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Performance Studies

Interventions and Radical Research¹

Dwight Conquergood

According to Michel de Certeau, “what the map cuts up, the story cuts across” (1984:129). This pithy phrase evokes a postcolonial world crisscrossed by transnational narratives, diaspora affiliations, and, especially, the movement and multiple migrations of people, sometimes voluntary, but often economically propelled and politically coerced. In order to keep pace with such a world, we now think of “place” as a heavily trafficked intersection, a port of call and exchange, instead of a circumscribed territory. A boundary is more like a membrane than a wall. In current cultural theory, “location” is imagined as an itinerary instead of a fixed point. Our understanding of “local context” expands to encompass the historical, dynamic, often traumatic, movements of people, ideas, images, commodities, and capital. It is no longer easy to sort out the local from the global: transnational circulations of images get reworked on the ground and redeployed for local, tactical struggles. And global flows simultaneously are encumbered and energized by these local makeovers. We now are keenly aware that the “local” is a leaky, contingent construction, and that global forces are taken up, struggled over, and refracted for site-specific purposes. The best of the new cultural theory distinguishes itself from apolitical celebrations of mobility, flow, and easy border crossings by carefully tracking the transitive circuits of power and the political economic pressure points that monitor the migrations of people, channel the circulations of meanings, and stratify access to resources (see Gilroy 1994; Appadurai 1996; Lavie and Swedenburg 1996; Clifford 1997; di Leonardo 1998; Joseph 1999; Ong 1999). We now ask: For whom is the border a friction-free zone of entitled access, a frontier of possibility? Who travels confidently across borders, and who gets questioned, detained, interrogated, and strip-searched at the border (see Taylor 1999)?

But de Certeau’s aphorism, “what the map cuts up, the story cuts across,” also points to transgressive travel between two different domains of knowledge: one official, objective, and abstract—“the map”; the other one practical, embodied, and popular—“the story.” This promiscuous traffic between different ways of knowing carries the most radical promise of performance studies research. Performance studies struggles to open the space between analysis and action, and to pull the pin on the binary opposition between theory and practice. This embrace

of different ways of knowing is radical because it cuts to the root of how knowledge is organized in the academy.

The dominant way of knowing in the academy is that of empirical observation and critical analysis from a distanced perspective: “knowing that,” and “knowing about.” This is a view from above the object of inquiry: knowledge that is anchored in paradigm and secured in print. This propositional knowledge is shadowed by another way of knowing that is grounded in active, intimate, hands-on participation and personal connection: “knowing how,” and “knowing who.” This is a view from ground level, in the thick of things. This is knowledge that is anchored in practice and circulated within a performance community, but is ephemeral. Donna Haraway locates this homely and vulnerable “view from a body” in contrast to the abstract and authoritative “view from above,” universal knowledge that pretends to transcend location (1991:196).

Dominant epistemologies that link knowing with seeing are not attuned to meanings that are masked, camouflaged, indirect, embedded, or hidden in context.

Since the enlightenment project of modernity, the first way of knowing has been preeminent. Marching under the banner of science and reason, it has disqualified and repressed other ways of knowing that are rooted in embodied experience, orality, and local contingencies. Between objective knowledge that is consolidated in texts, and local know-how that circulates on the ground within a community of memory and practice, there is no contest. It is the choice between science and “old wives’ tales” (note how the disqualified knowledge is gendered as feminine).

Michel Foucault coined the term “subjugated knowledges” to include all the local, regional, vernacular, naïve knowledges at the bottom of the hierarchy—the low Other of science (1980:81–84). These are the nonserious ways of knowing that dominant culture neglects, excludes, represses, or simply fails to recognize. Subjugated knowledges have been erased because they are illegible; they exist, by and large, as active bodies of meaning, outside of books, eluding the forces of inscription that would make them legible, and thereby legitimate (see de Certeau 1998; Scott 1998).

What gets squeezed out by this epistemic violence is the whole realm of complex, finely nuanced meaning that is embodied, tacit, intoned, gestured, improvised, coexperienced, covert—and all the more deeply meaningful because of its refusal to be spelled out. Dominant epistemologies that link knowing with seeing are not attuned to meanings that are masked, camouflaged, indirect, embedded, or hidden in context. The visual/verbal bias of Western regimes of knowledge blinds researchers to meanings that are expressed forcefully through intonation, silence, body tension, arched eyebrows, blank stares, and other protective arts of disguise and secrecy—what de Certeau called “the elocutionary experience of a fugitive communication” (2000:133; see Conquergood 2000). Subordinate people do not have the privilege of explicitness, the luxury of transparency, the presumptive norm of clear and direct communication, free and open debate on a level playing field that the privileged classes take for granted.

