

## Culture



# John NUNLEY and Judith BETTELHEIM, *Caribbean Festival Arts*, Seattle, University of Washington Press (in association with the St. Louis Art Museum), 1988. 218 pages, U.S. \$39.95

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papers cover a wide range of geographical and cultural areas, but they are united in their concern with women in fishing economies.

The collection contains an introduction and literature review by the editors and twelve papers. The introduction sets the stage for the rather diverse selection of papers. In it the editors set out the "four key (...) themes (which) underlie all the following chapters." The primary theme is the focus on women as creative and important actors in fishing economies. The themes of women's roles, their status, and the applied aspects of these issues, build on and elaborate the editors' primary concern with women as actors in fishing economies. The literature review is a comprehensive, yet sparse, discussion of the relevant sources. It provides just enough information to whet the appetite, but leaves many questions unasked. This is partly a result of the dearth of material which discusses women in the context of fishing 'communities'. Yet, one feels the editors have spent too much time cataloguing material and not enough on a substantive discussion of past literature. The introductory papers and Estelle Smith's concluding piece attempt to unify a disparate and theoretically chaotic work.

The twelve papers in this collection go a long way in correcting the problems of past studies of fisher folk which have assumed an unquestioned division of labour between men and women. Each paper is concerned with the sexual division of labour within fishing economies and the role women play in the fishing 'communities'. Allison's paper, *Women fishermen in the Pacific Northwest*, looks at atypical women in the Alaskan, Oregon, and Washington state fisheries where women work on fish boats. Davis' paper, *Shore skippers and Grass Widows*, concerns the role of women on shore. Clark's paper, *Managing Uncertainty: Family, Religion and Collective Action among Fishermen's Wives in Gloucester, Massachusetts*, is a discussion of the important role women play in political lobbying and "as onshore agents in the family fishing business" (p.278). These three papers are especially important in provoking a "radical rethinking of long-accepted anthropological truths, an (in) open(ing) up new areas of investigation" (p.1). In the concluding paper, *The Right to Choice: Power and Decision-Making*, Estelle Smith brings the collection together by focusing on "the multidimensional issue of power" (p.279). This is an effective way to close the book. The issue of power clarifies and demonstrates the thematic unity of the papers.

Despite its thematic unity, this collection lacks an overall theoretical cohesion. However, the impor-

tance of these papers is not in their theoretical sophistication; neither is it found in the definitiveness of their analysis. As in all ground-breaking texts there are weaknesses and unsatisfactory segments. Small inaccuracies, such as Allison's American presumption that the "pacific northwest" does not include British Columbia, are distracting. But the importance of this collection unequivocally stems from the questions and ambiguities it raises. This collection puts a new and important set of questions on the agenda for studies of fishing economies. Earlier volumes on fishing folk have focused on class relations, interaction between skippers and crews, relationships between fishing communities and metropolitan powers, or on technological adaptations. By focusing on the relationships and activities in which women play a significant role, Nadel-Klein and Davis have moved beyond the androcentric biases of previous work.

In all, this collection is a worthwhile contribution to the fields of gender studies and maritime anthropology. The ethnographic data provided in these paper challenges us to fully consider the role of women in fishing economies. The book reads well and its concern with the role of women and the issue of power in fishing economies makes it ideal for courses in gender studies, and maritime anthropology. With this inaugural book on women in fishing economies, the editors have embarked on an exciting trip into uncharted waters. It is up to us to join them in their voyage.

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John NUNLEY and Judith BETTELHEIM, *Caribbean Festival Arts*, Seattle, University of Washington Press (in association with the St. Louis Art Museum), 1988. 218 pages, U.S. \$39.95.

by Frank E. Manning  
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This book can be approached in terms of its genre, which I will here define as Coffee-Table Anthropology. Oversized, glossy, bound in cloth, and handsomely dustjacketed, it is a book in which the illustrations - 161 of them, mostly in full color - have the dominant impact. The book is a collector's item which is meant to be displayed and viewed, much like the exhibit of Caribbean festival artifacts that provided the occasion for its publication. The exhibit opened in December 1988 at the St. Louis Art Museum and is scheduled later to tour other US and Canadian museums. Principal authors John Nunley

and Judith Bettelheim developed the exhibit, Nunley in his role as a curator and Bettelheim in hers as an art historian. There are also contributions from four others who have been involved in Caribbean performance arts: Robert Farris Thompson, Barbara Bridges, Rex Nettleford, and Dolores Yonker.

