questioned realism's 'real life assumptions' and its hegemonic, patriarchal and colonial baggage.

However, during the development of my most recent project *Name Day*, I have been concerned about representing peripheral, marginalised people of society in a highly stylized and grotesque performance, as I am always conscious of the dangers inherent in the performative 'infantilization' and 'animalization' of these people. I do believe it is appropriate to use my *illustrative acting* style for the performance in the context of Shohat and Stam's position that grotesque images can convey a deep critique of social structures. For instance, in the case of my performance *Name Day*, the representation of 'the possessed' and 'the mad' subjects through a stylized mode of acting can itself be viewed as a political act of unmasking and challenging the cliché expectations the audience might hold. I believe that derogatory, distorted images of 'the other' can be utilized in the performance if they serve as a means of critiquing the stereotyping and objectification of 'the other'.

Hall, Stewart, ed.

1997 *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc..

Representation is a compendium focussing on 'representation' and its role in cultural communication. The six chapters of the book are written by Stewart Hall, Peter Hamilton, Henrietta Lidchi, Sean Nixon and Christine Gledhill. The contributors to the volume purport that 'representation' is a process of production of meaning through language and discourse. They argue that meaning is not found, but rather, is constructed through the constituents of language: sounds, words, gestures, movements, etc. Meaning constructed through language produces knowledge, which can then be represented through discourse. The volume also examines the concepts of 'power' and 'truth' in relation to the issue of 'representation'. The authors reference a vast range of examples from various cultural media and discourses, mainly focussing on visual language. The individual texts provide a plethora of approaches to representation, including semiotic, discursive, feminist and Foucauldian.

Stewart Hall first introduces the reader to contemporary polemics dealing with language, meaning and representation, and then discusses the 'politics of representation', where he examines how race, ethnicity and sexuality have been represented in popular culture and ethnographic museums. Henrietta Lidchi focuses on 'representation' in the context of exhibiting other cultures in ethnographic museums. Sean Nixon discusses constructions of masculine identities in consumer industries and advertising. Christine Gledhill queries the issue of 'representation' in television and soap operas. Peter Hamilton examines the photographic depictions of French society in the era of post-war reconstruction and defines the representational

approach--that was then popular--as the 'dominant representational paradigm of humanism'.

The volume *Representation* has been indispensable to my personal work, particularly because it examines the production of meaning within the framework of power and politics. Chapter 3 ("The Poetics and the Politics of Exhibiting Other Cultures") and Chapter 4 ("The Spectacle of the 'Other'") have largely influenced my own theatre project *Name Day*. Both Lidchi's examination of the practices of ethnographic museums in relation to knowledge and power, and Stuart Hall's accounting of the 'politics of representation', have significantly informed my decision to create a performance that would address issues of 'self-reflexivity' and 'multi-vocality'. I view any practice of theatre—including my own—as an active process of 'representation' which should not be divorced from its ties to knowledge and power, because the relationship between those being represented and the creators of that particular representation – regardless of the presentation's context, ie. museum, theatre, etc.—is demarcated in terms of power. Lidchi posits that the ethnographic representation of any culture is linked to the institutional power which permits a human subject to become an ethnographic object; similarly, I believe that any theatrical representation—and its propensity to transform human beings into the performance's subject matter—is implicated in a specific knowledge-to-power relationship. It is this privilege-granting affiliation that transmutes an individual's happiness and suffering into objects of artistic exploration.

In order to effectively critique global systems of oppression, I believe that my own theatre practice must first reveal and recognise its own power to represent, otherwise it risks hypocrisy. One possible means of critiquing a performance's power to represent is to implement a technique of 'defamiliarisation' which Stuart Hall addressed in the volume *Representation*. This technique has been adopted in the works of the contemporary avant-garde art with the aims of disrupting the everyday, doing the unexpected, and framing familiar subjects in unfamiliar settings in hopes of making the viewer conscious of difference. This technique of 'defamiliarisation' in the context of theatre can be seen as a logical step towards a truly multi-vocal, self-reflexive performance.

Yanagisako, Sylvia and Delaney, Carol, eds.

1995 *Naturalizing Power: Essays in Feminist Cultural Analysis*. New York: Routledge.

Naturalizing Power examines how differences in class, gender or ethnicity are naturalized in the discourses and practices of kinship, nation, family and religion. The work is inspired by David Schneider's critique of the universal, genealogical basis of kinship; however, this book enriches and extends beyond Schneider's theories from feminist critical viewpoints. All of the contributors to this volume argue that American kinship does not allow for differences in ethnicity, class, gender and power; for instance, the naturalization of gender difference has been an integral condition in the formation and perpetuation of power hierarchies between the sexes. Although the book discusses both American and non-American (Turkey and Papua New Guinea) cultures, I mainly focussed on the first section of the book which deals with American kinship.

In the first chapter, by examining the various scientific discourses on incest, Susan

McKinnon contrasts father-daughter incest with mother-son incest, and unmasks how father-daughter incest is 'depathologized' while mother-son incest is 'pathologized'. The second chapter further explores Schneider's discussions about the significance of 'the natural' or 'the biological' in American kinship. It reveals how countless judicial decisions in paternity suits and disputed surrogacy cases negotiate and establish what constitutes the natural family. Janet L. Dolgin's essay demonstrates how decisions of the judiciary are influenced by the class background of the plaintiffs. Another chapter that I have found useful was Rayna Rapp's "Heredity, or: Revising the Facts of Life" which further discusses the role class plays in society and how the negotiation of ideas about heredity are expressed in genetic counselling sessions.

