

## Introduction: The Dual Absences of Extinction and Marginality—What Difference Does an Indigenous Presence Make?

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One debilitating consequence of the way in which the native Caribbean has been locked into an ‘ethnographic present’ of 1492, divorced from five-hundred years of turbulent history, has been that the present native population has usually been ignored: some seemingly authoritative accounts of the region even appear written in ignorance of the very existence of such a population.

—Peter Hulme (1993, p. 214)

Twenty five years ago it was widely assumed that indigenous peoples were dying out; that they were either being physically extinguished by disease and the savage onslaughts of the modern world or that they were abandoning their indigenous identities and disappearing into the mainstream of the societies that surrounded them. This assumption was quite wrong.

—David Maybury-Lewis (1997)

Reports of the death of indigenous cultures...have been exaggerated.

—Marshall Sahlins (1999, p. i)

Indigenous peoples have been ever vanishing, almost as if disappearance was their predetermined historical role. The story of indigenous extinction is one the West tells itself about its own civilizational supremacy and cultural victory as the zenith of human achievement—indigenous people are always disappearing and declining. Why? They simply must, or the story will lose its power. It is an influential story, to be encountered in unexpected quarters. There I was in 1995, sitting around a table with other graduate students in Immanuel Wallerstein’s seminar, “Introduction to Modern World-Systems Studies,” at SUNY-Binghamton, the lone anthropology student in

“SOC 601.” Wallerstein had just started to talk—briefly—about the Caribbean as the launching pad for European expansion. Then he added, “the native peoples of that region were simply *wiped out*,” sweeping his hand off to the side. I felt uncomfortable. I had just returned that summer from my first meeting with members of the Carib community in Arima, Trinidad. Wallerstein is by no means alone in his belief. As an undergraduate in Latin American and Caribbean Studies, I never encountered a course on the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, and I only briefly heard of “Caribs and Arawaks” in passing, leaving me with the impression that they must have simply passed away. Recent anthropological writings that emphasize the presence and reproduction of indigenous cultures that were previously alleged to be on their way out (see Sahlins, 1993, 1999), also stay well away from the Caribbean, focusing instead on the usual suspects: the Inuit, highlanders of Papua New Guinea, the Maya. These are the most likely candidates to be seen as “really” indigenous, indicative of Field’s observation of “anthropologists’ preference for describing the ‘most Indian’ sociocultural areas” (1994, p. 234).

Some orthodoxy gets the better of the best of us. Wallerstein was only reproducing what he must have felt was common knowledge. One might therefore also feel embarrassed for macro-perspectives that rarely bother themselves with examining local ethnographies, thereby passing vast generalizations that are sometimes not evidenced on the ground, putting lines through whole peoples, and placing check marks in the “capitalism rules” column. David Maybury-Lewis makes an observation above that I certainly agree with, except on one point: assumptions of extinction have been generated for much longer than the past 25 years. In the case of the Caribbean those assertions have been made for the better part of the past five centuries, and the passage of time that helps to make some ways of knowing more common does not necessarily make them wiser. One should also note that the last 25 years have seen a shift from writing about indigenous peoples in a state of decline, facing a future of assimilation, to perspectives on indigenous peoples engaged in resistance, facing a future of resurgence (Bruner, 1986, p. 4).

For all the assertions of actual or impending extinction and sociocultural irrelevance, what we witness “on the ground” presents us with other realities. States have recognized existing Carib communities in Dominica, St. Vincent, and Trinidad and Tobago. In some territories, nationalist intellectuals have hailed Amerindians as the bedrock of the modern nation, territorial ancestors whose struggle for freedom could readily be folded into the wider Caribbean quest for independence. From the late 1980s, indigenous bodies in Belize, St. Vincent, Dominica, Trinidad, and Guyana cooperated in the formation of the Caribbean Organization of Indigenous Peoples. In the Guyanas, indigenous federations have emerged to challenge the erosion of their resource base and to assert rights to their own cultural identities and traditions, often linking