As its genre dictates, the book is descriptive and pictorial rather than analytical. It does, however, have a coherent perspective. This is presented through the metaphor of callaloo, a Trinidadian soup made of many and varied ingredients. Trinidadians themselves have long used the metaphor as a social image of their multiethnic diversity. The authors appropriate it to suggest three separate but related themes. The first is that Caribbean art forms are a creole synthesis, a fluid mixture of African, European, and Asian traditions that assume their present - and ever changing - form in the New World: "... the artists of the black Caribbean demonstrate that several art histories, not one, flourish today upon our planet. The creole thing to do is to mix them. Gone is the notion of a single canon. Bring on the callaloo" (p. 29).

The second theme is that the popular arts are a unifying social influence, appealing to a broad spectrum of Caribbean peoples rather than just the particular racial or ethnic groups with which they are primarily associated. The author cite an exegesis of King Callaloo, a shimmering, mirror-like masquerade figure from the Trinidad Carnival: "Those who are black see themselves black in him; if they be brown, they see themselves brown; if white, then white" (p. 32). The unifying symbolism of King Callaloo is seen as mirrored, in the double sense, across the gamut of Caribbean festival arts, a contention that establishes these popular forms as foci of national and even transnational identity.

The third theme is that the festival arts are products of the "aesthetics of assemblage" (p. 36). Artists are imaginative bricoleurs who appropriate mundane and often discarded materials from the environment, fashioning them into costumes, musical instruments, stage props, and so on. The result is that the festival arts embody "every little piece of difference" (p. 31), harmonized within the context of dynamic forms.

These themes are woven into a description that deals chiefly with Carnival, Jonkonnu, and Hosay. The discussion of Carnival centers on Trinidad, where the pre-Lenten celebration has achieved its greatest florescence. Perceptively, however, the authors also include a chapter on the recent rise of reconstructed versions of Trinidad's famous Carnival in metropolitan cities where large numbers of

Caribbean immigrants have settled; this discussion highlights the festivities of New York, Toronto, and London, and their continuing connections with the Trinidadian paradigm. Carnival masquerade art is given special attention, most notably the creations of Peter Minshall (who produced King Callaloo), an iconoclastic Trinidadian designer whose costumed bands combine sophisticated and serious social criticism.

The second genre considered by the authors is Jonkonnu, a Christmas mummering tradition that flexibly synthesizes African, European, and Amerindian motifs. Although the authors define the tradition as "secular" (p. 40), it might be pointed out that it has flourished in heavily Protestant countries, where Carnival has historically been absent and where Christmas rather than the period before Lent has been for blacks the principal season for street festivity. The discussion of Jonkonnu focuses on Jamaica, where the tradition has been long established and is currently being rediscovered by the artistic community. The authors also give attention to parallel and related versions of the Jonkonnu form - some of them popularly known by other names - in Belize, St. Kitts-Nevis, the Bahamas, and Bermuda.

The third celebration is Hosay, an Islamic festival introduced by East Indians who came to the Caribbean as indentured laborers in the years following the emancipation of black slaves in 1834. Trinidad again furnishes the case of cases for the authors' description and photographic record of the festival, but they include a commentary on its place in Guyana, Surinam, and Jamaica, where there are also substantial numbers of East Indians. Consistent with their general position, they contend that Hosay - which celebrates Muharram, the first month of the Muslim year - is an integrating influence, eliciting the interest and participation of not only Hindu and Christian Indians, but also a broad spectrum of the general population.

The authors also include an eclectic discussion of three other festival forms that are less well known to North Americans. These are a variety of carnival-type festivities by Afro-Cubans in the eastern part of the country; Rara, a Haitian celebration that follows carnival in the calendar and that differs from it in being more closely related to *vodun*, more disciplined, more collectively oriented, and more militantly political; and the Mardi Gras celebrations of blacks in New Orleans, which are highlighted by the public performances of Amerindian masquerade figures.

