

the very least, Miss Ullom has a series on folklore in mind.

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Halpert, Herbert and G. M. Story (eds.). Christmas Mumming in Newfoundland; Essays in Anthropology, Folklore and History. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Canada, 1969. xii - 246 pp., figure, 2 maps, 3 appendices, bibliography, index. \$7.50.

The editors of this collection of nine full-length essays and four shorter papers are to be commended in putting together a volume which so clearly demonstrates the compatibility of fieldwork-oriented social anthropology and folklore subject matter. The accomplishment is all the more impressive and timely in view of the current broadening of interdisciplinary interest in folklore and folklife studies. With scattered exceptions there has been a paucity of scholarship on the traditional English-language mumming complex in North America, particularly treatments which attempt to relate patterned mumming behavior to the social milieu in selected communities. Viewed in a wider perspective, of course, it would be an error to imply that these customs have passed unnoticed in folklore circles, especially in the British Isles. But to date the cultural phenomenon has lent itself to a plethora of context barren, historical-comparative studies which offer little in the way of synchronic interpretative analysis. We know something about the background of the custom, but very little about the reasons for its persistence in certain locales.

This is not to suggest that the diachronic approach is in any way slighted in this collection; the subtitle of the book and a cursory glance at its table of contents should remove any doubts. G. M. Story's thorough historical essay on Newfoundland's development from its settlement to the present, together with his survey of the printed record of mumming on the Island, are bulwarks which help to secure the accompanying functional analyses of ritualized mumming or 'janneying' behavior associated with the Twelve Days of Christmas. The overall proportioning of the contributions is such, however, that in terms of impact as well as sheer number of pages, the volume is weighted in favor of the five anthropologists. Still, the net result is a synthesis which, while something less than watertight in breadth of coverage and detail of execution, should win wide approval from the growing ranks of professional folklorists, many of whom seem oriented somewhere between the port and starboard extremes of the two disciplinary perspectives.

The impetus for the book grew out of a seminar sponsored jointly by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the Institute of Social and Economic Research at St. John's, Newfoundland in 1963, and specifically a paper delivered by social anthropologist Melvin Firestone which appears here as "Mummers and Strangers in Northern Newfoundland." Firestone suggests that the licensed abnormal behavior of disguised mummers serves to remove temporarily the participants from the normal patterning of social interaction. The outlandish behavior of 'janneys,' he argues, is in symbolic terms a "functional equivalent" for an ambivalent and

even hostile attitude toward 'strangers' in the everyday life of these isolated communities. In addition, the seasonal ritual offers the masked performers (in this case, residents of the 'Savage Cove' settlement on the Straits of Belle Isle) a unique opportunity to gain social esteem through a series of skillful deceits in personal appearance, mannerisms, and interpersonal behavior during informal house to house visits. Each of the other papers, with the exception of J. D. A. Widdowson and Halpert's compilation of data from fieldwork and questionnaires on "The Disguises of Newfoundland Mummers," a strictly descriptive student paper on "Janneying in 'Coughlin Cove,'" appendices dealing with the etymology of "mumming" (or, "mumming") and the regional term 'janneying,' as well as the custom's distribution in Newfoundland, illustrate and elaborate upon the theoretical groundwork and interpretative framework which Firestone sets forth.

Louis J. Chiaramonte demonstrates in "Mumming in 'Deep Harbour': Aspects of Social Organization and Drinking" how ritualized drinking behavior, as a feature of mumming, helps to renew interpersonal social ties and reaffirms a sense of group and community identity. John Szwed picks up this theme in "The Mask of Friendship: Mumming as a Ritual of Social Relations," where he describes how normal social relations in the west coast village of 'Ross' are organized around a voluntary system of reciprocity and guarded caution. Through the playful release of aggression, annual 'mumming' practices provide a sanctioned catharsis for social hostilities in the community. In Szwed's view, mumming culminates in a "reaffirmation of ties that express a formal societal rejection of the sort of behavior portrayed in the mumming." Moving northward geographically, Shmuel Ben-Dor's description of "The 'Naluyuks' of Northern Labrador: A Mechanism of Social Control" reveals the extent to which specific elements in mumming behavior can vary within a relatively confined region. In Makkovik, a tri-ethnic coastal community, 'naluyuk' (mumming) reflects assimilated practices derived from Eskimo, Northern European, and Moravian Christmas customs characterized by a mixture of apprehension and festive amusement. Like his colleagues, Ben-Dor presents a functional interpretation in which the custom is viewed as a highly integrated mechanism of cathartic entertainment and social control. James C. Faris explores the symbolism and structural logic of native ~~conceptual~~ conceptual categories in "Mumming in an Ourport Fishing Settlement: A Description and Suggestions on the Cognitive Complex." Faris considers mumming a form of "sanctioned licence" whereby social deviation leads to reversals of normal role expectations in the community of 'Cat Harbour.' Borrowing heavily from Durkheim and E. R. Leach, the author proposes that mumming is a symbolic representation of "sacred or polluted states, and opposed to the normal, everyday profane or secular behavior and expectations." Mummers, like strangers with whom Cat Harbour residents have had experience, are linked conceptually with 'blackness' (evil), danger, and general abnormality. Faris concludes his essay with the suggestion that the threat of potential danger and social disruption introduced from the "real" outside world, associated conceptually with ritual behavior which is "ominous, unpredictable, and uninhibited," is in the final analysis "the fundamental essence of mumming in Newfoundland and Labrador." Finally, editor Herbert Halpert sets forth tentatively "A Typology of Mumming" which he alternately claims and disclaims will serve to encompass "the whole mumming complex" in Newfoundland and elsewhere. Incidentally, the essay contains a semantic distinction -- perhaps whimsical, perhaps ominous, and perhaps a little of both -- between

"scholars and folklorists" (p. 57).

Individual readers may wish to take exception with the overall one-sidedness of the functional interpretations, which tend to lend a quality of "sameness" to the essays of the five social anthropologists. I would have personally welcomed some consideration of mumming in light of the religious life of these communities. Such a perspective might well force a reconsideration of the explanations offered for the persistence of these customs. Equally regrettable is the authors' decision to devote space in this volume to preliminary data and superficial consideration of Newfoundland Mummer's Plays belonging to the Hero-combat form of English folk drama. Halpert's essay on typology and three edited texts in an appendix make it clear that the fixed-form Mummer's Play presents, at least initially, a somewhat separate problem in analysis and interpretation. In marked contrast to the treatments of informal house visits, we are given brief background information and texts but scarcely an inkling of the social context of these dramatic performances in Newfoundland, or how the extinct plays might have fit into the mumming complex in specific communities. Apparently data which might have shed light on these issues became available to the editors subsequent to the finished form of the volume. We can look forward to the publication of these findings, hopefully in a book-length edition which will complement the present work.

Finally, the book's exceptionally attractive and well-planned format deserves mention, especially the editors' foresight in preserving independent footnoting for each article and printing notes below the body of the text on relevant pages. Such an arrangement should become standardized for all such volumes, not only for convenience in reading but to add to the suitability of photocopying selected pieces for course readings or other uses.

In sum, Halpert and Story have put together a series of essays which succeed in bringing new life to the description and interpretation of persistent traditional customs in contemporary folk cultures. The volume should well serve the future of folklore and folklife scholarship by demonstrating the fruitfulness of interdisciplinary perspectives for the study of stylized folkloric behavior.

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