themselves to wider South American and Caribbean indigenous confederations. Regional indigenous gatherings have taken place on multiple occasions in St. Vincent, Trinidad, Guyana, Dominica, and Cuba. The news media in various territories of the Caribbean have focused greater attention than ever before on the existence and current situation of indigenous peoples. Indigenous governmental bodies in North America have built supportive networks of exchange with Caribbean Amerindian bodies, including Canada's Assembly of First Nations, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. Agencies of the United Nations and the Organization of American States have recognized, supported, or otherwise worked with indigenous organizations in the region. The Internet has witnessed the growth of dozens of sites by and about contemporary indigenous peoples of the Caribbean. Many individuals are expressing a new pride in their indigenous ancestry as they broaden knowledge of their own family and cultural histories. Ethnographers have documented indigenous cultural survivals in numerous contemporary Caribbean cultural practices that have previously been taken for granted as simply "local," generically "creole," or of "unknown origins." In addition, there are more Caribbean indigenous scholars themselves, including Jose Barreiro and Joseph Palacio in this volume. Territories where, for generations, scholars and commentators had asserted the biological extermination of indigenous peoples have been shown to not only possess indigenous descendants, but that such descendants may in fact be in the majority, as in the case of Puerto Rico (see DRLAS, 2000; Kearns, 2003; Martinez Cruzado, 2002). Whether in terms of demography, symbolic meanings, cultural practices, political organization, or mere commemoration, the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean have, far from vanishing, become more visible than ever. The only way one can "miss" seeing them is by choosing not to look.

On many different levels we can speak of a *resurgence* of the indigenous in the Caribbean. The notion of resurgence will involve different meanings in different local contexts across the region. In some cases resurgence only exists as an expression of renewed interest by scholars in the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, as they challenge their blinkered inattention to peoples who have never consented to the view that they either disappeared or were unimportant. Theses of extinction have been a hallmark of island Caribbean historiography more than is the case with the mainland. On the other hand, challenges to notions of disappearance, efforts to resist political and economic marginalization, the formation of new regional organizations, and the recent growth in a committed body of scholarship focused on these issues, collectively produce resurgence. In all cases, contemporary indigenous peoples of the Caribbean refuse to be measured by the relics of their past or to be treated condescendingly as mute testimonials to a disappearing history, or a history of disappearance.

## What “We” Have Been Missing

The Caribbean is a remarkable place, a central place. At one and the same time, the Caribbean was present at the birth of world capitalism and the birth of two modern narratives that have since been applied to other parts of the world: extinction and cannibalism (see Hulme, 1992). This volume focuses on the former theme, under the heading of “absence”—absence as perceived through the lens of extinction or marginality: indigenous island populations as extinct, and mainland indigenous populations as marginal and on their way to meet the fate of their island precursors (at least, from an orthodox view point, which we collectively challenge). Fourteen contributors from three continents, including four indigenous representatives, collaborate here to provide a survey-like overview of the contemporary situation of indigenous peoples in the Caribbean and they analyze some of the challenges they face in making their identities present and their societies viable.

If the Caribbean is a central place in some respects, it is “out of place” in much of anthropology for being too novel, too hybrid, too discontinuous, not indigenous enough. As one anthropologist opined, “depicted today as uncertain, variegated, and unfinished—as creole—the world seems to have found its emblem in the Caribbean” (Khan, 2001, p. 271). The Caribbean has thus been typecast as the zone of “impurity,” of permanent “artificiality,” a place where primordial attachments are impossible (see Robotham, 1998, p. 308). No less a cultural critic than Stuart Hall argued that it is this pervasive sense of “ruptures and discontinuities” that constitutes the “uniqueness of the Caribbean” (1994, p. 394). C.L.R. James emphasized that “these populations [of the Caribbean] are essentially Westernized and they have been Westernized for centuries” (quoted in Oxaal, 1968, p. 1). Other writers have reaffirmed this perspective, some writing very plainly that “the history of the Caribbean has been the history of imported peoples” (Lieber, 1981, p. 1). If some would argue that indigenous activists are “essentializing” their identities as consisting of a core of fixed traits (see Field, 1999), it’s not like we have a superior alternative in these essentialisms of Caribbean people as “Western.”