As always, one could quibble with the particular of selection. I suspect that the authors introduced

the Cuban, Haitian and New Orleans examples in order to give their work a pan-Caribbean scope, but the inclusion is a bit parenthetical in relation to the rest of the book, which focuses on the Commonwealth countries. One might also question the selection of Hosay rather than Phagwa, another Indian festival which is arguably better known in Trinidad and which contributed to the symbolism of Minshall's 1983 Carnival band, "River", which the authors discuss extensively. I would also like to have seen a discussion of the many new carnivals that have arisen throughout the eastern Caribbean in the past three decades, each of them an attempt to adapt the Trinidadian format to local traditions and interests.

A more serious problem brings us back to the Coffee-Table genre. The emphasis on brilliant, glossy photography is commendable, but not at the expense of factual accuracy and other editorial standards that one rightfully expects. In the discussion of the Toronto Caribana, for example, the following are representative of the *errata* that I found within the span of three pages: 1) A long quote is incorrectly attributed to a journalist (p. 174, n. 21) - in fact, it comes originally from Austin Clarke, the Caribbean-Canadian writer; 2) Ken Shah, a masquerade band leader of Indo-Trinidadian ancestry, has his name anglicized as "Shaw" (pp. 175, 176); Elmore Daisey, a former carnival organizer, has his name misspelled as "Elmo" (p. 175); pre-Caribana ferry cruises that take place for upwards of a week are limited to a single night (p. 176); University Avenue, where the carnival takes place, is described as four miles long and sloping downward (p. 176) - the actual parade route is half that distance, and one would probably need a surveyor's instrument to detect any slope. I could continue this litany with both trivial and more substantive examples, but the point is that Coffee-Table Anthropology should not be an excuse for carelessness.

Shortcomings aside, this is a book that will be appreciated by Caribbean scholars from a variety of fields and by others with interests in festivity and popular culture. Like the museum collection that it commemorates, the book gives a distinctive and fascinating tradition of the showcase that it deserves.

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Margaret Critchlow RODMAN, *Deep Water: Development and Change in Pacific Village Fisheries*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1989. 173 pages, U.S. \$18.95.

by John B. Gatewood  
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Vanuatu (formerly, the Anglo-French colony of the New Hebrides), with a 1984 population of approximately 128,000, is one of the newly independent countries in the Pacific. Since achieving independence in 1980, Vanuatu has pursued a non-alignment policy with foreign powers. Such a policy is consistent with the goal of "self-reliance", which seems to be the key national value. This political stance raises practical problems, however, for the country must find a way to achieve economic development and overcome a trade imbalance without becoming dependent on foreign aid or going deeply into debt.

Finding solutions to this national problem is all the more difficult because "development" means various things to various local groups. Government planners regard development as anything that will balance international trade, whether achieved by substituting local products for foreign ones or by increasing exports. Small producers in the rural islands regard development as anything that increases their economic options while allowing them to maintain control over their productive labor. Foreign volunteers, primarily CUSO workers, are generally committed to a "small is beautiful / appropriate technology" concept of development.

Rodman's book is a very accessible (academic citations occur only in chapter endnotes), descriptive account of small-scale development projects in Vanuatu. Although copra has been and remains the principal cash-crop, Rodman focuses almost exclusively on efforts to develop a new resource: fish living in "deep-water" (100-400 m.) where reefs drop off toward the ocean floor. Whereas many of the Melanesian islanders have traditions of lagoon and reef fishing, they are generally ignorant concerning deep water species and how to catch them, and this is what the Village Fisheries Development Program is trying to redress. The hope is that exploitation of these new fisheries (handlining for snapper, mahimahi, and poulet) will not only increase the supply of fresh fish for local consumption, but also, if properly processed, provide exports for an international restaurant market.

As of 1985, the VFDP had made strides toward developing a marketing infrastructure and had directly supported about 100 "projects", ranging in scale from single outboard-powered canoes to fifteen motorized boats. Rodman describes two of these projects in detail. The first is the story of a single motorized fishing boat in the village of Longana, Ambae Island. The other project involves fifteen motorized boats under the auspices of a fishing association in Port Olry, Espiritu Santo.