Jolynna Sinanan, *Social Media in Trinidad: Values and Visibility*. London: UCL Press, 2018. vii + 236 pp. (Paper US\$ 26.63)

Social media has received a fair amount of attention as an academic subject in recent years, but most research explores it from the viewpoint of individuals. Anthropology takes a more encompassing approach, looking at communities. This is what Jolynna Sinanan demonstrates in *Social Media in Trinidad: Values and Visibility*. The book is part of the *Why We Post* series, developed with the intent of providing an unprecedented comparative study of the use of social media around the world. Apart from individual monographs relating to nine specific countries, this project also includes a broader comparative work in *How the World Changed Social Media* (2016), as well as a more narrowly focused book, *Visualising Facebook: A Comparative Perspective* (2017), coauthored by Sinanan and Daniel Miller and centering on the project's Trinidadian and English field sites. While Sinanan's work stands on its own merits, this means that for a more complete and comprehensive understanding of her findings one should also read the two comparative publications of the *Why We Post* project.

Sinanan's research in Trinidad centers on the way the use of social media contributes to our understanding of social visibility. She argues that social media heightens the visibility between individuals and the wider society and asks if this enhanced visibility has also contributed to making people more superficial, or somehow less authentic. With these issues of seeing and being seen in mind, Sinanan embarked on fifteen months of research in a small Trinidadian town which she describes as an "in-between" place. The town was considered rural by city dwellers and urban by denizens of the countryside, which Sinanan argues created a dichotomy in the town, with residents wanting to remain traditional while also being modern. This allowed her to analyze the use and distribution of social media in the town to great effect.

Much of Sinanan's book focuses on the concept of polymedia, which entails not just the multiple uses that people ascribe to media, but also the way these media interact, and are frequently embedded within each other, such as the way smartphones now have cameras and Internet access. Just as forms of media are embedded within one another, Sinanan argues, so is social media embedded in social relations. She uses the example of two local forms of gossip in Trinidad—"macoing" and "bacchanal"—, to demonstrate how social media, far from altering the way people interact, instead adapts already pre-existing forms of interaction. Using Facebook as her main example, Sinanan shows how Trinidadian sensibilities of visibility affect the way people approach the use of social media. She argues that in a society with a history of slavery and inden-

tureship such as Trinidad, and the Caribbean at large, being seen on one's own terms is paramount. As such, "a person's identity is evidenced visually through the labor they undertake in creating themselves" (p. 54), and this happens both online and offline. Trinidadians, then, utilize social media to create visible personas meant to be seen by others in strategic and specific ways.

Chapter 3 stands out, providing a great example of this strategic use of social media. Sinanan contrasts the use of Facebook by Trinidadians with their use of Instagram. These two social media platforms provide different ways to establish visible identities, she argues. Facebook serves as a way to assert group membership, and is seen as more collective and family oriented, while Instagram allows people to convey individuality the same way Carnival does: "people can be individuals, but in clearly defined spaces" (p. 107). Sinanan thus aligns Facebook with more traditional users, demonstrating a local orientation, versus the more international and cosmopolitan viewpoint of Instagram users, who tend to be younger and middle-class. Sinanan thus persuasively argues against the common notion of social media as an agent of social atomization, and claims that far from fragmenting societal bonds, it intensifies existing social conditions. She frequently compares the crafting of an online persona to masquerading at Carnival, where people can express their inner selves. The crux of her argument is that visibility is central to personhood, and social media allows for people to visibly express their individuality within the parameters allowed by societal norms.

This remarkable book is recommended for those interested in reading about social media in an accessible manner that centers on communities rather than individuals and seeks to further understanding on the subject without judgment of whether it's good or bad for society.

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