



NORTHEASTERN
ANTHROPOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

NEAA NEWSLETTER

**Mark Your Calendar:
NEAA Meetings at
SUNY at Buffalo on March 5-7, 2010**

**If You Cannot Whisper: The Performative
Language of Magical Spells**

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Meaning is not primarily what a word *has*; it is something a word *does*. The basis of much Slavic folk wisdom is a belief in the inherent power of words: some utterances are taboo, others sacred. Still more words are the province of magic, a culturally contextual conceptual system within which spells, curses, and oaths are the primary vehicles utilized by a practitioner seeking to affect the world around him/her. An analysis of Austin’s and Levinson’s theories of the performative aspects of linguistic utterances can provide an explanation of how folkloric practitioners empowered their spells with conjoined magical words and performative ritual actions to shape and alter reality through whispered spells. Magical words in Slavic practice are not merely tools by which they express meaning; they are the means by which spell-casters make manifest that meaning.

Working Magic

Magic is a conceptual system within which spells, curses, and oaths are the primary vehicles through which a practitioner seeks to affect the world around him/her. The term “spell” is an umbrella under which beneficent and maleficent intentions separate into spells (those cast by someone with paranormal capabilities), curses (often times cast by said practitioners, but also in

the province of “ordinary” people), and oaths (promises and verbal insults).

Spells, curses and oaths are the tools of magical practice. The waving of wands, the use of sympathetic magical practices and contagious magical practices are the common Western cultural perceptions of spell casting. Starhawk’s assertion is that none of these tools are necessary, for “to work magic, I need a basic belief in my ability to do things and cause things to happen” (1979:111). The language of magic, across cultures, consists of symbols and images. To cast a spell is to project energy through a symbol (Starhawk 1979).

One of the most often cited magical references in anthropology is Bronisław Malinowski’s *Magic, Science, and Religion* (1948). For him, culture’s magical language brought about the production of supernatural effects in and for the members who heard them. The words gain power if uttered in the context of action (Tambiah 1968). Rituals employ a number of verbal art forms, and Malinowski felt these words were equivalent to actions.

The role of a spell is culturally contextual. Outside that context the spell itself is meaningless (Tambiah 1968). For Slavs, the spell or curse itself manifests in a myriad of ways. Spells are a representation of the magical act, a formation in utterance of an invisible cognitive event invoking supernatural intervention, yet the formulaic utterance of a spell or curse can also act as a key that releases the force intended by the speech act itself.

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Message from the Editor

Greetings and a belated welcome to the academic year! I hope everyone enjoyed our “new” summer issue of the newsletter highlighting the paper and poster prize winners from the 2009 Meetings at Rhode Island College. We think it is a great addition to our newsletter series and hope you agree.

The 2010 conference, hosted by the University at Buffalo, is early this year (March 5th – 7th) so this newsletter is full of conference information. Paper and poster abstracts along with proposals for organized sessions must be submitted by January 15, 2010. I would like to note that the NEAA is also offering new funding opportunities for individual students and student organizations for this year’s conference in Buffalo NY. Please see “Conference Information” on page 8.

Our feature article this fall is “If You Cannot Whisper” written by our new Linguistic Contributing Editor Denice Szafran (University at Buffalo). We want to welcome her aboard and encourage you to contact her with your newsletter submissions. I would be remiss, though, not to publicly thank Karen Johnson-Weiner (SUNY Potsdam), who will be stepping down as the Linguistics Contributing Editor. She has shared her own work here as well as articles from other scholars, and she is an enthusiastic supporter of the NEAA and a personal friend. I will miss having her on the board but I know we will continue to see her at the annual meetings. Thank you, Dr. Johnson-Weiner!

