

provide even a modicum of proof for their assertions. Simply stating that elites rewrite history, that patriotic statues discipline the masses, and that patriarchy determines cultural expression – as compelling as these assertions may be – has no truth value in the absence of inter-subjective evidence.

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FORTE, MAXIMILIAN C. *Ruins of absence, presence of Caribs: (post)colonial representations of aboriginality in Trinidad and Tobago*. xv, 283 pp., map, figs, tables, bibliogr. Gainesville: Univ. Press of Florida, 2005. \$59.95 (cloth)

Indigenous revival has been a striking feature of the Caribbean region in recent years, albeit one often regarded sceptically. One of the great virtues of Maximilian Forte's book is that it takes a serious look at one of these revived indigenous communities, the Santa Rosa Carib Community (SRCC) of Arima, in Trinidad, dealing sympathetically with its struggle to assert its aboriginal identity despite the fact that its members are not marked out by physical appearance, do not speak an indigenous language, and possess few identifiable indigenous traditions.

Forte's key conceptual tool is 're-engineering', referring to the multiple interests vested in redesigning, constructing, or maintaining Amerindian traditions. His focus is then on the culture brokers – the translators, intermediaries, interpreters, and marshallers of tradition – who undertake this re-engineering, and among whom he openly includes himself, outlining his activities on behalf of the SRCC during his fieldwork. Forte offers a careful study of the network of interests involved with the SRCC, especially those associated with its imbrication in the political technology of neo-liberalism. He has to chart a careful path here, maintaining his links both with the SRCC's forceful President, Ricardo Bharath, the dominant culture broker, who, as a local and national politician of some influence, is responsible for increasing state recognition and funding for the Caribs, and with the 'traditional' figure of the Carib Queen, symbolically important but increasingly marginalized. Even a small group such as the SRCC does not speak with one voice.

In the now long-running dispute between essentialist and constructionist perspectives, Forte is an undogmatic constructionist. This is indeed the only sensible position to adopt with

regard to the Caribbean, where, until recent years, the essentialist view of indigeneity has usually amounted to a hardline version of the argument that sees the 'real' Indian as the 'pure' Indian, the only 'pure' Indian being the dead Indian. However, in the case of Trinidad, an interesting additional reason for adopting this perspective is that the Arima Caribs themselves tend to identify their indigeneity in indirect and implicit ways, close to anthropological constructionism.

Forte offers a careful history both of the emergence of 'Carib' as a powerful but contested historical category, re-engineered from the earliest days of Caribbean contact, and of the special town of Arima, established as a mission village in 1749 to house Amerindian agriculturalists whose lands were earmarked for new sugar estates founded by French planters. This firm historical background proves essential to understanding the nature of the claims which the SRCC now makes with respect to Amerindian tradition and the position and reputation of the SRCC within the wider Trinidadian community. Showing a subtle understanding of the political economy of tradition, Forte demonstrates his ability to move beyond the tried language of authenticity, offering in its place nuanced descriptions of what the culture brokers say and do, and how they explain their actions and words.

In the modern era Arima has seen two periods of resurgence: the first, roughly 1813 to 1828, under the auspices of the Governor Sir Ralph Woodford; the second, between 1870 and 1920, involving the importation of large numbers of Spanish-Amerindian cocoa workers from Venezuela, the so-called 'Cocoa Panyols'. The cocoa boom of that period renewed the fortunes of the *gens d'Arime*, the Spanish and French creole families of Arima, leading to a revival of interest in the Santa Rosa Festival, an event both deeply Catholic and intimately associated with Carib identity. Forte offers a fine description and analysis of this festival.

Among the many strengths of Forte's study is its understanding that contemporary mediations of indigeneity do not occur in a vacuum, but in larger social and historical contexts, not the least important of which is often the nation-state, which can act as a significant patron. One of his chapters looks at the way in which the Caribs of Arima have been re-engineered in recent years by the Trinidadian nation-state to provide a relatively non-contentious depth of national history; another addresses the international dimension of indigeneity, tracing some of the

contacts between the SRCC and other indigenous communities in and beyond the Caribbean.

