Re-Engineering Indigeneity

Cultural Brokerage, the Political Economy of Tradition, and the Santa Rosa Carib Community of Arima, Trinidad & Tobago

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Abstract

Re-Engineering Indigeneity: Cultural Brokerage, the Political Economy of Tradition, and the Santa Rosa Carib Community of Arima, Trinidad & Tobago

Maximilian C. Forte

In the social sciences, conventional depictions of the post-Conquest cultural development of the Caribbean are founded upon the absence of 'the indigenous'. However, groups such as the Santa Rosa Carib Community (SRCC) in the Borough of Arima, Trinidad, have begun to assert their identity and the 'traditions' that they posit as emblematic of an 'Amerindian heritage'. Furthermore, groups such as the SRCC have also received the recognition and support of the state, the attention of the national media, and they have increasingly acquired a privileged place in nationalist discourses and local historical narratives. The questions that are addressed in this project are thus: (1) Why does 'Carib' still exist as a category and as an available identity in Trinidad? (2) What were, and what are, the conditions that make possible the reproduction of 'Carib' as an identity and as a historical canon? (3) What value does Carib hold, to whom, when, why?

Indigeneity in Trinidad and Tobago is treated in this project as both a problem and as a 'presence'. The case of the SRCC is analyzed, not as a group reviving or defining itself as a bounded unit in relative isolation, but as a demonstration of the production of indigeneity in terms of multilaterality, that is, as a multiple vesting of interests and as a joint venture between various cultural brokers and institutions, acting via established social conventions and in dialogue with dominant historical narratives. Moreover, this case manifests the engagement of multiple processes of reinterpreting, reinventing, and articulating 'tradition' and the 'Carib'. I summarise this phenomenon as the re-engineering of indigeneity, standing at the intersection of three analytical axes: structure-agency, past-present, and local-global. I focus on the role of cultural brokers, working within a context constituted by the political economy of tradition, i.e.: (1) the politics and economics of associating certain values with particular cultural representations pertaining to groups of individuals marked as specific 'peoples'; and, (2) legislated recognition and rewards for groups engaged in competitive cultural display. The results of these processes serve as an entry point for critically examining the 'vacuum of indigeneity' perspectives that have neglected the colonial canonisation of the 'Carib', the nationalist reinterpretation of the symbolic archetype of the 'Carib', and current 'Carib revival'.
This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

Unless indicated otherwise, all illustrations, charts, diagrams and photographs are property of the author.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT:

DATE: **05 FEBRUARY 2002**
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Since this project first started in 1995 while I was a M.A. student at the State University of New York at Binghamton, I have received the assistance, encouragement, insights, and criticisms of numerous individuals. Beginning with previous teachers of mine in the Department of Anthropology at SUNY-Binghamton, I must thank Professors Richard Antoun, Safia Mohsen, Ann Stahl, Bill Isbell and my past supervisor, Richard U. Moench. I am proud to call Dr. Moench a mentor and friend whose ongoing critical commentary and correspondence is always appreciated. Also at SUNY-Binghamton, I feel fortunate to have studied in the post-graduate courses offered by those associated with the Fernand Braudel Center, including Professors Immanuel Wallerstein, Giovanni Arrighi, and Anthony D. King. After completing the first year of my Ph.D. at Binghamton, I transferred to Adelaide where I was the beneficiary of the critical inputs of my supervisors, Dr. Michael Roberts, Dr. David Murray, and Dr. John Gray who supervised the final stages of this work. I appreciate the care they have shown in their detailed reviews of my work.

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Sociology and Anthropology Association in Ottawa in June 1998 and in Sherbrooke, Quebec, in June 1999; at the Australian Association for Caribbean Studies conference in Canberra in February 2001; and, at two seminars in the Department of Anthropology at Adelaide University in October 1997 and August 2000.

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With the support and assistance of so many individuals in so many places, I must be held responsible for any and all lingering shortcomings that are perceived in the text that follows, especially where I maintained a perspective that differed from some of the critical inputs. Likewise, I retain full responsibility for the work as a whole as presented here.
Abbreviations

ABC: Arima Borough Council
AFN: Assembly of First Nations of Canada
AMC: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
BWIA: British West Indian Airways
CARICOM: Caribbean Community and Common Market
CDCC: Committee for the Development of the Carib Community (St. Vincent)
COIP: Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous People
CUFU: Communities United to Fight Underdevelopment
FSIN: Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations
HERBS: Herbal, Educational, Recreational, Biological Services
IBRD: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
ILO: International Labour Organisation
IMF: International Monetary Fund
JTTN: Jatibonicu Taino Tribal Nation of Boriken (Puerto Rico)
KTK: Kairi Tukuienyu Karinya
NAEAP: National Association for the Empowerment of African People
NAR: National Alliance for Reconstruction
NPATT: National Parang Association of Trinidad and Tobago
OAS: Organisation of American States
PNM: People's National Movement
RC: Roman Catholic
SIFC: Saskatchewan Indian Federated College
SRCC: Santa Rosa Carib Community
TIDCO: Tourism and Industrial Development Corporation of Trinidad and Tobago
TTT: Trinidad and Tobago Television
UCTP: United Confederation of Taino People
UNC: United National Congress
UNCED: United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
UNDP: United Nations Development Program
UNEP: United Nations Environment Program
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
URP: Unemployment Relief Program
UWI: University of the West Indies
WCIP: World Council of Indigenous Peoples
WIPO: World Intellectual Property Organisation (United Nations)
To Allison, my angel,

And

To Justa Werges (n. 01 May 1915—d. 16 January 2000), Queen of the Caribs...my queen. *Eternal rest grant unto her.*
Introduction

REVIVING CARIBS:
The Problem of Indigeneity in Trinidad and Tobago

“The first Amerindians disappeared hundreds of years ago and are no longer here. We are the descendants. We are not the same and we do not do the same things. Of course, we have some of the blood, but much has been lost. People must understand these things. Now with our associations and linkages with other groups, we hope to relearn our past traditions together. This is a learning experience for us”.

-----Ricardo Bharath, President, Santa Rosa Carib Community, Arima, Trinidad (Friday, 12 November 1999).

“Ethnics...are not the autochthonous ancestors who have the power to turn feathers and flourishes into brick and mortar”.


The Research Problem

In much if not most of the social science literature on the cultural development of the post-Conquest Caribbean there seems to be a consensus that the indigenous has been absent or severely diminished. Moreover, in this state of post-Conquest construction, attempts at conceptualising Caribbean indigeneity prove to be elusive, so the arguments go (cf. Robotham 1998). In the case of Trinidad and Tobago, anthropologists have written that Trinidad “remained largely a deserted island until the last years of Spanish colonial rule, when in 1783 French planters and their slaves came and set up plantations based on slave labour”
(Yelvington 1995b:37, emphasis added). As Yelvington (1995b:42) further notes: “social historians have investigated how the aboriginal population was virtually wiped out after contact with Spanish explorers who came after Columbus’s voyage in 1498”. Indeed, support for this argument has been forthcoming from the influential works of historians such as Bridget Brereton in Trinidad:

The modern history of Trinidad began in the 1780s, when the Spanish Government opened the island to settlement by French planters and their slaves. In the nearly three centuries following its discovery, Trinidad was a remote, isolated, and undeveloped outpost of Spain’s vast American empire. [Brereton 1979:7-8]

Other anthropologists such as Michael Lieber have incorporated this deserted island thesis in explanations of the factors accounting for the ‘distinctiveness’ of the Caribbean compared to other parts of the colonised world. Lieber (1981:1) thus states:

as a sociocultural region the Caribbean developed in what may be called a vacuum of indigenousness. The earliest European settlers, through outright extermination and the introduction of Old World diseases, were remarkably successful in depopulating the area of its aboriginal inhabitants, leaving, here and there, marginal groups of Indians whose impact on the cultural future would be nonexistent....imperialistic intrusion and expansion throughout the region could proceed as though the area were simply a cluster of lands, without a human or cultural presence. From the conquest on, the history of the Caribbean has been the history of imported peoples. [emphasis added]

Lieber therefore argues that with “no precoslal indigenous traditions available as partial models for the construction of a postcolonial society (as has been possible in much of the rest of the Third World), the attempt to forge an image of such a society is limited to reconstructions and elaborations of the repertory set down by the colonial experience” (1981:3, emphasis added). Similarly, Gordon K. Lewis argued that West Indians start on the road to ‘psychological independence’ from inherited colonial complexes with “massive, even frightening handicaps”, one of these being that “there is little left of the original culture in which to take pride, save for a few scattered artefacts”, adding that, “the Carib Queen of Arima and the
Carib reserve villages in St. Vincent and Dominica are about all that is left of the original populations" (1968:393, emphasis added). Aside from any reservations one might have with the thrust of Lieber's argument, for example, he has at least effected a useful analytical coupling here, providing a duality that will be at the heart of this project, which consists of understanding indigeneity at the wider social level as well as at the level of particular persons and the practices, rituals and objects subsumed under the heading of 'tradition'. For his part, Lewis couples 'independence' and 'national pride' with the image of the Amerindian, an important connection that was also recognised by Lowenthal (1972).

In terms of analyses affirming the decline or disappearance of the indigenes, or the impossibility of indigeneity, I would argue that there is nothing exceptional about the preceding statements when considered in the context of the mainstream social science literature. Indeed, as Palacio (1992) noted, it has been common practice to teach students in the Caribbean that indigenous peoples were exterminated and are thus extinct (although, even this has begun to change). Peter Hulme further observed:

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 been usually ignored: some seemingly authoritative accounts of the region even appear written in ignorance of the very existence of such a population. [Hulme 1993:214]

Within that same social scientific literature, there has been some mention of the "Caribs of Arima" and the Santa Rosa Festival (Wood 1968:43-44) and the "Carib Queen of Arima" (G. Lewis 1968:393), and only recently Brereton (1996) has spoken of the current Santa Rosa Carib Community. Much more mention of the Caribs of Arima exists in the works of non-academic writers, Trinidadian and international, on both general and very localised topics of the Caribbean, written over half a century ago (i.e., Luke 1950; Bullbrook 1960, 1940). Texts referring to Amerindians in the Mission of Arima, or after its demise, comprise colonial reports, the writings of amateur historians, and the works of travel writers (i.e., Borde 1883, 1876; Burnley 1842; Coleridge 1826; Collens 1886; Cothonay 1893;
De Verteuil 1858; Fraser 1896, 1891; Joseph 1838; Kingsley 1877; Wise 1938a, 1938b, 1936, 1934). The last category of literature residing outside of the institutional social sciences that makes some mention (in varying degrees) of the Caribs of Arima or the Amerindians of Trinidad, consists of locally published texts in Trinidad, on various topics of Trinidadian history, culture and society (i.e., Anthony 1988; Elie 1990; Harricharan 1983; Leahy 1980; Ottley 1955). In summary, the Arima Caribs have either been featured in literature marginal to social science research on Trinidad, or, have appeared only momentarily in some of that research, again in varying degrees of acute marginality and usually positing their imminent disappearance (G. Lewis 1968:19). For the most part, the dominant view, across the array of social science research, is simply that the native population was liquidated (i.e., E. Williams 1970:41). There is, of course, the occasional ambiguous exception in the social science literature, such as Knight who, on the one hand, clearly speaks of the “rapid disappearance of the Arawakan population during the first century of Spanish colonisation” given that “the arrival of the three caravels from Spain in 1492 meant inexorable doom”, and on the other hand, while he states that they did disappear he adds (unlike Lieber above) that this “does not mean that this group failed to have any impact on the future of the area” (1978:15, 22). This much discussion only makes the briefest appearance in his text, even in the chapter devoted to Amerindians.

One of the given is much if not most of the Caribbeanist literature in the social sciences is that, in terms of the post-Conquest period, “Caribbean” and “indigenous” (as in Amerindian) cannot usually go together except as a stark contradiction of terms. The basic and widely accepted premise is that societies such as Trinidad were ‘artificially’\(^1\) instituted (Lowenthal 1972) for the purposes of world capitalism, namely, the production of cash-crop exports (Mintz 1977). As one author summed up, “slavery, the plantation economy, colonialism and labour migration enforced a precocious and violent exposure to modernity for Caribbean

\(^1\) For related anthropological coverage of the “artificial societies” created through colonial processes, using examples from Africa and Southeast Asia, see Tambiah (1994:434). The references made by Tambiah could also be used to dispute the convention of marking the Caribbean as ‘unique’ for being a zone of colonial artefice.
peoples”, factors that also, “lent themselves to the region’s vibrant social and cultural heterogeneity” (Wardle 1999:523). On the other hand, in the view of Yelvington (1996:86-87), defining the Caribbean as “hybrid” and “Creole” also entailed the marginalisation of the Caribbean within anthropology, due to what he argues has been the discipline’s predominant interest in the pristine, the utterly Other. The Trinidadian social order is generally depicted as a nineteenth century creation (Wood 1968, Brereton 1979), a product of colonialism and the transcontinental transplantation of peoples (G. Lewis 1968) in the service of monocultural production (E. Williams 1970, Knight 1978), and thus as a site marked by a dearth of indigeneity or primordial continuities, a phenomenon that embodies ethnogenesis, hybridity, invention, modernity and migration. On the other hand, the foregoing constitutes mostly one side of a debate between the two competing camps that Yelvington (2001a:232) identifies as the “creationist” or “creolisation” theorists and the neo-Herskovitsians. Even amongst authors who have tempered or argued against “creationist” analyses, by arguing in terms of African and East Indian cultural continuities in the Caribbean and Trinidad specifically (see Herskovits 1941, M. J. & F. S. Herskovits 1947; Klass 1991, 1961; Warner-Lewis 1991; Mintz & Price 1992), most of these works are also not connected to an identifiable conception of indigeneity, and usually discount continuities of an Amerindian, pre-Conquest kind. If anything, the observation is that “as the [native] Indian population decreased, the African component increased” (Knight 1978:46; see also E. Williams 1964:7-9)—so that the presence

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2 Indeed, whilst speaking of the Amerindians of the Caribbean, Knight says: “these island peoples have been especially vulnerable to influences from the outside, and their society has been more of a reflection of eclectic adaptation than original creation” (1978:21).

3 One example of this position is in G. Lewis (1968:20): “those West Indians who are not yet mixed will be effectively mixed in a few generations, the conclusion is unavoidable that miscegenation is not only the biological base of the society but must also assuredly become its operative ideal”.

4 As Yelvington explains: “these latter [the creationists] emphasise cultural creativity, cultural blending and borrowing, cultural adaptations to local circumstances, and ethnogetic processes” (2001a:232).

5 I agree with Yelvington’s observation: “Ironically, however, even to search for Africanisms means to show how much African culture has been lost” (2001a:250).

6 These studies differ in where they locate continuities, whether in the case of Herskovits’ treatment of acculturation or Mintz’s and Price’s focus on values and unconscious grammatical principles (see Yelvington 2001a:229, 1996:87-88).
of the latter is a function of the absence of the former. As I will elaborate presently, a key subject of concern for this study is how indigeneity is defined, developed and disseminated in and through the processes set out in the creolisation/creationist perspectives.

The problem that is posed in assuming or arguing the absence of ‘the indigenous’ is that it cannot account for the presence and elaboration of two current phenomena: (1) the construction of nationalist discourses and representations of indigeneity in Trinidad, developed in part via the trope of the Amerindian; and, (2) the current region-wide revival of Caribbean Amerindian identities and organisations, as evidenced by Trinidad’s Santa Rosa Carib Community (SRCC), state support and recognition for bodies such as the SRCC, the holding of three regional indigenous gatherings in Arima, Trinidad, itself; and, at the regional level, as exemplified by the formation of the Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous Peoples, the growth of ‘Caribism’ in Dominica, the international networking of Belizean Garifuna, and the emergence of an array of new Taíno organisations comprised by Puerto Rican immigrants in the United States (see Haslip-Viera 1999b). However, having stated this problem we are not closer to any resolution, to the extent that two further problems are encountered: (1) how ‘the indigenous’ and ‘indigeneity’ are defined and interpreted (when, where, why and by whom); and, (2) how far one can go in framing this Caribbean Amerindian revival and concomitant attempts at developing national senses of indigeneity as forms of ‘invention’ that occur in and through precisely the processes of post-colonial erasure of primordiality and the globalised creation of ‘artificial societies’ in the Caribbean. Moreover, further problems are posed by overrating arguments to the contrary of the absence/erasure theses: arguments seeking to establish Amerindian historical continuities,7 ‘bloodlines’ and

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7 Not to be misunderstood, such theses have yet to make a solid appearance in the academic literature, though one might argue that those works that sometimes come closest to supporting these theses are those of Barreiro (1997a, 1997b, 1990, 1989), Forbel (1998, 1997), Guitar (1998a, 1998b, 1998c), and especially the various anthropometric and DNA studies, including amongst them those of Cordones (1980), Lauzer (1987), plus see DLRS (2000) and Ramirez (2001a). The survivalist theses tend to be more pronounced on the Internet, as evidenced by various materials posted on the Caribbean Amerindian Centrelink at <http://www.centrelinlink.org> which sometimes
‘authentic traditions’ run the risk of being contradicted by statements such as those made by Carib President Ricardo Bharath at the opening of this chapter. Moreover, in stressing ‘presence’ in terms of demographic and ethnic continuities, one runs the risk of (dis)missing observable contemporary constructions and/or reducing the suggestion of the existence of these constructions to a perceived moral accusation of ‘fakery’. There is something in between total absence and seamless continuity and that, I argue, consists of phenomena that can be understood as comprising ‘revival’, ‘resurgence’ or, as I will explain, the re-engineering of indigeneity from within certain political economic contexts.

Spokespersons such as Ricardo Bharath speak of the current “revival” of Caribbean Amerindian identities and “retrieval” of traditions, against a backdrop of loss. Indeed, the central questions that I ask as I approach the problems outlined above are: Why does ‘Carib’ still exist as a category and as a possible identification in Trinidad? What were, and what are, the conditions that make possible the reproduction of the Carib idea? What ‘value’ does Carib hold, to whom, when, why?