In addition to the 2010 conference information we have several articles from our student representatives. The Newsletter Board has made a commitment to adding the voices of our student representatives to the newsletter so each issue will have pieces from one or more of the student representatives. In this issue we have two articles by Ammie M. Mitchell, M.A. (University at Buffalo/NEAA Graduate Student Representative): one on the importance of attending conferences and networking and one welcoming us to Buffalo, NY for the March meetings. Additionally, Heather Slivko-Bathurst (SUNY New Paltz/NEAA Undergraduate Representative) shares her experience on how the NEAA helped her create a research opportunity for herself as an undergraduate. Both of these pieces give us a much-needed student perspective on the educational experiences of our members.

Matthew Trevett-Smith (St. Lawrence University, NEAA Membership Coordinator) and I, along with the University at Buffalo (UB) Department of Anthropology will continue to send you more information and updates for the March Conference. UB is excited to host the 50th NEAA Meetings and has already put in a lot of work. We are all looking forward to a great conference! THANKS UB!

I hope to see you all in Buffalo!

Jess Skolnikoff
Roger Williams University
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Message from the President

I wish everyone a renewed sense of productivity and prosperity for the academic year and fall season. If you did not have a chance to peruse the inaugural Summer issue of the NEAA Newsletter highlighting prize winning student papers please do so. I hope you will take the opportunity to join me and our NEAA colleagues for an exciting 50th annual conference from March 5-7, 2010 hosted by the University at Buffalo. I'd like to thank Don Pollock and his colleagues for all of their great work in organizing the meeting. Please refer to this issue of the Newsletter for more details on the conference and periodically check our website www.neaa.org for further updates on the program. Our 2010 meeting theme "NEAA 50: Borders, Margins, Passages" calls upon all of us as anthropologists to consider these concepts both literally and figuratively in global and local contexts. It is especially timely for us to reflect upon this theme to celebrate our organizations' 50th annual meeting. I call on all of you to come and share your varied experiences. A special invitation is extended to students who wish to submit and present their papers for the Graduate and Undergraduate paper and poster prizes. I again close this message as in the past with a note that we continue to make adjustments to our organization to bring together students, faculty, and other professionals to the same forum. The Northeastern Anthropological Association is what we collectively make of it. I look forward to seeing you in Buffalo this coming March and remind you to feel free to contact me or any of the Executive Board members for any questions, concerns, or suggestions that you might have.

Barrett P. Brenton (St. John's University)

NEAA 50 "Borders, Margins, and Passages"

The 50th annual conference of the Northeastern Anthropological Association will be held on March 5-7, 2010, at the Marriott Hotel in Amherst, New York, adjacent to the campus of The University at Buffalo, State University of New York (UB). UB, which hosted the first NEAA conference, is pleased to be able to sponsor and host this 50th anniversary conference.

We have chosen as our theme "Borders, Margins, and Passages." Buffalo, which sits on an international border, is an ideal location from which to think about these critical issues in contemporary anthropology, as borders become blurred or erased in an age of globalization, refugees and immigrants dominate attention to national identities, and anthropologists increasingly find that fieldwork takes on global dimensions.

Registration for the conference will open on Thursday evening, March 4, at the Marriott Buffalo/Niagara Hotel. The formal program will begin on Friday morning, March 5, and will continue through Saturday, March 6. The UB Department of Anthropology will host an informal reception and open house on Friday evening for all conference participants, and a banquet will be held on Saturday evening at the Marriott, with a presentation by our featured speaker, Prof. Michael F. Brown of Williams College.

Conference Registration

We are pleased that we can hold the line on inflation and charge the same registration fees as last year: Professional rate: \$40; Student rate: \$25. The Saturday banquet will be \$25 per person. The NEAA website will have registration and payment links.

Paper or Session Submission

This year the NEAA will use an on-line conference planning system for registration, and for collecting proposals for paper presentations and sessions. Conference participants can check the NEAA website for a link to that system. Paper and poster abstracts, and proposals for organized sessions should be submitted by January 15, 2010. Please note that this is somewhat earlier than last year. On-line registration will be accepted up to the date of the conference, and in-person registration will be accepted through Friday, March 5.