It is at this very point that the discussion could spiral out of control. We risk ending up in fruitless debates between essentialism and its not-so-different constructionist critics (see Friedman, 1996, pp. 129–130); between survival and invention (where those claiming to see invention clearly have fixed historical coordinates in mind for what they implicitly understand to be “non-invented” referents [see Sahlins, 1993]); between theories of primordality versus instrumentality (casting indigenous peoples in a lose-lose situation: either they are too innocent and unthinking to engage in conscious political action, or they are cynical cultural manipulators who will make just about any claim to get a casino); or, in arguments between cultural change and cultural “loss”

—as Sahlins put it: “when *we* change it’s called progress, but when they do...it’s a kind of adulteration, a *loss* of their culture” (1999, p. iii). This volume, for its part, is not oriented toward directly revising and rebuilding analyses of creolization, essentialism, or invention, as much as it is about making certain histories, cases, and communities better known so that we can begin to rework our conceptual tools and to revise the materials on which theories of modern Caribbean cultural history have rested. If there is one theoretical tool that the contributors collectively offer, directly or by implication, it is that of reproduction and resurgence, which I will return to in greater detail below.

The arguments presented in this volume hinge on the belief that acknowledgment of the presence of the indigenous in Caribbean societies significantly challenges our understandings of the cultural complexity of the modern Caribbean. In addition, the contributions reveal how the same political and economic processes that have the effect of marginalizing contemporary Amerindians can sometimes provoke if not enable their reproduction as indigenous entities. We hope to fill a very critical gap in the literature of the modern Caribbean by focusing on *contemporary* indigenous peoples of the region, which does not mean forgetting history, indeed, most of the contributions offer significant historical foreground, without conflating indigeneity with archaeology.

Regrettably, no other volume has provided us with an overview of contemporary indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, not even ones with titles that might tempt us to think otherwise. For example, *Taino Revival*, edited by Gabriel Haslip-Viera (1999), featuring contributions with derisive titles such as “Making Indians Out of Blacks” or the apparent mockery in “The Indians Are Coming! The Indians Are Coming!”, focuses on Puerto Ricans, and does so in a manner that strongly suggests that contemporary Tainos are pathological, self-deluding holders of a false consciousness that blinds them to their true nature as Black. Hence, key terms such as “Taino,” “present day,” and “traditional” rarely appear without the scare quotes. Far from offering “critical perspectives” on “cultural politics,” as that volume’s subtitle indicates, a number of the authors themselves intervene as hard-bitten cultural politicians, themselves reinvigorating racialized and essentialist notions of identity as they “critique” the “authenticity” of Tainos (see especially Jiménez Román, 1999). Indeed, the effort is to marginalize Tainos from writing their own history and sidelining scholars whose work advocates for those in the Taino resurgence. That volume only provided room for one chapter by one Taino leader, Roberto Mucaro Borrero of the United Confederation of Taino People, who nevertheless did an admirable job of trying to counter some of the more litigious allegations of a volume that is perhaps an extreme manifestation of what Friedman has signaled as a disturbing anti-indigenous trend among contemporary anthropologists, for example (see Friedman, 1996, p. 127).

On the other hand, *The Indigenous People of the Caribbean*, edited by Samuel Wilson (1997a), makes a commendable contribution to knowledge in this field, with a carefully developed and detailed presentation of the archaeology, colonial history, and contemporary survival of indigenous peoples in the Circum-Caribbean region, while still incorporating at least one brief chapter by a contemporary indigenous representative, Garnette Joseph of the Dominica Carib Territory, who later became Chief of that Territory. However, even in this case, as two reviewers noted (Ferbel, 2000; McIntosh, 1999), the volume disappoints for not providing adequate space to the survival and revival of indigenous identities and communities in the region, one of the more striking features of the contemporary social and cultural landscape of the Caribbean. While that volume, with its emphasis on archaeological prehistory and early colonial history, risks reinforcing the notion that indigenous peoples of the Caribbean are to remain consigned to a frozen and distant past, reduced to material traces displayed in museums, clearly Wilson did not intend to grind that particular ax. As he encouragingly states in his introduction to that volume:

What we find worthy of celebration is that, despite the ravages of five centuries of European conquest, the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean have survived. The role they have played in the formation of modern Caribbean culture is immense, and the voice of their descendants is growing ever stronger in the modern Caribbean. (Wilson, 1997b, p. 8)

