Introduction to Folklore II: Folk Genres and Analysis 2010-01-19 Manning's "Carnival in Canada" FOLK AND FINA 113

CELEBRATION

× A paradox:

- + It is *autotelic* (one celebrates for the sake of celebrating), purely *expressive*, and *ludic* (about play)
- + It also has political connotations, a communication to outsiders of identity
- **×** Both culture and politics

CARIBANA

- * "West Indian" Festival in Toronto, originating in 1967 when West Indian community asked to participate in centennial
- Imported Trinidadian masqueraders: parade in downtown Toronto (moved to Montreal for Expo 67)
- Decision was made for it to be ongoing: original organisers became permanent committee

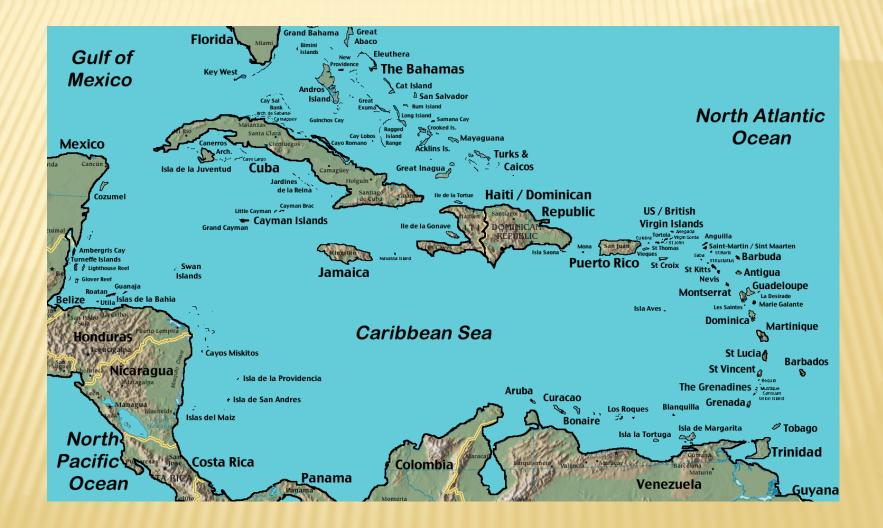
HOWEVER

- "West Indian" not a term of positive connotation for Caribbean people
- Island cultures largely defined in sharp contrast to other islands
- × An implied hierarchy based on island size
 - + Smaller = backwards
 - + Larger = aggressive and domineering

SO...

- Jamaica (largest island) most unliked by all the others, reluctant to engage with others
- Trinidad (next largest) seen as small island by Jamaica, but dominates (and is thus unliked) by eastern Caribbean
- Smaller islands often unite in opposition to Jamaica and Trinidad but retain hierarchical divisions amongst themselves

PERSPECTIVE: CARIBBEAN ISLANDS



INSULARITY CONTINUES

- × Insularity (Latin *insula* "island")
 - + literal and metaphorical connotations
 - + (cf. the persistent use of "Island" to refer to Cape Breton, even as a metonym)
- Social organisations, fraternal clubs, churches continue to be organised along island origins

SO...

- Jamaica drops out, having no "carnival" tradition
- Organization becomes dominated by Trinidad, for which carnival is the major festival

CARNIVAL

- * from Latin carne "flesh" (as in reincarnate, chili con carne, etc.)
- × A feast of flesh
 - + Literally, the eating of meat prior to a period of fasting and abstention (Lent)
 - + Metaphorically, focused on the body and not the spirit
 - × Mardi Gras in New Orleans, etc.

FLESH!

- <u>http://www.cbc.ca/toronto/features/caribana2</u> 008/history.html
- <u>http://www.tradebit.com/filedetail.php/80086</u>
 <u>051-street-dancing</u>

MORE COMPLEXITY

- Trinidadian committee members desired a Trinidadian-style carnival
- Smaller island representatives wanted a pan-Caribbean style carnival and other forms of display
- Trinidad eventually drops out, recreates carnival, replete with lingo, dance styles, etc.

EVEN MORE COMPLEXITY

- Trinidad historically multi-racial, with carnival understood as a black festival within but incorporating multi-ethnic musicians
 - + Trinidad see cultural similarity as basis of solidarity
- Smaller islands largely black-only, with a different history of influences
 - + Racial similarity basis of solidarity, despite cultural differences

CLASS

- Caribana (expensive, reserved) seen as a bourgeois, serious, educational festival
- × As opposed to Carnival, open, exciting, etc.
- × Funding eventually forced a merger

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Do you think of yourself as having an "ethnic" identity? Why or why not?

GO AWAY FROM THIS PLACE

- Read "Religious Folklore" by Danielson, from the Introduction
- I don't like this reading much: in years past I have even skipped it. Try to figure out why.