An underlying intent of this project is to take up a challenge issued by the Trinidadian anthropologist John Stewart in Drinkers, Drummers and Decent Folk (1989:20), where he wrote that while the anthropological literature emphasises that Trinidad is a “migrant and therefore nonindigenous society”, few treat “the struggle to establish indigeneity as a significant problem”. By indigeneity I take Stewart to mean some primordial sense of belonging to place or some mode of self-identifying as ‘uniquely Trinidadian’. As early as the start of the 1970s, David Lowenthal observed that the Amerindians play “an important symbolic role in the West Indian search for identity....Cultural nationalism throughout the Caribbean today promotes the search for Arawak and Carib remains” (Lowenthal 1972:186). Dr. Eric Williams—Trinidadian historian, nationalist, founder of the

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8 In this regard, current theses on Caribbean Amerindian revivals include the doctoral dissertation by Lynne Guitar (1998a, see also Guitar 2000), and the doctoral dissertation of Peter J. Ferbel (1995). See also Arévalo (1990) and McComie (1990).

9 I discuss alternate meanings of this term in a following section.
Peoples National Movement, and first Prime Minister—thus entitled one chapter “Our Amerindian Ancestors” in his History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago (1962).

I will thus describe and analyse the development of a national sense of indigeneity via the symbolic device of the Amerindian, as a contextual complement of my research on the Santa Rosa Carib Community (SRCC) in Arima, Trinidad, and its attempts to define and promote “Trinidad’s Carib heritage”. Part of the background of this project’s focus is necessarily that of Trinidadian élites’ increased recognition and institutionalisation of the Carib in narratives of national history, as well as the state’s nation-building efforts in seizing upon the proclaimed Carib “contribution to the national foundation”. Therefore, I highlight modern Trinidadian attempts to reconstruct the indigene, the Carib, in a nationalist and anti-colonialist light, whilst utilising the symbolism of Amerindian indigeneity as a device for creating a sense of local primordiality and of territorial continuity with antiquity. Taking into account dominant texts, state recognition and rewards, and the impact of the national media in promoting certain representations of Trinidadian society, we seem to be facing a process comprised of ‘the wider society’ (or at least the classes that dominate it) ‘rediscovering’ its ‘Carib heritage’. What is missed by authors working within the ‘vacuum of indigeneity’ perspective are the contemporary practices of states and intellectual élites in the Caribbean in forging a sense of national indigeneity, in part and sometimes indirectly, via the figure of the ‘heroic Amerindian’, the ‘first root of the nation’, the territorial predecessor even if not the biological ancestor of the true national. When coupled with efforts by individuals to assert and articulate their Amerindian ancestry and the value of their ‘traditions’, we see a dual process at work: national élites and culture brokers ‘discovering’ a general Trinidadian indigeneity via the symbolic archetype of the Amerindian, while the newly recognised and self-identified Amerindian ‘discovers’ his/her indigeneity in the wider society.

Finally, while numerous authors have tended to write of the anomalous nature of the Caribbean as an anthropological phenomenon, as a cultural tabula
**Introduction**

*rasa*, with labour processes and mercantile capitalism creating communities, and where primordiality is at least illusory and at best displaced, I am not so much interested in arguing the exact opposite. In this study I am not endeavouring to bolster tenuous theses of Amerindian cultural survival and continuity of bloodlines, as much as I am interested in locating the Caribbean Amerindian revival within the same global and modern currents that have shaped the post-Conquest Caribbean.

**Analytical Framework and Conceptual Orientations**

Before I present an overview of the research problem in its ethnographic setting, and the theoretical grounding of the main concepts that I use, my first objective here is simply to delineate the analytical themes underpinning this study. In this project I examine the case of the Santa Rosa Carib Community in Trinidad as demonstrating the production of indigeneity in terms not of a group reviving or reinventing itself, but in terms of mutuality and multilaterality, that is, as a vesting of interests and as a joint venture between various cultural brokers and institutions, acting via established social conventions and in dialogue with dominant historical narratives. The case of the SRCC is also of significance for highlighting ‘the indigenous’ in a society that analysts have described as having developed with a dearth of indigeneity. I therefore treat indigeneity in Trinidad and Tobago as both a ‘presence’ and a problem.

In the case of the SRCC, élites and institutions situated within Trinidad and abroad have vested diverse interests in the development and promotion of ‘Amerindian heritage’ or in the deployment of the ‘Carib’ label. The impact on the SRCC, in terms of producing representations of Carib-ness that are partly managed and orchestrated by diverse brokers and institutions in accordance with different valorisations of the Carib and of indigeneity, is that as a ‘group’ it bears and enacts multiple and even divergent meanings, representations, and organisational projects and goals. Furthermore, the emergent sense of national indigeneity, joined with the revivalist efforts of SRCC brokers in defining and promoting *Amerindian indigeneity*, have resulted in the powerful translation of the Carib into the “First
Nations’, the “First Trinidadians”, and the “First Peoples”, a translation that enhances nationalist reinterpretations of Amerindian history whilst also intersecting with increasingly powerful globalised discourses of indigeneity.\(^{10}\)

The aim of this project is twofold: (1) to critically examine analyses that conventionally describe Trinidadian society as one that has developed within a ‘vacuum of indigeneity’, by way of the case of the SRCC and the increased dissemination of ideas and symbols of indigeneity in Trinidad; and, (2) to focus on the social organisation of indigeneity in Trinidad, including the multilaterality of various cultural brokers and patrons engaged in affirming and displaying the ‘value’ of indigeneity at the crossroads of the local, the national, and the global. The project involves an examination of how ‘traditions’ are created, maintained, reworked and publicly presented by the SRCC in conjunction and/or conflict with a variety of local and global institutions and agents. Hence of special concern is the work of cultural brokers and gatekeepers both within and without the SRCC. Patterns and processes of networking are key elements of this study. In the articulation of Carib indigeneity I look at how some of the brokers act as *bricoleurs*, forming a local-global *bricolage*\(^{11}\) of indigenous symbols and meanings, and even re-infusing or objectifying non-Amerindian originated practices with ‘indigenous’ symbolic properties. The twofold nature of this work thus entails focusing on structure and agency, on wider normative frameworks and particular interpretations, and on larger bodies of practice and particular actions. Different levels of analysis are involved in developing a comprehensive understanding of the problem and the questions outlined in the preceding section, ranging from the local (Arima) to the national (Trinidad and Tobago) and the global (the wider Caribbean and the world system), though not necessarily in that

\(^{10}\) I see the concept of *First Trinidadian* as one that fits within nationalism rather than subverting it; moreover, these terms need to be seen in their context where, to the best of my knowledge, they are uttered with pride in the Amerindian rather than with suspicion.

\(^{11}\) I use this term in line with the French origin of the word, of putting ‘a little of this and that together’ to ‘make do’. The notion of patching things together in an *ad hoc* ‘on the spot’ fashion also has a counterpart in Trinidadian parlance, often transcribed as “vikey vie” (although I believe this derives from the Italian *vai che vai* which has identical connotations) meaning an ‘as you go you put things together’ type of approach.
order. The three analytical axes of this study are thus structure-agency, past-present, and local-global.

This project is developed by means of understanding why, and explaining how, certain practices and objects evoking indigeneity are organised, reformulated, reinterpreted and articulated for particular audiences. From an empirical point of view, the project is significant for documenting and bringing to light a particular group that has not been covered in the extant ethnographic literature on Trinidad. Given the predominance of analyses stressing the dearth of indigeneity in Trinidadian cultural development, the perceived lack of a sense of any local primordiality, the mere existence of the SRCC is itself worthy of note and discussion. In addition, given the Amerindian revivals occurring across the Caribbean and the within the region’s diaspora in the United States (see Barreiro 1997a, 1997b, 1996, 1992, 1990, 1989; Palacio 1992, 1989; Ferbel 1995; Gregoire et. al. 1996; Gregoire & Kanem 1989; Guitar 1998a; Dávila 1999, Duany 1999, Jiménez Román 1999), such case studies become especially necessary now.

The analytical structure of this project can be outlined in broad terms as follows. I begin with the observation that ‘Carib’ as a category and as an identification, with diverse ‘traditions’ that are represented at different times as emblematic of ‘Carib’, are being actively organised, reinterpreted, and promoted. This introduces questions of who are the actors and institutions involved in these processes, when do these processes materialise, where and why. One may perceive that this label, and the traditions construed as emblematic of the label, are maintained and revived by a variety of actors and institutions because they have some importance, i.e., value. Values, of whatever kind, are historical (rising, stabilising, and declining), which means that they fluctuate, and recently the value of ‘Carib’ has been increasing. The latter is due in large part to the work of cultural brokers active in organising and infusing meanings whilst promoting or demoting particular ‘traditions’. In the course of this project I bring attention to patterns and processes of patronage-clientelism, which I see as constituting the dominant framework of brokerage in Trinidad.
One way of analysing what cultural brokers do with the ‘Carib’ idea is to argue, as I do, that they are re-engineering ‘Carib’. The notion of re-engineering refers to multiple interests vested in redesigning, constructing, or maintaining ‘Amerindian traditions’ for various purposes, all of which are purposes valued by different interested agents. The concept is one of multilateral management, organisation and design. This type of focus places us in the conceptual territory of ‘the social organisation of tradition/difference/primordiality’ (Yelvington 1995b, 1993; Antoun 1989). The emphasis here is on a re-engineering brokerage that stands at the intersection between past and present, structure and agency, local and global.

I refer to the context in which these cultural brokers operate in terms of a number of phenomena encompassed under the heading of ‘the political economy of tradition’, i.e.: (1) the politics and economics of associating certain values with particular cultural representations pertaining to individuals marked as members of specific ‘peoples’; and, (2) legislated recognition and rewards for groups engaged in often competitive and even conflicting cultural display.

This idea of a ‘political economy of tradition’ is used here to make reference to the way certain practices and objects achieve, maintain, or even lose value, in line with specific material and ideational interests. The larger significance of this notion lies in its stressing that identity construction is about other things besides itself, that is, not just an end in itself, but also a means to that which Yelvington (1995b) summarises as “producing power”. Moreover, in viewing indigeneity as socially organised, we are led to consider what makes certain identities possible, valid, or even useful. In addition, we are led to consider how certain identities are communicated (or made communicable) and understood. This is another way of seeing the indigenous as not just, or even primarily, self-defining, self-constructing, or self-inventing. Thus the approach I follow is in seeing indigeneity as not just personal but as a complex and difficult process to site. One of the reasons making for this complexity is the network of institutions, interests and actors engaged in articulating indigeneity. The involvement of an array of interests is also indicative of the value of indigeneity. Deciphering what
the value is can be complex when considered historically and when one considers
the range of interests and meanings involved.

A further reason why I have chosen to use the term re-engineering is as a
means of pointing to the history involved in the construction and valorisation of
‘Carib’, processes that neither ceased in 1492 nor just developed out of thin air
over the last two decades. In fundamental ways it is history that gives ‘Carib’ its
cultural weight as an evocative idea.12 It is also difficult to miss the extent of
historically oriented self-representation that occurs amongst Caribbean
Amerindian revivalist groups such as the SRCC. One of the primary features of
their discourse is that of history, embedded in concepts of tradition, ancestry,
heritage, cultural loss, and cultural ‘retrieval’. In broader terms, some argue that
the historical processes that informed the Caribbean’s ethnic heterogeneity
produced a historical consciousness among Caribbean peoples, “a consciousness
which many anthropologists could not (or would not) recognise” (Yelvington

The temporality of the contemporary Caribbean Amerindian revival, and
that of the SRCC specifically, becomes indispensable to the analysis of how it has
developed, the shapes it has taken, and the interests that are involved in the
valuation of the Carib. In this vein, I draw from Sally Falk Moore who asks the
question, “when does past history illumine current fieldwork?” replying, “the
answer is surely ‘always,’ whenever information about the past exists. It is always
desirable for the ethnographer to know as much as possible how the present came
into being, what sort of a sequence of transformations took place before the

The temporal dimension of re-engineering processes highlights at least
three themes that are central to this project and the development of its argument.
One is that Amerindian ‘revivalist’ groups in the Caribbean, such as the SRCC, do
not just ‘invent’ themselves in either historical or social isolation, or on terms

12 Moreover, as an anonymous reviewer rightly suggested, the particular colonial and European
interpretations of time and space given to the ‘Carib’ category, “become the only means of
determining the validity of such presence or absence”. More of this will be detailed and
demonstrated in chapters 2 and 3.
entirely of their own choosing. Instead, their self-representations are products of mediations between their own interests and beliefs, historical texts, and social institutions upholding and legitimating particular representations.

Secondly, the temporal dimension of re-engineering runs counter to the finality of the perspective that argues that a “dearth of indigeneity” is a feature of modern Caribbean cultural development, by highlighting the fact that even the once commonly assumed absence of an actual group does not preclude at least the presence of its historical construction and the activation of its symbolic value. History forms a critical cultural resource in the mediation and development of current representations of Amerindian identity in the Caribbean.

Thirdly, the temporal infrastructure of ideational and institutional sources imbricated in the current interactions that make ‘Carib’ valuable is part of a process that Gabriel Haslip-Viera (1999a) and Arlene Dávila (1999) identify as the construction of a canonical status for Caribbean Amerindian identities. As Haslip-Viera (1999a:2) argues in the case of the dissemination of Taino history and symbolism in Puerto Rico, “the Taino heritage has been canonised through state-sponsored institutions, such as museums, monuments, festivals, contests, crafts, and textbooks”. Dávila also argues that, “the old Puerto Rican nationalist canon” has “created new memories out of forgetting”, and in her work she outlines the “the transmutation of the Taino from a recognised group and a living population into a symbol to be revived, romanticised and manipulated”, and the subsequent transformation of the Taino from symbol to living reality (1999:12, 14; also Jiménez Román 1999), in a manner that has echoes in this project. The construction of emblematic ‘traditions’ is central to the way the Carib has undergone the transition from symbol to ‘living reality’.

This project takes ‘tradition’ as a central entry point to the discussion of the articulation of indigeneity in Trinidad. There are five reasons for this approach:

(1) ‘tradition’ is at the very centre of the focus of the programs and projects articulated by the SRCC’s own cultural brokers and those associated with it;
(2) to bring attention to the ‘tradition’ of calling certain people ‘Caribs’, at different times and places and for different reasons;
(3) to spotlight the contemporary role of ‘tradition’ as part of the politics of creating an inventory of ethnic contributions to the national foundation;

(4) ‘tradition’ is conventionally identified as a key component of ‘heritage’ in Trinidad; and,

(5) related to the last two points, because ‘traditions’ are the basis for the public demonstration or display of ethnic heritage and a critical basis for making claims on state patronage in Trinidad and Tobago (cf. Ryan 1997).

‘Tradition’ is a problematic term; it does not simply denote a set of givens. Throughout the course of this text I treat ‘tradition’ as comprising texts, practices, rituals, and/or objects representing what actors believe to be a particular cultural history, and that analytically we can perceive as implying repetition, regulation and institutionalisation (cf. Antoun 1989).

‘Indigeneity’ is another problematic term that is used repeatedly in this work in an admittedly slippery fashion, as a matter of both design and necessity. The term seems to have only randomly and sporadically surfaced in the literature mostly within the last ten years and there is as yet no consensus on how best to define the term. Indeed, how ‘indigeneity’ is to be defined, much like the term ‘indigenous’, is a contentious issue and forms part of the problem addressed by this project, even whilst forming part of the vocabulary of the project itself. For my own part I use it as an open term, meant to be distinguished from ‘indigeneousness’ which can connote a static ‘state of being’, or ‘indigenism’ which has specific Latin American connotations of elitist romanticism and state incorporation projects known as *indigenismo* (see Díaz-Polanco 1982, Field 1994),

which contrasts with *indianidad* (or ‘Indianity’) as ‘indigenism from below’ (see Berdichewsky 1989:25-26; Varese 1982), or what some call ‘radical indigenismo’ (Bollinger & Lund 1982:20). However, definitions of indigenism, aside from the Latin American context, can be used in other meaningful ways, as Jean Jackson explains: ‘Indigeneism—indigenism with a capital ‘I,’ self-conscious indigenism, along with self-conscious culture—begins when a group of people begin to

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13 I thank Jean Jackson at MIT for her helpful comments on indigenism (personal communication via e-mail, 30 April 2000). I am unsure of how widespread is the use of *indianidad*. 
appropriate notions of who they are from the intrusive dominant culture, albeit in contradiction to it" (1989:133; also Conklin 1997). Perhaps, I would add, there need not be any contradiction, especially where the state takes a role in producing or facilitating expressions of “Indigenism” as Jackson outlines above. If we factor in the latter reservation, Jackson’s sense of Indigenism is echoed in the notion of ‘re-engineering’ as I use it in this project. In broader terms however, the value of the term ‘indigeneity’ is in its avoidance of the sometimes confusing distinctions amongst various concepts related to ‘the indigenous’. Its value then lies in its generalising denotation of the theory and practice of, by or for ‘the indigenous’, that is, as a bundle of discourses and practices for representing ‘the indigenous’. ‘Indigeneity’ can be also be used to refer to some notion of being ‘locally rooted’ in a particular territory, of being either ‘first here’ as expressed in the ‘first nations’ idea (an idea of precedence) or the ‘true local’ as expressed in the ‘sons of the soil’ idea (an idea of residence).

In terms of the analytical framework of this project, we are faced with questions centreing on how we are to conceptually locate indigeneity in terms of the models that have been used to situate indigenous peoples today. There are a number of models or paradigms for discussing indigenous peoples in the wake of the emergence of world capitalism—and I must stress that here I am simply outlining the various analytical representations of those realities (in the form of models and paradigms). Leaving aside the more extreme models of indigenes as either the total victims that nonetheless have faithfully preserved intact a total emic worldview, or current indigenous revival as being pure invention or a case of pathological agency, one can discern the following models. Some anthropologists have worked with a model that sees indigenous peoples at the losing end of the international development process, as victims of the international capitalist juggernaut (see Bodley 1990; Weyler 1982). Another approach has been one that sees indigenous people adapting world capitalism to their own cultural ends, for

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14 Where matters become confusing—and hence the need for a generalising term such as ‘indigeneity’—is Berdichewsky’s (1989) explanation of “indianidad” as being the product of profound structural transformations affecting indigenous communities, with the resultant creation
their own putative self-preservation (i.e., Sahlins 1994, 1987). Similarly, we could divide the literature between those who stress the reality of assimilation and deculturation of indigenous peoples, and those who highlight processes of syncretism, defensive acculturation and resistance. Activist social scientists involved in the drafting of the Barbados Declaration of 1977, formulated a combination of these approaches in a scheme that identified the three major divisions characterising distinctions between the situations of diverse Amerindian groups. One is the situation of groups that have remained relatively isolated and have been able to “preserve their own cultural schemes” intact, including the many “tribal formations” found in the Amazon Basin, according to those who drafted the document. A second consists of groups that have retained a great deal of their culture but nonetheless exist in relations of “direct domination by the capitalist system” and includes most Indians in the Andean and Mesoamerican regions. The third situation involves those who have been “de-Indianised” through integration, have lost coherent cultural schemes, and have gained “limited economic advantages” (quoted in Bollinger & Lund 1982:23-24). Yet, none of the approaches discussed thus far seems to fit the case of the SRCC very well, for reasons that will become increasingly apparent in subsequent chapters. What is needed, I believe, is more work on the economic corporatisation and modernisation of indigenous organisation, conscious attention to the emergence of indigeneity from within a creolised\textsuperscript{15} cultural setting, and for accounts of the role of the state and ruling groups in the construction, dissemination and valorisation of indigeneity alongside and in conjunction with similar processes at the international level. The need for this will hopefully become more apparent as I proceed in describing the particular ethnographic case at the centre of this project.