In recent years, other volumes with broader purviews than indigenous peoples of the Caribbean alone, and some focusing only on the Caribbean archipelago, have provided some space for discussion of the presence and resurgence of indigenous communities in the region. For example, under the heading of *Ethnic Minorities in Caribbean Society*, Rhoda Reddock (1996) devotes half the volume to case studies on the Caribs of Dominica (Gregoire, Henderson, & Kanem, 1996), and Guyanese Amerindians (Fox, 1996). More ambitious, and certainly the earliest attempt to focus on contemporary Amerindians of the Caribbean island chain, was *Pueblos y políticas en el Caribe Amerindio* (1990), published by Mexico's Instituto Indigenista Interamericano, and only available in Spanish. It was a landmark effort in some respects; for example, the first article about the contemporary Caribs of Trinidad, and for a decade the only article, appeared in that volume (see Harris & Reyes, 1990). A year earlier, *Cultural Survival Quarterly* (Chapin, 1989) produced a collection of brief articles on Central America and the Caribbean that included Belize, Cuba, Dominica, and French Guiana. Since then, *Cultural Survival Quarterly* has featured individual articles on almost all of the communities in the present volume, apart from the Caribs of St. Vincent and Tainos in Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. One will of course also find single chapters and articles in larger works pertaining to the Caribbean (e.g., Eguchi, 1997; Layng,

1985). This preliminary overview of earlier attempts takes us to the scope of the present volume, its aims and its logic.

## The Structure and Purposes of This Volume

The 14 contributors to this volume represent a diverse range of expertise. Four of the contributors are also Caribbean indigenous persons (Barreiro, Estevez, Palacio, and Bharath Hernandez), all of whom are active in their communities, with two of them, Barreiro and Palacio, being noted scholars in this field of interest. Contributors are affiliated with institutions across the Caribbean, Central America, South America, the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and France, rendering this project, like so many cultural movements in the world today, a truly transnational effort.

The geographic coverage of the volume, while less than complete, presents cases spanning the Caribbean that was colonized by the Dutch, English, French, and Spanish. The chapters present us with insights concerning contemporary indigenous peoples in Belize, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Dominica, St. Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana, with parts of chapters also including the Puerto Rican Taíno diaspora in the United States. Regrettably, we were not able to present a chapter devoted entirely to Puerto Rico, certainly not because we concur with anti-Taíno assertions of extinction, but only because one contributor withdrew when it was too late to find an alternate author. In addition, while I have received numerous e-mail messages over the last seven years from individuals in territories such as Anguilla, Aruba, Barbados, Curaçao, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Jamaica, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, and the US Virgin Islands, all of whom spoke of their indigenous ancestry, it was not possible to include these territories for a lack of authors available to contribute chapters. Clearly, much work remains to be done and we hope that a renewed effort at covering indigenous peoples of the Caribbean would appear some time in the future, especially if more students choose to pursue research projects in this field of study. What the current volume does provide, nonetheless, is the most comprehensive presentation to date on the contemporary indigenous peoples of the Circum-Caribbean, incorporating at least four mainland territories that have historically been associated with the island Caribbean both before and after Columbus.

Defining the Caribbean as a region is here, as in many other cases, problematic. This is true especially as soon as one moves beyond the archipelago, although even in that case there are many island possessions of mainland states such as Venezuela, Colombia, Nicaragua, Honduras, the US, and a number of European states. One could therefore broaden the definition of the

Caribbean zone to include all coastal areas that border on the Caribbean Sea, in which case this volume omits most of Central America, while including the Guyanas whose coastline faces the Atlantic Ocean more than the Caribbean Sea. Population movements within the region, cultural affinities, and historical ties make the matter even more complex. As is often the case, the decision to determine what is Caribbean for the purpose of this volume is a mixture of contingency and observation. All of the territories in this volume are either islands or have long-standing linkages with the societies and cultures of the archipelago. Precolonial indigenous population movements and trade networks, forced dislocations of the colonial era, and contemporary indigenous activism and cultural exchange unite these territories to varying degrees. Otherwise, there is no hard-and-fast definition of the region that will equally satisfy all interests and provide little more than a working template suited to a particular project.

