

Department of Anthropology Colloquium Presentation

Monday, November 9th

11:00-12:30pm

HAH Seminar room



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Trickster Citizenship: Staging Uncertainty in an Age of Revolution

Ghana's National Theatre Movement emerged as the nation achieved independence from British colonial rule in 1957. Playwrights and performers built a modern theatrical style by adapting Akan language Ananse the Spider trickster tales for the proscenium stage.

The elaboration of a shared cultural tradition tied Ghanaian identity to a rural origin, legitimating national sovereignty. However, there are consequences for a nation whose hero is Ananse, a trickster who is both the owner and teller of stories as well as their protagonist; he is notorious for his desire, intricate plotting, and lying. This paper examines the contradictions that emerge from the ideal Ghanaian citizen being a performer, a dangerous political-economic subject with transformative potential.