

Attica as Symbolic Event

or

“All we want is the facts, Ma’am.
Nothing but the facts.”

Focus in this lecture

Fr seeing chg in motive to seeing variety

From *Soc Infl of Lang*

- Subcomties use d-to-d events to strengthen

From *Epis Infl of Lang*, in day-to-day events:

- T/A: Comty defs, evals, & motivates resp

From *Beh Infl of Lang*,

- Thru T/A motives are chosen & played out

Now we look at that process

Symbolic Events

- Demand attention
 - In resp, subcomties produce intrprtns
- Result:
 - Comty chooses fr variety of ways to und
 - Subcomties strengthened/weakened
- *Landmark events: benchmarks for the discourse that makes society's history*

Levels of Symbolic Events

- Generational Events
 - 9/11, Vietnam, Great Depression
- Compelling Events
 - Attica, Challenger Disaster, Election of Obama
- Mundane/common events

Texture of Symbolic Events

Looking at the subcomities

- All exp same event; desc event diff/ly

Looking at the comty

- Var of voices: compete to give meaning

Looking at the rhetoric

1. See the variety
2. See the motives
3. See the logic

Discourse in Symbolic Events

- What happened?
 - Notice var of “facts”
 - What causes event?
- What sig? What meaning?
 - Connections? Similarities?
- How to respond?
 - Notice the logical structure

Attica Prison Revolt

- 1971
- Upstate New York, near Buffalo
- Part of 1960s
 - Race
 - Religion
- Prisons take over Cell Block D; take hostages
- Ended in assault
 - 39 hostages killed; all by assaulting forces

Significance of Attica

- Weeks of front page news
- Cover of news magazines
- Major topic of comm across society

Focus on Four Motives

14 diff motive in T/A Attica

Our focus, 4 major:

- Prison Reform
- Rejection of Authority Structure; Revolution
- Attica and the Radical Revolution
- Law and Order

Prison Reform Motive

- Personae of *Struggle*
 - The forces
 - The Inmates
 - Those who would ease the struggle
 - Negotiating Team
- The Conditions
- The Progression Toward Death
- Attica as *archetype*

What you should note

- Pwr of narr of *struggle* to shape desc
 - Word choices?
 - Progression?
- Merger of desc, eval, & action
- DP motivating chg
- Beyond Attica relevant? How?
- Driven by policy or democratic motive?

Revolution: Rejecting the Authority Structure

- Char of American authority (Pollution)
 - Vignettes of Action
- Fixing responsibility: Capitalism forms character
- Revolutionary hero
 - Humane & compassionate
 - Unity of cadre
 - Willingness to sacrifice
- Rituals perform revolution

Attica: the reality test for revolution

What you should note

- Diff of facts in desc
- Relevant b/y Attica? How? Diff fr PR?
- Vignettes r/t narratives: Why?
- DP & strength of motivation
- How do desc & eval motivate?
- How does ritual function?

Recognizing the Revolution

- Attica part of rev *conspiracy*
 - Looks like a revolution
 - Secret meetings to plan
- Pttns of rev play out at Attica
 - See typical strat of rev
- Only way to deal w/ rev: total victory
 - Char of those we fight
 - Rej neg; Suppress immediately

Obscured revealed; now you must act

What you should note

- What diff facts?
- Events b/y Attica? Why imp?
- What does Attica contribute rhet/ly?
- DP?
- How does it tie desc, eval, action?

Law and Order

- Centrality of <Law> in discourse
- <Law>: symbol shapes Attica
 - Participants
 - 3 challenges to law
- Response: Principle of <Law>

What you should note

- Diff facts? Beyond Attica?
- Things shared w/ other motives?
- Use of the ideograph
- DP?
- Tie of desc to eval and action?

Rhetoric which enacts: 3 quals

- Creates cmn **undstdg** of events:
“Knowledge”
- Names & **motivates** *proper* response
- In doing so, **reaffirms** motives; shapes action

Toward “Cmn” Understanding

- rhet selects
 - some happenings appear; some don't
 - different importance
 - details differ
 - story starts & ends in diff places
- the rhet relates thgs in pttns
 - Concurrent rlsp remove randomness
 - Causality & interaction give reas & dev

Toward Propriety & Response

- Rhet vals elems of sit
 - by vocab
 - by attributing chars
 - by rlsp of pttns
- act of valuing sugg coalition or conflict
 - imperative for action in portrayal of roles

Reinforcing the Motive

- Praise for people & acts at Attica w/
certain char: praise for chars themselves
 - Concreteness offers Attica as proof
- Rhet ties desc to response: “What happened at Attica proves that this is the proper way to respond!”

Variety of Perspective marks the texture of discourse