The contributions have been organized according to the most prominent themes in both scholarly research on indigenous peoples of the region, as well as those themes arising from Caribbean indigenous activism itself. These themes are organized here under the headings of *presence* (i.e., survival and revival), *identities* (i.e., tradition and representation), *rights* (i.e., protecting access to resources), the politics of the *nation-state* (i.e., relations with the wider society), and *regional* networking (i.e., indigenous transnationalism). In terms of *presence*, chapters bring to light indigenous survival and revival in territories long assumed to be lacking any indigenous heritage (whether demographic or cultural). Nowhere have assertions of absence been as marked as they have been in the Greater Antilles, the first to bear the brunt of European conquest. How contemporary Amerindian communities maintain, rework, and articulate their *identities* is crucial to our understanding of the ways in which indigeneity in the Caribbean is reproduced and made present. Amerindian communities have also become active in asserting *rights* that have long been denied or that are currently facing renewed challenges. Their identities as indigenous peoples are critical in fashioning politico-economic strategies to resist attempts at undermining their presence. The *nation-state* in the Caribbean has proven to be a critical actor in either constraining or enabling the pursuit of indigenous rights, the recognition (or lack thereof) of the Amerindian presence, and the identities by which that presence is expressed. In confronting their local challenges, indigenous groups across the region have come to recognize that they share much in common and have begun to meet and organize either through various *regional* fora created by state sponsorship or by establishing their own conferences, gatherings, and regional bodies. The survival and revival of the indigenous presence, the articulation of indigenous identities, and the struggle for rights within the politics of the nation-state—all of these are increasingly



worked out on a regional scale. It is this combination of themes that builds up into what we call *resurgence*.

## Reproduction and Resurgence

“Salvage ethnography,” the drive to document indigenous societies and their traditions before they disappeared, as they were assumed to be facing imminent cultural death, was a fundamental assumption of early American anthropology, one that has endured through many different theoretical projects. Cultural evolutionists of the late 1800s envisioned a world where all societies would evolve through the same set of stages, from savage to barbaric to civilized societies, with European societies of the present held to be the most advanced. The antievolutionist relativists and salvage ethnographers, such as Franz Boas, still assumed that indigenous societies would vanish, for different reasons. By the 1930s, “assimilation” was perceived by many anthropologists and policy makers to be the outcome of the indigenous encounter with an expansive West. From the late 1950s, with the advent of Modernization Theory, once again non-Western cultural traditions were held as backward and subject to disappearance with the spread of capitalist progress. Intellectual thrusts whose aim or effect is to de-indigenize the anthropological subject have been reproduced even in postmodern guises, with their stress on “unbounded” and “deterritorialized” cultures, seemingly never in place, never with a core of even relatively stable cultural contents (e.g. Appadurai, 1991, 1994; Marcus, 1986, 1994; Smith, 1994). The anthropological subject is thus rendered monstrous, an ever-shimmering, shape-shifting, boundary-transgressing creature of the likes one sees in Japanese horror films such as *The Ring* and *The Grudge*. Anthropology, in effect, has been a discipline with an ever-vanishing subject.

By the 1980s, a different discourse became apparent, as a number of social scientists started to recognize that indigenous peoples, far from vanishing, were making a “comeback.” While there was little question that global capitalism had wrought changes in indigenous societies, new interpretations were offered that questioned the nature of those changes. Does change occur everywhere, in the same fashion? What causes those changes? Who directs the changes, and the pace of change? In this vein, Sahlins, perhaps the leading theorist of the reproduction of indigeneity, noted, “the very ways societies change have their own authenticity, so that global modernity is often reproduced as local diversity” (1993, p. 2). Others have argued that the emergence of global cultural processes accompanying the development of world capitalism have produced a world culture, “marked by an organization of diversity rather than a replication of uniformity” (Hannerz, 1990, p. 237). Indigenous peoples are often able to draw on material and symbolic resources from this

broader world culture in reproducing their own indigeneity: “most peoples find critical means of their own reproduction in beings and powers existing beyond their normal borders and their customary controls” (Sahlins, 1999, p. 411). Indigenous identification therefore involves, “a *positioning* which draws upon historically sedimented practices, landscapes and repertoires of meaning, and emerges through particular patterns of engagement and struggle” (Li, 2000, p. 151). Reproduction, as Kelvin Smith argues in this volume is not invention; rather, the emphasis here shifts from reading identity against the validity of its references, to the contexts in which it is created and proclaimed. This is not “fake” indigeneity; this is the actual practice of indigeneity in real-world settings.