Given this project’s ethnographic and theoretical emphasis on the role of cultural brokers of Carib indigeneity, and their own, often instrumentalist, approaches in constructing and defining Carib identity and its hallmark traditions, of an ideology that reflects integration into the world capitalist system. This does not seem altogether incompatible with Jackson’s definition of “indigenism” above.\textsuperscript{15} For further discussion of creolisation see, amongst others, Segal (1993) and Hannerz (1992, 1987).
some might object that this approach has the effect of reducing cultural processes to a purely political economic approach that marginalises analysis of the ‘local cultural frameworks’ of people ‘not in the limelight’. Likewise, some may argue that I do not convey the extent to which “being Carib” may be meaningful, and that I do not address the lived practices of everyday experiences of “being Carib”. While the intention of this research project differs from the assumptions inherent to these objections, in that the aim of this work is to understand how a particular identity has been re-engineered through historical processes, texts, social institutions, and via the efforts of those at the forefront of the contemporary revitalisation of this identity, I must nonetheless address those pertinent critiques.\footnote{Here I must thank external examiners for making these issues salient and worth addressing.}

One of the inherent assumptions of those critiques is that I am adopting a “top down” approach, whilst largely omitting what those “below” think or feel. As will become increasingly evident from the ethnographic sections of this work, and given my own theoretical interests, that approach struck me as the most reasonable one. I say this for several reasons, which will also serve to preview the ethnography that follows. 1) With the small membership bases of the organizations that I studied—the largest not containing more than 30 active members—the leading brokers of these groups often form the bulk of the constituents; in the cases of the newer groups that I discuss in chapter 4, the brokers are often the only members. 2) The only individuals to actually choose the label “Carib” as an auto-denomination are brokers. 3) Many of the ‘regular members’ are often present given their personal and familial ties to the leading brokers, in terms of assisting in the manual labour required to prepare for and produce certain rituals and public events, or, are paid to do so by the brokers. In many cases, I detected that many of these members either had little interest in, or little knowledge of, the meanings of dominant symbols contained in those rituals. The President of the SRCC, as we shall see, in fact regularly complains that most members, even those who are related to him by blood, would probably not assist were it not for the fact that they are financially compensated. While the study of the everyday and lived practices of these members is certainly a valid interest, we cannot conflate those practices
with “being Carib” or imagine them to be representative of primordial affective attachment to certain rituals and performances.

The problem concerning the study of “being Carib” is, however, much broader than what the foregoing suggests. To characterise certain lived practices and everyday experiences as “being Carib” is precisely to evade the ways in which this project seeks to problematise “Carib”, and it would involve considerable theoretical labour to write out the dominant ethnographic realities as indicated in the opening quote by SRCC President Bharath. In addition, we cannot assume continuities when all the key ethnographic informants are stressing cultural loss, discontinuity, and the need for revival. In other cases, they stress maintaining certain practices simply because these too risk being lost—hence, for example, the practice of processing cassava into bread, knowledge of which they still have, yet most SRCC members will themselves not practice this on a daily basis given the labour involved and the ease with which ready baked bread is available and affordable. In addition, the meaning of this practice has changed. Moreover, rather than speaking in terms of continuity and persistence of lived experience of “being Carib”, informants regularly speak of having come to an “awareness” of themselves as “Carib” as mature adults, rather than having been raised to think of themselves in these terms, a fact that will be evident at different points of the ethnography. Bharath himself emphasises repeatedly that when he began to revitalise the community, it was, as he says, “without the knowledge of anything Amerindian”. “Being Carib” introduces an ethnographically inappropriate essentialism, and here, as we shall see, both the ethnographer and the informants are acutely conscious of the role of history in shaping Carib indigeneity and the fact that the meanings and purposes of certain re-enacted rituals and practices have changed considerably and are informed by the modern context in which they are performed and articulated. My aim, therefore, as spelled out in chapter 1, is not in line with fixing the SRCC (the anthropological ‘other’) in time, treating it as a bounded ethnic variant of the Levi-Straussian ‘cold society’. Again, as detailed in chapter 1, resistance, adaptation, and accommodation can all serve as conceptual formulae for fixing the ‘other’ in time as essentially unchanging. Therefore, it is
not so much that “being Carib” is not relevant, as much as it is the wrong question to pose with reference to this particular case.

As I mentioned before, I study “Carib” as both a “presence” and a “problem”. “Carib” is not taken for granted here, as an unproblematic given, either by myself or by my informants. It is critical that anthropological readers do not attempt to fold the case of the SRCC into every other “indigenous” situation and history that they have studied. In many ways, as we shall see, the SRCC is a unique and ‘irregular’ association, with a morphology that lies somewhere between a business, a club, a family, a folkloric troupe, and a political body, amongst other possible variants. Similarly, we should endeavour to appreciate the specificities of different cases and not treat “the indigenous” as an iconic entity, as a persisting symbol in a binary opposition between Europeans and natives, where one equates “indigenous” with eternal resistance, continuity, and community, and “Europe” is equated with oppression, discontinuity, history, and society. Such assumptions render ethnography marginal and serve to produce universalising theories of indigeneity that actually inhibit us from appreciating, understanding, or knowing difference.

“Presence” and “being” are not the same and should not be conflated. As some argue, anthropology is an academic discipline steeped in the ‘Western’ philosophical tradition of “being as presence”, a tradition that conflates self, individual and social personhood without differentiating amongst these. The “presence” of the “Carib” is one that has been fought for and dominated by the colonial record, the imperial state, slave traders, missionaries, competing indigenes, nationalists, and the independent nation of Trinidad and Tobago. The reproduced views of all of these agents and institutions, in turn, shape and inform the ‘local’ cultural frameworks that come into play in defining and deciphering, understanding and articulating the meaning of the “Carib” as a presence, and, in cases, as an absence. I therefore describe and analyse the various meanings of the “Carib presence” mediated via such practices as the Santa Rosa Festival, cassava

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17 I thank an anonymous reviewer of this study for his/her interesting and useful insights along these lines, many of which I adopt here.
production, New Age ‘shamanism’ and so forth. My focus then is on the interpretable representations of a particular, objectified category of the social person marked as “Carib”.

To reiterate then, in this study I examine how, when, why, and by whom ‘indigenousness’ is constructed, expressed and interpreted in a manner which, as we will understand better further on, allows for the greater play of the causal role of history. I therefore highlight a group seeking legitimacy as “indigenous”, striving to establish a “presence” within specific empirical qua cultural renditions of body, community, land, art and ritual performances, shaped furthermore by powerful forms and modes of national and international acceptance and scrutiny. Rather than “being Carib”, I thus study the (un)making and remaking of “Carib” as a recognised, intelligible, and legitimate category, thus I study identity not as a state of being but as a process—much like Bharath explicitly states in the opening quote: “this is a learning experience for us”.

Background to the Research Problem

At this juncture I will provide some necessary background to the research problem and its analysis by way of (1) an ethnographic introduction to the SRCC, and the fieldwork that I conducted, and (2) theoretical and conceptual approaches that have shaped and informed the analytical outline sketched in the preceding section.
Figure 1.1: Maps of the Caribbean, Trinidad and Arima

Caribbean Sea
NOTES:

The SRCC membership is geographically divided into at least two parts within Arima (above), distributed between the Community Centre and its environs in Jonestown, and Calvary Hill where most members reside.

The bottom right inset in the above section shows the location of the SRCC headquarters behind the Santa Rosa cemetery approximately 300 metres west of the Santa Rosa RC Church, in the Jonestown district of Arima.

Most of the SRCC members reside on Calvary Hill approximately 400 metres to the north and overlooking the SRCC headquarters.

The numbered dots in the top right inset of the map section indicate homes of SRCC member families.

As listed on this map of land ownership in Arima, the names of SRCC member families appear in the top right inset: Calderon, Hernandez, Lopez, Marcano, Farfan.

The Santa Rosa Roman Catholic Church is circled in the bottom right inset. The SRCC Centre is marked by the number 1.
A. Situating the Santa Rosa Carib Community (SRCC): An Ethnographic Synopsis

Trinidad, the southernmost island of the Caribbean archipelago, was, according to archaeologists, the first site of human settlement in the Caribbean, dating back over 7,000 years. The Island of Trinidad, at the centre of this project, covers a land area of 1,864 square miles, and the overall population of the twin island Republic of Trinidad and Tobago numbered almost 1.3 million in 1997 (ECLAC 1999, UNDP 2001a). Port-of-Spain, the nation’s capital and main port, is located on the northwest coast of Trinidad. San Fernando, the country’s industrial capital is situated in the south of Trinidad. Their estimated population figures are approximately 46,800 and 28,600 respectively, and they are the two largest cities in Trinidad (UNDP 2001a).

Christopher Columbus named Trinidad after the Holy Trinity and made landfall at the end of July in 1498. Other adventurers of fame to land in Trinidad were Américo Vespucci, Sir Walter Ralegh, Sir Robert Dudley, and Sir Lawrence Keymis. It was not until 1592 that Spanish settlement of Trinidad started. More of the historical detail concerning Spanish and aboriginal interactions is covered in chapters 2 and 3. In 1797 the British seized Trinidad from the Spanish. Trinidad was thus ruled by the British, with Spanish laws in place (given the terms of the Spanish cession of 1802), and the majority of the population spoke French and French patois given the waves of French Caribbean immigrants that started arriving in the late 1780s. With the emancipation of slaves in 1834-1838, migrant labourers were imported from Madeira, China, the Levant, and especially India until the end of indenture in 1917. In 1946 universal adult suffrage was instituted and the colony achieved internal self-governance in 1956. In 1958 Trinidad and Tobago joined the West Indies Federation, which it later abandoned, opting for full independence in 1962. The country became a republic in 1976.

Trinidad and Tobago is usually ranked as one of the more developed countries of the Caribbean, with Trinidad producing petroleum, natural gas, chemical and manufactured exports while Tobago’s economy is centred on agriculture and tourism. During the oil boom of 1973-1982, Trinidad and Tobago
became one of the wealthiest countries in the Americas. Revenues from petroleum exports enabled the state to undertake rapid industrial growth, particularly via the nationalisation of over 80 enterprises. At one point, the state was the country's largest employer. From especially 1988 to 1994, Trinidad and Tobago suffered a serious economic crisis and was forced to undergo internationally supervised "structural adjustment" programs organised by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Neo-liberal economic policies in the form of extensive trade and investment liberalisation, divestment of state enterprises, an emphasis on export-led growth, cutbacks in social expenditures, and the floating of the exchange rate were instituted. Between 1994 and 1998, the country experienced steady growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of between 3 and 4%, while unemployment has fallen from 19.8% in 1993 to 14.2% in 1998 (ECLAC 1999). The country is undergoing another boom at present, being the highest recipient of US Foreign Direct Investment in the Western Hemisphere after Canada. Of a workforce numbering 521,000 people, 61% are employed in trade and services, 13% in construction, 11% in manufacturing, 9% in agriculture, and 4% in oil and gas (USDoS 1998).

According to the World Bank, 74% of the population is urban (IBRD 2000). Statistical breakdowns of the multiethnic population show 39.5% as 'African', 40.3% as 'East Indian', 18.4% as 'mixed', 0.6% as 'European', and 1% as 'other' (USDoS 1998). This is also a multi-denominational population, with 29.4% being Roman Catholic, 10.9% are Anglican, 3.4% are Presbyterian, while 23.8% are Hindu, 5.8% are Muslim, and 26.7% listed as 'other' (USDoS 1998).18

The politics of national unity versus ethnic segmentation have marked Trinidadian party politics over the past 40 years, with the former arguably gaining ground over the latter. Organised politics in Trinidad and Tobago have usually been run along the lines of ethnicity, with Afro-Trinidadians mostly supporting the People's National Movement (PNM) and Indo-Trinidadians supporting the United National Congress (UNC) or its predecessors. In power, most parties have sought to cast themselves as national (as symbolised in the parties' names) and have

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18 See also the 2000 Trinidad & Tobago Country Review <http://www.countrywatch.com>
recently endeavoured to expand their memberships in more multi-ethnic directions. The oldest party in Trinidad is the PNM, founded and led by Dr. Eric E. Williams from 1956 until his death in 1981, and ruling until 1986 and again from 1991 to 1995. In 1970 the country experienced a wave of protests and an army mutiny that have come to be known as the “Black Power Revolution”. Despite the name, the thrust of the protests was working-class oriented, seeking unity between Trinidadians of African and East Indian descent, and was strongly nationalistic and anti-imperialist. In 1986, the National Alliance for Reconstruction wed disaffected elements of the PNM and the major Indo-Trinidadian politicians in an alliance touted as a Rainbow party of “One Love”. The NAR defeated the PNM in a landslide, promising the end of ethnic politics. While the outcomes were complex and contradictory, another organisation challenged the established political order in the most forceful manner, with an armed rebellion in July of 1990. The Jama’at al Muslimeen—sometimes incorrectly designated as “Black Muslims” or misinterpreted as “black nationalists”19—challenged what they saw as government corruption, illegitimacy, and alleged involvement in aiding drug cartels, though some argued that a land dispute with the state was at the root of its attempted coup. The group itself, similar to the government, combined members of both African and East Indian descent (see Forte 1996a).

The decline in expenditures on education, with current levels only 20% of 1982 levels in real terms, has resulted in a situation where “a large number of students now graduate without basic cognitive and numerical skills”, according to the World Bank.20 Figures of the World Bank nonetheless show a literacy rate of 98%, and they also show that for every 1,000 members of the population, there are 135 copies of daily newspapers circulated, 19.2 personal computers, 3.24 Internet hosts, and 318 televisions.21 In addition, other agencies report that for every 1,000 members of the population, there are 491 radios and 15.8 telephones (UNDP

19 On the other hand, one may increasingly make this argument as the Jama’at has recently tended to adopt a ‘black nationalist’ approach toward the country’s ethno-political divide.
20 See World Bank Group, Countries: Trinidad and Tobago <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extdr/offset/lac/lt2.htm>
21 World Bank Group, Country-Competitiveness Indicators—Trinidad & Tobago,
Radio, television, and newspapers, in that order, are thus the dominant means for disseminating news and images.

Arima, Trinidad’s third largest urban area, is conventionally hailed as ‘the home of the Caribs’ in the writings of Trinidadian authors (e.g. Anthony 1988:2). Other writers note that up to the 1930s, most homes in Arima were constructed using Amerindian techniques and styles, and Amerindian utensils were common in homes (see García 1991:50-51). Arima was established as a Mission village in 1749 and again in 1784 (Wise 1938a:40). This was done in order to house Amerindian agriculturalists whose lands were earmarked for the new sugar estates to be founded by French Caribbean planters and their slaves, who were invited to settle in Trinidad by a 1783 decree. By a Royal Charter of 1888, Arima became a Borough, entitling it to a certain degree of self-governance, with its own legislative body, its own budget, and its own tax base, anticipating internal self-governance at the colony-wide level by 68 years. Arima also once had its own bus company and its own water works (García 1991:46-47).

Arima has undergone a series of population expansions since the demise of the Mission in the 1840s, starting with large influxes of immigrants from Venezuela, voluntary immigrants from Africa and the West Indies, and indentured East Indians. During the Second World War, the opening in 1941 of US Army and Air Force bases adjacent to Arima at Cumuto and Wallerfield attracted people from across Trinidad and neighbouring Caribbean islands (García 1991:34). Remaining sugar and cocoa estates required imported labour, since their “labourers left them in droves” (García 1991:34). Large numbers of immigrants from St. Vincent, Grenada and Barbados occupied different areas of Arima (García 1991:35).

In line with Trinidad’s and the wider Caribbean’s development policy of “industrialisation by invitation”, whereby foreign-owned branch plants were rapidly set up in return for a series of incentives, Arima saw the establishment of the O’Meara Industrial Estate in 1960 on 235 acres of land (García 1991:29-30).
The estate occupies the southwestern corner of the map of Arima in Figure 1.1. This industrial area has shrunk considerably, especially since the demise of Arima Textile Mills where the Carib President, Ricardo Bharath, was once employed. Arima is still a mixed agricultural, industrial and service economy and serves as the main transport and commercial hub for the agricultural districts of northeast Trinidad. My informants within the Arima Borough Council estimate that the majority of Arimians are employed outside of the Borough and, indeed, the morning line-ups of commuters leaving Arima are very large, if that is a reliable indication. Four secondary schools are based in Arima, and most of those students come from outside of the Borough. I resided in the central business district during my 21-month stay, and I found Arima to be a very busy and somewhat run down area whose infrastructure was clearly over taxed. While economically depressed, Arima still has all the main amenities one would see in a ‘developed’ economy—supermarkets, night clubs, restaurants, two cinemas, an Internet café, travel agencies, all the major banks, a post office, hardware and electronics stores, and a large shopping district that is still fairly well known for its clothing and shoe stores. Arima also has its own annual Carnival celebrations, on a smaller though no less raucous scale than the main activities in Port of Spain.

