March 21, 2013

Tuesday Week 8: Final Project Proposals

Week 8

T: No Class – Passover. Work on Final Project

Final Paper Proposals are due by midnight to leibman@reed.edu or (even better!) posted in a comment below. Paper proposals should include the following:

1. Your name

2. What book you are writing about and the topic/aspect you will discuss

3. The following information that will eventually go in your introduction:
   - Review of Scholarly debate, including the names and citations of the article[s] you will use as your common ground and what they have said on the topic you will be discussing ("common ground")
   - Statement of Argument Relevant to Context, Debate, and Perceptions (your new insight). This includes what they have missed that you will discuss and what you will say that is new. ("but" and "thesis")
   - Claim for significance of the subject, approach or argument ("so what")
   - Summary of article structure and points (your "road map")

More help! To find out more about the Common Ground, But, So What, Thesis see The Problem of the Problem by Joseph Williams.
Inge Oosterhoff (3615723)

Topic: Femininity in The Bingo Palace

I am working on the position female characters hold opposite male characters in Louise Erdich's The Bingo Palace because I want to uncover the unique characteristics of the female characters to explain to you the ways in which the female characters in Louise Erdich's novels reflect the complex position women hold in Ojibwa tribes.

In his article “Mix-Ups, Messes, Confinements, and Double-Dealings”: Transgendered Performances in Three Novels by Louise Erdrich, J. James Iovannone discusses both female and male characters in Louise Erdich's novels as being transndered and continuously transformative as both male and female (38). Although the argument Iovanne makes is strong, I believe that by discussing Louise Erdich's characters as negotiating between genders and taking on different gender-characteristics as they go, dismisses the unique construction of femininity, which Erdich attributes to her female characters. I believe that the female characters in Erdich's novels reflect the unique position women hold within Ojibwa tribes and are adjusted by her to create a definitive construct of femininity within her novels.
For this essay, I will use the book The Bingo Palace by Louise Erdich to examine the unique characteristics of the female characters by contrasting them with the male characters of the book. I will use the article by Iovannone to show which implications his approach to Louise Erdich's characters have when examining these female characters, and to find out how his views can be altered to come to a better view on gender roles in Erdich's novels. According to Iovannone, Erdich's novels treat gender in the following ways:

“[G]ender is experienced as a wound, a site of conflict and discord, a transformation, a negotiation between men and women, masculine and feminine – an exchange that redefines and transcends both” (38).

I believe that by seeing the gender of Erdich's characters as gender-transformative, it is impossible to see the uniqueness of the femininity which Erdich attributes to her female characters, because it will either be discussed as traditionally feminine, or divergent, thus masculine.

I will also use the article ‘The Woman Who Married a Beaver: Trade Patterns and Gender Roles in the Ojibwa Fur Trade' by Bruce M. White, to elucidate the unique position women hold within traditional Ojibwa tribes. White describes the role of women in Ojibwa tribes as follows:

“All these roles for women in the trade were reflective of Ojibwa belief that women's roles were ultimately shaped by spiritual power rather than any gender category based solely on a rigid division of labor” (109).

I believe that this article shows that the role of women within Ojibwa tribes is complex and transformative, yet distinctly female. I believe that the female characters in Louise Erdich's The Bingo Palace should be seen in the same light: not as negotiating between male and female, but as female with unique female qualities and characteristics. In the end, I would like to prove that it is important to see the female characters in The Bingo Palace as distinctly feminine, in order to see the unique position women hold in Ojibwa tribes and how this rings through in the female characters of Louise Erdich's novels.

Roadmap:

* Introduction
  * Discussion of article Iovanni and how his view creates difficulties for recognizing the unique femininity of Erdich's female characters.
  * Discussion of article White to show unique position of women in Ojibwa tribes.
  * Examination of female characters in The Bingo Palace opposite male characters to unravel their unique characteristics. Main focus: in which ways do their characteristics match those of the female characteristics in White's article.
  * Main focus: in which ways do the characteristics of the women in The Bingo Palace diverge from the characteristics in White's article > which characteristics are unique to Erdich's construction of femininity?
  * Conclusion: recapitulation of the ways in which Erdich's female characters be seen as unique and to which extent is this reflective of the unique position women hold within Ojibwa tribes. Proof of how this would have been missed, had Louise characters been seen as gender-transformative.