In his critique of the limitations of literacy, Kenneth Burke argued that print-based scholarship has built-in blind spots and a conditioned deafness:

The [written] record is usually but a fragment of the expression (as the written word omits all telltale record of gesture and tonality; and not only

may our “literacy” keep us from missing the omissions, it may blunt us to the appreciation of tone and gesture, so that even when we witness the full expression, we note only those aspects of it that can be written down). ([1950] 1969:185)

In even stronger terms, Raymond Williams challenged the class-based arrogance of scriptocentrism, pointing to the “error” and “delusion” of “highly educated” people who are “so driven in on their reading” that “they fail to notice that there are other forms of skilled, intelligent, creative activity” such as “theatre” and “active politics.” This error “resembles that of the narrow reformer who supposes that farm labourers and village craftsmen were once uneducated, merely because they could not read.” He argued that “the contempt” for performance and practical activity, “which is always latent in the highly literate, is a mark of the observer’s limits, not those of the activities themselves” ([1958] 1983:309). Williams critiqued scholars for limiting their sources to written materials; I agree with Burke that scholarship is so skewed toward texts that even when researchers do attend to extralinguistic human action and embodied events they construe them as texts to be read. According to de Certeau, this scriptocentrism is a hallmark of Western imperialism. Posted above the gates of modernity, this sign: “‘Here only what is written is understood.’ Such is the internal law of that which has constituted itself as ‘Western’ [and ‘white’]” (1984:161).

Only middle-class academics could blithely assume that all the world is a text because reading and writing are central to their everyday lives and occupational security. For many people throughout the world, however, particularly subaltern groups, texts are often inaccessible, or threatening, charged with the regulatory powers of the state. More often than not, subordinate people experience texts and the bureaucracy of literacy as instruments of control and displacement, e.g., green cards, passports, arrest warrants, deportation orders—what de Certeau calls “intextuation”: “Every power, including the power of law, is written first of all on the backs of its subjects” (1984:140). Among the most oppressed people in the United States today are the “undocumented” immigrants, the so-called “illegal aliens,” known in the vernacular as the people “sin papeles,” the people without papers, *indocumentado/as*. They are illegal because they are not legible, they trouble “the writing machine of the law” (de Certeau 1984:141).

The hegemony of textualism needs to be exposed and undermined. Transcription is not a transparent or politically innocent model for conceptualizing or engaging the world. The root metaphor of the text underpins the supremacy of Western knowledge systems by erasing the vast realm of human knowledge and meaningful action that is unlettered, “a history of the tacit and the habitual” (Jackson 2000:29). In their multivolume historical ethnography of colonialism/evangelism in South Africa, John and Jean Comaroff pay careful attention to the way Tswana people argued with their white interlocutors “*both* verbally and nonverbally” (1997:47; see also 1991). They excavate spaces of agency and struggle from everyday performance practices—clothing, gardening, healing, trading, worshipping, architecture, and homemaking—to reveal an impressive repertoire of conscious, creative, critical, contrapuntal responses to the imperialist project that exceeded the verbal. The Comaroffs intervene in an academically fashionable textual fundamentalism and fetish of the (verbal) archive where “text—a sad proxy for life—becomes all” (1992:26). “In this day and age,” they ask, “do we still have to remind ourselves that many of the players on any historical stage cannot speak at all? Or, under greater or lesser duress, opt not to do so” (1997:48; see also Scott 1990)?

There are many ethnographic examples of how nonelite people recognize the opacity of the text and critique its dense occlusions and implications in historical processes of political economic privilege and systematic exclusion. In Belize, for

example, Garifuna people, an African-descended minority group, use the word *gapencilitin*, which means “people with pencil,” to refer to middle- and upper-class members of the professional-managerial class, elites who approach life from an intellectual perspective. They use the word *mapencilitin*, literally “people without pencil,” to refer to rural and working-class people, “real folks” who approach life from a practitioner’s point of view.² What is interesting about the Garifuna example is that class stratification, related to differential knowledges, is articulated in terms of access to literacy. The pencil draws the line between the haves and the have-nots. For Garifuna people, the pencil is not a neutral instrument; it functions metonymically as the operative technology of a complex political economy of knowledge, power, and the exclusions upon which privilege is based.