Arima today covers an area of approximately four square miles, at 800 feet above sea level. It is located 12 miles east of Port of Spain. In 1971, the National Housing Authority began building homes for the working poor and unemployed, resulting in an influx of thousands of new residents (Garcia 1991:38-39). As a result, in 1980 the boundaries of the Borough extended from one to the current four square miles. The environs of Arima are home to Santa Rosa Heights, Maloney Gardens and La Horqueta, three large government-housing areas for the economically disadvantaged. The SRCC Centre is itself located in Jonestown, a district within Arima that came about as a result of extensive squatting on land owned by the Santa Rosa RC Church. Jonestown is a fairly depressed area in economic terms and is known to be one of Arima’s major zones of drug dealing, with a high level of reported gang crimes.
Price (1987:1) notes that out of a population of 24,112 people, a census of 1980\textsuperscript{22} registered 8,305 people as ‘African’, 74 as ‘White’, 5,030 as ‘[East] Indian’, 231 as ‘Chinese’, a massive 10,320 as ‘Mixed’, 46 as ‘Syrian-Lebanese’, and 106 as ‘Not Stated’ (see also Garcia 1991:123). ‘Carib’ does not appear as a category, for various possible reasons as we shall see. Out of that same population in 1980, 15,558 people were professed Roman Catholics (Garcia 1991:108). In contrast with national figures, Arima is predominantly Roman Catholic and ‘mixed’.

Arima has experienced some of the main currents of globalisation and creolisation in the Caribbean: colonialism, missionising, the cocoa economy, migration, world war, industrialisation, and national integration. That it should still be called “home of the Caribs” is, in itself, a strikingly counterintuitive statement that raises the issue of the problematic presence of indigeneity.

My first knowledge and awareness of the Santa Rosa Carib Community of Arima came via Carifesta V in 1992\textsuperscript{23}, pictures in tourism brochures showing a procession of the Santa Rosa festival headed by Ricardo Bharath, and newspaper articles on the SRCC’s Youth Representative, Susan Campo, having won a scholarship to undertake Amerindian Studies at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College in Canada. This was also the first way in which I was drawn into consideration of the dissemination and mediation of images of the SRCC, as well as state patronage for the group and its international indigenous networking.

The SRCC is a formal organisation that was incorporated as a limited liability company in 1976 in order to receive state lands—“indigenous people need land in order to survive” is the almost emblematic explanation now offered by SRCC President Bharath. In that year, with the guidance and support of the

\textsuperscript{22} It is not clear to me if the ethnic terms are chosen by respondents or ascribed by census takers.

\textsuperscript{23} The acronym stands for the Caribbean Festival of the Arts, an event involving the participation of most states in the Caribbean Basin, sending delegations of artists. Carifesta V was held in Trinidad while I was still living there in 1992, which was also the Quincentenary of Columbus’ entry into the Caribbean, the “Encounter of Two Worlds,” as it was officially referred to. Being 1992, and on the eve of 1993—the United Nations’ International Year for the World’s Indigenous People (with the International Decade for Indigenous Peoples beginning in 1994)—Caribbean governments made a concerted effort to showcase their indigenous populations—“marketing the cultural product” as former Prime Minister Robinson put it in a TV interview.
Ministry of Culture, Joseph Pantor (a prominent attorney and supporter of the People’s National Movement [PNM]) and Andrew Carr (a local folklorist), Bharath succeeded in registering what is formally known as The Santa Rosa Carib Community Company Limited (1976). Elma Reyes, a journalist who also served as the SRCC Research and Public Relations Officer, often exclaimed: “This must be the only ethnic group in the world that is organised as a company”. Bharath claims that this option was imposed on him, a question we shall examine later. This degree of formalisation attracted my attention as it represented another front on which the organisation of the SRCC is re-engineered by dominant social institutions.

SRCC documents emphasise that the group’s immediate needs are: (1) “recognition by society and government as a legitimate cultural sector”; (2) “research to clarify their cultural traditions and the issue of their lands”; and, (3) “support from appropriate institutions in their perceived need areas”. The working relationship that the SRCC has been able to establish with journalists and researchers has been critical to SRCC brokers’ efforts at gaining historical material needed for representing Carib history.

One of the SRCC’s primary aims over the last 25 years of its history as a company has been to acquire a land grant to build an “Amerindian village”. This was to be called the “First Nations Botanical Park”, and was meant to serve as a “cultural tourism facility” targeted especially at foreigners, and as an “educational tourism facility” to educate nationals and visitors,

about systems which are at present respected and held as worthy of emulation by such esteemed authorities as the Smithsonian Institute [sic]; the World Wildlife Fund; Greenpeace; Cultural Survival; Survival International and the National Geographic Society of the USA. [Reyes 1995]

On this site, the families that comprise the SRCC would make baskets, for example, not simply for their own use, as Bharath explains:

you would like to get an income out of it, and this would appeal to the tourists because you would hardly find your people, locals, coming and buy a basket. A tourist would pass...and they would say: ‘yes, I like this’. [Bharath 1995]
The function of this “re-created” village is, in the view of leaders such as Bharath, to provide a common residential space, combined with a jointly held economic base, for a continuous period of time, in order “to truly live as a community”, to transform the current part-time practice of traditions for display purposes into a more regular activity. For now, the SRCC’s primary space as an organised body is that of the Community Centre, built on land donated by the Roman Catholic Church, and also home to Bharath and his family (see Figure 1.2).

The particular cultural politics of the SRCC are explicitly not of a segregationist sort nor do SRCC leaders engage in a critique of the post-colonial nation-state. Bharath exclaimed, “it makes my blood boil that anyone should think we want to be separate and apart from everyone else” when I asked him if the proposed recreated village might serve as a reservation. Indeed, SRCC leaders even refused to join in protests against the celebration of the 500th anniversary of Columbus’ landfall in Trinidad, so that the politics of the SRCC are decidedly different from those of many of its prominent North and South American counterparts. The SRCC, in fact, has never engaged in any protests or demonstrations and the leaders routinely dismiss such an option. One must remember that the SRCC is closely tied to the state (through funding arrangements and through Bharath who works in local government), the Catholic Church, the PNM, and various powerful interests, ties that will be explored in greater detail in chapter 4. In this vein, Elma Reyes (1978) referred to the SRCC as being “on the peacepath”, adding: “the Caribs of the 20th Century no longer follow the ways of their ancestors, and they say their solution is not to attack with poison-tipped arrows and spears, but by the establishment of a representative body, through which they hope to acquire alternate lands”. The leaders and members of the SRCC also struck me as keenly nationalistic and patriotic, and as some examples of this I recall their engaging in serious discussions of how the national flag is to be held and raised, how one should comport oneself during the singing of the national anthem, and the largest number of members adopt “Trinidadian” as the
self-descriptive label of choice, above “mixed”, “Spanish”, or “Carib” which are the other contending labels (in descending order).

The SRCC has been relatively successful in achieving recognition and support from a variety of institutions, both locally and abroad. Most prominent amongst these have been the state and its constituent agencies and enterprises, the Arima Borough Council (ABC), the People’s National Movement (PNM), the local media, and from prominent individuals and small private foundations. In 1990 the government of A. N. R. Robinson, of the ruling National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR), officially recognised the SRCC as “representative of the indigenous Amerindians” of Trinidad and Tobago and initiated an annual award of $30,000 TT.\(^\text{24}\) The ABC itself funds the SRCC with an annual subvention of $5,000 TT. The SRCC and its key members have also won numerous state awards over the last decade. In 2000, Prime Minister Basdeo Panday of the ruling United National Congress (UNC) promised lands to the group, awarded funds for an international indigenous gathering, and proclaimed 14 October to be henceforth an annual “National Day of Recognition of Trinidad’s Indigenous Peoples”.

\(^{24}\) The value of this subvention, in US dollars, has of course changed since 1990 with significant changes in the exchange rate. At present, one US dollar is roughly equivalent to $6.27 TT.
Figure 1.2:
The Carib Community Centre

TOP: The exterior of the SRCC headquarters, formally marked as the “Santa Rosa Carib Community Centre”. This centre serves primarily as a staging area for events and displays that the SRCC mounts for external audiences. It is also used for formal General and Special Meetings of the SRCC.

BOTTOM: remnants of past displays; rows of benches used during formal meetings; and, partially shown at bottom left, a stage.

The SRCC Centre also serves as the home of the SRCC President and his family.

The Centre, which cost over $250,000 TT to construct, was built with funds from the Arima Borough Council and labour from the Unemployment Relief Programme. It is based on land donated by the Catholic Church.

Amongst the goals of the SRCC, where traditions are concerned, “maintenance” and “revival” are the two most important objectives, in the words of its key brokers. Its ‘stand on tradition’ is used to define the practice of the SRCC in the following terms, as set out in one of its publicly disseminated documents:

What the Santa Rosa Carib Community stands for: (a) To retain, publicise, and promote, in a respectful manner the tradition maintained by the Carib people of Arima, in honouring their patroness Santa Rosa de Lima, with emphasis on the observance of the annual celebration founded through a mystical experience of their ancestors. (b) The establishment of agro-industries utilising
Cassava and other food-crop to be grown by co-operative effort on a commercial scale by members of the Carib tribe of Arima. (c) The establishment of a Cultural Centre to allow educational, recreational, and vocational training facilities; the setting up of archives, museum, and other relevant services designed to promote awareness and appreciation for the culture, history and traditions of the Carib people of Trinidad and Tobago. (d) The revival and practice of traditional handicraft, utilising natural, indigenous material and following the customs of the Carib people in Trinidad and Tobago. (e) To promote and develop in other relevant and positive ways the welfare of the Carib People of Trinidad and Tobago, and the doing of all things that are incidental or conductive [sic] to the attainment of the above.

In addition to these aims, the SRCC set out a practical agenda for its promotion of ‘Carib tradition’. In a “Proposal for a Centre for Amerindian Studies,” the Research Unit of the Santa Rosa Carib Community stated the main objectives as follows:

To retain, and when necessary revive, the survival [of] cultural systems which were evolved by the indigenous people of Trinidad and Tobago, for practical application in the late 20th and into the 21st century. To allow also, areas of job creation and career development, within the Santa Rosa Carib Community, and the wider society, through such activity.

This statement is an example of the underlying instrumentalist orientation of the SRCC with respect to tradition, drawing my attention to the fact that remuneration is an important factor in the development of their various projects. This work does not read backward from an instrumentalist theory of ethnicity into the ethnography, indeed, the reverse would be more accurate. The issue of whether it is the anthropologist whose perspective is instrumentalist, or a case of recognising instrumentality on the part of one’s informants, can be a contentious one. In the case of the SRCC, we will encounter key statements that indicate their own instrumental perspectives on ethnic traditions, a fact that caused me to examine instrumentalist approaches to ethnicity in the first place. As Reyes (1995) argued, the SRCC was “discriminated against,” scorned and ridiculed, “because they are at the bottom of the economic ladder”, a situation which they seek to remedy. The need for money, Bharath explains, is also important for building self-confidence,
and for increasing the appeal of the SRCC’s leadership’s plans amongst potential members at the outer edge of the SRCC—as Bharath states, money: “would be...a great support to whatever you want to do because you would be able to start putting the infrastructure [together]. The people will say: ‘Well yes! Something is happening! This is looking good’ (Bharath 1995). Bharath observed that with increased funding, official recognition and media coverage of the SRCC, more individuals are showing an interest in the group:

in the last few years, with the publicity, with the Community [be]coming a little more outright, and [our] people getting support from different areas, people are hearing with the printed media and other forms of communication to the wider society, people are learning more about the Community, that it exists, and you would find people coming now and saying: ‘Hey, my grandmother, my grandfather or my father are Carib, and I’m part Carib or Arawak, or as the case may be, and they [arc] expressing interest. [Bharath 1995]

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**Figure 1.3:**
**Emblem of the SRCC’s Representation of Tradition**

The SRCC’s official logo, as explained to me, was meant to symbolise “retained and preserved traditions”, focusing on the Santa Rosa Festival (symbolised by the pink background colour not shown here); the “cassava culture” as symbolised by the sebucán (the cassava strainer shown in a semi-circular position), and the manare (used to sift grated cassava); and, weaving in general, shown in the border on the right.

The main “retained traditions” to be preserved come under the headings of food (see Figure 1.4), house building, handicrafts and the Santa Rosa Festival, and “traditional” or “bush” medicine to some extent. Traditions to be “revived” include: the Carib language and weaving using a variety of local palms that are
still not used in their current weaving. The SRCC is also intent on symbolically “reclaiming” certain traditions: Parang music (or “parranda”, a religious Spanish folkloric musical form that sweeps Trinidad for two months each year during Christmas time), the conventional “Red Indian” figures that appeared in Carnival parades, and other festival arts forms.

The Santa Rosa Festival, which runs over the last week of each August, is considered of prime importance to SRCC brokers such as Bharath, and it serves as the regular public announcement of “the Caribs’ identity as a community”, to quote Bharath (1995). The preparations for the festival, as Bharath notes (see Figure 1.5), are entirely in the hands of the SRCC and “this keeps the community together” insofar as it is a collective production.

Figure 1.4:
The SRCC and the ‘Retention of the Cassava Culture’

LEFT: Raw cassava is first peeled, and then washed. This photo shows Julie Calderon, one of the elderly stalwarts of the SRCC who is regularly featured in photographs in the local news media.
RIGHT: After washing, the cassava is then grated by approximately six to eight ladies of the SRCC.

Figure 1.4 continued on next page
LEFT: The grated cassava is packed into a sebucán, a strainer woven from the terite reed. The strainer is hung from a rafter, and a pole is inserted through the bottom hoop. Weight is then applied; the strainer stretches and squeezes the cassava, releasing a torrent of milky white, starchy residue that can be poisonous if bitter/yellow cassava is used. The residue is used to make cassareep, a food seasoning, and starch.

RIGHT: Julie Calderon sifts the strained cassava “flour” through a manare.

After sifting, a handful of the cassava is sprinkled onto a hot griddle (the aripo) flattened, and shaped into a circle. The ovens are made from mud.

While the Amerindian words noted above are often used, it was not clear if their usage began recently as part of the ‘cultural retrieval’ effort. Other elements of ‘the cassava culture’ have not been activated in conscious explications of the ‘traditionality’ of certain practices. For example, in Guyana some assert that the cassava bread is shaped as a circle to deliberately symbolise the womb, fertility, and nourishment (J. Forte & Melville 1989). In the SRCC, the bread is that shape ‘because it is always made in that shape’, as the explanations go.

Ricardo Bharath is now the only surviving member of the SRCC who is capable of weaving the cassava strainer and sifter.
Figure 1.5: SRCC Members Labouring for the Santa Rosa Festival

LEFT: Carib President Ricardo Bharath cutting timite palm leaves to refurbish roofs at the Carib Centre for the visitors expected during the Festival. RIGHT: Cristo Adonis cutting bamboo, used as flagpoles that are planted along the road between the church and the SRCC Centre during the Festival, used also for making bamboo cups to hold flowers that decorate the church.

LEFT: Cleaning the rods to which flags will be fastened. RIGHT: Ladies of the SRCC sewing and fastening flags to rods that are later attached to bamboo poles and flown during the Festival; the colours of the flags, are the same as those symbolising St. Rose: pink, red, yellow, and white.

Figure 1.5 continued on next page
Revival, as SRCC leaders use the term, can blend in with their concept of “retrieval” which entails instituting traditions learned from historical and ethnographic texts, or reacquiring from elsewhere in the Caribbean and South America those traditions in place in contemporary indigenous communities. The process of reacquisition entails what they call “cultural interchange” between themselves and these other communities.
Figure 1.6:
Examples of ‘Cultural Retrieval’ and ‘Reclamation’

LEF: Cristo Adonis, in his role as shaman, performs a Smoke Ceremony to mark the start of August (1999), the month the SRCC observes as belonging to St. Rose. This is an example of what SRCC brokers call “cultural retrieval”. RIGHT: Some members of the SRCC play Parang on Calvary Hill, overlooking the SRCC Centre. Parang, usually described as an “Hispano-American Christmas tradition”, has been “reclaimed” by SRCC brokers as a tradition that incorporates Amerindian history and culture, symbolised by the indigenous maracas, and stemming, as some argue, from the missionary work conducted amongst Amerindians (teaching prayers in song).

Of course, not all Trinidadians who identify themselves as “Carib” or of “Carib descent” are members of the SRCC, nor does the SRCC claim to represent all people of Carib descent outside of Arima. The Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous People claimed that, on the whole, there were 2,000 “Amerindians” in Trinidad (Caricom Perspective 1991:11). Peter Harris (1989b), a British archaeologist who worked with the SRCC, estimated that there are as many as 12,000 people of “Amerindian descent” in northeast Trinidad. 25 For its part, the SRCC formally determines membership in three ways, as overseen by Bharath, by way of: (1) what he terms “recognisable surnames”—invariably Spanish, of “related families known to be of Carib descent” (see Figure 1.1); (2) some history of residence in Arima, especially Calvary Hill (see Figure 1.1); and, (3) long-standing participants in the preparations for the Santa Rosa Festival. 26 The number of members is increasingly becoming an important issue for SRCC brokers.

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25 Harris does not reveal the means by which he came to this estimate. I actually believe that number may be conservative, given the influx of a large number of Venezuelans, many of whom were mestizos and indios (Indians).

26 Bharath explains that those who wish to join must go through the following process: “they would register by giving their name, their address, a little history about their family and...we monitor your...the actions of the person, if they really willing to work to preserve the traditions and so on.
Determining the number of 'members' of the SRCC is not an altogether straightforward task. Some of those whom the SRCC leaders refer to as 'members' may appear only once or twice every couple of years, while others regularly attend meetings and functions. In 1976, Bharath indicated that there were seven members of the SRCC executive, and 200 general members. In 1995, Bharath stated to the media that the SRCC numbered 75 registered members (*Sunday Express* 13/08/1995:5). Almarales (1994) spoke of 40 “active members” divided into the following units: Research and Education Unit, Building and Housing Unit, Environmental Planning, Handicraft, and Food. This organisational definition also reflects the degree of formalisation of the group and the way it mirrors the organisation of the state bureaucracy. These units existed in a much more irregular fashion during the period of my fieldwork. Almarales (1994) also stated that the SRCC executive consisted of the Queen, President, Secretary, Youth Officer, and Public Relations Officer. During my fieldwork, regular members of the executive numbered three, with two occasional participants in addition, and one ‘estranged’ member (the Queen). Amongst the ‘general membership’ that I saw regularly, the number fluctuated between 14 and 31, depending on the occasion. However, it seems that there may be an additional 200 or so individuals in the Arima area with whom Bharath maintains contacts and can call upon for assistance and participation in various functions. In 1999, one local observer of a certain age insisted that the numbers of both Catholic parishioners and the SRCC had both been declining, given the rise of US evangelical sects and the alienation of Arima’s largely unemployed youth from established institutions.