Featured Speaker

The featured speaker at the Saturday banquet will be Prof. Michael F. Brown of Williams College, whose presentation will be entitled "In the Night Kitchen of Bureaucracy: Certifying Virtue in Global Society"

Prof. Brown is Lambert Prof. of Anthropology & Latin American Studies and Director of the Oakley Center for the Humanities & Social Sciences at Williams College. He is the author of a number of books, including *The Channeling Zone: American Spirituality in an Anxious Age*, and *Who Owns Native Culture?*, both published by Harvard University Press. More information about Prof. Brown and his work is available at: <http://www.williams.edu/AnthSoc/brown.php> and <http://www.williams.edu/go/native/>

Accommodations

The main conference venue and hotel will be the Marriott /Buffalo-Niagara Hotel, which is conveniently located adjacent to the main campus of SUNY at Buffalo, the host of the conference, at 1340 Millersport Highway, Amherst, NY 14221. Their phone number is 716-689-6900 or toll-free 800-334-4040. You can also contact them on-line at www.buffaloniagaramarriott.com. We have arranged for a block of rooms for NEAA participants, at \$119 per night for a single or double room. Mention the NEAA when making reservations.

In addition, half a dozen other hotels are either next-door to, or within short walking distance of, the Marriott. Several of these, such as the Red Roof Inn and Motel 6, are very inexpensive, and are within 100 yards of the Marriott: [The Comfort Inn](#), [Motel 6](#), [Red Roof Inn](#), [Homewood Suites](#), [Hotel Indigo](#), [Candlewood Suites](#).

For any additional information or questions, contact neaa@buffalo.edu, and watch the NEAA website for conference registration and submission information. We will also post helpful links on the website of UB's Department of Anthropology at anthropology.buffalo.edu

**Bored? Looking for scholarly adventure and entertainment in a rich historic landscape?
Then join us for the 50th Annual Meetings of the Northeastern Anthropological Association in
Buffalo, New York!**

Did you know that Buffalo has a little bit of everything for everyone? From stunning art and architecture to great food and drink, Western New York is home to one of the natural wonders of world, Niagara Falls. Here is just a short list of some awesome reasons to visit Buffalo next spring.

- Compared to the Eastern Coast, Buffalo was settled by Europeans relatively late. Western New York is the traditional homeland of the *Haudenosaunee* or the "People of the Longhouse" (the Iroquois Nation). Frenchman Samuel de Champlain is thought to have been the first European to visit the land of the Iroquois around 1604, however it wasn't until 1789 that a small trading community was established on the banks of the Buffalo Creek. This land was eventually sold for development through the Holland Land Company, led by Joseph Ellicott and over time developed into Buffalo.
- The year 1826 saw the opening of the Erie Canal and the City of Buffalo (officially incorporated in 1832) became the Gateway to the West and the leader of the American shipping industry. By the mid-1830s, grain from the Midwest was processed in Buffalo and shipped east via the Erie Canal. Enormous grain elevators, designed to handle industrial-level shipping were first invented in Buffalo and are still visible today across Buffalo's harbors.
- Nineteenth century advancements in transportation also brought a flood of immigrants to Buffalo from across the world as individuals sought to reach America's homeland. Today Buffalo is known for its excellent restaurants, breweries and food festivals. Famous Buffaloian foods include Beef on Weck, Wardynski's kielbasa, Sahlen's hot dogs, sponge candy, pierogi, haddock fish fries, chicken wings, and loganberry-flavored soda. Finally, annual food festivals include the Taste of Buffalo, the National Buffalo Wing Festival, and the Micro-beer Festival.
- As Buffalo grew in importance throughout the mid-nineteenth through early twentieth century it attracted the attention of many renowned architects including individuals such as H. H. Richardson, Adler and Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, Fellheimer and Wagner, and the Saarinens to name a few. Many signature houses, churches, and gardens, such as the Darwin D. Martin House, Our Lady of Victory Basilica, and the Botanical Gardens are open to visitors throughout the year.
- Buffaloian's are proud of their long, distinguished heritage, this is reflected in the numerous museums spread throughout the area, for example the Buffalo Museum of Science, the Albright-Knox Museum, the Theodore Roosevelt National Museum, Lackawanna History and Steel Plant Museum, and the Seneca Iroquois National Museum.