The state of emergency under which many people live demands that we pay attention to messages that are coded and encrypted; to indirect, nonverbal, and extralinguistic modes of communication where subversive meanings and utopian yearnings can be sheltered and shielded from surveillance.

In his study of the oppositional politics of black musical performance, Paul Gilroy argues that critical scholars need to move beyond this “idea and ideology of the text and of textuality as a mode of communicative practice which provides a model for all other forms of cognitive exchange and social interaction” (1994:77). Oppressed people everywhere must watch their backs, cover their tracks, suck up their feelings, and veil their meanings. The state of emergency under which many people live demands that we pay attention to messages that are coded and encrypted; to indirect, nonverbal, and extralinguistic modes of communication where subversive meanings and utopian yearnings can be sheltered and shielded from surveillance.

Gilroy’s point is illustrated vividly by Frederick Douglass in a remarkable passage from his life narrative in which he discussed the improvisatory performance politics expressed in the singing of enslaved people. It is worth quoting at length:³

But, on allowance day, those who visited the great house farm were peculiarly excited and noisy. While on their way, they would make the dense old woods, for miles around, reverberate with their wild notes. These were not always merry because they were wild. On the contrary, they were mostly of a plaintive cast, and told a tale of grief and sorrow. In the most boisterous outbursts of rapturous sentiment, there was ever a tinge of deep melancholy [...]. I have sometimes thought that the mere hearing of those songs would do more to impress truly spiritual-minded men and women with the soul-crushing and death-dealing character of slavery, than the reading of whole volumes [...]. Every tone was a testimony against slavery [...]. The hearing of those wild notes always [...] filled my heart with ineffable sadness [...]. To those songs I trace my first glimmering conceptions of the dehumanizing character of slavery [...]. Those songs still follow me, to deepen my hatred of slavery, and quicken my sympathies for my brethren in bonds. ([1855] 1969:97–99)

Enslaved people were forbidden by law in 19th-century America to acquire literacy. No wonder, then, that Douglass, a former enslaved person, still acknowl-

edged the deeply felt insights and revelatory power that come through the embodied experience of listening to communal singing, the tones, cadence, vocal nuances, all the sensuous specificities of performance that overflow verbal content: “they were tones loud, long, and deep” (99).

In order to know the deep meaning of slavery, Douglass recommended an experiential, participatory epistemology as superior to the armchair “reading of whole volumes.” Douglass advised meeting enslaved people on the ground of their experience by exposing oneself to their expressive performances. In this way, Douglass anticipated and extended Johannes Fabian’s call for a turn “from informative to performative ethnography” (1990:3), an ethnography of the ears and heart that reimagines participant-observation as coperformative witnessing:

If any one wishes to be impressed with a sense of the soul-killing power of slavery, let him go to Colonel Lloyd’s plantation, and, on allowance day, place himself in the deep pine woods, and there let him, in silence, thoughtfully analyze the sounds that shall pass through the chambers of his soul, and if he is not thus impressed, it will only be because “there is no flesh in his obdurate heart.” (Douglass [1855] 1969:99)

Instead of reading textual accounts of slavery, Douglass recommended a riskier hermeneutics of experience, relocation, copresence, humility, and vulnerability: *listening to and being touched by* the protest performances of enslaved people. He understood that knowledge is *located*, not transcendent (“let him go” and “place himself in the deep pine woods, and there [...]”); that it must be *engaged*, not abstracted (“let him [...] analyze the sounds that shall pass through the chambers of his soul”); and that it is forged from *solidarity with*, not separation from, the people (“quicken my sympathies for my brethren in bonds”). In this way, Douglass’s epistemology prefigured Antonio Gramsci’s call for engaged knowledge: “The intellectual’s error consists in believing that one can know without understanding and even more without feeling and being impassioned [...] that is, without feeling the elementary passions of the people” (1971:418). Proximity, not objectivity, becomes an epistemological point of departure and return.

Douglass recommended placing oneself quietly, respectfully, humbly, in the space of others so that one could be surrounded and “impressed” by the expressive meanings of their music. It is subtle but significant that he instructed the outsider to listen “in silence.” I interpret this admonition as an acknowledgment and subversion of the soundscapes of power within which the ruling classes typically are listened to while the subordinate classes listen in silence. Anyone who had the liberty to travel freely would be, of course, on the privileged side of domination and silencing that these songs evoked and contested. In effect, Douglass encouraged a participatory understanding of these performances, but one that muffled white privilege. Further, because overseers often commanded enslaved people to sing in the fields as a way of auditing their labor, and plantation rulers even appropriated after-work performances for their own amusement, Douglass was keenly sensitive to *how* one approached and entered subjugated spaces of performance.