After a while, well...we consider you part of the Community”. He notes problems of the past, insofar as, “you will find those who are coming just to see, well, what there is to get because, at one time there is a little talk went about the Caribs would get so much land from government—and this place couldn’t hold people: you had people jam packed. Everybody had Carib blood. But their motive was to see what they could get and when they found that the land wasn’t coming so easy, well then the numbers boiled down again. But traditionally in Arima there are families...the Lopez family, the Calderons, the Hernandez, the Guerreros. There are certain people that can easily be identified as belonging to the Community” (Bharath 1995).

The issue of numerical size is important, within limits. On the one hand, that such a relatively small body should garner the attention, recognition and support that it has speaks to the power of ‘Carib’ in Trinidad, that is, the symbolic value of indigeneity and the interest in Amerindian history and ‘heritage’ generated in important circles beyond the SRCC, an observation that served to generate further interest on my part for the purposes of this research project. On the other hand, the small and diminishing size of the SRCC works to constrain any tendency toward radical politics of opposition, not that I sensed that such a tendency was lying in wait of future membership growth. Lastly, the diminishing membership affects the practical construction of practices that SRCC brokers identify as traditional, e.g. the processing of cassava was to be mechanised, the group of ladies seen in Figure 1.4 to be replaced by a mechanical grater. Some members jokingly called this the creation of “RoboCarib”, one other referring to the process as the “downsizing” of the SRCC, a result that they saw as the combination of an aging membership, defection to other faiths, and youth disinterest.

Harris wrote of the Arima Caribs: “their blood is mixed, the young people are no longer proud of being Amerindian, and they are struggling for cultural survival” (1990). In a six-week survey that I conducted among what I just indicated as maximum number of 31 members of the SRCC in late 1998, I found that 45% of members do not choose the label “Carib” in any way in describing themselves. Another 48% use “Carib” as an auto-denomination only if preceded by a qualifying label such as “Trinidadian”, “Spanish” or “Mixed”. Of this group, most preferred “Spanish Trinidadian” as an everyday mode of identifying themselves. Only 6% use “Carib” alone. At least 42% of the members are women over the age of 40, and many of those are over the age of 60; overall, males comprise 29% of the membership. Over 90% of the members interviewed defined themselves as earning insufficient income to meet all living expenses and debt obligations, and more than 75% indicated that they depended on allotments of

\[28\text{ By estranged I mean that the then Queen, Justa Werges, had largely disassociated herself from Bharath, the two often acting as rivals, with the main points of division being who should wield} \]
temporary work under the Unemployment Relief Program. By most definitions, the majority of SRCC members would qualify as “working class”, “working poor”, and even “lumpenproletarian”. The overwhelming majority of members are related by blood or marriage, deriving for the most part from two main inter-married families, Hernandez and Calderon. Even so, this has not ensured affective unity within the group.

One of the effects of the SRCC’s constant search for recognition, via the production of cultural events that attract attention, is that it has developed a pronounced external orientation to the detriment of building its own internal bases for reproduction, i.e., recruitment, consciousness-raising amongst members, social events for members, and the like. The Community Centre, in fact, is not often used by members, except for two weeks each year when they gather to work for the Festival or for occasions such as a news conference or a meeting. The Carib Community Centre is one of the SRCC’s primary platforms for exhibiting itself to a wider audience. Funding by the state, specifically for the Santa Rosa Festival, has not aided the SRCC in achieving any measure of economic self-reliance. All funds are to be spent for the Festival and no surplus is allowed to remain in the SRCC itself. What I, and some others, call the “alternate Carib Centre” (see Figure 1.7) comes closest to being a site for regular encounters among members.
The four leading cultural brokers that are members of the SRCC are President Bharath, the Queen (Justa Werges during my fieldwork), Cristo Atékosang Adonis (claiming the title of shaman; he founded Katayana “Indigenous Peoples’ Spiritual Consciousness” and heads a parang band, Los Niños del Mundo29), and Ricardo Kapaupana Cruz (also representing himself as a shaman; Cruz founded Kairi Tukuienyo Karinya [‘Hummingbird People of Trinidad and Tobago]). I was thus attracted to this medley of representational facets, from the matriarchal authority of the Queen, to the modern corporate President, to an almost ‘New Age’ spiritual-revivalist indigeneity, and all acting in the name of tradition, which I shall discuss in greater detail in chapter 4.

29 This band has a Website located at: <http://trinidadtobagoparang.freeyellow.com/>
Within the SRCC Bharath acts as the central cultural broker (see Bharath 1995) since, indeed, a significant part of the contemporary ‘resurgence’ of the SRCC, at least within the Arima context, stems from his initiatives in reorganising the SRCC. A basic overview of his story is necessary for tracing the development of the SRCC as he has led it for over a quarter of a century. His involvement began at 19 years of age, around 1973, after he returned from Detroit, Michigan, where he received his secondary schooling. On his return visits, Bharath claims that he was distressed to see how Arima’s Santa Rosa Festival had declined, in terms of preparation and participation: “as a child, six, seven, eight years [old], I remember how bright and beautiful the festival [was]. That is how it [my interest in revitalisation] started....mainly concerned about that festival”. He immediately adds:

The tradition as I knew it as a child was going to nothing, really nothing.... That is how it started, not having any knowledge at that time about Amerindian, Carib or Arawak, or the history of the people, or who was here first or last or whatever it is, but mainly concerned about that festival. [Bharath 1995, emphasis added]

His interest developed from there and he says that he called upon the Carib Queen³⁰ and elderly members and he states that he said to them: “Let us do something. Let us form a group, a community so that we can preserve these things”, thus indicating that the current SRCC is, at the very least, a reformulated body. Originally, as Bharath explained, he considered entering the priesthood with the hope of becoming the parish priest of Arima. He lost interest, by his own admission, when he was informed that it was unlikely that he would be assigned anywhere permanently, let alone Arima itself.

Bharath explains repeatedly and even emphatically (see also Almarales 1994) that when he began his career in Arima, it was never with the intention of leading an Amerindian revival. This forms one of the most dominant themes of his discussions of the Carib Community’s development and he repeats this even when the explanation is not solicited. I was drawn to this point since it seemed to
indicate the possibility of Bharath himself having his actions and outlooks reworked, reframed and reinterpreted by the larger social and cultural contexts in which he found himself, which together became a defining component of the way I see the re-engineering phenomenon.

Bharath says that he soon became interested in discovering how much of Arima’s history was owing to the Carib presence (something he says he had long taken for granted) and he became interested in researching and then publicising the “Amerindian contribution to the national foundation”, and the Carib role in the Santa Rosa Festival. Bharath’s formulation of this contribution also attracted my attention and helped me to focus on established norms for measuring the ‘worth’ of ethnic groups in Trinidad, and how the latter articulate their own representations with respect to these dominant conventions.

The need for leadership, for someone to form a committee and rebuild a community, for representation to government Ministries, for someone with valuable connections—for a broker—is a need that Bharath sees himself satisfying. The need for a new leader was also mandated by a prior breakdown of community gatherings given serious personal conflicts and by the fact, as Bharath states it, SRCC members were “so calm and docile” and did not push their claims. In becoming “better connected” with key local and national institutions, Bharath ran for the People’s National Movement, one of Trinidad’s two main parties and long its governing party, and he became an Arima Borough Councillor on three consecutive occasions spanning 1993-2002. My turning to a notion of brokerage and networking thus appears to have been inevitable, in retrospect.

Identification as ‘Carib’ is also a problem that SRCC brokers such as Bharath have had to grapple with. Amongst all Trinidadians, it can be difficult to physically distinguish all members of the SRCC as being distinct. Bharath, speaking of the intense miscegenation of the SRCC member families, notes that

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30 “Queen of the Caribs,” as she is referred to, was the person primarily responsible for overseeing preparations for the Santa Rosa Festival. Prior to Bharath’s institution of the presidency, the Queen was the only figure representing the pre-incorporated SRCC.

31 Since reading Brackette Williams (1989), which occurred after my first fieldwork study with the SRCC, I was struck by how both she and Bharath use the identical phrase.
those individuals who have condemned them have done so “on the basis of purity”, calling into question their Amerindian ancestry, but, he adds, it has been rare for them not to be accepted as “Carib”. The label, “Carib,” how and why it is used, is an important issue for the key brokers of the SRCC, both as a resource and a constraint, as I came to learn. On the one hand, brokers such as Bharath say that as far as they know the people who form the SRCC were “always referred to as the Santa Rosa Carib Community, referring to the people as descended from the Carib tribe”. On the other hand, spokespersons such as Bharath and Reyes state that the descendants are comprised of different tribal origins, using the terms “Carib” and “Arawak”. There is “mixture”, but, “because the people were referred to as the Caribs—the Santa Rosa Carib Community—the name remains, and when you hear it, an outsider hears it, they would look at the people as direct descendants from the Carib tribe” (Bharath 1995). “First Nations” is a designation that SRCC brokers have adopted in recent years, arguing that this is the correct “international designation” and, they claim, it is “endorsed” by the United Nations. Given that the membership is the product of miscegenation, and added to the fact that their use of the ‘Carib’ label is not fixed, Bharath explains that which SRCC brokers instead do “hold fast to”:

we know that our parents or foreparents on either side...came from that race, that Amerindian race who had certain traditions, who you know believed in certain things...did certain things, and that was passed down, to a certain extent, to the generation today.

The emphasis is on descent and especially the inheritance of ‘traditional practices’, which also served to focus my attention on ‘tradition’ in this project. On the other hand, Bharath does not emphasise continuity, as he will repeat, “we’ve lost the language, the religion, and a lot of the traditions”, even describing the Caribs as a group that is extinct or facing imminent extinction, in part, due to their patterns of inter-ethnic marital miscegenation. Since ‘race’ is not available as a clear marker of Carib identity, at least not given the dominant Trinidadian social conventions, brokers such as Bharath turn to ‘tradition’. Since many of the traditions have been

Indeed, Bharath’s statements seem to indicate that he sought to re-create a ‘community’ that had already suffered dissolution.
lost, as Bharath says, then ‘revival’ becomes necessary. Instruments of official recognition of the SRCC as ‘representative’ of Trinidad’s Amerindians are also utilised by SRCC brokers to shore up their identity. I will describe and analyse the processes which laid the foundations for these ways of framing Carib identity in chapters 2 and 3.

The global frame is one of great importance for many facets of the SRCC, a fact that also focused my attention where this research project is concerned. The SRCC has developed relations with foreign and international indigenous organisations. The SRCC has been recognised and aided in different ways from Amerindian groups in Dominica and Guyana as well as Canada’s Assembly of First Nations, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations. Links with Amerindian communities in Dominica and Guyana, in terms of educational exchange visits, are something the SRCC has maintained in the wake of Carifesta V in 1992 which brought several indigenous communities to Arima—“a gathering we never had before,” as Bharath says—to share their cultural forms. Bharath points out that the revival of Carib culture and identity takes place on a regional basis, as a relationship between the various communities. While not trying to reproduce North American Indian reservations, some SRCC members have broadened their knowledge of such communities, having visited Seminole Indian reservations in Florida, according to Bharath.

**Doing the Fieldwork**

Overall, I resided in Trinidad for over five years, having also studied there and having engaged in previous independent field research (Forte 1996a); this research project is to a significant extent derivative of that larger experience. My fieldwork took part in two stages. The first was a pilot study that I conducted in June-July 1995, when I met some of the key spokespersons for the Santa Rosa
Carib Community (Ricardo Bharath, Elma Reyes, and Ricardo Cruz), along with an elderly medicine man associated with the SRCC (Ian Capriata Dickson). I conducted two formal recorded interviews and engaged in several informal conversations, and began a collection and analysis of SRCC documents, newspaper reports, and general historical literature on the ethnohistory of Caribbean Amerindian populations, especially since 1492, along with materials on Trinidadian history. The second stage lasted from 15 February 1998 to 26 November 1999, followed up with online media research lasting until July 2001. I began the second stage with a round of formal, structured and recorded interviews of five leading members of the SRCC, and two leading ex-members. I met all the members of the SRCC and I conducted a survey of the group to gain a sense of a socio-economic profile of the SRCC membership and members’ attitudes and opinions on a wide range of subjects: ethnicity, religion, politics, money, tradition, identity, leadership. I spent many days on Calvary Hill, where most members reside, just “liming”34 with members. My own apartment became a field site insofar as certain key informants regularly visited and discussed a wide variety of subjects.

I attended meetings in the Carib Centre from 1998 through early 1999. I also engaged in collaborative writing projects with key members of the SRCC, by aiding in the drafting of a proposal for a land grant and further state funding (see SRCC 1998c)35, designing two Websites in conjunction with the SRCC and Los Niños del Mundo (Forte 1998-2001e, 1998-2001f), and an article for a newsletter (Forte 1999f). In addition, I assisted in producing an annual report of SRCC expenses, activities and projects for the Ministry of Culture (SRCC 1998a, 1998b, 1997), in the process also gathering past reports and letters (Bharath & Khan 1997a, 1997b). I also assisted in the drafting of letters to corporations and press releases for leading SRCC members (Bharath & Khan 1998). I attended key meetings between select members of the SRCC and external brokers (i.e.,

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34 See the Glossary.
35 This document is also available at <http://SRCC1CaribCommunity.tripod.com/project.htm>.
politicians and business persons). Moreover, I also attended non-Carib functions and events, such as political party meetings and rallies, and festivals, in the company of select SRCC members.

In many ways I served as an intern of sorts within the SRCC, doing some secretarial work and participating in meetings with SRCC leaders. A significant amount of the knowledge that I gained from this degree of association is of course confidential. While the experience provided insights that inevitably shape my perspectives, I am careful not to reveal private sources of information unless they have either already been publicly revealed by my SRCC informants or are clearly not damaging to the SRCC. I performed similar functions with both Katayana and Los Niños del Mundo, both headed by Cristo Adonis. Again, acting in a secretarial position, I also served as the e-mail intermediary for some of my informants (establishing e-mail accounts at their request, forwarding received messages to them, and typing and sending messages on their behalf). Once more, while I was exposed to a significant degree of private correspondence, and while this inevitably informs my outlook on the SRCC, I am careful to protect sources.

In addition to the above, I conducted participant observation within state structures at the local, Arima level, attending Statutory Meetings of the Arima Borough Council, interviewing and conversing with a number of Councillors and the Mayor, preparing letters for the SRCC President in connection with his constituency work, and even working on a joint project\textsuperscript{36} between myself and Kelvin Seifert, the Deputy Mayor, who also brought me on a working tour of Arima with some of his staff. In the course of my research I regularly interacted with at least four members of the Arima Borough Council, which also gave me a first hand introduction to party politics, the local workings of the People's National Movement and led to my meeting PNM leader and ex-Prime Minister Patrick Manning.

My rounds of interviews and conversations extended to priests in the Catholic Church, both within Arima, and ex-Arima. In addition, my research also

\textsuperscript{36} This was an essay competition that failed to materialise—see The Independent (23/04/1998:10) and Newsday (20/04/1998:04).
took me to another Arima-based institution of some public magnitude (and with connections to the SRCC), the National Parang Association of Trinidad and Tobago, whose events I attended, along with select SRCC members, on a number of occasions.

Lastly, I also benefited from a deeper grounding in Trinidad than that afforded by formal fieldwork alone. During the period in which I resided and studied in Trinidad from August 1990 until September 1993, when I was enrolled at the Institute of International Relations at the University of the West Indies, I was taught by several former government ministers and state technocrats (the University often functioning as an employment backup for members of the ‘out’ party). This served to immerse me in the thinking and practices of policy makers and technocrats, a virtual type of participant observation in state structures. I have also benefited from my friendship with numerous Trinidadians as an undergraduate at York University in Toronto. Of course, being married to a Trinidadian and having local in-laws has helped tremendously, if anything to keep Trinidad as a source of daily discussion in my home since 1994. Finally, having established myself within an international network of scholars and activists with common interests focusing on Caribbean Amerindian issues, I have benefited from a context of almost daily discussion and debate on issues of relevance to this study.

The Project Database

The main corpus of the ethnographic data consists of fieldnotes, a diary, an analysis journal, and both audio recordings and videotapes of (more than 55) interviews and key rituals, festivals and other public events of the SRCC in both 1998 and 1999 (approximately 78 hours of videotape footage), in addition to 396 photographs. Before I stopped counting, which occurred around March of 1999, I had held 155 formal and informal interviews with seven of my key informants.

37 Here I refer to the Caribbean Amerindian Centrelink at <http://www.centrelink.org> and Kacike <http://www.Kacike.org>, as well as various Usenet newsgroups such as soc.culture.caribbean, alt. native, soc. culture.native, soc.culture.puerto-rico, plus my own discussion list, Carbet-L,
within the SRCC and eight non-SRCC brokers who were directly associated and worked with the SRCC. In addition I conducted 31 survey-based interviews with SRCC members from November through December of 1998. I attended at least four SRCC meetings and five Borough Council statutory meetings, plus three formal functions of the Arima Borough Council. I also attended several political party meetings, religious festivals, arts and crafts exhibitions and other public events with SRCC informants, including those events produced by them. My total informant base in Trinidad (meaning regular informants rather than those with whom I occasionally conversed) consisted of 29 individuals: seven SRCC brokers, nine non-SRCC brokers, and a pool of family, friends, and academics at the University of the West Indies. Within that pool were Arimians not associated with the SRCC, people of ex-Arima descent of self-designated Spanish-Carib heritage (but with no desire for ties with the SRCC), and other Trinidadians who claimed to be of aboriginal heritage with no ties to either Arima or the SRCC. The total number of informants plus respondents and contacts in Trinidad amounted to 53 individuals. Outside of Trinidad, informants, respondents and contacts amounted to 22 individuals in Dominica, Belize, the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom.

As part of this fieldwork I also engaged in local archival research, library research, and media analysis. My archival research included the baptismal registers of the Santa Rosa Roman Catholic Church of Arima, from 1820 to 1920; the files on Arima held at the Archbishop’s Residence in Port of Spain; the Arima and Carib archival media files held at the Arima Public Library; the microfilmed collections of two nineteenth century Trinidadian newspapers held in the West Indian Reference Collection at the Main Library of the University of the West Indies in St. Augustine, and the rare books collection of nineteenth century works on Trinidad also held at that library along with its collection of lectures published by the defunct Historical Society of Trinidad and Tobago; and, Colonial Office reports held in the Haggerty Collection of French and British colonial documents housed at the State University of New York at Binghamton. I also collected many accessible at <http://www.centrelink.org/Carbet.html>, and other Caribbean studies listservs such as H-Caribbean and Standpipe-L.
hundreds, most likely thousands, of newspaper articles that appeared for the whole of my fieldwork period, under different headings (Caribs, Arima, Eco-Tourism, Community Development, Ethnicity, Economy, Party Politics, Festivals, Culture-Business, Parang Music, Catholic Church, International Presence). I also conducted research at the Companies Register at the Ministry of Legal Affairs in Port of Spain and at the National Museum of Trinidad and Tobago.