Why else should you visit Buffalo this year? The State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo hosted the first ever meeting for the Northeastern Anthropological Association. The NEAA was founded in 1961 and in March 2010 will celebrate its 50th annual meeting, again convening at the renowned University of Buffalo. The State University of New York at Buffalo is the crown jewel of the New York system of higher education. The University of Buffalo was founded in 1846, originally specializing in medical studies. Today the University offers 83 undergraduate programs and 211 graduate programs and has provided more than 7,000 degrees. University facilities are spread over more than 1300 acres and

provide the latest, up-to-date technology, programs and facilities for students. Dr. Marian E. White was the first woman to receive a Ph.D. in archaeology through the University of Michigan and founded the University of Buffalo's Archaeological Survey in 1969. Dr. White was an early proponent of archaeological site preservation and Cultural Resource Management (CRM). Today, as part of the Anthropology Department at UB, the mission of the Archaeological Survey remains to "provide the highest quality CRM services to a diverse range of clients and to train CRM professionals in all aspects of field work, lab work, analysis, report writing and project management in order to provide practical, applied experience in a growing industry for graduate and undergraduate students" (<http://www.archaeologicalsurvey.buffalo.edu/>).

So, when you're in town for the conference, between bites of Buffalo wings, be sure to stop by the Anthropology Department's Marian White Museum and Archaeological Survey, a proud sponsor of the 50th annual meeting of the NEAA.

For More Great Information about Buffalo See:

- <http://www.archaeologicalsurvey.buffalo.edu/>
- <http://www.darwinmartinhouse.org/>
- <http://www.buffaloah.com/>
- <http://www.visitbuffaloniagara.com/visitors/history/>
- <http://www.buffalonian.com/>
- http://www.wcities.com/en/guide/fun_facts/300/guide.html
- <http://www.buffalo.edu/aboutub/alumni.html>

Ammie M. Mitchell, M.A.
University at Buffalo
NEAA Graduate Student Representative



<http://mappery.com/map-name/Downtown-Buffalo-Map>

2010 NEAA Student Paper Competitions:
M. Estellie Smith Graduate Paper Prize
John Omohundro Undergraduate Paper Prize
NEAA Poster Paper Prize

Each year the NEAA awards prizes of \$200 each to the best graduate and undergraduate papers presented at the annual meeting. Separate awards of \$200 are also given for the best undergraduate and graduate student poster papers. All awards are announced at the conference. Guidelines for submissions are as follows:

- Separate graduate and undergraduate prizes are awarded for both podium and poster papers. The winning papers are published in the NEAA newsletter and publication of the articles in professional journals may be facilitated.
- To be eligible, the podium and poster papers must be presented in a conference session by the author at the 2010 NEAA meetings in Buffalo, New York. Please make sure to complete registration and abstract forms.
- The papers may be in any sub-field of anthropology and can be given in French, Spanish or English.
- For the Smith and Omohundro prizes, only the “conference version” of the paper (i.e. the podium version that is actually read) is eligible; this is a paper of 8-12 pages, double spaced, exclusive of bibliography. The bibliography should be included with the paper.
- For the NEAA poster paper prizes a 2-page, double-spaced, summary of the poster must be provided to express the entrants interest in having their poster judged at the meetings.
- Conference version podium papers and poster paper summaries must be received one week before the conference, or by February 26, 2010. Papers can be sent via snail-mail to: **Pierre Morenon, Anthropology Department, Rhode Island College, Providence, RI 02908 U.S.A.** or as a file attachment via email to: **pmorenon@ric.edu**
- A cover page must be attached with the author’s name, address, phone number, email address, institution, department and program. Entrants must also specify the competition (graduate or undergraduate, podium or poster) that they are entering.
- Shared student authorship papers are eligible provided that the category in which they are entered (i.e. undergraduate or graduate) is appropriate for the most senior author. Papers co-authored with professionals are not eligible for the competition.
- All papers submitted by undergraduates must be accompanied by a note from the student’s advisor or a professor from their department, indicating that the work is an original piece and that the professor believes it to be appropriate for presentation at the conference. (Such a note is required for all undergraduate papers at the conference)
- The submissions will be evaluated by a panel of judges under the direction of the President-Elect of the NEAA. This panel convenes during the annual conference.