The *mise-en-scène* of feeling-understanding-knowing for Douglass is radically different from the interpretive scene set forth by Clifford Geertz in what is now a foundational and frequently cited quotation for the world-as-text model in ethnography and cultural studies: “The culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong” (1973:452). Whereas Douglass featured cultural performances that register and radiate dynamic “structures of feeling” and pull us into alternative ways of knowing that exceed cognitive control

(Williams 1977), Geertz figures culture as a stiff, awkward reading room. The ethnocentrism of this textualist metaphor is thrown into stark relief when applied to the countercultures of enslaved and other dispossessed people. Forcibly excluded from acquiring literacy, enslaved people nonetheless created a culture of resistance. Instead of an “ensemble of texts,” however, a repertoire of performance practices became the backbone of this counterculture where politics was “played, danced, and acted, as well as sung and sung about, because words [...] will never be enough to communicate its unsayable claims to truth” (Gilroy 1994:37).

In addition to the ethnocentrism of the culture-is-text metaphor, Geertz’s theory needs to be critiqued for its particular fieldwork-as-reading model: “Doing ethnography is like trying to read [...] a manuscript” (10). Instead of listening, absorbing, and standing in solidarity with the protest performances of the people, as Douglass recommended, the ethnographer, in Geertz’s scene, stands above and behind the people and, uninvited, peers over their shoulders to read their texts, like an overseer or a spy. There is more than a hint of the improper in this scene: the asymmetrical power relations secure both the anthropologist’s privilege to intrude and the people’s silent acquiescence (although one can imagine what they would say about the anthropologist’s manners and motives when they are outside his reading gaze). The strain and tension of this scene are not mediated by talk or interaction; both the researcher and the researched face the page as silent readers instead of turning to face one another and, perhaps, open a conversation.

Geertz’s now classic depiction of the turn toward texts in ethnography and cultural studies needs to be juxtaposed with Zora Neal Hurston’s much earlier and more complex rendering of a researcher reading the texts of subordinate others:

The theory behind our tactics: “The white man is always trying to know into somebody else’s business. All right, I’ll set something outside the door of my mind for him to play with and handle. He can read my writing but he sho’ can’t read my mind. I’ll put this play toy in his hand, and he will seize it and go away. Then I’ll say my say and sing my song.”
([1935] 1990:3)

Hurston foregrounds the terrain of struggle, the field of power relations on which texts are written, exchanged, and read. Whereas Geertz does not problematize the ethnographer’s will-to-know or access to the texts of others, Hurston is sensitive to the reluctance of the subordinate classes “to reveal that which the soul lives by” (2) because they understand from experience the ocular politics that links the powers to see, to search, and to seize. Aware of the white man’s drive to objectify, control, and grasp as a way of knowing, subordinate people cunningly set a text, a decoy, outside the door to lure him away from “homeplace” where subjugated but empowering truths and survival secrets are sheltered (hooks 1990). In Hurston’s brilliant example, vulnerable people actually redeploy the written text as a tactic of evasion and camouflage, performatively turning and tripping the textual fetish against the white person’s will-to-know. “So driven in on his reading,” as Williams would say, he is blinded by the texts he compulsively seizes: “knowing so little about us, he doesn’t know what he is missing” (Hurston [1935] 1990:2). Once provided with something that he can “handle,” “seize,” in a word, *apprehend*, he will go away and then space can be cleared for performed truths that remain beyond his reach: “then I’ll say my say and sing my song.” By mimicking the reifying textualism of dominant knowledge regimes, subordinate people can deflect its invasive power. This mimicry of textualism is a complex example of “mimetic excess” in which the susceptibility of dominant images,

forms, and technologies of power to subversive doublings holds the potential for undermining the power of that which is mimed (Taussig 1993:254–55).

Note that in Hurston's account, subordinate people read and write, as well as perform. With her beautiful example of how a text can perform subversive work, she disrupts any simplistic dichotomy that would align texts with domination and performance with liberation. In Hurston's example, the white man researcher is a fool not because he values literacy, but because he valorized it to the exclusion of other media, other modes of knowing. I want to be very clear about this point: textocentrism—not texts—is the problem.