When we speak in this volume of survival and revival, we are aware of the limited utility of these received concepts. One can certainly speak of survival in the commonly accepted sense of the term, but *cultural* survival raises certain problems. Is culture to be likened to a biological organism, with a “life” and “death,” and once “dead” can never be “resurrected”? This would not be the consensus in anthropology, especially where the ideational concept of culture is treated as a dynamic system of meanings, and meanings do not live natural “lives.” Likewise, there is nothing to say that material practices, in their own dynamic relationship with cultural meanings, *necessarily* have an expiry date. When we speak of “identity,” and specifically of identity as a process (i.e., identification) it is not at all fixed for eternity that an identity, a way of drawing boundaries in relation to others, must have a precise and finite set of contents around which the boundaries are drawn. Indigenous identities in the Caribbean are constantly being *reproduced*, not “invented,” and how one is “Indian” in 2006 will not be the same as in 1492. As Lynne Guitar, Pedro Ferbel-Azcarate, and Jorge Estevez argue in this volume, “the idea that the Taínos of today must prove themselves to be comparable to the Taínos of 1492 ought to be as nonsensical as Spaniards today proving themselves to be comparable to Spaniards of 1492.” Identity is relational, and the relationships constantly change.

The *reproduction* of indigeneity in the Caribbean also stands as a critique. In “A Bridge for the Journey,” José Barreiro (this volume) notes, “in reviewing the many methods used by colonial apologists to attack the Native American world, the casual denial of identity and existence has been the most constant. Perhaps the majority of historians, anthropologists and archaeologists writing on the Caribbean region have accepted the fallacy of extinction.” The fallacy, or myth of extinction, as Guitar et al. discuss in this volume, certainly served vital purposes to colonial administration, expansion, and even reform. First, the claim of impending extinction was used in antislavery campaigns focused on the tragic situations of Amerindians in Hispaniola and elsewhere. Second, the same argument was then recruited to argue in favor of importing African

slaves. Third, as they argue, the extinction narrative could help to create a self-indulgent illusion of imperial control and power—a classic story, in fact, of “weaker” indigenous “species” thrown to the wall with the arrival of “civilization.” (This is a story that is taken up in the guest commentary by Arthur Einhorn concluding this volume, which furthermore places Caribbean Amerindian history within a broader historical and comparative context.) Fourth, the myth of extinction served a variety of national and class interests, as all attempts at marginalizing the indigenous do in the other case studies in the volume. Indigenous peoples were, and to significant degree still are, targeted as “obstacles” to be removed from the path of “development” and the building of a “modern nation.” Extinction, as I have argued elsewhere (Forte, 2005), has been a convenient trope for the expression of anti-indigeneity.

Reproduction, as a conceptualization, challenges notions of extinction and assimilation, notions that reflect what Sahlins refers to as the “anthropological demotion” of indigenous peoples (1993, p. 1). With reference to notions of culturally “extinct” groups “inventing” indigenous traditions for themselves, Sahlins’ response frames these notions historically: “as an attack on the cultural integrity and historical agency of the peripheral peoples, they do in theory just what imperialism attempts in practice” (1993, p. 7), or, as Jorge Estevez puts it in this volume, proponents of extinction theses are guilty of “paper genocide.” Both the chapters by José Barreiro (“Taíno Survivals,” this volume) and Guitar et al., demonstrate the extent to which colonial records, previously neglected chronicles, and long-forgotten research can be mined precisely to throw the entire “factual” basis of the extinction myth into disarray. This is not a strategy peculiar to marginal island cases either, as Janette and Arif Bulkan note in the case of Guyana (this volume), where contemporary Amerindians, faced with losing oral histories, have turned to colonial records to validate their land claims and to recover their own sense of their own history.

The reproduction of indigeneity is not tantamount to a celebratory view of untrammelled indigenous cultures enjoying autonomy. One simply cannot dismiss the severe material, social, and political challenges that afflict indigenous communities across the Caribbean. What reproduction asks us to look at, however, is the fact that there are people *there* determined to meet these challenges head on, in the process affirming and renewing their self-definition as indigenous. As Kelvin Smith (this volume) explains with reference to the Caribs of Dominica, we must pay attention to “the role of socioeconomic contexts in shaping and defining possible cultural articulations,” thereby inviting us to examine the material and social conditions involved in the reproduction of indigeneity. From this perspective, it is important to recall the ultimate political and material act that instituted “indigenous peoples” as a category: European colonial invasions (see Beckett, 1996, p. 5). In this regard, Paul