In September of 1998 I travelled to and stayed in the Carib Reserve in Dominica. There I mostly conducted formal recorded interviews with five key informants and met and spoke with several former Chiefs, including the then Chief (Hilary Frederick) and his current successor (Garnette Joseph), one Senator, three members of the Carib Council, and the head of a Carib NGO. In total I conversed with and interviewed 15 individuals. The main purpose of this research was to follow up on leads and connections that I had acquired from SRCC members in Trinidad. Similarly, in June 1998, I travelled to the Assembly of First Nations headquarters in Ottawa, Canada, where I carried out research in the documentation centre of the AFN.

Discussions and even interviews by e-mail were conducted with ex-Arimians in Miami, New York and London, as well as some of the SRCC’s Taino associates in New York and New Jersey. Guest books and ‘quizlets’ collecting online visitors’ responses to select questions was another method, albeit unscientific, by which I also gauged public reactions and estimations. In addition, equipping my Websites with standard tracking devices gave me information on visitors, including from which websites they came to mine, the search terms they used, the pages on my sites that they visited, how long they stayed, and the countries in which they were located, amongst other information (more details on this are in Forte 1999b). Most of this has been processed and reviewed in bulk so that no personal information is compromised.

**B. Approaches to the Problem in the Related Literature**

Given that a review of the relevant theoretical, historical and ethnographic literature occurs throughout this text, often where it can be most appropriately
integrated with the ethnography that it complements, here I will only foreground select concepts and approaches that have been useful in developing the analytical tools used in this project. Those analytical tools are deployed according to certain assumptions and an overall analytical methodology that is the subject of the next chapter.

One of the main problems at the centre of this project is the problem of indigeneity in the Caribbean, a problem that I addressed in previous sections. Here I only wish to add that this problem acquires greater focus with the recognition of the fact that the Caribbean is the site of the first European expansion beyond the confines of the ‘Old World’ and what many see as the fact that in sociological terms, “the Caribbean’ owes its origins to…colonialism” (Yelvington 1995a:1). Trinidad, like the rest of the Caribbean, “is not on the margin of the ‘so-called world system’ but, historically, squarely in the system’s foundation” (Yelvington 1995b:41). Given what some see as their genesis in globalising capitalism, C. L. R. James thus observed: “Caribbean territories have a universal significance far beyond their size and social weight” (1980:173). As a result of the diversity of global inputs localised in the Caribbean, writers like Edouard Glissant (1989:xxxii) describe Caribbean consciousness as one marked by historical dispossession, caught between the “fallacy of the primitive paradise”, “the mirage of Africa”, and the “illusion of a metropolitan identity”. Stuart Hall argues that it is this pervasive sense of “ruptures and discontinuities” that thus constitutes the “uniqueness of the Caribbean” (1994:394). My concern with indigeneity differs in some respects, and is developed along two fronts: (1) how despite these trends one can observe processes of developing a sense of Trinidadian national indigeneity, and (2) the indigeneity associated with those identifying with an Amerindian heritage. The sense of being either ‘ruptured’ or ‘discontinuous’ is a problem that Trinidadians have sought to overcome—as C. L. R. James put it, “the West Indian, in searching for an identity, is expressing one” (quoted in Lowenthal 1972:292).

On the basis of the above arguments, various authors have stressed the lack or impossibility of primordial pre-colonial attachments in the Caribbean. For example, Lieber (1981:4) argues that, “few regions on earth have been more
affected by North American styles, demands, needs and other metropolitan images of the way life should be lived”. Reminding us that, “the history of the Caribbean has been the history of imported peoples”, Lieber (1981:1, 4) adds that Trinidad “is virtually a satellite city of London and New York”. Oxaal (1968:11) commented that the African roots of “part of Trinidad’s lower class negro culture are today generally viewed as colourful but vanishing anachronisms”, and C. L. R. James emphasised that “these populations are essentially Westernised and they have been Westernised for centuries” (quoted in Oxaal 1968:1). Within this particular framework, active ongoing mimesis has thus been observed to be as much an aspect of Caribbean culture and society (see Naipaul 1969), as in the importation of fashions from the metropole, as it is a defining element of Caribbean political economy (see Girvan & Jefferson 1971; Beckford 1975; Ramsaran 1989), as in “bridging the development gap”, “industrialisation by invitation”, and “becoming more like the North” (see Addo 1985, 1984).

If we agree with the authors above, then we are faced with a problem in defining, locating and analysing indigeneity in the Caribbean. One approach is to take a long view of the cultural development of the post-Conquest Caribbean. ‘Carib’ as a category emerged from within the confrontation between Europe and the aboriginal Caribbean, as Peter Hulme (2000, 1992, 1990) has carefully detailed and argued. This, we might say, was the original act of engineering, to construct and ascribe traits of the worst imaginable savagery (cannibalism), indiscriminately, to all aboriginal enemies of Spanish geopolitical expansionism. ‘Carib’ is a world-systemic category insofar as it emerges with European expansion (Hulme 2000).38 ‘Carib’ is a powerful historical category and is enshrined at least as the starting point of all contemporary reconstructions of modern Caribbean history. Thus, in response to Lieber’s analysis, one could note that the indigene is a constituent part of that same “repertory set down by the colonial experience”, to use his words, a fact that can be observed in a variety of phenomena. Examples of the latter range

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38 Indeed, the Caribbean is the birthplace of colonial formulations and applications of the ‘cannibal’ (a term that was once a cognate of Carib) and applied worldwide, acting also as a foil for defining European nations. See Handler and Segal (1993:3) for the argument that Europe’s nations were constructed in opposition to “raced” others, which, I assume, would equally apply to the Caribs.
from the naming of the Caribbean after the Caribs, to the colonial creation of special reserves in Dominica and Guyana, to the use of Amerindians as allies in the military and trade arenas, to the role of Amerindians in countering slave rebellions and hunting runaway slaves, to modern cultural nationalist reconfigurations of Amerindians as national heroes and as the first to suffer and resist European slavery. Even in their presumed absence, Amerindians still exercise a ‘presence’, even if only in symbolic and discursive terms. The latter observation, as it is stressed in this project, is a significant issue that deserves greater attention.

Other approaches, aside from those already mentioned in this chapter, highlight the contemporary Caribbean indigenous resurgence as a form of contemporary invention and as instituted recently. Eguchi (1997) looks at the creation of traditions meant to denote purity and continuity in Dominica, in conjunction with their presentation for the tourist market in Dominica and in North America and Europe. Eguchi thus adopts an “invented traditions” approach that is on the conceptual agenda in discussions of manifestations of modern Caribbean identifications with an indigenous heritage. Anthony Layng (1985, 1983, 1979-1980) also argued that Carib identity in Dominica could neither be rooted in surviving traditions nor could it rest on ‘racial’ markers, instead stressing territoriality as the defining basis of Carib identity. Gregoire and Kanem (1989:53-54) outline the emergence of “Caribism” in Dominica, following the island’s independence from Britain in 1978 and the new parliament’s restoration of the Carib Reserve, previously established and dissolved by the British administration. Concerning Belize, Wilk and Chapin (1989) spoke of an externalised, ‘cultural events’ orientation amongst the Black Caribs (Garifuna) that developed with the formation in the 1980s of new organisations that had crystallised around the celebration of Carib Settlement Day and to choose a “Miss Garifuna Belize”. Indeed, there appears to be an almost standardised menu of practices for representing Caribbean Amerindians: dance troupes, crafts, Indian Model Villages, Cultural Centres, arts shows, museums, and beauty pageants (i.e., in Belize, Dominica, Trinidad). Two studies by Palacio (1992, 1989) have described
measures adopted by various Caribbean governments to commemorate and
celebrate Amerindian heritage. The volume edited by Gabriel Haslip-Viera
(1999b), Taino Revival: Critical Perspectives on Puerto Rican Identity and
Cultural Politics, focuses on the canonisation of the Taino in Puerto Rican cultural
nationalism and its activation within the diaspora population in the United States.
The problem of how to explain these phenomena remains to be developed further,
especially with reference to Trinidad.

Perspectives on the instrumentality of ethnic politics\textsuperscript{39} connect the
articulation and objectification of identities to the quest for rewards, in a manner
that is relevant to the SRCC case. Karen Fog Olwig (1993:89-90) argues that “the
concept of the traditional, bounded, integrated cultural entity has become an
increasingly important political tool in the non-Western world”, as a means of
acquiring recognition, rights and resources within nation-states. In Abner Cohen’s
(1974) “interest group” approach to ethnicity, material interests are a key element
in ethnic politics.\textsuperscript{40} Yelvington (1991:166), writing in the same vein as Archer
(1988),\textsuperscript{41} also ties interests to the way symbols are deployed: “to the extent that
symbols become increasingly involved in social action, they become infatuated
with interests, ends, and means”. The recognition that ethnicity “is a strategy
(possibly one of many) used by groups seeking advantage and attempting to avoid
disadvantage in specific socioeconomic situations”, is also elaborated by Morton
Klass (1985:143) and is an argument that is developed further by Stanley Tambiah
(1994).

Brackette Williams’ analytical framework brings the state into the question
of how groups organise and legitimate their power or their quest for it. Williams
views the state as a set of power-brokering apparati, and she sees state intervention

\textsuperscript{39} Of course, we also need to resist lingering anthropological biases that see ‘instrumentalist actors’
as somehow corrupting ‘good culture’ and rendering it ‘fake culture’. Stated differently, romantic
primitivism and theories of primordiality that are not grounded in what the Comaroffs have called
the “hardened materialities of life” are not a good answer to a theory that some might scornfully
call an “economic man theory of ethnicity”.

\textsuperscript{40} As he says, the “earning of livelihood, the struggle for a larger share of income from the
economic system, including the struggle for housing, for higher education and for other benefits,
and similar issues constitute an important variable significantly related to ethnicity” (Cohen

\textsuperscript{41} See the discussion of Margaret Archer’s work in the next chapter.
as a factor in establishing the material and symbolic conditions for the production of ethnic groups (B. Williams 1989:406, 427). Tambiah also notes that the state, as the central political authority, "is now, after years of escalating ethnic divisiveness and enabling regional cultures and societies to attain their 'authentic' identities and interests" (1994:436). He also links the 'state as referee' phenomenon to the bolstering of ethnic strategising in making claims on state resources, which he sees as inevitably reinforcing the "patron/client networks, bossism, and patronage structure" (Tambiah 1994:436). Williams’ focus on concepts of value and credit underscore an approach that I also wish to adopt: in studying the formation of categorical identities we should also endeavour to "disclose the meaning of processes of identification for the political and economic dimensions of social organisation" (1989:401). The quotation at the opening of the chapter indicates one key entry point that Williams has set out for considering the state, power, brokers, and displays of heritage and traditions that are at the heart of this project—as she puts it: "designated ethnic celebrations provide forums for such [ethnic] groups to display colourful proof that they too have contributed to the national foundation" (B. Williams 1989:435).

In fact, it at this juncture between instrumentality, patronage-brokerage, and the political and economic implications of the role of the state in "managing diversity,"\(^2\) that we can discern the political economy of tradition, as foreshadowed in an earlier section of this chapter. Of course, it is impossible, nor very illuminating, to define something that is contextually bound in a manner that suits all situations at all times. Even so, certain approaches have been especially helpful in outlining or at least informing this notion as I utilise it. Essentially what we are considering is the context and ramifications of power in the construction and valuation of identities and the practices, rituals and objects cast as emblematic of those identities. Some notion of ranking groups is also involved, thus the political economy of tradition can refer to the premise that ethnic differences are
comparable (Eriksen 1993) and, by implication, can be ‘organised’ within a system of comparative valuations managed, ultimately, by élites and powerful social and political institutions (see also B. Williams 1989:412, 435; Yelvington 1995b:164). However, one can frame this perspective in more profound terms of how we analyse cultural practices. Bourdieu (1994:173) argues that we can “extend economic calculation to all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formulation”, and later he speaks of developing a “general science of the economy of practices” that melts the dichotomy of the economic versus the non-economic, so that all practices can be seen as aimed at maximising material and/or “symbolic profit” (1994:177). In a related vein, Marcus and Fischer (1986:85) state that not only “is the cultural construction of meaning and symbols inherently a matter of political and economic interests, but the reverse also holds—the concerns of political economy are inherently about conflicts over meanings and symbols”. The political economy of tradition, as outlined previously, builds on these perspectives, on the one hand pointing to straightforward examples of politics and economics merging in the construction and valuation of particular traditions, and on the other hand operating with a view of applying political economic assumptions to the study of cultural practices and vice versa.

At this stage we can now focus specifically on the dimension of tradition, to the extent that the SRCC itself highlights traditions as embodying its identity, as the basis for staking its claim of contribution to the national foundation, and tradition is also important to the extent that the state and international organisations also foster, support or enable the construction and putative preservation of indigenous traditions. One of the dominant themes in the literature on tradition over the past two decades has been the renewed debate between primordial and instrumental/constructivist/situational perspectives occasioned by the “invention of tradition” approach and its diverse anthropological variants. The SRCC represents a complex mix of possibilities that render dichotomous analyses

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42 I borrow this phrase from Basdeo Panday, Prime Minister of Trinidad & Tobago, who outlined the need for the state to “manage diversity” in order to prevent the country from “becoming another
problematic. Both sides of the debate share at least one premise in common: tradition is motivated (see Bentley 1987). (Of course, both sides of the debate also assume that people actively attach themselves to certain traditions, so that neither side attempts toconcertedly explain why or how traditions are lost, forgotten, or deliberately abandoned.)

Numerous concepts in anthropology, and the wider social sciences, have dealt with the reactivation and revival of traditions and identities in different ways and contexts, resulting in what Sissons (1993:97) called a “bewildering variety of terms”. I will now trace some of the genealogy of these terms while pointing to what I perceive as their advantages and shortcomings, at least from the perspective of this project. Ralph Linton spoke of “nativistic movements,” with a key definitional aspect being: “Any conscious, organised attempt on the part of a society’s members to revive or perpetuate selected aspects of its culture” (1943:230). This approach emphasises conscious, organised effort, emerging when a group feels its culture threatened in a context of close and continuous contact with other societies, in situations of social stress and inequalities between groups. Linton notes that the most distinctive elements (in relation to other cultures) are emphasised in such movements as symbolically valuable. Linton thus introduced a notion that would later be referred to as objectification or reinvention when he wrote: “what really happens in all nativistic movements is that certain current or remembered elements of a culture are selected for emphasis and given symbolic value” (1943:231). Linton did not necessarily see ‘nativism’ as a form of ‘resistance’ either, and towards the end of his article (note its date) he tied his argument to a critique of Nazi philosophy. Anthony Wallace (1956) developed his concept of “revitalisation movements”, which most closely resembles Linton’s “magical nativistic movements” for their clear religious messianic quality, although Wallace intends to use “revitalisation” as an umbrella term that includes “revolution”. Similar to Linton, he defines a revitalisation movement “as a deliberate, organised, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more
satisfying culture” (Wallace 1956:265). The purpose, in Wallace’s view, is to innovate a new cultural system, and emerges from situations of stress, conflict and inequality. Thus far, tradition is treated by implication in connection with ethnic politicisation. Left here, these approaches make a number of useful points and observations. Indeed, we could argue that Linton and Wallace founded anthropological approaches to tradition in terms of politicisation and construction.

That which needs to be added, in my view, is: (1) more work on the social structure within which such phenomena emerge, and through which their organisational form is defined; (2) more in-depth analysis and description of how certain practices, rituals, objects or discourses come to be selected, defined and valued as ‘traditions’; (3) deeper probing of why such revivalist movements occur in a particular time-space; (4) examining the role, if any, of globalising forces; (5) whereas Linton and Wallace focus on the actions of agents inside these movements, we could also focus on the larger, powerful, external institutions participating and vesting interests in such resurgence; and, (6) analysis of cases that are not engaged in conflict, opposition, agitation or rebellion, such as the SRCC.

Some of the more recent anthropological literature on tradition focuses on concepts and processes of reinvention, reinterpretation, and objectification of traditions. In general, most involve an implied caution against the “naturalisation” of culture in our analyses (Handler & Linnekin 1984:278). Of especial import to anthropologists working in this framework has been the “invention of tradition” perspective. The notion of “invention” is defined by Eric Hobsbawm (1983:1) as the rapid institution of traditions, as well as actually inventing and constructing outright and then seeking to formally institute these novelties. As he explains, the term “invented tradition” is used in a broad sense and focuses on the temporal dimension, emphasising rapidity of institution, while also equating invention with construction (Hobsbawm 1983:1). Specifically, he says:

‘Invented tradition’ is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of ritual or

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43 These aspects of both Linton’s and Wallace’s work share overlaps with the work of Vittorio Lanternari (1962).
symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past. [Hobsbawm 1983:1]

Hobsbawm also notes that the inventions occur in accordance with certain “overtly or tacitly accepted rules” that we can logically assume are prior to the invented tradition. In addition, Hobsbawm carefully qualifies and limits the applicability of his concept, a fact often lost in the more polemical critiques (e.g. Sahlins 1993).\textsuperscript{44} First, Hobsbawm says that when one finds cases where “the old ways are still alive” and where “traditions need be neither revived nor invented”, then his approach cannot be used (Hobsbawm 1983:8). In addition, his work makes it clear that the ‘agents’ responsible for “invention” are states themselves. Furthermore, he does not indicate if “revival” of tradition is to be equated with “invention”. I see the “invention of tradition” as a useful starting point, and at the very least as a valuable counterpoint to the essentialist “billiard ball models of culture” critiqued by Eric Wolf (1994, 1990, 1984, 1982), which do little to account for processes of change and interaction.

