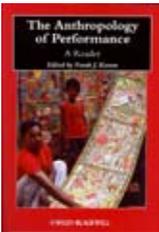


REVIEWS



General



Frank J. Korom, *The Anthropology of Performance: A Reader*

Malden, MA, and Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. 304 pages.
Hardcover, \$99.95; paperback, \$49.95; e-book, \$32.99. ISBN 978-1-1183-2398-4 (hardcover); 978-1-1183-2399-1 (paperback); 978-1-1184-9309-0 (e-book).

WITH THIS new anthology of previously published essays, Frank Korom has assembled an excellent volume that presents a series of approaches to “performance” in the study of cultural expression. Tipping his hat to his folklorist roots, Korom includes numerous classic essays from folklore studies in the volume, including Roger Abrahams’s essential “Playing the Dozens,” Richard Bauman’s “The La Have Island General Store,” E. Ojo Arewa and Alan Dundes’s “Proverbs and the Ethnography of Speaking Folklore,” and Deborah Kapchan’s “The Promise of Sonic Translation.” Other selections will be equally familiar to students of performance from an anthropological perspective, perhaps most notably Donald Brenneis’s “The Matter of Talk” and Frederick Manning’s “Celebrating Cricket.” The balance of articles is excellent, and the organization is clear. Korom helpfully includes a comprehensive bibliography as suggestions for further reading.

The collection is organized into five sections, and Korom leads off the entire collection with a brief but informative introduction. The first section, entitled “Performance in Prehistory and Antiquity,” offers two excellent essays that explore performance in the context of ancient and classical texts and artifacts. This approach has been quite productive in recent years, with Terry Gunnell’s work on performance in pre-Christian Scandinavia being among the most successful (unfortunately, Korom has not included a reference to GUNNELL’s influential work *The Origins of Drama in Scandinavia* [1995] in his bibliography).

The second section moves to more contemporary material. Entitled “Verbal Genres of Performance,” the essays in the section are important examples of works that trace their genealogy to early folklore study and, more recently, work on the eth-

nography of speaking. It should be noted that from the late eighteenth century on, many folklorists were deeply interested in aspects of performance, a fact that has been largely ignored by many students of performance. In this abbreviated version of intellectual history, performance studies start more or less with Dell HYMES's classic essay (1975). William LABOV and Joshua WALETZKY's work on personal experience narratives (1967), which somewhat unexpectedly is not included in the suggestions for further readings, is an earlier watershed essay that also enabled this avenue of inquiry. The omission of Labov and Waletzky draws attention to the impossible task of generating a comprehensive list for further reading. Indeed, one could spend a great deal of time figuring out what is missing from the volume, or from the list of suggested readings—that would be a counterproductive exercise, and one that would divert attention from the otherwise excellent selection of essays in this volume.

The third section of essays, "Ritual, Drama, and Public Spectacle," offers a series of ethnographically rich explorations of ritual performance, often as public events. Many collections of essays focusing on performance, ritual, and drama would doubtlessly include well-known articles such as Clifford GEERTZ's (1972) exploration of the Balinese cockfight (again, missing from the list of suggested readings). Korom resists this temptation, and introduces several important yet slightly less-known studies that broaden our understanding of ritual, spectacle, drama, and performance.

The fourth section of essays, under the heading "Performance and Politics in the Making of Communities," intersects well with many of the ideas presented in the second section. Here the focus turns to rhetoric and political action, and Korom has selected four mini-classic essays for this section, including Don Brenneis's fascinating discussion of "talk" in Fiji. The final section of essays, "Tourist Performances and the Global Ecumene," pushes the boundaries of performance well beyond the local, and engages the concept of tourism as performance. These essays will challenge many students of performance and anthropology and offer an interesting new horizon for future directions in performance studies.

Korom's introduction sets up the essays well, and the organization of the volume is clear from the start. What is not so clear is why the publisher has gone to the lengths that it has anthologizing a series of articles that are widely available through online library subscriptions. It is always helpful to have a compendium of essays easily accessible in print—but in most universities, there is a tendency to "push" electronic files onto the students' desktops using course management systems. Given the relative ease of access to these essays for most students (the primary target audience of this volume), it might have made more sense to present a collection of lesser-known essays that engage the concept of performance. These selections could have reached into some of the earlier work of folklorists that recognized the importance of performance (for example, the work of Per Arvid Säve; see PALMENFELT 1993) and presented other essays on performance that are less accessible. The essays presented in this volume could then be included in a more comprehensive list of suggested readings arranged not alphabetically but by the excellent topic headings (and perhaps several more) that Korom has already pro-

posed. As the publication model for these types of collections shifts radically in the coming years, it will be necessary for us to develop delivery mechanisms beyond the simple printed book that will allow broad and deep access to well curated subject areas. Although the print book is an important piece of this puzzle, the curated article list is equally important.

Korom should be commended for assembling this excellent selection of essays. The only thing missing is perhaps a bit more context for this collection, and for the selection of essays themselves. To that end, it would have been helpful if Korom had provided brief introductions to each of the anthology's sections. These smaller introductions could have been used as a means for setting up the topic and providing a history of the development of ideas in that particular sub-area. Nevertheless, the anthology will be a welcome addition to the bookshelves of any student of folklore, anthropology, or performance. And for researchers not aware of the significant contributions of folklorists to the field of performance studies, this reader offers a welcome corrective.

REFERENCES

- GEERTZ, Clifford
 1972 Deep play: Notes on the Balinese cockfight. *Daedalus* 101: 1-37.
- GUNNELL, Terry
 1995 *The Origins of Drama in Scandinavia*. Cambridge: D. S. Brewer.
- HYMES, Dell
 1975 Breakthrough into performance. In *Folklore Performance and Communication*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos and Kenneth Goldstein, 11-74. The Hague: Mouton.
- LABOV, William, and Joshua WALETZKY
 1967 Narrative analysis. In *Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts*, ed. J. Helm, 12-44. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- PALMENFELT, Ulf
 1993 *Per Arvid Säves möten med människor och sägner*. Stockholm: Carlssons Bok-förläg.

Timothy R. Tangherlini
University of California, Los Angeles