Twinn (this volume) narrates a land struggle in St. Vincent between Caribs and the Danish owners of Orange Hill Estates, where Caribs situated Danish acquisition within a genealogy of colonization, that is, “in a particular lineage from the genealogy of Carib history from the time of their autonomy until the present day. Within this lineage of Carib history the principal element in the creation of Caribs as Caribs, was the Carib/Land relationship.” Smith seems to concur when he observes that in Dominica “the rise of Carib identity is tied to the relationship the community has to the land and space, as much as to its perception of history.” The contributions by Smith and Twinn are emblematic of many of the approaches in this volume in that they ultimately intertwine identity politics and material politics, an approach with as much resonance for the mainland as for the islands. To the extent that the competition for resources is located in discourses of ancestry, Twinn shows us another facet of the reproduction of indigeneity in the contemporary Caribbean, one that is historically *oriented*, but not historically *derived* in any simple sense of direct continuity. Reproduction is not fossilization.

The international political economy of resource exploitation is central to the renewed defense of land that underpins the contemporary reproduction of indigeneity in many of the cases covered in this volume. Some of the socio-economic transformations that appear in this volume, arising from indigenous engagements with world capitalism, include mining and logging; cash crop plantations; tourism; urbanization; and, international migration. Natural resource use, for its part, is a site of social action and contested cultural meanings that can act as a vehicle and catalyst for Amerindian resurgence in the Guyanas. The cases covered in this volume tend to reflect what Hodgson observed, in general terms, regarding indigenous rights struggles: “a key impetus for the emergence of indigenous activism on its current scale has been the sustained threats to indigenous land, territories, and resources by colonial and postcolonial state interventions, capitalist industry, and other incursions” (2002, p. 1041). This is painfully illustrated in the case of Suriname as outlined by Fergus MacKay in this volume, where the state has effectively produced a *de jure* extinction of the sizable native population by not admitting that indigenous peoples have any standing under the law, a fact that has allowed foreign corporations to plunder Suriname’s interior. As Janette and Arif Bulkan explain in this volume, speaking of Guyana with specific reference to contestations surrounding forest resources, “[European] ‘constructions’ of the lands and the peoples they encountered beyond Europe continue to have the hegemonic force of law and custom into the postcolonial era.” It is equally true that these European constructions continue to be met by indigenous opposition, a tension that is a key element in the Guyanese reproduction of indigeneity. Speaking of French Guiana, the one case in this volume of a territory that is still a colony, Gérard Collomb discusses the fact that struggles

for land rights are tied to larger issues of indigenous cultural presence, noting that “the history of the Amerindian movement in French Guiana [has been] to validate a more fundamental claim, from which these land claims proceeded: that of the recognition of a specific cultural and political presence of the Amerindians.” It is at least partly the case, then, that indigeneity in the Caribbean is constantly being reproduced in tandem with exogenous intrusions and usurpations. Indigenous political organization, as Collomb demonstrates in this volume, is in part a systemic and structural outcome of foreign conquest and continued expansions. The situation of indigenous peoples of the Guyanas, as Janette and Arif Bulkan argue, is thus “reminiscent of the colonial experience.”

Yet, if many of the current struggles seem to echo or continue older colonial situations, then on what basis can we speak of *resurgence*, of something seemingly novel occurring in the last two or three decades? There are indeed some indigenous spokespersons who have taken me to task for speaking of resurgence, arguing that there is nothing new about the present except that academics such as myself are “suddenly paying attention,” and in suddenly looking believe that what they are seeing there has only suddenly appeared. It is a valid objection, yet, there definitely is something that has been happening over the past 20 or more years that is not mere repetition of the past. First, one can point to the development of indigenous ideologies of renewal and autonomy, in some cases acquiring explicit labels as ideologies: “Caribism” in Dominica, or “Garifunaduo” in Belize, as discussed in this volume by Palacio in “Cultural Identity among Rural Garifuna Migrants in Belize City, Belize.” In the case of Trinidad, while not explicitly formulated as a political and social manifesto, the Santa Rosa Carib Community has enunciated a sophisticated range of concepts and projects where traditions are concerned, including distinctly envisioned programs of “maintenance,” “preservation,” “retrieval,” “interchange,” “translation,” and “reclamation” (see Bharath Hernandez & Forte in this volume). Second, and related to the first, we see the emergence of strong activist indigenous leaders across the region, whose names appear in most of the chapters of this volume.

