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Cover Caption: This early studio photo of a Ch'uta standing beside a Pepino reveals his
relation to the humble figure of the pongo. The mask in his right hand, however, could easily
be the head of his former master. Photo by Julio Cordero.

the United States. Westfried argues that motherhood and children are seen as "sacred" in Brazilian society, allowing women to combine work with their mothering role due to reliance on kin and domestic servants. Likewise, in the United States the lack of such a strong and enduring kin system, alongside the lack of help from corporation and State bodies in establishing effective support services for working mothers leaves American women behind in their accomplishments. In this section the author often slips off into the anecdotal, such as his lengthy discussions of the dangers posed to the psychological and physical wellbeing of children by the demise of the nuclear family, giving the book an air more akin to a "parenting handbook" than an academic text.

The book provides interesting interviews of middle-class Brazilian women. One cannot but wonder whether keeping the focus of the book on these case studies, framing them in more detail within the history of women's struggle in Brazil, and foregoing the spelled out comparison with the United States could have strengthened the book's argument.

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2000 Maid to Order. Harper's Magazine, April 1.

Ruins of Absence, Presence of Caribs: (Post) Colonial Representations of Aboriginality in Trinidad and Tobago.

Maximilian Forte, Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005. 283 pp.

Gerard Collomb

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The ordinary discourse on the anthropological specificity of the Caribbean islands has been built on the statement of the disappearance of the Amerindian populations after the European arrival: they would have been eliminated during the colonial history, or they would have become so minoritized that they would constitute today only negligible numbers. Thus, whereas anthropology and history work with the categories of cultural continuity or survival in connection with the African populations imported in the Caribbean, it seems impossible to use the same categories to think about the indigenous populations of this area. Taking this statement as a departure point, Maximilian Forte approaches the "indigenous" reality of Trinidad today. The "Caribs" are indeed quite present on this island, as a category or identity, if not as a clearly identified population.

Forte relies on the study of the Santa Rosa Carib Community in Arima to question this paradox of an "indigenous presence" maintained in spite of an "absence of the Indigenous." He argues that this presence stands out through what he calls a "reengineering" of indigeneity, involving several agents who get their materials out of multiple sources: the Amerindian "tradition," the representations worked out by colonial Europe, and more recently the expression of a Trinidadian national feeling, as the consequence of globalization.

In the first chapters, the author shows the colonial reality—throughout the Caribbean and more particularly within Trinidad—constructed representations which formed, up to the present, the ideational background of this

contemporary reengineering of the Carib identity. This reality produced by the European newcomers conveyed a limited number of recurrent discursive topics, through which an indigenous presence has been perceived and thought of: the progressive disappearance of the natives and the decline of their political and military power since the 17th century made way for a valorization of the symbolic reference to the indigenous presence, and for its political use in the colonial and post colonial history. The Arima Mission became, for Trinidadians, the "village of the Caribs," and the indigenous reference occupied in Trinidad an increasing place in the nationalist discourses and in the local historical narratives, reinforcing the inscription of a Trinidadian national identity in the Caribbean area.

The work then analyzes how, within the Santa Rosa Carib Community itself, the "reengineering" of indigeneity and the reinterpretation of the indigenous heritage provides today the material for discourses and performances which contribute to mark out a cultural area thought of as specifically "Amerindian." These identity constructions are in the core of the contemporary social and cultural interactions, between the various local indigenous agents but also in their interactions with the other components of the national society.

One of the great qualities of this book resides in its concern to always confront a deep theoretical approach developed in a long introductory chapter with a meticulous ethnographic observation, which puts under the light the contrasted, and sometimes contradictory, strategies adopted by the "natives." The agents who use the representations of "indigeneity" and who promote them, especially in the field of politics, act according to their own

interests and to their social position, but they also stay in an attitude of hypercorrection facing the representations which are imposed to them by the outside world, and which they endeavour to correspond to. As the author points out: "the study of indigeneity can never be just the study of indigenous peoples."

In the final chapters, Forte shows how Carib identity appropriates today the reference to the "first nations" as a tool of legitimation in the Trinidadian political space. He insists on the articulation, from now on central, of the Carib identity in Santa Rosa with the discourses of the international organizations and NGOs networks, which aim to validate the idea of "autochtonie" as transnational. The "indigenous" leaders have completely integrated this process in their symbolic and political strategies, by taking part in this international interplay for asserting themselves (and thinking themselves) as "first nations."

The analysis which M. Forte develops in this book is much stimulating, getting rid of the standardly reproduced opposition "community/ethnicity" versus "globalization," to explore how globalisation produces materials which the local actors use to build ethnicity. Overall, the book points out the performative character of the reference to indigeneity, still too often understood as an essential category, by replacing it in a dynamic and non-homogeneous social context, and in the flux of history. The true question, as the author points out, is to consider the way in which the representations of indigeneity and ethnicity are initially built by an elite, and highly overdetermined by the constructions which are made outside of the group. The "constructivist" position that he adopts is plainly justified in the case of the

Santa Rosa Community, perhaps more so than in other regions. Of course it is not the case everywhere, especially when the "indigenous" reference appears to be the only mean of resistance to the consequences of the colonial history—a limit which the author readily concedes in his conclusion.