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A Musical View of the Universe: Kalapalo Myth and Ritual Performances. *Ellen B. Basso.* University of Pennsylvania Publications in Conduct and Communication. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985. 360 pp. \$35.00 (cloth).

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A Musical View of the Universe ventures into uncharted territory, the interface of discourse-centered ethnography and psychoanalytically informed interpretation. Focusing on the Carib-speaking Kalapalo Indians of central Brazil, Basso explores Kalapalo myth in its actual instances or tellings. Simultaneously, she charts the position of myth performance within a broader view of psychosocial functioning, showing how Kalapalo myths encode affect and help channel this affect toward the ends of community integration and conduct regulation.

Basso's work is highly text-focused. In it are to be found some 17 translated myth-tellings, analyzed into lines and displayed in accord with the methods developed by Hymes (e.g., in *In Vain I Tried to Tell You*), which give one a much better sense of the rhythm and internal structure of discourse than the traditional paragraph method. The reader becomes immersed in the Kalapalo mythical world, where the sacred *kagutu* and *kuluta* flutes originated, where the voracious sexual appetite of Ulejalu sapped her husband/lover, where a rejected husband finds a beautiful snake-woman lover.

This work reflects a gradual, but possibly important paradigm shift in central Brazilian research. An earlier generation of "structuralist" ethnographers viewed discourse as a window to "culture." Ethnographic "data" consisted in what informants said, i.e., the semantic or referential content of discourse, mixed indiscriminately with what the ethnographer observed. No attention was paid to how people said what they said or to the contexts of saying. That is, linguistic usage was not viewed as part of ethnographically describable social action.

For Basso, the ethnographic description of language use is a central objective. She is concerned, for instance, with the "what-sayer," the special addressee of a Kalapalo myth-telling without whom the performance would not take place. The "what-sayer" not only responds with "yes's" and "no's," but as well asks for information and gives summaries of major points. As Basso observes, "how the what-sayer responds . . . is crucial to a successful narrative performance" (p. 17).

She is also concerned, for example, with how the functional work of Kalapalo myth-telling is accomplished through onomatopoeic devices. There is the *titititi* of human footsteps, the *kidik, kidik* of a hammock being untied, the *tik bom* of the hammock collapsing, the *tutik, tutik* of a cricket. One senses the importance of the sound shape of discourse to the "meaning" of Kalapalo myth.

The discourse-centered approach represents one key component of Basso's work, and it is especially prominent in chapters 1-4. There is a second component, which becomes prominent in chapters 5-7. Whereas structuralism was concerned primarily with cognitive and intellectual meanings, Basso is concerned with feeling and emotion—the grief and anger surrounding death, the sexuality and aggressivity of life. For Basso, much of Kalapalo ritual and myth links up with these themes, and, indeed, Kalapalo myths "seem to serve less as justifications of particular practices than as poignant, evocative models of feeling" (p. 140).

Basso discusses three myths in chapter 5, "The Government of Grief." One, a variant of the widespread Orpheus theme, deals explicitly with the loss associated with natural death. A second focuses on Atsidyi the Bat, who dupes his mother-in-law and succeeds in cutting off her huge labia, thereby killing her. Basso includes the myth here because a song used in the death ceremonies, known as "Bat's Song," makes reference to the events of this myth, in the course of which Bat himself sings and mourns his mother-in-law's death. A third myth relates the origin of the *auügufi* dance, which forms part of the mortuary rites. In it, a man goes off to live with his Snake wife, from whose people he has learned the *auügufi* dance the Kalapalo now perform. The emotions surrounding his definitive separation from the community of humans parallel those associated with death.

The myths in chapter 6, "Fantasies of Erotic Aggression," all relate in one way or another to desire and to fear of desire in others. They begin with typical domestic situations and show how these situations are fantastically transformed by the eruption of powerful emotions. It is really upon fear of these emotions that the myths turn. Basso concludes that Kalapalo "men fear and are repelled by certain female sexual things, and women fear and are repelled by men's sexual persistence" (p. 239).

