Introduction to Folklore II: Folk Genres and Analysis

2010-03-23 Oring's "Documenting Folklore: The Annotation" and Paper / Presentation Q&A

FOLK AND FINA 113

WHAT DID *YOU* THINK?

HIS POINT

- Serves as the conclusion for both books
- Reaffirms that each performance is a unique occurrence,
  - "Everything is utterly singular and new"
- Reaffirms that one can legitimately make comparisons between performances
  - "Were it not for our categorizing and classifying propensities, we would be hopelessly overpowered by the relentless novelty of the world"

RELATIONS

× Categories make explicit the recognition of relations between these unique events
  + Same, similar, or analogous *content*
  + Same, similar, or analogous *form*
  + Same, similar, or analogous *function*
  + Same, similar, or analogous *group*
  + Same, similar, or analogous *context*
    × *Etc.*
× Groups, genres, types are all manners in which we impose relations of similarity on unique performances

REMEMBER

* Early folklorists assumed a strict genetic relationship between occurrences

* The folk were a "faulty conduit": variations were a consequence of mis-performance (or, charitably, necessary but unfortunate adaptations to new circumstances)

* The exercise of comparing versions was ultimately aimed at reconstructing "the original" (the Ur-form) that is related to and the basis for all

BUT NOW

- ✖ "The folk" understood not as faulty conduits but as deliberate re-interpreters who create new performances based in part on
  - ✚ an understanding of the context of a specific performance,
  - ✚ the understood shared repertoire of the group, and
  - ✚ an understanding of the group's sense of aesthetics
- ✚ Relationships are historical, not genetic; intentional, not necessary; emic as much as they are etic

EMIC AND ETIC

× Have we covered emic and etic? Here they are:

× Terms derived from linguistics – phonemic and phonetic

+ Phonetic spelling: spelled according to how the word objectively sounds

+ Phonemic spelling: spelled according to the particular language's historical system of associating sounds with markings

× Phonemic: their   there   they're
× Phonetic: Θēr   Θēr   Θēr

EMIC AND ETIC

* Etic: the technical terms used to describe something; theoretical categories

* Emic: the "insider" terms used to describe something; vernacular categories

* (Much of our folklore theory was built on thinking European emic terms were in fact etic: that's why we waffle over "what is a legend? questions?

THREE BENEFITS TO ANNOTATION

- A buffer against parochialism
  - You may be distinct, but you ain't all that unique
- Identifying socio-cultural change
  - Provides the data for seeing how forms are adapted to new circumstances, ideologies, contexts
- Quantitative data for suggesting the sociological. psychological importance of themes and values
  - (The rest of the chapter is interesting, but not to necessary to talk about)

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ASSIGNMENTS / PRESENTATIONS?

LAST (!) QUESTION OF THE WEEK

- Tell me the last joke you heard, and provide a brief "documentation" (where, when, why, and by whom was it performed, what does the joke reference) and "annotation" (how does it relate to other jokes you know, etc.) for it.

GO AWAY FROM THIS PLACE

- Next week: PRESENTATIONS
- Do I have any volunteers for Monday? Ideally, I would like to see at least 10, hopefully closer to 15.
- Remember, you can email them (or links to them), so shyness need not be a factor