**Hot Off the Press:
NEAA Announces Its Student Travel Fund**

Given the impact of the current economic crisis on our members - particularly students - the Executive Board of the NEAA has approved the creation of the NEAA Student Travel Fund. This fund will provide up to \$500 for individual students or student groups who demonstrate financial need to offset the cost of attending the 2010 meetings at the University of Buffalo. These funds can be used toward any conference-related expense (travel, conference registration, rooms, meals, etc.). Recipients of travel funding can be graduate or undergraduate students or groups. Students need not be presenting a paper or poster and they are not required to stay at the conference hotel. Students who receive travel funding will, though, be required to attend the conference banquet.

Individuals or groups are asked to submit electronically to Dr. Alan Hersker, NEAA Treasurer, (herskeal@potsdam.edu) a letter requesting funds. This letter should include: the applicant's name and school affiliation; the mail and email address where they receive correspondence; how many individuals will be traveling to the conference; the amount of money they are requesting; the costs being reimbursed by the NEAA funding; other sources of funding that they are requesting; an explanation of their financial hardship; how they will be participating in the conference (e.g., attending, delivering a paper, presenting a poster, assisting in conference functions). All applicants must also include a recommendation letter from a sponsor or faculty member that confirms their eligibility. Letters must be received by Dr Hersker by January 15, 2010.

Funding decisions will be made by February 12, 2010 by a committee of NEAA Executive Board and University of Buffalo Host Committee members. Student Travel Fund recipients must submit original receipts along with a letter explaining each receipt within two weeks of the conclusion of the conference. Funds will be distributed by the NEAA Treasurer by check after the required documentation is received. Recipients will be able to receive their travel funds at the conference itself.

These funds are competitive and will be awarded to those who demonstrate the greatest need. If you have any questions on the NEAA Student Travel Fund please contact Dr Alan Hersker (SUNY Potsdam) at 315-267-2720 or herskeal@potsdam.edu.

**NEAA Conference March 5-7, 2010 Buffalo, NY
Paper and poster abstracts, and proposals for organized sessions should be submitted
by January 15, 2010.**

HELLO, BUFFALO!

When people think of archaeologists, the picture is often one of men and women in khaki shorts and tee-shirts, in a distant field somewhere, looking for buried treasures. However, we archaeologists know that is not entirely accurate. The general public retains this image of us because our most frequent contact with them is during our fieldwork. However, most archaeologists would agree that while we do regularly conduct fieldwork, we spend much more of our time behind a desk, doing research so we can better understand the past cultural landscape. We also spend a significant portion of our time writing reports about the material that we have recovered. Still, in addition to research and fieldwork, reporting is an equally important aspect of our discipline, one which many archaeologists are frequently guilty of avoiding...presenting and publishing.

Presenting and publishing are important steps for reasons which we are all familiar with. Minimally, sharing information provides a better understanding of the past because it allows for dialogue between archaeologists. By creating dialogue we are able to better compare and contrast artifacts, features, sites, and more, across time and space, so that we can find patterns in past life ways. More than this is the simple truth that presentation and publication separates the modern academic discipline of archaeology from the antiquarians of the past.