The constitutive liminality of performance studies lies in its capacity to bridge segregated and differently valued knowledges, drawing together legitimated as well as subjugated modes of inquiry.

From her ethnographic fieldwork in the coal camps and “hollers” of West Virginia, Kathleen Stewart documents an especially vivid example of text-performance entanglements: how official signs and local performances play off and with each other in surprising and delightful ways. After a dog bit a neighbor's child, there was much talk and worry throughout the camp about liability and lawsuits:

Finally Lacy Forest announced that he had heard that “by law” if you had a NO TRESPASSING sign on your porch you couldn't be sued. So everyone went to the store in Beckley to get the official kind of sign. Neighbors brought back multiple copies and put them up for those too old or sick or poor to get out and get their own. Then everyone called everyone else to explain that the sign did not mean them. In the end, every porch and fence (except for those of the isolated shameless who don't care) had a bright NO TRESPASSING, KEEP OFF sign, and people visited together, sitting underneath the NO TRESPASSING signs, looking out. (1996:141; see also Conquergood 1997)⁴

Through the power of reframing, social performances reclaim, short-circuit, and resignify the citational force of the signed imperatives. Moreover, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's concept of “orature” complicates any easy separation between speech and writing, performance and print, and reminds us how these channels of communication constantly overlap, penetrate, and mutually produce one another (1998).

The performance studies project makes its most radical intervention, I believe, by embracing *both* written scholarship *and* creative work, papers and performances. We challenge the hegemony of the text best by reconfiguring texts and performances in horizontal, metonymic tension, not by replacing one hierarchy with another, the romance of performance for the authority of the text. The “liminal-norm” that Jon McKenzie identifies as the calling card of performance studies (2001:41) manifests itself most powerfully in the struggle to live betwixt and between the theory and theatricality, paradigms and practices, critical reflection and creative accomplishment. Performance studies brings this rare hybridity into the academy, a commingling of analytical and artistic ways of knowing that unsettles the institutional organization of knowledge and disciplines. The consti-

tive liminality of performance studies lies in its capacity to bridge segregated and differently valued knowledges, drawing together legitimated as well as subjugated modes of inquiry.

There is an emergent genre of performance studies scholarship that epitomizes this text-performance hybridity. A number of performance studies-allied scholars create performances as a supplement to, not substitute for, their written research. These performance pieces stand alongside and in metonymic tension with published research. The creative works are developed for multiple professional reasons: they deepen experiential and participatory engagement with materials both for the researcher and her audience; they provide a dynamic and rhetorically compelling alternative to conference papers; they offer a more accessible and engaging format for sharing research and reaching communities outside academia; they are a strategy for staging interventions. To borrow Amanda Kemp's apt phrase, they use "performance both as a way of knowing and as a way of showing" (1998:116). To add another layer to the enfolding convolutions of text and performance, several of these performance pieces have now been written up and published in scholarly journals and books (see Conquergood 1988; Becker, McCall, and Morris 1989; McCall and Becker 1990; Paget 1990; Pollock 1990; Jackson 1993, 1998; Allen and Garner 1995; Laughlin 1995; Wellin 1996; Jones 1997; Kemp 1998).

Performance studies is uniquely suited for the challenge of braiding together disparate and stratified ways of knowing. We can think through performance along three crisscrossing lines of activity and analysis. We can think of performance (1) as a work of *imagination*, as an object of study; (2) as a pragmatics of *inquiry* (both as model and method), as an optic and operator of research; (3) as a tactics of *intervention*, an alternative space of struggle. Speaking from my home department at Northwestern, we often refer to the three *a*'s of performance studies: artistry, analysis, activism. Or to change the alliteration, a commitment to the three *c*'s of performance studies: creativity, critique, citizenship (civic struggles for social justice). We struggle to forge a unique and unifying mission around the triangulations of these three pivot points:

1. *Accomplishment*—the making of art and remaking of culture; creativity; embodiment; artistic process and form; knowledge that comes from doing, participatory understanding, practical consciousness, performing as a way of knowing.
2. *Analysis*—the interpretation of art and culture; critical reflection; thinking about, through, and with performance; performance as a lens that illuminates the constructed creative, contingent, collaborative dimensions of human communication; knowledge that comes from contemplation and comparison; concentrated attention and contextualization as a way of knowing.
3. *Articulation*—activism, outreach, connection to community; applications and interventions; action research; projects that reach outside the academy and are rooted in an ethic of reciprocity and exchange; knowledge that is tested by practice within a community; social commitment, collaboration, and contribution/intervention as a way of knowing: praxis.