I have found this book to be very useful in the development of my own thesis, as it contributes to an understanding of 'peripheral behaviour' in the larger context of society. For example, the convulsing, sweating body within the ritual of possession trance in Hofryat society is often viewed—as Janice Boddy suggests—to be beneath the dignity of the possessed. This demonstration of chaos and lack of self-control is only permitted for the participants of the *Zar Trance*. Here the peripheral behaviour of possession trance can be contrasted with the 'naturalized', standard behaviour of the larger society. Similarly, the behaviour of the Bakhtinian 'grotesque body' within carnival can be contrasted with the norms of behaviour which are naturalized and codified by the dominant class within a particular society.

Considering 'peripheral behaviour' in light of *Naturalizing Power's* theoretical positions on kinship, one can infer that there is no inherently 'natural', 'normal' or 'God-given' behaviour, and that any attempts at legitimizing any behaviour as such are only a system of beliefs that a certain individual or society holds about a particular 'state-of-being' and is directly linked to the power hierarchy within that society.

Young, David E. and Goulet, Jean-Guy, eds.

1994 *Being Changed: The Anthropology of Extraordinary Experience.*

The book *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Encounters* deals with the intriguing subject of 'extraordinary experience'—a subject that has been rarely addressed within the discipline of anthropology, mainly because of the rationalist, scientific bias of Western anthropological discourse. The volume includes contributions from ten anthropologists who have all had 'extraordinary experiences' during their fieldwork with indigenous cultures. The main premise of the book is to grapple with the question of why and how these experiences of anthropologists often assume the form and content consistent with the anthropologist's host culture, even when the anthropologist has only had a brief encounter with that culture. The book also undertakes to develop an approach to such phenomena that would respect the culture being studied while satisfying the rigour of a Western scientific audience. The contributors to *Being Changed by Cross-Cultural Encounters* believe that the 'extraordinary experiences' of their informants merit serious investigation. They critique the traditional Western ambivalent and—very often—patronizing approach to the notion of another reality, which usually stems from the attitudes of colonial imperialism. The contributors argue that 'reality-as-one-knows-it' may be experienced

differently according to one's own cultural context and state of mind. They believe that when fieldwork is conducted while suspending the researcher's personal prejudices and beliefs, then the anthropologist's normal perception of reality can be altered, making it possible for the anthropologist to experience phenomena claimed to be encountered by her informants.

The volume consists of four sections: *Extraordinary Experience and Fieldwork*, *Modelling Extraordinary Experience*, *Taking Our Informants Seriously*, and *Conclusion*. The first section features anthropologists' personal accounts of 'extraordinary experiences' in the field, and discusses how their usual perceptions of reality were challenged by such experiences. The second section attempts to construct a theoretical framework that could assist in our understanding of these experiences. The third section discusses how such experiences in the field have affected the anthropologists in their everyday lives. In the final section, the editors attempt to summarize and connect the various essays presented in the volume. They conclude that actual encounters with the 'extraordinary' can enhance one's understanding of the culture studied, and challenge one's own assumptions about the world.

I find the subject matter of *Being Changed* to be very innovative, although its approaches to—and treatment of—'extraordinary experiences' are still somewhat conservative. One oversight I find striking is the book's homogenization of indigenous people as universally experiencing 'other realities'. While the contributors recognize that even the reason-based Western cultures are not monolithically secular, such recognition is never carried over to the cultures of indigene.

Another indiscretion I have noticed about this book is that even though the contributors to the volume mainly address their own personal quests and experiences, they do not hesitate to transpose their assumptions and observations onto the experiences of their informants. The book also seems to contradict its critique of Western naive empiricism when the authors talk about their ambitions to investigate the 'extraordinary experiences' from the loci of 'legitimacy' and 'truth', both of which are Western concepts that are not necessarily applicable across different cultures.

Criticisms aside, this book has made a significant contribution to my own work, particularly because it addresses the problem of the nature vs. culture dichotomy. In my own work on 'peripheral behaviour', I have often been perplexed as to how I should approach spirit possession and its 'extraordinary character'. I have always believed that it is insufficient—and even contemptuous—to dismiss other people's most sacred beliefs and convictions from a relativist, structuralist, symbolist or Marxist position. Elizabeth Povinelli asks --in her article "Do Rocks Listen?"--that if we assume **rocks do listen** as purported by Australian Aboriginals, does logic then dictate that nature is an active agent?...and if we do assume that it is, then what are the implications of such an assumption? Similarly, in the case of 'spirit possession', what are the implications of the assumption that spirits actually do exist and invade the women's bodies? This acknowledgement respects the indigenous belief of 'spirit possession', but it also risks the danger of ignoring the social and political context of 'spirit possession'. In our attempt to approach the phenomenon from the 'native point-of-view', we might overlook the fact that the only point of view the native is allowed to express is that of the Spirits; thus, we might disregard many constructs of 'social injustice' and oppression can become naturalized and normalized. On the other hand, if we reject the notion that nature has agency, we not only risk patronizing other people's beliefs, but we also face the danger of assuming--particularly in regards to land claim

court cases—that native beliefs are to be assigned our Western political and economical ‘weight’, and thus should be assessed only in our social realm. Moreover, in rejecting the possibility of agency in nature, we might inadvertently abrogate our own capacity to assume any political stance with conviction. Why—for example—should one care about the violation of others’ dignity and welfare if there is nothing fundamental about a person—or nature—that can be damaged? However, in writing about—and discussing—‘spirit possession’, one must inevitably assume a particular stance, even though it may not be the ideal. My personal approach to the ‘extraordinary character’ of ‘spirit possession’ has been to admit that its’ character is a matter of faith, not of scientific investigation; however, what can be investigated and enquired into is the nature of this faith, and how it affects—in any society—the lives and the interrelations of its members.