As a student of archaeology, I have been attending the NEAA meetings for the last seven years. My first NEAA meeting was my sophomore undergraduate year in 2002. I was encouraged to attend the NEAA by my academic advisor, even though I was far too shy to present my ideas in front of professionals at the time. Even without presenting, I had an amazing time at the conference. With constant support from my professor, I agreed to present at the NEAA's 2003 meeting. White-knuckled and shaking, I approached the podium and stumbled my way through the first presentation of my professional career. Much to my delight, I received no harsh words or overly critical comments from anyone. Quite the opposite happened: fellow students offered insights on how to overcome presentation jitters and the professional archaeologists provided resources to strengthen my work. I was overjoyed. Since that year, I have presented nearly every year at the NEAA.

The NEAA provides a low-stress, positive atmosphere for students of all levels to flex their academic muscles and talk with other archaeologists from all areas of the Northeast. The positive interaction created by the NEAA affords great opportunities for all of us – students and professionals – to meet others working on similar projects. It also exposes us to topics that might be out of our areas of study. This system of networking is a great way to share information and join forces. For example, student-professional contacts made at conferences like the NEAA can help students with their choice of graduate school, dissertation research, and career direction.

Additionally, the NEAA also offers an excellent opportunity for students to do joint projects with their professors. This not only allows students to gain the experience of working with a knowledgeable, experienced archaeologist but also encourages professionals to present and publish when they may otherwise be constrained by the rigors of the classroom or the time crunch of a cultural resource management firm. Presenting is also a great resume booster and is essential for any archaeologist looking toward a graduate degree or a job in archaeology.

While we all wish we could spend endless summers digging for artifacts, the reality of our profession is researching, reporting, presenting, and publishing our finds. The NEAA provides an inexpensive and fun escape from our daily routine in the classroom or behind the computer screen. So, dust off those khakis, put on a button-up shirt, and play an active part in enhancing our discipline through this year's meeting of the NEAA. Hello Buffalo!

Ammie M. Mitchell, M.A.
University of Buffalo
NEAA Graduate Student Representative

Undergraduate Experience at NEAA

Previous to my college experience, I had no idea of the importance of research, or rather, getting involved with professors in *their* research, in one's undergraduate career. I thought it a thing of graduate school. What professor would want to work with a nineteen-year-old that didn't know what she wanted to be when she grew up, let alone specific research methodologies in specific fields of research? And then I was offered the opportunity to travel to Peru for the summer of 2008 and work side by side with a biological anthropology professor. Of course I took it! For six months prior to the trip, I read and summarized hundreds of articles, looked up countless journals, and spent hours in the library searching for books that were older than I am. By the end of the spring semester, I thought I was going to quit life. Two weeks later, I was standing in the airport, gazing around in delight and I remembered why I had spent the last several months preparing. Two months later, it was over and I was shipped back to the United States. The Spanish I had learned during my time there was gone quicker than I was able to unpack, but the things I saw and the experiences I had were something that will never leave me. A year later, it almost seems as if it were a dream, a distant memory, or possibly a fantasy that I might have made up in my head. But no, it was real. It was amazing. And it was made possible by several things.

Firstly, initiative. I'm not going to lie and say that professors aren't looking for students that show some sincere interest in the work that they do and they're obviously not going to approach someone whose pulling straight D's. You want it? You have to work for it. Such is the game of life.

Secondly though, and more importantly I feel, is the professor her- or himself. A professor that understands the importance of bringing the next generation into the field to guide and mentor them is *absolutely key*. Professors who don't understand this, should, as a rule, be avoided. Even if it's not you (all jealousy aside), if a professor isn't engaging the students in a productive way, then they're not doing their job. Perhaps that might sound a bit forward, but it's the truth!