Works Cited


Iovannone, J. James, “‘Mix-Ups, Messes, Confinements, and Double-Dealings’: Transgendered Performances in Three Novels’ SAIL 21:1 (spring 2009) print.

and spirits have guided her throughout her life. She explains how being a medicine woman intertwines with her basket weaving. When healing sick people the spirit guides her into sucking the pain from the patient and spitting it out into the basket she is weaving. It ensures that her baskets come 'alive'. Mabel's way of telling her stories jumps from one story to the other, however in his writing Greg incorporates the jumping of stories very well, making it easy to read and still very true to Mabel's way of storytelling.

While people might say that Greg, as a Native American, would be the perfect candidate to understand Mabel, I would argue that he had just as much trouble understanding Mabel at times as anyone else, with his Native American heritage only adding to the frustration as he expects to understand her because they have shared the same heritage. He mentions this in an article he writes on Mabel called 'The Woman who loved a Snake' and 'What people of Elem Saw: Orality in Mabel McKay's Stories'.

Greg Sarris writes in this article that, "Mabel bucks literary expectations so that neither she nor any aspect of her world is seen or reduced to anything other than what it is, for its complexity and difference". This is also visible in Weaving the Dream, as Mabel refuses to conform her mannerisms to answer his questions the way he wants or expects her to. There are numerous moments where it becomes apparent that writing a story about Mabel is frustrating for Greg. Mabel's refusal to conform to a persona or cliché results in interesting answers to Greg's question's, of which there will be further explanation later in this essay. Greg goes on in the article to say that, "Basically, in whatever form or manner we deal with oral texts, whether orally or literally, we continue their lives in very specific ways. This is just as true about an oral exchange within a single culture as it is about an oral exchange that is cross-cultural. No two personal worlds are identical anywhere. We sort what we hear, unconsciously and consciously, and this has to do with our cultural and personal histories and the situation of our hearing". This can also be applied to his relationship with Mabel. Their shared cultural and personal histories made it easy for them to connect however there are times as well where this shared history does not work in Greg's favor and his questions and requests to Mabel do not get the answer or response he thought they would, quite simply because Mabel sees things very differently to him. In this paper I am going to analyze those moments where their communication is affected by the barriers mentioned above.

Road Map:

- Introduction
- Examination of Greg Sarris; his childhood, identity & relationship to the Native Americans. This will be done with the use of Weaving the Dream but also an article written by Susan Schindehette & Danielle Morton, named 'Native Son' which focuses on Sarris's childhood and Native American identity.
- Main Focus: His relationship to Mabel, how do frustrations with Mabel become clear in Weaving the Dream?
- Examination of these frustrations and analysis with the use of his article "The Woman who loved a Snake & What people of Elem Saw: Orality in Mabel McKay's Stories".
- Conclusion

Bibliography


Elaboration on *but and *so what:

In his article, Iovannone provides a strong argument as to why characters in Louise Erdrich's novel should not be discussed as "Berdache" or "two-spirited", which is what Julie Barak, who has written prominent articles on gender in Erdrich's novels, has done. Iovannone suggests that even though these terms describe a form of third gender, which transcends female and male and is an accepted gender-role in many Native-American cultures, it is unfulfilling in describing gender roles in Erdrich's novels.

First of all, Iovannone suggests that the term "Berdache" is now used as a derogatory term for all divergent sexual- and gender identities, such as transsexuals, gays and transgender people. For this reason, "Berdache" should cannot be used without negative connotations (40). Secondly, Iovannone states that the term "two-spirited, which is used by to replace the term "Berdache" in scholarly debates, is also unsatisfactory in describing Erdrich's characters, since it limits gender to only three possible distinct gender-identities (40). He also argues that Barak's approach cannot be applied to female characters, since the term "Berdache" is originally a term for male prostitutes, and thus focuses on male characters behaving female (41).

Iovannone argues that Erdrich generates a more complex view on gender in her novels, in which gender moves and transcends any binary categorization. He proposes to view characters in Erdrich's novels as transgendered, suggesting that they move between female, male and different sexualities (41). He also argues that Erdrich's characters should not be seen from a traditional Anishinaabe perspective, since Erdrich combines Native and modern culture in her novels (42).

In my essay, I will argue that Iovannone's argument is not satisfactory in explaining gender in 'The Bingo Palace'. For his argument, Iovannone dismisses Erdrich's earlier novels because he believes them not to have developed transgendered characters enough yet. For this reason, he focuses on three more recent novels and three characters in particular, who respectively experiment with their sexuality, cross-dressing and passing as a different gender.