A Musical View of the Universe is not explicitly about music—although the theme of music appears throughout—until the concluding chapter, "Saturated with Music, Submerged

in Sense." Here we learn that songs, which foreground the performance aspect of language use and are frequently without true semantic meaning, are associated in mythology with the spirit world, with the Dawn People. Performance of these songs by humans effects an approximation with the spirit world. Simultaneously, it effects an approximation between the humans themselves, "fusing the bounded and opposed into a unity of performative discourse" (p. 309).

If there is a criticism to be made of this book, it is that its two components, discourse-center ethnography and psychoanalytically informed interpretation, are not yet sufficiently integrated. However, this is to be attributed to the exploratory nature of Basso's work. The terrain is not yet fully charted. One can only hope that it will be more fully mapped by future generations. If it is true that *A Musical View of the Universe* reflects a major paradigm shift for central Brazilian research, we can imagine that even now those expeditions are getting under way.

Mythistoire Tungaru: Cosmologies et Généalogies aux Iles Gilbert. *Jean-Paul Latouche.* Langues et Cultures du Pacifique, No. 5. Paris: Société d'Études Linguistiques et Anthropologiques de France, 1984. 488 pp. 180 Fr (cloth), n.p. (paper).

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Mythistoire Tungaru is a collection of southern Gilbertese oral traditions, texts that provide the genealogical charter for present-day social hierarchies. The "mythistoire" in the title communicates the author's premise that in this corpus myth and genealogical history are inseparable, the cosmogonic genealogies connecting to the origin myths of specific families and titles. Latouche asserts therefore that one can only understand the Tungaru social and political system through a detailed study of this myth-history. The texts were collected in Nikunau and Beru islands in southern Kiribati, where collective assembly in communal houses called *maneaba* plays a critical role in local-level organization. The distribution of *maneaba* and their internal subdivision into ranked seats or titles effect a spatial representation of the Tungaru sociopolitical order. The hierarchy of titles without islandwide centralization shows affinities to Samoan social organization. The texts in this collection recount the origins of *maneaba* and of *kaalinga*, which

Latouche identifies as cognatic residential groups. Latouche points out that in the northern isles, centralized chiefdoms developed and the *maneaba* have largely lost their political functions. In contrast, the functioning cognatic organization and decentralized political system of southern Kiribati have interested anthropologists because of possible insights they may afford into prototypical Polynesian social forms.

It is important to note that although this collection is relevant to a number of theoretical issues in Oceanic ethnology, such as land tenure and the nature of the local group, Latouche does not address those issues at length here. He states that his findings on Gilbertese social organization differ from those of other anthropologists, such as Goodenough, who worked on the neighboring atoll of Onotoa, but most of that discussion is contained in footnotes. The brief but valuable introduction to Gilbertese society is followed by approximately 300 pages of texts, each complete in the vernacular with an interlinear word-by-word translation and a narrative translation on the facing page. A set of genealogical tables accompanies the volume, and a glossary—indispensable for working with the material—indexes the names of ancestors and descent groups to the texts and genealogies. Latouche also provides seating diagrams of selected *maneaba* and tables referencing the seats and founding ancestors to the genealogies. In passing, he affirms the vitality of the system of titles for the modern Tungaru, who still engage in lengthy debates about the cosmological origins of their society.

This is a rich and fascinating corpus for students of Austronesian linguistics, myth, and sociopolitical organization. Latouche has done a meticulous job of making the texts accessible, and the collection will delight those who enjoy tinkering with genealogies. The texts depict the generation of social hierarchy. In general, Latouche notes, the elder brother line takes precedence over the cadet and sister lines, and first settlers have priority over latecomers. The genealogical relations portrayed will be particularly familiar to those who have worked with Polynesian systems. The material is so clearly presented that it is not difficult to follow the process of social production. Be forewarned, however, that this collection aims primarily to systematize Tungaru myth-history and reveal its integral relationship to social organization. Latouche does not offer here a structural or symbolic analysis of the content of the texts, and the relationship between the mythic genealogies and resultant political relationship is implicitly isomorphic. The un-