Lastly, students, never be afraid to ask! Whether you're absolutely certain that you want to establish a career in anthropology (or any field, for that matter) or you are just as confused as the rest of us, research with a professor will help you in further understanding not only your life plan, but who you *are* as a person – it's all about the personal growth! Don't be afraid to ask any and every professor in your department what they're working on and if there's anything you can do to help them out. Most schools

offer some sort of Research Assistantship where you can not only get credit for the work you do (usually in the form of an Independent Study), but in some cases you can also get paid! Maybe the professor that is interested in undergraduate research is working on something that you know nothing about, and possibly have no interest in. I say do it anyway. Maybe you'll fall in love with it, or maybe you'll hate it. Either way, the benefits outweigh the costs. You'll learn so much about *how* to do research and *how* to work with someone on research that it hardly matters what the topic is. Perhaps, you cannot find a professor who's doing any work of their own. Why not ask if they would be willing to create a new (and most likely, smaller) project for the two of you to work on? The bottom line is, there is certainly no harm in asking...

The world of anthropology is not becoming less competitive. With every generation comes new and higher expectations. Research with a professor gets you ahead in the game, hands down. It gives you the experience itself, the resources, a relationship with someone who can give you sound advice about career steps, and most likely, a fantastic recommendation (if you deserve it) for whatever you choose to pursue next. The possibilities are endless. And who knows where it will take you!

Heather Slivko-Bathurst
SUNY New Paltz
NEAA Undergraduate Representative

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If You Cannot Whisper: The Performative Language of Magical Spells

True enchanters normally whispered spells and referred to them as “sent on the wind” (Kmietowicz 1982:72). An old Polish proverb advises, “If you cannot whisper, you will not drink,” meaning that if the architect of the spell is not successful, i.e. if they cannot successfully whisper a spell, they will not receive payment, and, therefore, will have nothing to drink (Kmietowicz 1982). The belief in the power of the word was so pervasive among Slavs that they avoided pronouncing some word so as not to provoke the undesired action. Taboo words in their languages were more common than magical words.

There are specific conditions for casting a spell in Slavic magic practice. All enchantments must occur in silence and in hiding, thus the proclivity for whispering (Kmietowicz 1982). Most of the Slavic words used to refer to a spell derive from roots that mean “word, speaking, or whispering” (Ryan 1999:310-311). It is the act of casting that, in concert with the actual words used, make a charm magical. The *sheptun/szepcze* (the one who whispers) waits until there is a wind blowing in the direction of his victim, asks his clients for a handful of earth, snow, or dust, and throws this into the wind in the direction of his victim. The practice was so widespread that in 1598 Boris Godunov, on becoming tsar of Russia, “enacted an oath from those in his service that they would not by means of magic send any evil upon him by the wind” (Ryan 1999:413). Interestingly, the Russian word for epidemic means “something carried on the wind” (Ryan 1999:35).

To talk is to act

“Language is not a neutral entity. It is a thousand ways biased” (Bolinger 1980:68). Language consists of more than words; it includes the various forms of delivery of those words. All speech acts change, in some way, the conditions that exist in the world (Wardaugh 1986).

In his landmark 1962 work *How to Do Things With Words* J.L. Austin defines the types of performative verbal utterances. Locutionary speech acts are simply the utterance of sounds that both the speaker and the listener know to have meaning. Illocutionary speech acts are locutionary acts that invoke a conventional force, that is, they do something in the saying: asking a question, making an identification, giving a description. Perlocutionary speech acts are illocutionary utterances that elicit responses in the listener; these acts do something by the very act of saying them, or, according to Levinson, “the bringing about of effects on the audience by means of uttering the sentence, such effects being special to the circumstances of the utterance” (1983:236). Like the act of stating “I now pronounce you husband and wife,” or “you are under arrest,” spells are performative utterances that occupy a tenuous place in both of the latter categories, according to Austin. The illocutionary act incorporates and instigates the perlocutionary act, taking a stand or creating a response within an audience, (Sbisà 2001), something that a spell, curse, or oath by its inherent nature works to accomplish. “Most illocutionary acts succeed not by conformity to convention but by recognition of intention” (Strawson 1964:440). Curses, spells, and oaths realize themselves as the meaning of the words fall away, and the “actual enunciation of the curse performs the special act of cursing” (Kelly 1982:48).