Even though Iovannone's argumentation is confirmed by his discussion of these particular novels and characters, the characters of 'The Bingo Palace' cannot be discussed in the same way. An important reason for this is that the characters in 'The Bingo Palace' are involved in heterosexual relationships. Additionally, there is no question of bi-sexual experiences, cross-dressing or conscious transgendered performance. However, I believe the characters of 'The Bingo Palace' should be seen as uniquely gendered; the female characters in particular. They do not seem to comply to traditional or western female gender roles. They have a distinct agency and spirituality that should be discussed in a different way than Iovannone attempts to in order to gain a better understanding of it. Instead of looking at the female characters of 'The Bingo Palace' as transgendered in the way of Iovannone, I will look at them within the framework of (their) heterosexual relationships. This is not possible using Iovannone's approach, since he rejects binary oppositions in looking at gender roles in Erdrich's novels (42). By looking at the female characters in opposition to the male characters, I will argue that Erdrich does in fact create unique gender-attributes or –performances in early novels like 'The Bingo Palace', not by creating transgendered characters, but by creating a unique type of femininity within the boundaries of traditional gender roles.

I will also argue that these female gender roles are best understood in the framework of original Ojibwa women gender roles, rejecting (partially) Iovannone's argument that Erdrich's characters should not be seen in the light of traditional Anishinaabe culture. I do agree with Iovannone that Erdrich adapts traditional culture to create her own hybrid world. I believe she adjusts traditional Ojibwa female gender roles to create her own form
of femininity within 'The Bingo Palace'. To support this argument, I will discuss the female characters in the light of the article "The Woman Who Married a Beaver: Trade Patterns and Gender Roles in the Ojibwa Fur Trade" and show in which ways Erdich's female characters fit traditional Ojibwa female gender roles and in which ways they deviate.

Concluding, my main point will be that Iovannone's adaption of Barak's approach to discussing gender roles in Louise Erdich's novels is not satisfactory when discussing female gender roles in 'The Bingo Palace'. Even though Iovannone tried to find a way to broaden Barak's approach to be able to also discuss both male and female characters, his transgendered approach fails to lay bare the unique femininity which Erdich creates in 'The Bingo Palace'. Next to this, I will try to lay bare this unique femininity by understanding the female characters of 'The Bingo Palace' opposite the male characters in the light of traditional Ojibwa female gender roles. In this way, I would like to provide readers of The Bingo Palace with a better understanding of the female characters, which the approach of Iovannone would not provide.

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Betty Keeman
March 26, 2013 at 8:48 pm

Name: Betty Keeman  
Student number: 3340589  
Course: Native American Literature and Culture  
Professor: Laura Leibman  
Date: March 26th, 2013.

Paper Proposal

I am working on the position of gambling in the Native American culture because I want to uncover how gambling effects the social and economical position of the Native Americans in order to better explain why gambling is still a big part of the Native American culture.

Thesis statement

Gambling is not just a significant part of the Native American culture because gambling has been part of the culture for centuries, other factors have influence on this and with that also change the way of gambling in the Native American culture.

Gambling in the Native American culture

Gambling is forbidden in most of the US. The only places where you are aloud to gamble are Las Vegas and Atlantic City. However, there are some other places you can gamble as well, at Native American casino's to be exact. Many tribes in the US have a casino. These casinos bring job opportunities and money to the tribes and with that can create welfare. Unfortunately it also creates gambling addictions among Native Americans. What many people do not know is that gambling games have been a part of the Native American culture for a long time, even before North America got colonised. Scholars have argued that because gambling has probably always been part of the Native American Culture that it explains why gambling is currently still a big part of the lives of Native Americans.

However, what they do not take into account is that the sort of gambling and purpose of gambling have changed. Gambling now only has to do with luck, no longer with myths and legends, as it did before the colonisation. Gambling within the Native American community also used to be to win as a group, these days gambling is aimed at the luck of the individual. More important is that the growth of Native American casinos also has to do with the willingness to cooperate of the federal and state government. Just because gambling has been a part of the Native American Culture in the past, does not necessarily explain why it still is in the future.

Misconceptions about the current impact Native American casinos have on the Native American community are dangerous as people might see the gambling as just an addiction that needs to be prevented. Maybe it should, but the casinos also bring money and welfare to the tribes. We also need to understand the position of gambling in the Native American community to understand why gambling is still such a big part of the Native American culture and why so many Native Americans now have gambling addictions. This way we can understand the current value and position gambling has in the Native American culture.

