

A World of Others' Words: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Intertextuality. *Richard Bauman.* Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004. ix + 184pp.

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Richard Bauman's work in linguistic anthropology and folklore has long since established him as a central innovator in the field, and yet, at the same time, his older works remain readable and relevant, many of them classics in the field. His work both shows great breadth of topics without sacrificing nuanced and sensitive understanding of ethnographic details. This book, of course, shows all of these traits: theoretical innovations of lasting value combined with a series of varied and unusual ethnographic expositions of a diverse array of genres from a wide variety of contexts. A reader will not be disappointed.

The genre to which the book itself belongs is, at first glance, picaresque, moving from one genre to the next, often across very diverse genres ("magical" poems, riddle tales, market calls and spiels, tall tales, yarns and recitations) in ethnographic settings that provide in a sense a road map of the range of the author's own wide-ranging world of interests (Icelandic poets, Scottish travelers, Mexican markets, Texas and Nova Scotian storytellers, to name a few). But just as a picaresque novel has its unity in its wandering hero, not in its settings or plot, so too this book without apology creates a unified narrative by placing issues of intertextuality and genre at the forefront, in relation to a constellation of key theoretical terms, text and performance, entextualization and contextualization (which were introduced long ago by the author in collaboration with others but in this book are given a more fulsome exposition and definition), and then takes them wandering through a series of chapters of ethnographic studies of genre. As a result, there are several ways to read this book, either as a set of individual chapters or as a whole. For those interested in theoretical expositions, the first chapter on "genre, performance and the production of intertextuality," as well as the penultimate chapter on mediational performances, will justify the price of the book. The clarity of exposition and theoretical innovation is such that these chapters could be assigned in a university course, alone or in tandem. For those, however, interested in detailed ethnographic exposition of genres, any one of the individual chapters stands as a fine example of how this should be done. For those who are looking for a book that might serve as a unifying core to a course on textuality and intertextuality, genre, or performance, this book provides both theoretical innovation and a varied diet of folkloric and ethnographic details.

In fact, the book, which at first glance seems a very loose unity (a common enough feature of linguistic anthropological ethnographies), in its very structure illustrates some of its arguments on genre and intertextuality, making for a book that is on the whole better read as a whole, and as making not only an argument about representing genres in ethnography, but also about ethnographic genres of representation. For throughout the seemingly picaresque travel from one strange genre in another strange land to another, the author builds a subtle but compelling set of intertextual linkages, both at the level of theory and ethnographic detail, between different genres, leading to a masterful critique of a common core of assumptions in linguistic anthropology, folklore and ethnography in general that privilege dialog in context as a primordial locus of the authentic. The book builds up a strong and subtle apologetic that moves linguistic anthropology, folklore, and ethnography from a position that privileges the primordial authenticity of extemporaneous dialogic encounters in a single speech situation, to one that recognizes that even the simplest speech encounters are shot through with intertextual mediated dialogs, and dialogic references to the words of others. In other words, Bauman moves us from the rather simplistic invocation of Bakhtinian concepts of dialog and polyphony characteristic of the 1980s and 1990s to a understanding of dialog that understands dialog as not merely an external mechanical relationship between two voices in a single context, but also a mediated relationship that obtains between genres, between contexts, between texts (intertextuality) and performances (interperformance, not a particularly happy phrase). The central categories of the book, genre and intertextuality, move by the epilogue into a fresh and masterful critical reflexive position with respect to anthropological debates about the role of genre and intertextuality in the ethnographic encounter begun two decades ago with "Writing Culture." Using the more nuanced views of categories of genre and performance in relation to intertextuality-interperformance he has developed using ethnographic and folkloric

materials, he brings a refreshing and nuanced view to ethnographic representation itself, and shows how one-sided the notion of genres of representation and dialog in the "Writing Culture" discussion were, and shows how a more nuanced view of intertextual dialogs that recognize not only the "source dialog" of the ethnographic encounter but also the "target dialog" of the published ethnography as being relevant, not only for ethnographers, but also our interlocutors in the field. Among other things, Bauman reminds us that our ethnographic interlocutors talk to us willingly, because they want their words to be heard by others, that they too are performing for an imagined public of absent others. That is, the target dialog (the ethnography) is always already intertextually present, projected, in the source dialog or performance (the ethnographic encounter), not only for the ethnographer, but also for the performer. So contextualized, Bauman's book as a whole addresses issues that are relevant to anthropology as a whole.