Third, we see a spate of new organizations being formed over the last quarter century, or revamped versions of previously existing representative bodies. Just to briefly and randomly list a few, in Suriname there is the Association of Indigenous Village Leaders; in French Guiana, the *Association des Amérindiens de Guyane Française*; where Taínos are concerned, the Indigenous Association of Puerto Rico was formed, and several other organizations (some of which are discussed in Forte’s chapter, “Searching for a Center in the Digital Ether,” in this volume); in Guyana, the Amerindian Peoples Association and the Guyanese Organization of Indigenous Peoples are two of the more prominent bodies; in Central America, the National Garifuna Council and

the World Garifuna Organization. Moreover, many of these bodies have joined larger, international, indigenous federations, such as the Caribbean Organization of Indigenous Peoples (see Palacio's "Looking at Ourselves in the Mirror," in this volume), the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, or the Coordinator of Indigenous Organizations of the Amazon Basin (COICA). Also, a number of these bodies have cooperated with indigenous bodies from outside of the region, such as the Assembly of First Nations of Canada. Indeed, the transnationalization of Caribbean indigenous organization and self-representation seems to be unheralded, especially as it now extends to the Caribbean diaspora in advanced capitalist countries. With greater access to the international media, the organization of their own regional gatherings (see Barreiro, this volume, on the Indigenous Legacies conferences in Cuba), their utilization of the Internet (Forte, chapter 13), Caribbean indigenous peoples have a voice and visibility that one could argue they have never had before.

Fourth, the growth of Caribbean nationalism, and projects of nation-building, which are especially recent in the Anglophone Caribbean, and are at best still emergent in the French Caribbean, have established a platform for new indigenous entanglements with the wider societies they inhabit. The economic transformations wrought by national development, and the increase in urbanization, is a situation that has challenged the maintenance of indigenous cultures while at the same time affording new bases for reproducing those cultural ties (see Palacio, chapter 9). Competition for resources in these new nation-states has also spurred the development of indigenous political organizations, as Collomb, MacKay, and the Bulkans show in their case studies. Expressions of local pride, and nationalist reinterpretations of the folk roots of the nation, have produced varied and often contradictory appropriations of indigeneity in places as varied as Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, St. Vincent, and Trinidad. Very simply then, to the extent that we could not speak of nationalism and state formation before the recent past, this is inevitably a new context for the reproduction of indigeneity addressed by the idea of resurgence.

Fifth, some would add that there has been a demographic resurgence as well, not just through increasing birth rates and decreasing death rates, but also through more individuals self-identifying as indigenous. Indeed, if there is one thing that this overview has deliberately shied away from is producing a more or less fixed number for the total indigenous population of the territories covered in this volume. This is either not known with any certainty, or is in a state of significant flux. Twinn notes in his chapter on St. Vincent that whereas less than 40 people in the 1981 census identified themselves as Carib, this figure rose to 1,500 by 1991. Similar results have been reported for St. Lucia (see Forte, 2002). Guyana reports one of the largest indigenous populations, exceeding 55,000. One estimate (Palacio, 1995) placed the total indige-

nous population of the mostly Anglophone Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) at roughly 150,000. If one consults linguistic databases, such as those of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, which span the entire region, both island and mainland, and takes into account all speakers of languages in the main Arawakan and Cariban language families, then we have a total that seems to change every time one consults the data, and depending on which territories one includes, the number can range from 347,000 to 738,380 persons (see [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com)). On the other hand, the latter also reports that the indigenous populations of Dominica and St. Vincent are “extinct.” Where extinction was widely assumed and asserted, Puerto Rico, the United States census for 2000 reported a population of 13,336 “Native American Indians” (see [factfinder.census.gov](http://factfinder.census.gov)). What is left unclear is whether these are “Native Americans” who moved from the mainland US to Puerto Rico (still a surprising number), or native Puerto Ricans who might have preferred to self-identify as Taino, but checked the only box that came closest to their identity. In other words, the numerical map is simply all over the place, and statistics are not here, if anywhere else, a satisfactory route toward deeper understanding of the ongoing reproduction of Caribbean indigeneity.

Our collective ambition then is to help readers, especially students, those interested in the history and anthropology of the Caribbean or in indigenous studies on a global level, to admit the Caribbean into their appreciations of the indigenous cultures that are resurgent. For those of us who are anthropologists, the hope is that “resurgence ethnography” will become a distinct genre that replaces previous “salvage ethnography,” helping to maintain the dynamism of a discipline that is as alive as the indigenous peoples who continue to teach us about the complexity of our world.

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