

CNR

Centre for Narrative Research, UEL

SEMINAR PROGRAMME 2004-2005

1:00 PM, Room LD 3010

University of East London, Docklands Campus

October 11th, 2004, Michael Hanne, University of Auckland, New Zealand,

Secondhand stories

‘Storytelling is always the art of repeating stories’, wrote Walter Benjamin, and evidence for this assertion may be found in every domain of human culture from sacred myth and folktales to the adaptation of fiction for the cinema, and from jokes and gossip to medical and legal practice. This talk explores some of the ways in which human beings, as individuals and in communities, use the retelling of existing stories as a device both for maintaining continuity and negotiating change.

Mike Hanne is Associate Professor and founding co-ordinator of the Programme in Comparative Literature at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. He studied French and Italian at Oxford and Glasgow Universities (and in Paris and Rome), and for many years taught Italian language and literature at Exeter and Auckland Universities. He has published on many topics in modern Italian literature, on the intersection of narrative and metaphor, and on literature and politics. His monograph, *The Power of the Story: Fiction and Political Change* (Providence/Oxford: Berghahn, 1996) examines the social and political impact of fictional works from Turgenev's "A Sportsman's Notebook" to Salman Rushdie's "The Satanic Verses." He is currently editing a volume of papers, creative work, interviews and readings for a volume and DVD deriving from the major international conference he convened in Auckland last year, "The Poetics of Exile."

November 1st, 2004, Derek Michael Robins, University of East London

A narrative of response.

Derek Robbins is currently writing an extended Introduction to a selection from the articles which he has written on Bourdieu in the period between 1986 and the present. The book is due to be published before the end of 2004 with the title: *Responding to Bourdieu*. Whether or not the book is available at the time of the seminar, Derek will summarise the contents and read extracts.

The purpose of the book and the seminar is to chart the development of a narrative of response, taking the response to Bourdieu's work as a case-study to explore what it means to be 'influenced' by texts or thinkers. In the expression of Goethe which Bourdieu liked to deploy, what is the nature of the 'elective affinity' which attracts us to some texts more than others and which causes us to allow our own thoughts and feelings to be articulated through the language which we read? Using the title of a book by Alfred Schütz, the seminar will explore the 'problem of relevance'. Although the seminar will focus on problems associated with the tension between subjective knowledge selection and objective criticism and will discuss the ambivalence of pedagogy in this context, it will also seek to broaden the horizon to consider cross-cultural communication and reception. By this means, the seminar may investigate spheres of interest common to the Centre for Narrative Research and the Group for the Study of International Social Science.

Derek Robbins is Professor of International Social Theory at the University of East London, where he also is Director of the Group for the Study of International Social Science in the School of Social Sciences. He is the author of *The Work of Pierre Bourdieu* (1991) and of *Bourdieu and culture* (2000); the editor of the four-volume collection of articles on *Bourdieu* in the Sage Masters of Contemporary Social Thought series (2000); as well as author of many articles on Bourdieu's work. He is the editor of the three-volume collection of articles on *Lyotard* (2004) and is currently editing a second four-volume collection of articles on Bourdieu, both in the same series. He is writing *The Internationalization of French Social Thought, 1950-2000* and his *Responding to Bourdieu* is due to be published in 2004.

December 6th, 2004, Alexandra Georgakopoulou, King's College, London

**On doing narrative research without research narratives:
data, interactional, and identity issues**

Although in principle a pluralized (rich? fragmented?) endeavour, narrative research in numerous social science disciplines tends to evoke and employ specific kinds of data and methodologies. In particular, “spoken” (sic non-literary, natural) narratives invariably occur (are elicited) in interview situations, hence the oft used term *research* or *interview narratives*. I will claim that such narratives tend to a) present highly comparable structural/interactional features and b) allow for and even warrant specific views of self and identity constructions. It is not accidental that another frequent characterization of such narratives is “autobiographical”; it is also true that the main purpose of narrative research on research narratives is some kind of (e.g. gender, culture, etc.) identity analysis. My talk will give a voice to and argue for the “worthiness” of narratives that are still in the fringes of narrative cum identity research. I will talk about those kinds of atypical (inasmuch as they do not sit well with the research narrative canon, as outlined above) stories using the formulations *story-lines* and *ongoing narratives*. I will claim that such narratives force the analyst to micro-interactional work that closely looks at co-text as well as situational and larger context. I will also argue that identity analysis based on such narratives inevitably leads to at the same time as bringing up issues of co-constructions, inter-textuality/inter-mediality, re-contextualization and consequentiality. I will illustrate the above with data from the conversations of a group of female adolescents and private e-mail messages.