Notwithstanding the many calls for embracing theory and practice, universities typically institutionalize a hierarchical division of labor between scholars/researchers and artists/practitioners. For example, the creative artists in the Department of Fine Arts are separated from the "serious" scholars in the Department of Art History. Even when scholars and practitioners are housed within the same department, there often is internal differentiation and tracking, e.g., the literary

theorists and critics are marked off from those who teach creative and expository writing. This configuration mirrors an entrenched social hierarchy of value based on the fundamental division between intellectual labor and manual labor. In the academy, the position of the artist/practitioner is comparable to people in the larger society who work with their hands, who make things, and who are valued less than the scholars/theorists who work with their minds and are comparable to the more privileged professional-managerial class. Indeed, sometimes one of the reasons for forming schools of fine and performing arts is to protect artists/practitioners from tenure and promotion committees dominated by the more institutionally powerful scholar/researchers who do not know how to appraise a record of artistic accomplishment as commensurate with traditional criteria of scholarly research and publication. The segregation of faculty and students who make art and perform from those who think about and study art and performance is based on a false dichotomy that represses the critical-intellectual component of any artistic work, and the imaginative-creative dimension of scholarship that makes a difference. A spurious, counterproductive, and mutually denigrating opposition is put into play that pits so-called “mere technique, studio skills, know-how” against so-called “arid knowledge, abstract theory, sterile scholarship.” This unfortunate schism is based on gross reductionism and ignorance of “how the other half lives.” Students are cheated and disciplines diminished by this academic apartheid.

The ongoing challenge of performance studies is to refuse and supercede this deeply entrenched division of labor, apartheid of knowledges, that plays out inside the academy as the difference between thinking and doing, interpreting and making, conceptualizing and creating.

A performance studies agenda should collapse this divide and revitalize the connections between artistic accomplishment, analysis, and articulations with communities; between practical knowledge (knowing how), propositional knowledge (knowing that), and political savvy (knowing who, when, and where). This epistemological connection between creativity, critique, and civic engagement is mutually replenishing, and pedagogically powerful. Very bright, talented students are attracted to programs that combine intellectual rigor with artistic excellence that is critically engaged, where they do not have to banish their artistic spirit in order to become a critical thinker, or repress their intellectual self or political passion to explore their artistic side. Particularly at the PhD level, original scholarship in culture and the arts is enhanced, complemented, and complicated in deeply meaningful ways by the participatory understanding and community involvement of the researcher. This experiential and engaged model of inquiry is coextensive with the participant-observation methods of ethnographic research.

The ongoing challenge of performance studies is to refuse and supercede this deeply entrenched division of labor, apartheid of knowledges, that plays out inside the academy as the difference between thinking and doing, interpreting and making, conceptualizing and creating. The division of labor between theory and practice, abstraction and embodiment, is an arbitrary and rigged choice, and, like all binarisms, it is booby-trapped. It's a Faustian bargain. If we go the one-way street of abstraction, then we cut ourselves off from the nourishing ground of

participatory experience. If we go the one-way street of practice, then we drive ourselves into an isolated cul-de-sac, a practitioner's workshop or artist's colony. Our radical move is to turn, and return, insistently, to the crossroads.

Notes

1. A shorter version of this paper was presented at the "Cultural Intersections" conference at Northwestern University, 9 October 1999. "Cultural Intersections" was the inaugural conference for Northwestern's Doctoral Studies in Culture: Performance, Theatre, Media, a new interdisciplinary PhD program.
2. I thank my Belizean colleague, Dr. Barbara Flores, for sharing this Garifuna material with me. I had the privilege of working with Dr. Flores when she was a graduate student at Northwestern.
3. An earlier version of the Frederick Douglass-Zora Neal Hurston discussion appeared in 1998 (Conquergood 1998).
4. Stewart's experimental ethnography is remarkably performance-sensitive and performance-saturated. Her text is replete with voices, sometimes explicitly quoted, but often evoked through literary techniques of indirect and double-voiced discourse so that the reader is simultaneously aware of the ethnographer's voice and the voices from the field, their interaction and gaps. The students in my critical ethnography seminar adapted and performed passages from the ethnography as a way of testing Stewart's stylistic innovations and textual evocations of performance.

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