Paper outline

1. Introduction.  
   Thesis statement.
2. History of gambling in the Native American Culture.  
   How is this seen in the book?
3. Current position of gambling in the Native American culture.  
   How is this seen in the book?
4. How is the current way of gambling influencing the Native American culture?
   How is this seen in the book?

5. Conclusion.
   Answering the thesis statement.

I will start with an introduction to my thesis statement. Then I will go into the history of gambling in Native American culture. Followed by the current situation of the position of gambling in the Native American culture and how this is influencing the Native American Culture. To illustrate this I will take examples from different theories and parts of the book: The Bingo Palace by Louise Erdrich. I will end with a conclusion, coming back to the thesis statement.

Literature


female, and this sexual identity is constantly changing” (12). Mathew Teorey in “Spinning Bigendered Identity in Silko’s Ceremony and Puig’s Kiss of the Spiderwoman” explores the character of Betonie as one the reincarnations of Yellow Woman, who “spins a web of feminine storytelling and love to ensnare Tayo” (5). In his view, Betonie, drawing power from both white and native cultures and traditions engages Tayo in his healing process (9). Betonie’s location in physical borderlands, where, in Anzaldúa’s words, “the prohibited and the forbidden […] the squint-eyed, the perverser, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the mulato, the half-breed, the half-dead” (3) live. Also Betonie fulfills the function traditionally ascribed to Kochinnenako by Allen, he “keeps track of the people,” who even though sleep in alleys between the bars and occupy the liminal space between the railroad, white’s people dump, and the river, feel comfortable on the land they belong to (Ceremony 108). In the character of Betonie, already established in the borderlands, Silko fuses the traditional significance of Yellow Woman’s liminal position with the new borderland consciousness, which is empowered by both white and Indian culture.

Also Tayo can be seen as an updated rendition of Yellow Woman, an individual living on the margins of the community due to his atypical feature, mixed ancestry in case of Tayo. Through Tayo Silko is trying to show the beneficial side of difference, which Silko understands in the traditional Pueblo terms: “In the old Pueblo world differences were celebrated as Mother Creator’s grace” (11). In Silko’s story the ceremony does not lead Tayo back to the community. Especially during the summer he physically stays on the ranch with Ts’eh, which unleashes hatred of Emo, one of his troubles veteran friends. In the following adventure Tayo restores the balance to the community, as he avoids the capture by the stakeout Emo set up and restrains himself from killing Emo, who eventually leaves for California.

Roadmap:
To account for the ways in which Silko updates the liminal space and the role model of Yellow Woman I would like to focus on Silko’s characters of mixed-ancestry, living in the proximity of the border between white and Indian worlds. Night Swan rents the upper floor of the bar smuggling beer to the reservation, Ts’eh live in isolation in the mountains somewhere off the track, Betonie is in Gallup. I would like to discuss these characters first as representations of Yellow Women, her significant difference from the community, and her adventures which benefit the whole tribe. In what ways do these characters respond to these aspects of Yellow Woman? On the other hand, to compare it with Anzaldúa’s new borderlands, in what ways are they empowered by their access to both, white and Indian, cultures?

The character of Tayo is of special significance as his identity is in the process of creation throughout the novel. It is interesting to see how Silko’s Tayo in the healing ceremony constructs his borderland identity, or in other words, cuts the hole in the fence to create new borderlands. Tayo here represents the process of reclaiming the borderlands but also creating the new borderland identity. It is also the process of healing, and as such crucial to the wellbeing of the whole community.

Works Cited:
California Community Colleges Final Project Proposal. District: College: Energy Use Calculator. There is the presumption that a Non-Academic Week uses about 50% of the energy of an Academic Week, therefore only half of the difference between the number of Academic Weeks and the Total Weeks is added to the Academic Weeks to determine the 'total weeks' of operation for the calculation of the Average Btu/GSF/Week. California Community Colleges Final Project Proposal. C. ALIFORNIA.

Your final project is a four week assignment to be completed in two stages (proposal and implementation). Proposals presentations will be over two weeks (Nov 23 and 30). Final project presentations will be Monday, Dec. 14. The final project should be a creative project that builds off of or is inspired by the concepts we've covered this semester. You should feel free to think non-traditionally, projects do not need to be screen-based and there is no requirement to use a particular aspect of JavaScript or programming. Final projects can be collaborations with anyone in any class. Final project...