Appropriately for a book on intertextuality, the introduction of the book will probably be oft-cited in the future. In addition to an excellent discussion of the categories of genre and performance, and the paired categories of intertextuality and interperformance, there is also found here a cogent discussion of the terms "entextualization" (discursive processes, often linked to genre, that bound off, objectify, a "text" from its "co(n)text," making it a cohesive, bounded, integral "figure" opposed to a nebulous contextual "ground" and rendering it able to be separated from that context [decontextualization] and redeployed in another [recontextualization]) and "contextualization" (discursive processes that tend to blur or erase the figure-ground divide between text and con(n)text). Both of these categories are linked, of course, to genre (genre serves as a framework for entextualization) and intertextuality (obviously decontextualization and recontextualization are processes that produce intertextual relations), but the discussion of genre, performance and intertextuality and interperformance is detailed and fairly exhaustive.

The next five chapters of the book deal with specific genres in specific times and places, differing aspects of the relationship of genre and intertextuality. The first three chapters (on Icelandic "magic poetry," Scottish traveler riddle tales, and Mexican market calls and *spies*) deal with Bakhtinian "secondary genres," showing intertextual relationships of genre in which primary genres (respectively poems, riddles, and short market "calls") are absorbed and recontextualized within complex secondary genres ("magic" poems within prose texts that tell of magical powers of certain kinds of Icelandic poets; riddles within "riddle tales"; and short market calls within broader "spies" in a market). Each such chapter is a wonderful ethnography by itself, and each contains separate gems of observation and wit. For example, one is impressed by the homologies Bauman draws between the riddle tale as a genre as being in a sense emblematic of Scottish travelers' own collective self-representation as being people defined by wit, especially in relation to non-traveler country dwellers. The initial and emergent character roles within the riddle tale then become images of ethnic self: the apparently feckless but actually very clever riddler-riddle-solver Jack versus the apparently clever but actually dough-headed non-traveler country folk (p. 53). I cannot resist pointing out here that examples of social divisions being expressed in British and North American folklore by a feckless but clever character named Jack outwitting a country bumpkin can be found elsewhere, notably Cornish tinner stories about "Jack the Tinker" outwitting the country bumpkin "giants," who, like Paul Bunyan, are large, strong, stupid, and represent unskilled agrarian laborers, illustrating the equivalent proposition that "skill and wits beat strength, skilled workers beat navvies and farmers" ("Rereading Man's Conquest of Nature: Skill, Myths and the Historical Construction of Masculinity in Western Extractive Industries," N. Quam-Wickham, *Men and Masculinities*, 1999:135–151; "Jewish Ghosts, Knackers, Tommyknockers, and Other Sprites of Capitalism in the Cornish Mines," P. Manning, *Cornish Studies*, 2005:216–255). The chapter on the Mexican market similarly shows how different uses of genre delineate different spheres of value, differentiating different qualitative classes of commodity between the polar types of short "call" and elaborated "spiel." Short "calls" are used for quotidian necessities and low-priced staples, for which only the type and quantitative relationships of price and commodity quantity are relevant, while luxury goods and novelty items are sold using much more elaborated *spies* (p. 81). The latter three chapters instead dwell on the intertextuality of tellings and retellings, decontextualizations and recontextualizations, and calibrating of "intertextual gaps." The penultimate chapter on "mediated performances"—performances where the fact of performance is put on display; and where "source dialogs" that are relayed by intermediaries or reciters are to be re-performed in a "target dialog" for various rhetorical or pragmatic effects—is destined to become a classic treatment of mediated communication. But I

am particularly fond of the contrast between two story tellers and story telling traditions in the previous two chapters, the accomplished Texas teller of tall tales that are positioned as autobiographical narratives and the more reserved Nova Scotian teller of yarns that belong to others. Here the opposition that Bauman develops across the chapters between the (very different) epistemic premises of the two story types is brilliant, as is the way he locates the very different kinds of forms of self-presentation that are produced by these different story traditions. Found in here, too, is a charming and trenchant critique of our own ethnographic predilection for authentic autobiographical narratives that are performed (without performance) for the first, and last time, before the ethnographer. Such “life stories” are treated as if they were the only kind of narrative worth recording or studying, and treated as if they were a universal *a priori* genre, which probably reveals more about the way that our ethnographic tradition unwittingly incorporates the categories of the psychoanalysis couch and the encounter group than anything about genre, paralleling Bauman’s critique of the way that the category of “situated dialog” or “talk in context” has been set up as a universal *a priori* or foundational genre. In all this somewhat puritanical search for the ordinary, everyday, true, authentic and unpolished, a lot of the really interesting stories and storytellers are ruled out of court (pp. 82–84). Bauman has an ear for a good storyteller, a good tall tale and a good yarn, and his ethnographic retellings are part of what makes this book worthwhile. But that is not all, there is a lot to be learned from artful liars like Ed Bell. But I would spoil the story by trying to say exactly what. Read the book.

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