Alexandra Georgakopoulou is Reader in Modern Greek Language & Linguistics, King's College London. Her research interests include discourse analysis, narrative analysis, sociolinguistics, anthropological linguistics. She has published on the textual devices, interactional and socio-cultural roles of narratives in conversational contexts in contemporary Greece. Other research interests include: language, youth, and gender identities; talk in family and friendship interactions; computer-mediated communication (mainly e-mail); Greek and English language uses in contact situations. She is currently working on a book on narrative and interactional practices in peer-group socialization, based on the ethnographic study of an all-female group of Greek adolescents. Books include *Discourse constructions of youth identities*, (co-edited with Jannis Androutsopoulos, 2003, Amsterdam/Philadelphia), *A reader in Greek sociolinguistics* (co-edited with Marianna Spanaki, 2001, Oxford/Bern), *Text and Communication* (with Dionysis Goutsos, in Greek, 1999, Athens), *Discourse Analysis* (with Dionysis Goutsos, 1997, 2004 - 2nd edition, Edinburgh) and *Narrative Performances: A study of Modern Greek storytelling* (1997, Amsterdam/Philadelphia).

February 7th, 2005, Michael Erben, Centre for Biography and Education,
University of Southampton

*Life Without Narrative: Linking Freud and Durkheim through the
Unconscious',.*

This talk will be a discussion of the importance of narrative by an analysis of the consequences of its absence. Durkheim's formulation of Anomie and Freud's formulation of the Id will be examined as abstracted portrayals of de-narrativised existence. Examples will be given that compare and contrast the utility of these conceptions. In the case of anomie, suicide will be discussed in relation to young men in prison and in the case of the id there will be discussion of psychotic states in relation to adequate early socialisation. Further, and relatedly, there will be an exploration of the category of atypicality as a methodological resource for the social sciences.

Michael Erben is Director of the Centre for Biography and Education at the University of Southampton. He is a founder member of the British Sociological Association Auto/Biography Study Group and is Reviews Editor of the Journal Auto/Biography. His current research is into prison lives and suicide.

March, 3rd, 2005, Nicole Vittelone, Manchester Metropolitan University

'Condoms, Adolescence and Time'

The object of the condom is generally described as concerning a history of sexuality. In much writings in the social sciences and humanities, this object is discussed in terms of stigmatising certain social groups, particularly gays, and as a threat to normative identities, especially straight white men. In addition, there have been more liberal approaches to the meaning of the object as a 'symbol of sexuality' in a global world. In contrast to these accounts, in this paper I suggest that there is a new history of the condom that has yet to be written. Paying particular attention to the popularisation of the object of the condom, I propose that this object concerns the making of heterosexuality and in particular heterosexual adolescence. By returning to the North American condom debates of the early 1990s this paper suggests that struggles over the contemporary meaning of the condom concern not just the media and discursive constructions but the process of measuring and documenting condom use. Whilst for Joshua Gamson (1990) the aesthetisation and commodification of safer sex was seen to mark a new history of the object (and indeed sexuality) this paper revisits the concerns of Trumbach (1990) and Bravmann (1990) who stress the invisibility of gays and lesbians post the mid 1980s in the discourse of safer sex. These concerns I suggest involve not just the media and consumer culture but the research process itself both within and outside of the academy. In particular and by focusing on the production of knowledge – via narratives on condoms use – this paper considers the ways in which safer sex culture today involves the making of individuals, particularly heterosexual individuals.

Nicole Vittelone is Lecturer in Sociology, at Manchester Metropolitan University. Her most recent research addresses the object of the syringe.

April 18th, 2005, Catharine McLean-Hopkins, 'University of Manchester

Repertoires of the Self: Autobiographical Aspects of Bobby Baker's performance works

This talk explores the multiple autobiographical aspects of Bobby Baker's performance works. This British performer has placed her/self in the performance of her/selves for nearly three decades. Her work is seemingly grounded in the mundane world of the domestic yet carries a political intent that takes them beyond the limited identities of gender, class or nationality. Her performances are constructed works, planned for repeatable performance and in that sense these autobiographical representations negotiate the conditions of fiction. However, by placing her live self at the site of that telling Bobby Baker is an embodied, 'authentic' presence.

Bobby Baker's repertoire of autobiographical selves is drawn from a range of self representations including personal anecdotes, personal sites, the comic placement of her performance persona against the trivialities of her domestic life and the transgressive use of the symbols of nurturing as the medium for representing her anger and rage. These autobiographic features combine in a series of comic performances that follow the trajectory of her adulthood and have produced a body of work that performs the mutable identities of one life.

Drawing On A Mother's Experience and *Box Story* were devised more than ten years apart. Bobby Baker performs versions of her remembered self whilst she 'draws' the emotional intensity of confessional revelations about motherhood in one and negotiates memory and loss in the other. Autobiographical performance is an emerging interdisciplinary area of academic engagement and Bobby Baker's long performance career provides a source for the theorising and exploration of what autobiographical performance can be.

Catharine McLean-Hopkins is a lecturer in Drama and English at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston. She is researching the political potentials of women's autobiographical performance. She has a chapter forthcoming 'Re(c)ipertoires of the Self: Autobiographical Aspects of Bobby Baker's Performance works' in Gale and Gardener. Eds. *Women, Theatre and Performance: Auto/biography*. Manchester: MUP, 2005.

May 16th, 2005, 'Barbara Harrison, University of East London.

Photographs, community, networks and relationships in everyday life