Ruins of absence, presence of Caribs is a deeply rewarding fieldwork study of the Caribs of Arima, carefully researched, well informed, and written with intelligence and sensitivity. However, beyond that, it also offers signal contributions to the history of Trinidad and Tobago, to the history of the Amerindian communities of the Caribbean, and to the understanding of the significance of indigeneity in the twenty-first century.

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GOLDSCHMIDT, WALTER. *The bridge to humanity: how affect hunger trumps the selfish gene*. xii, 164 pp., bibliogr. Oxford, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006. £10.99 (paper)

The public intellectual role of anthropology is in need of reinvention given that most in the academy and the wider public no longer read our work or seek our counsel. Goldschmidt's book is an opportunity to revitalize us as intellectuals first, but also as people who can be engaged with public issues of the day. Born in 1913, Goldschmidt is one of our most distinguished published anthropologists, whose long service to the discipline includes elected presidencies (e.g. the American Anthropological Association) and journal editorships (e.g. *American Anthropologist*). His fieldwork is extensive in North America and Africa, especially among the Sebei of Uganda (see *Culture and behavior of the Sebei*, 1976).

In this book, Goldschmidt poses the big questions: What is uniquely human? What is the nature/nurture controversy today? The book boldly confronts challenges posed by genetic interpretations of human behaviour. Its clearest spokesperson, Richard Dawkins, writes in *The selfish gene* (1999) that 'we are born selfish ... universal love and welfare of the species as a whole are concepts that do not make evolutionary sense' (p. 2). It is not the gene for Goldschmidt, but human bodily events – centred in brain growth, upright posture, and delicate hands – which set the evolutionary stage for the cognitive complexity prerequisite for grammatical development and tool sophistication – as central to humankind's capacity for cultural learning. Affect hunger, defined as 'an urge to get expression of affection from others', is innate and is also central to *Homo sapiens'* uniqueness. Affect

hunger finds expression first in infancy, 'trumping' but not eliminating the selfish gene interest, and is the affective precondition for bonding needed for cultural life throughout the life cycle, even to the detriment of genetic interests.

The book provides a thoughtful rehearsal of empirical information, pro and con, marshalled in support of its vision. Sidebar cases drawing from multi-disciplinary literatures are impressive, including 'Behavioral variation within the genus *Pan*', 'The discovery of mirror neurons', 'Social inducement to mothering', 'The chemistry of caring', 'Neonate cultural indoctrination', 'Aboriginal justice', and 'Diversity in forager social structure and ethos'.

A special feature is the chapter 'Revolution of the nursery' where rarely considered infancy (Alma Gottlieb, *The afterlife: the culture of infancy in West Africa*, 2004) is documented cross-culturally for its illumination on affect hunger. Various chapters provide a concise presentation of the history of anthropological theory and consideration of sub-fields such as linguistics and biological perspectives. The book will have appeal for both introductory anthropology courses and graduate seminars. It will serve as a counterpoint to the biologized world of psychological and behavioural science, and should be read in courses with these interests.

For anthropologists, there is a roadmap for public advocacy with a consistent theme of media and academic over-representations of the power of gene over culture, for example in the widespread attention given to books such as *The bell curve* (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994), where it is said that we must learn to live in a world with genetically based causes for poverty. I wonder, ironically, why such genetic approaches do not search for a 'white-collar' crime gene in light of Enron, but consider seriously a black genetic basis for inner-city urban crime.

Goldschmidt's synthesis recalls an earlier one by the eminent A. Irving Hallowell (*Culture and experience*, 1967), whose idea of 'self-awareness' served as his precondition for the 'socially constructed behavioural environment' which made humans unique in the course of hominid evolution. Goldschmidt's vision is one for our times, taking into account advances in the sciences not available to Hallowell. Historians of anthropology should also read Goldschmidt's *Man's way* (1959), where he first set forth the idea of a 'need for positive affect'.

Agency theorists will be critical at first, although Goldschmidt uses the idea of 'career' to consider individual variation within a