Spells occupy a genre of their own, much like poetic language and proverbs. Genres are not necessarily innate to the text itself, but in the forms performers and their audiences use to produce and understand these texts (Foley 1997). Spells have highly stereotypical and constrained forms (Foley 1997), yet they are not always independent of dialogic input. They make use of intertextuality, pulling context from across generations and manipulating multiple voices and forms of pronouncement, yet they are emergent as well, morphing themselves to attune to the immediate requirements of the situation. Like poetry, the *form* of spells is the focus of the utterance, separate from the actual meaning of the words used (Foley 1997). “It is not the case that words are one thing and the rite another. The uttering of words itself is a ritual” (Tambiah 1968:17).

Spells derive some of their power from the use of metaphor and from their deviation from the uses of ordinary language (Foley 1997). Spells may incorporate texts no longer understood, but it is in the speaking that they obtain meaning. Curses, spells, and oaths are non-transferable – they belong to the person who utters them (Jacobsen 1971). According to Austin’s theories, performatives are not true or false (Dineen 1972), but based on the qualifications and performance of the utterer, they may be right or wrong (Jacobsen 1971), depending on whether or not they are appropriate (Tully 1982), or uttered by someone who has no authority to perform the act in question (Jacobsen 1971:357). Spells are a variety of claim-making formulas the role of which is to represent actions (Tully 1982). Excessive deviance from the recognized strictures of the performance may make it unrecognizable as a spell, not only in the wording, but also in the use of tone, speed of speech, pitch, dramatic pause, and physical actions (Foley 1997). The success of the spell is dependent on whether we use the correct spell, pronounced with the appropriate pronunciation, relative to the receiver. (Johansson 1994). The act of uttering the performative forces the speaker to assume responsibility that the hearer can expect fulfillment of the conditions promised (Dineen 1972). As “contracts” between individuals the spell gains efficacy by this assumption, and by the presumption that both the spell-crafter and the listener believe they can perform the promise, that they intend to complete the act, and that they have specific knowledge necessary to complete the spell (Wardaugh 1986). The very uttering of the spell is an obligation to perform the act.

Conclusion

Slavic peoples turned to specialized individuals, called among other names “whisperers,” to perform spells and incantations. The magical workings contain a structured form and rules including silence and seclusion, and these strictures gave rise to the whispering of spells. What made these speech acts magical was the incorporation of the natural world elements, the laws governing words of power, and the knowledge of the enchanter. Linguistically, what made these events identifiable as spells and, therefore, believable as magic, was the performative nature of the genre, not only in the selection of words (either intelligible or not), but also in the paralinguistic features executed by the *szepcze/sheptun*. Either of these qualities alone did not create the magic: the joining of this pair of aspects into verbal and performative artistry did.

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New Policy for NEAA Student Representatives

At the meeting on September 23, 2009, the NEAA executive board unanimously decided to offer financial assistance to the organization's two undergraduate student representatives and two graduate student representatives to offset the cost of attending the annual meetings. The executive committee wants to encourage more involvement of our student representatives and does not want lack of financial resources to become a hindrance. Student representatives will be given free memberships for the upcoming year. The NEAA will also cover the costs of the conference registration and the banquet for the student reps attending the meetings. Additionally, each student representative will be eligible to receive up to \$150 for lodging, meals (excluding alcoholic beverages) and travel expenses. They will be required to submit a letter requesting reimbursement along with original receipts to the NEAA treasurer within two weeks of the conclusion of the conference. Any questions about this new policy can be directed to the NEAA president or treasure.

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