Some anthropologists have applied Hobsbawm’s concept of invention,\textsuperscript{45} while disputing precisely the notion of old, continuous traditions that Hobsbawm’s approach permits, in arguing that even “traditional culture” is increasingly

\textsuperscript{44} For example, while Sahlins denounces anthropologists who embrace the “invention of tradition” approach as being those who “do in theory what imperialism failed to do in practice” (Sahlins 1993:381), he does not seem to recall that the majority of chapters in Hobsbawm and Ranger’s volume deal with European cases. How is the study of invented traditions in the English coronation ceremony, for example, one that demonstrates “imperialism”? In addition, the argument that ‘traditional cultures’ persisted in spite of colonialism is one that is also implied in neo-liberal attempts to salvage and popularise Modernisation Theory: there is no need for the “West” to feel guilty about colonialism since it did not really eliminate non-European cultures—indeed, it is precisely because traditional cultures survived that modernity and development have failed to take hold and thus, once more, there is no reason for “Westerners” to feel any guilt. Contra Sahlins and Friedman (1996), I would argue that polemical accusations of theoretical ‘imperialism’ should be held in abeyance if dialogue is to proceed.

\textsuperscript{45} One of the lesser-known anthropological concepts dealing with the construction of traditions emerged from the study of the Garifuna of Belize. Gonzalez (1983:157) spoke of “neoteric” traditions, where “neoteries” describes “a type of society which, springing from the ashes of warfare, forced migration or other calamity, had survived by patching together bits and pieces from its cultural heritage while at the same time borrowing and inventing freely and rapidly in order to cope with new, completely different circumstances”.

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**INTRODUCTION**

**REVIVING CARIBS**

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recognisable as more of an “invention” constructed for contemporary purposes (see Hanson 1989). Some anthropologists likewise speak in terms of the “ongoing reinvention of traditions”. Handler and Linnekin (1984:273) argue that tradition is not simply an inherited body of customs and beliefs, not a “core of inherited culture traits whose continuity and boundedness are analogous to that of a natural object,” but that tradition is instead a symbolic construction. As they explain further: “tradition is invented because it is necessarily reconstructed in the present, notwithstanding some participants’ understanding of such activities as being preservation rather than invention”, adding that while, “traditional action may refer to the past...to ‘be about’ or to refer to is a symbolic rather than natural relationship, and as such it is characterized by discontinuity as by continuity” (Handler & Linnekin 1984:279, 276). They also argue against seeing culture and tradition as “having an essence apart from our interpretation of them” (Handler & Linnekin 1984:273). Moreover, the “larger society’s notions of tradition and cultural identity...become part of the community’s self-image” (Handler & Linnekin 1984:285). Unlike Hobsbawm, Handler and Linnekin also address the question of “revival,” stressing that, “cultural revivals change the traditions they attempt to revive,” since, “to do something because it is traditional is already to reinterpret, and hence to change it” (Handler & Linnekin 1984:276, 281). Linnekin (1983:241) expanded on this further, arguing that the “use of a defining tradition exemplifies the objectification...and the invention...of a symbolic construct”. Tradition, she argues, “is not a coherent body of customs, lying ‘out there’ to be discovered, but an a priori model that shapes individual and group experience and is, in turn, shaped by it” (Linnekin 1983:241). Instead, “cultural revivalists”, in searching for “an authentic heritage as the basis for ethnic distinctiveness” simultaneously “create” the culture as they “rediscover” it (Linnekin 1983:241). Echoing Hobsbawm, Linnekin argues, “sometimes altogether new practices and items are constructed as ancient tradition” (1983:243).

At the same time as Handler and Linnekin, Immanuel Wallerstein also published a concept of “reinvention” noting that when groups seek to establish their particularities, “they reinvent their histories. They look for ‘continuities’
which at that moment in time will be congenial” (1984:63). Wallerstein’s focus is twofold: one, the historiographic intellectual exercise of rewriting history, and, two, a focus on congeniality that echoes Linton above. This approach might be especially relevant to the SRCC’s research and self-representation activities, and is one that I value for opening up the discussion to wider contexts and the roles of structures and a variety agents in helping to shape that which is particular, and that which is particularly congenial. As Anthony Cohen (1989:99) states this case: “The manner in which the past is invoked is strongly indicative of the kinds of circumstance which makes such a 'past-reference’ salient. It is a selective construction of the past which resonates with contemporary influences”. On this question of history in articulating ethnicity and its emblematic traditions, Yelvington draws on Hobsbawm and sees history as a “legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion” (Yelvington 1991:166). Moreover, other authors have argued that “the selection of what constitutes tradition is always made in the present; the content of the past is modified and redefined according to a modern significance” (Linnekin 1983:241; see also Landsman & Ciborski 1992:441). Olwig’s (1999) analysis of the “heritage movement” also foregrounds the politics of history. She thus argues: “Many of the most forceful and visible expressions of the past are fuelled by the so-called heritage movement, which is becoming a worldwide concern, born of an uneasy combination of national ideology, ethnic politics, and tourist industry needs” (Olwig 1999:370). I find this combination interesting in the way it mirrors the case of the SRCC in Trinidad. To summarise what has been outlined thus far, this project tends to draw on that literature that focuses on traditions für sich more than traditions an sich.

Nicholas Thomas (1992) outlined a bundle of concepts referring to ways traditions can be utilised, shaped and reconstructed. Thomas’ primary principle is, akin to Handler, Linnekin, and A. P. Cohen, that, “self-representation never takes place in isolation and...it is frequently oppositional or reactive” (1992:213). His second principle is that the “reform and reformulation” of tradition involves an “immediate strategy” for dealing “both with what is inadequate in intersocial relations and with what seems unsatisfactory or backward in one’s own situation”
Thomas' concept of "articulation", unlike "invention", involves cases where, "something already present becomes explicit or is made explicit in new terms that alter its content, valorisation, and ramifications" (1992:220). One could argue that this is similar to Handler and Linnekin's treatment of revival as reinvention, only with a change of terms. Another of Thomas' concepts relevant to this project, is the "objectification of tradition": the organisation of a "neotraditional culture" organised primarily in novel and oppositional terms; reifying practices and characteristics of an "emblematic way of life" signifying the distinctiveness of a community; and, where identity and tradition are "part of a broader field of oppositional naming and categorisation" (Thomas 1992:215, 216).

Sissons (1993) attempts to consolidate these various concepts under the heading of the politicisation and rationalisation of tradition. By "politicisation" Sissons means "the use of tradition to articulate national, ethnic and regional identities" and by "rationalisation" he means "the explicit formulation and codification of tradition" (1993:99). Sissons argues that the politicisation of tradition, "when pursued by national élitists, is normally tied to the enhancement of distinctive national or regional identities in a post-colonial, or neo-colonial context" (1993:99). On the other hand, "when pursued by ethnic leaders, in opposition to state policies and actions, it takes the form of a reactive objectification of culture" (Sissons 1993:99), echoing Thomas' conceptual formulation. The "rationalisation of tradition", as Sissons explains it, accompanies the "ethnicisation" process, "replacing implicit meaning and taken-for-granted practice with explicit and 'reasoned' tradition" (1993:113). On the one hand, Sissons' approach is useful for balancing state and non-state agents, its attentiveness to context, and its attempt to unify the study of inventions and constructions of tradition. On the other hand, in explaining his terms, he breeds a whole new plethora of additional terms, most synonymous with already
established concepts yet not developed in any kind of sustained dialogue with the latter.

Finally, another of the approaches that I found useful in developing this study is Richard Antoun’s “social organisation of tradition”, his focus on culture brokers, and their “reinterpretation” of tradition. The “reinterpretation of tradition” perspective sees brokers as responsible for accepting, rejecting, reinterpreting or accommodating customs and traditions within a framework of what some call the “social organisation of tradition,” (Antoun 1989:17). The “social organisation of tradition” is defined by Antoun as a process that is to be found when communities become linked to, “overarching political, economic and religious structures and implicated in the concomitant processes of debt, politics, social control, and the quest for salvation” (Antoun 1989:17). I would add that the social organisation of tradition, in definitional terms, would be altered by the historical and social contexts and the sorts of traditions we study as ethnographers, but Antoun’s definition is a good starting point. The work of the culture broker, “involves the necessary selection from and interpretation of tradition”; culture brokers interpret a message “for a particular clientele...at the same time that they deal with political and religious hierarchies [amongst others] whose norms and aims [may] differ from those of both the culture broker and his audience” (Antoun 1989:4-5). The culture broker is, in Antoun’s perspective, a translator, intermediary, interpreter, and marshal of tradition. As Antoun adds, “it is these figures who must accept, reject, reinterpret, or accommodate the diversity of local custom with the ordinances of religion” where he speaks of a local Imam as a broker (1989:17). Much of Antoun’s ethnographic concern is for religious leaders and sacred traditions.

One could also add that brokers promote, publicise, organise and add value where secular traditions are concerned, and even where sacred traditions are involved, such as the Santa Rosa Festival in Arima. The focus on cultural brokers is important, as Jean and John Comaroff (1999:295) argue: “Without human
agents, without specified locations and movements and actions, realities are not realised, nothing takes place, the present has no presence". This perspective can be used to highlight the importance of the work of brokers in realising the presence of specific traditions, and their value. Peace (1998:274), looking at trade in popular culture at the national and international levels, sees brokerage as, “located between the core areas of global production on the one hand and semi-peripheral areas of popular consumption on the other”, and notes that, “brokers do much more than merely trade in culture. They define its meaning, they establish its significance in the overall order of things, they endow it with particular kinds of power”. In addition, Peace argues that, “the concept of broker emphasises above all the importance of conscious and calculating social agency in what can be too easily and mystifyingly represented as an impersonal marketplace driven by forces of supply and demand”, and in his view, “brokerage underscores the point that regional-global articulation is, first and foremost, a complex, socio-politically mediated constellation of relations, not just a matter of mere economics” (1998:278). He also adds that processes of endowing cultural productions with special value, “have to be calculatingly engineered, carefully fabricated, and that is always and everywhere the forte of cultural intermediaries” (Peace 1998:279, emphasis added). What is problematic here is the implication that brokers create value mostly through their own agency.

Critiques of the matrix of invention-construction concepts have been issued on a number of fronts. Some would argue that these approaches introduce other problems by implying that there are ‘authentic’ traditions somewhere or at some point that act as the benchmark or baseline by which to determine that something is invented or reinvented in the first place. Instead I would argue that the focus of these approaches is on posing invention and reinvention as counterpoints to seamless continuity and passive inheritance, thus their focus seems to be on agency, history and change, rather than issuing value judgements of fakery or impurity. Of course, there is always the historicist temptation to be overzealous in

46 If one is sensitive to the tradutore-tradittore principle, then even the broker as translator and reinterpreter provides another addition to the literature of the transformation of tradition in its
showing that what is done now is not quite the same as it was done yesterday, while perhaps missing the broader, more interesting cultural and socio-political implications. On the other hand, we may be tempted to focus on the ‘doing’, risking that we miss that while the ‘doing’ of a tradition may seem the same from one year to the next, its meanings have been changed, in addition to ‘inevitable’ modifications as a matter of course (Vayda 1994:322). Jackson extends these latter arguments further, drawing on her study of Tukanoan Indians in Colombia:

if a ritual evolves from something Tukanoans do entirely for one another to something they do for outsiders, or if Tukanoans perform a ritual for themselves because it fosters a self-image that has been inspired by outsiders, then despite superficial similarities between traditional rituals and these new ones, they are not traditional in some important aspects. [Jackson 1989:132]

Some authors argue in favour of drawing a distinction between “invention” and “construction” (Mato 1996). Mato’s view is that Hobsbawm’s “invention” can be differentiated from “the general social dynamic of making representations, which may be said to involve social practices that vary in their degree of conscious and formal intent” (1996:63). His emphasis, drawing on Linnekin’s more recent work, suggests that constructions may be conducted ‘unconsciously’ while inventions are fully conscious constructions (Mato 1996:63). I appreciate Mato’s openness to various cases and possibilities, his consideration of a range of agency and consciousness, even though I feel that the distinction he draws is somewhat defensive. I also agree with Mato’s focus on construction as not asserting itself as opposed to anything that may be considered more ‘real’—“from this point of view, the dilemmas ‘real vs. imagined’, ‘authentic vs. false’, or ‘genuine vs. spurious’, are simply not pertinent” (1996:64).

Others argue that “invention” and cognate approaches fail to take into account pre-existing social and cultural realities that make the invention possible, although I would see Hobsbawm, Thomas and Antoun as exempt from this critique since all three explicitly refer to pre-existing formations. The “experiential substrate” perspective employed by A. D. Smith (1993:31) and Friedman
(1994:13), counters “invention” by arguing that there must be a substrate of shared motivational and interpretive fields underlying what superficially appears as complete novelty. As A. D. Smith argued: “‘inventing’ ethnies, like creating nations, requires certain preexisting elements and appropriate conditions. Otherwise, the ‘inventions’ will fail to take root among the designated populations” (1993:31). Neil Whitehead (1990:360) criticises this approach for theoretically overemphasising the durability of ethnic formations and failing to account for the rapidity of change in their boundaries and content. Also, I do not see “preexisting elements” as synonymous with “appropriate conditions” since the latter may materialise at roughly the same time as the invention. Indeed, inventions do not necessarily require the experiential substrate and cultural rootedness assumed by Smith and Friedman. As I will show in the ethnography presented herein, what can really make a new practice take hold and take on the aura of ‘tradition’ is state support, insistent repetition by key performers, lack of opposition or contradiction from those who are putatively represented by the new tradition, media attention, and the support and involvement of political and cultural élites. Indeed, Trinidad also presents cases where experientially rooted attempts at invention have in fact altogether failed to take hold.\footnote{Many thanks to Richard Antoun for discussing this question with me.} I would still hold that primordialist or constructivist accounts may explain one situation better than another, that there is no need for a stark “either-or” stance, and that there will be a good deal of variability in terms of place and time.

An additional problem concerns what seems to be analytical selectivity in terms of the agents of invention in much of the literature, some focusing on states, others on select ethnic groups or communities, and both often in isolation from each other. The problem is either one of structure-less agency and the notion of ‘man making his own culture’, or that of a top-down approach to culture. In focusing on the display of indigenous heritage, my interest lies in examining the

\footnote{One example is the largely forgotten attempt to create a local, ‘self-reliant’ and ‘self-sufficient’ substitute for Santa Claus under the 1986–91 National Alliance for Reconstruction regime, a figure called “Papa Jolly” who in appearance was a take on the old Afro-French Creole myth of Papa Bois, living in the bush, playing Parang music. He was to be seen on television for one Christmas only.}
role of presentation to others in the constitution of selfhood. There is insufficient discussion in the approaches outlined above concerning how a tradition is socially organised and valorised, contextually placed, with a *multiple* vesting of interests in the act of 'co-production' (see Rogers 1996). My own interest in the structure-agency issues of tradition involves the agency of state bodies and technocrats, patrons, and brokers engaged with the SRCC, resulting in a multifaceted organisation, and the interaction of these agents with established social conventions, cultural institutions, political ideologies, and historical narratives.

"Re-engineering", as explained in previous sections, is intended to bridge concepts of construction in a manner similar to Mark Rogers' stress on the "dialogic coproduction of 'indigenous' rhetoric", involving a group's selective interaction with national and global contexts (Rogers 1996:79). The ethnographic case here is not uni-dimensional—no single concept will embrace its multifaceted nature, the multiple and divergent interests vested in 'the Carib revival', and the multiple representations of 'Carib-ness'. Given the latter, I saw both an ethnographic and analytical need for an umbrella approach that could also help in consolidating established knowledge. At the same time, I wished to emphasise history, structural power (Wolf 1990), the local-global stretch of cultural practice, and the agency of brokers. Finally, I see re-engineering as a term reflecting what the Comaroffs argue when they say that, "the epistemic objects of our inquiry are no longer nouns—culture, society, institutions, or whatever—but compound verbs describing the construction and deconstruction of more-or-less stable practices, conventions, forms, commodities, abstractions" (1999:295). The manner in which each of the chapters of this work is titled was meant to reflect the latter observation.

In summary, I treat indigeneity as both a presence and as a problem in the Caribbean, posing certain theoretical and ethnographic challenges. I consider indigeneity at the intersection of the local, national, and global. I ask: How is indigeneity constructed, interpreted, expressed? By whom, when, why? I address such questions by arguing that indigeneity is the result of historical processes of re-engineering, focusing on multiple ideas, interests, institutions and actors
involved, each imprinting and pulling indigeneity in certain directions. In this study, tradition is at the focus of re-engineering. Moreover, I say that re-engineering can be analysed in terms of political economic processes and contexts. I thus focus on cultural brokers engaged in reinterpreting, objectifying and articulating traditions, within a wider social organisation of tradition shaped by various historical processes, political economic contexts and diverse material and ideational interests.

**Mapping the Project**

In chapter 1, I address the question of structure and agency as this serves as the framework of assumptions encompassing the project. In that chapter I examine the approaches of Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, and Margaret Archer with respect to each other and with respect to established anthropological theories of cultural integration, social interaction, and agency. In a manner similar to Yelvington (1995b) I argue in favour of Archer’s emphasis on “morphogenesis” in order to overcome the limitations of Giddens’ and Bourdieu’s approaches in terms of their difficulty in explaining historical change. As I explained in a previous section, history is a critical factor in re-engineering indigeneity. However, this chapter also serves to underline questions of power, hegemony and knowledge that form the necessary analytical backdrop of this project.

In chapter 2 I deal with history in more empirical terms, highlighting the contexts, processes, and interests behind the construction and reproduction of the figure of the ‘Carib’, with a special focus on Trinidad itself, whilst tracking the enduring influence of historical texts on contemporary reinterpretations and articulations of the presence of the Carib. In that chapter I focus on the political economy of identity construction with reference to Caribbean Amerindians in the colonial period, the original phase of engineering ‘Carib’, thus building the temporal and ideational field of interaction encompassing this identity construction. I thus proceed from an outline of the political economy of ‘Carib’ as a mediating label, a historical category, and a historical narrative that has been both canonised and localised within Trinidad.
Chapter 3 continues the historical analysis but with especial concern for the spatial dimension of ‘emplacing’ Carib identity. While chapter 2 focuses on the regional and Trinidad-wide dimensions, chapter 3 concentrates on how Arima came to be sited as the place of the Caribs in Trinidad, with a focus on the discourses, processes, actors and institutions involved, and with additional attention to the position of the Amerindian in the colonial ‘race’ hierarchy. Both chapters 2 and 3 also reveal the modes by which ‘Carib’ came to have a value and how that value has changed. The aim of this chapter is thus to spotlight the modes by which Arima has come to be popularly referred to as the home of the Caribs, and how the Carib came to be localised within Arima via at least two previous ‘revivals’ of the presence of the Amerindian in Arima, in both demographic and symbolic terms. This chapter thus provides further depth to the concept of re-engineering as an historical process. Furthermore, both chapters 2 and 3 are designed, in part, to counter the finality of perspectives that argue in terms of the dearth of indigeneity in modern Caribbean cultural development by showing that, indeed, the Amerindian (whether in the flesh or as a symbol) constituted an important part of the repertory set down by colonial experience, to use Lieber’s terms, whilst also providing an important and enduring set of textual distillates that continue to influence contemporary definitions and discussions of Amerindian indigeneity.

In chapter 4 I underscore the role of the cultural broker in promoting and shaping the meaning and value of the Carib. I focus on contemporary patterns of cultural brokerage and the construction of indigeneity in Trinidad, highlighting the structural field of socio-cultural interaction underlying the current re-engineering of indigeneity. The primary aim of that chapter is to provide a description and analysis of the relevant forms of cultural brokerage whilst examining in depth the network of contemporary interests at work and the main actors and institutions that were at the heart of my ethnographic research. Bringing to life those actors currently active at the local level is one of the main aims of this chapter. However, only condensed biographic information on the wide range of brokers can be presented here, within the confines of this project. Thus, by necessity, only the
most salient points of the various actors’ interests, background and activities will be presented, rather than attempt a comprehensive biography that would not necessarily bring into focus the main themes of this work.

The focus of chapter 5 is on the duality of nationalist and ethnic constructions of indigeneity in contemporary Trinidadian cultural politics. One of the focal aims of this chapter centres on demonstrating the degree to which nationalist discourses shape and mediate constructions of Carib indigeneity, and the ways in which SRCC brokers define such indigeneity with respect to these and older constructions. Moreover, I direct attention to the ways in which colonial discourses of indigeneity are ‘replayed’ in contemporary Trinidad via certain nationally sponsored traditions and institutions. In the process I also update the ways in which we can outline a contemporary ‘political economy of tradition’ with respect to cultural politics in the modern Trinidadian nation-state. In addition, this chapter examines those aspects of the SRCC’s approaches to ‘tradition’ (as outlined in the preceding ethnographic synopsis) that involve symbolically ‘reclaiming’ as ‘Amerindian’ certain practices located within the wider Creole cultural setting, and then their subsequent reappropriation as indigenous in contemporary constructions of national history. The articulation and presentation of Carib traditions for the national audience is thus a key part of this chapter’s focus on the contemporary definition and presentation of Carib indigeneity.

Chapter 6, the final ethnographic chapter, features the global dimension of current reinterpretations and valuations of the Carib in Trinidad. I therefore outline the extent to which the contemporary SRCC constructs and reinterprets its indigeneity in and through a network of globally organised representations of aboriginality. Furthermore, I bring attention to the legitimating and value-adding impact of the SRCC’s international associations within the Trinidadian social context. As emblematic of the impact of the insertion of the SRCC within globalised discourses and networks of aboriginality, I focus on the development of new SRCC traditions that embody and enact their transformation into internationally defined “First Nations”.
I conclude this project with a consideration of the overall transformations in the processes and practices of representing and reinterpreting Carib indigeneity, whilst also pointing toward future research possibilities. The key element of this chapter is a discussion of how we go about theorising indigeneity, how we are to analytically locate indigeneity, and ways of addressing indigeneity as a theoretical and ethnographic problem. I also critically address the significance of this project and its limitations. Finally, I reflect on some of the problems and prospects facing the SRCC in its practice of representing and promoting Carib traditions.
SITUATING ‘CARIB’:
Structure, Culture, Agency, and Morphogenesis

“...it is optimistic, even romantic, to suggest that these forms of creative response to a subordinate position can exist in the majority of cases unaffected by the ideologies of the powerful as propagated in the very institutions in which working-class people experience their subordination”.


Introduction: Questions of Re-Engineering ‘Carib’

The relationship between “structure”, understood as forms of social constraint and modes of control, and “agency”, understood as some degree of voluntary action, is one of the central problems of modern social theory according to Anthony Giddens (1979), and it inevitably plays a part in this study. As Margaret Archer (1988:ix), amongst many others has observed, the problem of structure and agency, “is now a familiar phrase used to denote central dilemmas in social theory—especially the rival claims of Voluntarism versus Determinism, Subjectivism versus Objectivism, and the micro versus the macroscopic in sociology”. Within the social sciences, one could argue that Karl Marx placed structure and agency firmly on the theoretical agenda with his famous dictum that ‘man’ makes history but not under the circumstances of ‘his’ own choosing. I agree with Archer when she explains that these issues are so central that it is impossible to proceed in social and cultural analysis without coming to some personal decisions about them:
When writing, these decisions affect the statements that we advance, and when reading they affect the sentences that we can accept. These issues are problematic for any social theorist who cannot come down with conviction on one side or the other: and that means a great many of us, each of whom is then of necessity in the job of reconciliation. [Archer 1988:x]

Given the centrality of these decisions that are at work in the background of the assumptions that we make as we proceed in our investigations and analyses, it is necessary to pause on this subject and devote special attention to it by way of this chapter. This chapter is not put forth in order to substitute for anything presented in the last chapter. Where the previous chapter focused on conceptual tools deployed within certain theories and their import for this study, this chapter focuses on clarifying some of the working assumptions that constitute the analytical background.

The careful balancing act that Archer points to above has come to predominate in much of the literature on structure and agency, especially as influenced by Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu. Structure is often cast as simultaneously the medium and outcome, the presupposition and embodiment of social action and social relationships. Potential change stems from the contradictions that arise from the duality of structure as both product and producer of social activity. The central principle is that structures and agents are not constituted independently of each other (Giddens 1984:25). Notions of “the discursive subject”, where agency and constraint are not antithetical (Hekman 1995:202), are bolstered by a reformulated anthropology where “people are seen as agents who, through particular understandings of the contexts in which they live, draw on a variety of resources, both symbolic and material, in their daily lives” (Beriss 1993:107; see C. B. Cohen & Mascia-Lees 1993:147). Within anthropology, new formulations of agency and culture tend to curtail the overwhelming constraining power of such formations as that which Alfred Kroeber (1917) described as “the superorganic”, of minds constrained and ideas constructed from a determining cultural order above the individual. Thus far we can already detect an often subtle divergence of issues confronting agency, along
the lines of structure and culture: on the one hand, social structure, social organisation and social relationships that constrain and enable individual agency at the praxiological level; on the other hand, systems of ideas, values, and meanings, that might together be called ‘culture’ (cf. Keesing 1974), and that also act to constrain and enable individual agency at the epistemological and axiological levels.¹

While the dualistic balancing act reconciling structure and agency is a virtue of contemporary theorising, it also poses its own limitations. Are structure and agency perennially grid locked? Does one ever prevail over the other in any instance? How universally applicable is a given theory of structure and agency? For example, would one analyse the structure and agency issues pertaining to a schoolgirls’ recital in the same framework as the structure and agency issues pertaining to the chaos of Lebanon’s civil war in the 1970s? Indeed, certain dividing lines are becoming more evident, with writers such as Anthony King (1999) arguing in favour of a reduction (his term) of social analysis to individual action, while Eric Wolf objects that not enough attention is given to those determining conditions shaping outcomes and groups’ actions: “much of the discourse about agency and construal strikes me as unduly voluntaristic... There is too much talk about agency and resistance” (1994:6). Indeed, there is nothing to say that agency should be equated with resistance, a move that involves an a priori dismissal of the agency of conservatives and conformists. On closer inspection, an array of problems emerges with theoretical treatments of structure, culture and agency, with questions of key concern here being: history; power/ hegemony; shared culture and shared knowledge; conflations of society and culture; conflations of structure, culture and agency; and, conceptions of societies and cultures as isolates. Ultimately, in addressing these issues my own preference is for historically situated and ethnographically grounded specifications of particular cases, drawing on these larger dualistic formulations for the necessary analytical tools, without altogether drowning in amorphous ambiguity and vague mutuality.

¹ Thanks to the late Professor Herb Addo (International Relations, University of the West Indies) for indicating that these issues could be revisited in terms of debates concerning theory and
The structure, culture and agency problem is especially relevant to the way this project has been framed in terms of multiple cultural brokers and social institutions engaged in myriad processes of defining, representing, promoting and valuing 'Carib'—the re-engineering of indigeneity. In a setting as crowded with brokers as in the case at the centre of this project, it would seem that we are especially focusing on agency, given that conceptions of ascription, appropriation, reinvention, objectification, and reinterpretation imply agents—active and 'knowledgeable' human actors—at the heart of these processes. Yet, with so many agents present, the 'noise' that is generated begins to act as 'structure', as a source of constraint on some or all of the agents and above them, not to mention that these agents are themselves mostly tied to institutions that prescribe and enforce certain rules and roles that also reside above these agents. Moreover, these agents, the brokers and 'key players' featured in the ethnography, are working with materials (discourses, texts, labels, practices) that often predate and shape their action, and that may be modified or reinforced by their action. The questions that necessarily enter here are those of history, power and knowledge. When, how and why did 'Carib' emerge and come to be canonised as a key label in the Caribbean? Who was responsible for the ascription of this label, what were the responses, and how did the results of these interactions shape subsequent interactions? Are all the agents involved equally knowledgeable? Do agents just resist structure or can they also invest their labour into maintaining structure? These questions of structure, culture and agency are addressed historically and ethnographically in the chapters that follow, and probed in terms of analytical methodology in this chapter.

The intent of this chapter is not to recapitulate the theories and perspectives I referred to in the last chapter, or that have been woven into the appropriate ethnographic chapters that follow, but to provide an overview of the assumptions encompassing this work. I will not attempt a comprehensive literature review,
which is beyond the scope of this project, nor offer any innovation in the form of a new theory of culture/structure-agency. Instead, I will locate this project within established approaches even while raising questions as outlined above. In the remainder of this chapter I will present some of the main themes of culture/structure-agency theories with a focus on the works of Giddens, Bourdieu and Sahlins, followed by a discussion of some of the main limitations and problems posed in conceptualising culture, structure and agency issues. The latter will lead into an overview of Archer’s framework for theorising structure, culture and agency within a “morphogenetic” perspective. Archer’s work is important here to the extent that it has provided me with some of the vocabulary and analytical grammar for structuring the outline and organising the contents of the following chapters of this work, whilst providing a means of highlighting history and power.

Main Currents in Culture/Structure-Agency Theories

Pierre Bourdieu (1977), Anthony Giddens (1979), and Marshall Sahlins (1981), oppose, to varying degrees, the view of action as sheer enactment or execution of rules and norms, while not opting for the other extreme of heroic voluntarism (Ortner 1994:394). There is thus a tension between the reification of social structure over and above individuals and the reduction of social relationships to individual, face-to-face interactions (see King 1999; Yelvington 1995b:5). Giddens emphatically writes against what he sees as the conception of “cultural dopes” in the work of Talcott Parsons, and “structural dopes” in the work of Louis Althusser (Giddens 1979:52). Giddens takes aim at the structuralist and functionalist traditions in anthropology, noting that they “strongly emphasise the pre-eminence of the social whole over its individual parts (i.e., its constituent actors, human subjects)” thus positing the primacy of structure over action (1984:1, 2). Even in situations where individuals seemingly have “no choice”, Giddens argues that oppressive social constraints “are not to be equated with the dissolution of action as such”, thus to “have no choice does not mean that action has been replaced by reaction” (1984:15).
Giddens and Archer are two of the leading authors that most emphatically write against the structuralist denial of human agency and the view of people as unthinking traditionalists. In Archer’s words, people can be seen as “evaluators of alternatives” and “potential competitors” (1988:298). She argues against assuming “a priori that manifest intellectual contradictions in belief systems are never of social account, can never intrigue human actors, will never be grasped and exploited by some group” and thus also takes aim at what she sees as the Parsonian and once dominant anthropological myth of cultural integration (Archer 1988:41-42). Archer especially critiques the manner in which “individual innovation or group interaction are denied any independent intermediary role, both individuals and groups being reduced to carriers of their unconscious cargo” (1988:42). In many ways, Archer closely follows Giddens (King 1999), with some important differences, as we shall see later.

Flowing from the above propositions, Giddens reserves a special theoretical place for the ‘knowledgeable’ and ‘reflexive’ agent in his theory of “structuration” (1984:3). As he states, analysing the structuration of social systems means, “studying the modes in which such systems, grounded in the knowledgeable activities of situated actors who draw upon rules and resources in the diversity of action contexts, are produced and reproduced in interaction” (Giddens 1984:25). Giddens’ emphasis on agency and the practical consciousness of the human being frames actors as engaged in the reflexive monitoring of action, incorporating the monitoring of the setting of interaction (1984:4, 6). Agency involves people’s capability of doing things, drawing upon and reproducing the structured properties of social systems in the course of their interaction (Giddens 1984:9, 15). In and through their activities, “agents reproduce the conditions that make these activities possible” (Giddens 1984:2). Despite Giddens’ strong emphasis on agency, change turns out to be a problematic feature of his theory. He sees human social activities, “like some self-reproducing items in nature” as recursive, even while criticising similar organic analogies underlying assumptions in functionalist anthropology (Giddens 1984:2). The social totality is not brought into being by social actors, rather it is, “continually recreated by them via the very
means whereby they express themselves as actors" (Giddens 1984:2). One source of change seems to lie in the “unintended consequences” of “repetitive activities” (Giddens 1984:13-14). In summary, Giddens emphasises that connecting a notion of human action with structural explanation in social analysis demands: (1) a theory of the human agent/subject; (2) an account of the conditions and consequences of action; and, (3) an interpretation of ‘structure’ as somehow embroiled in both those conditions and consequences (1979:49).

In the same vein as Giddens, Bourdieu stresses the duality of practice. He sees practice as a “double reality”, intrinsically “equivocal, ambiguous” (Bourdieu 1977:179). Practice is not based on “mechanical reaction”, and it is not directly determined by antecedent conditions (Bourdieu 1977:73), nor is it grounded necessarily in obedience. Yet, as Bourdieu emphasises this does not imply that we should instead,

bestow on some creative free will the free and wilful power to constitute, on the instant, the meaning of the situation by projecting the ends aiming at its transformation, and that we should reduce the objective intentions and constituted significations of actions and works to the conscious and deliberate intentions of their authors. [1977:73]

The duality of practice in Bourdieu’s theory lies in the fact that it is produced by “habitus”/structure (see below), while structure is reproduced by practice (Bourdieu 1977:79).

In contrast to Giddens, Bourdieu’s theory of practice seems to emphasise the power of structure a little more intensely. He argues, “‘interpersonal’ relations are never, except in appearance, individual-to-individual relationships” and that “the truth of the interaction is never entirely contained in the interaction” (Bourdieu 1977:81). In Bourdieu’s framework, the subject/agent embodies, assumes, and takes for granted various cultural forms (Dirks et al. 1994:16). What might seem to be rational interest-seeking behaviour is, in Bourdieu’s scheme, “an acting out of habitual constraints encoded in unexamined assumptions about what is reasonable and unreasonable” (Bourdieu 1977:77). The notion of “habitus” is central to the way Bourdieu frames practice theory. Habitus is the “intervening
variable” between the objective context and the subjective consciousness of identity (Bentley 1987:40). Habitus consists of “systems of durable, transposable dispositions…. a set of generative schemes that produce practices and representations that are regular without reference to overt rules and that are goal directed without requiring conscious selection of goals or mastery of methods of achieving them” (Bourdieu 1977:72). Habitus makes practices seem “sensible” and “reasonable” (Bourdieu 1977:79), and the individual agent does not necessarily have conscious mastery over its rules. As Bentley (1987:28) explains, the inculcation of habitus depends on “innate pattern-recognition capabilities”, a process that is, “similar to language learning, in which competence is achieved without conscious awareness of the structure of what is learned”. This has been criticised by Yelvington (1991:158) on the grounds that it is an, “‘oversocialised’ conception of human activity”, founded on a notion of common cultural presuppositions that “surely refers to common culture”.

To a significant extent, Bourdieu also sets out what appears to be a view of the role of culture in mystification. As Bourdieu argues, the “social order’s very functioning serves the interests of those occupying a dominant position in the social structure” (1977:165). This approach is echoed by Roger Keesing, as discussed below. With reference to practical taxonomies, Bourdieu states that these are “a transformed, misrecognisable form of real divisions of the social order”, that “contribute to the reproduction of that order by producing objectively orchestrated practices adjusted to those divisions” (1977:163). Moreover, he argues, “every established order tends to produce (to very different degrees and with very different means) the naturalisation of its own arbitrariness” (Bourdieu 1994:159). Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of doxa is a way of explaining the correspondence between social structures and mental structures that underpins the “most ineradicable adherence to the established order” (1977:164). Doxa is the experience whereby the social world is naturalised, its organisation believed to be self-evident and is taken for granted (Bourdieu 1977:164). Bourdieu thus establishes means of analysing social stability and the hegemony of particular structures:
In a determinate social formation, the stabler the objective structures and the more fully they reproduce themselves in the agents’ dispositions, the greater the extent of the field of doxa, of that which is taken for granted. When, owing to the quasi-perfect fit between the objective structures and the internalised structures which results from the logic of simple reproduction, the established cosmological and political order is perceived not as arbitrary, i.e., as one possible order among others, but as a self-evident and natural order which goes without saying and therefore goes unquestioned, the agents’ aspirations have the same limits as the objective conditions of which they are the product. [Bourdieu 1977:165-166]

In this framework, doxa is a foundation of mystification: “the adherence expressed in the doxic relation to the social world is the absolute form of recognition of legitimacy through misrecognition of arbitrariness, since it is unaware of the very question of legitimacy, which arises from competition for legitimacy, and hence from conflict between groups claiming to possess it” (Bourdieu 1994:163). Bourdieu’s observations are critical in balancing a critique of functionalism with an equally (or even more) critical view of agency that renders ‘society’ virtually undefinable, that is, he effectively questions any assumptions that might hold agents to be like free-floating, equally empowered, mutually determining atoms.

History and transformation, however, are as problematic in Bourdieu’s theory as in Giddens’. There is no explanation of what accounts for the emergence of habitus and how it is constituted. Yelvington observes that both “the theories of Giddens and Bourdieu have been criticised for a tendency toward ‘static reproductionism’ and ‘behavioralist conditioning’ and toward precluding the possibility of historical change” (1995b:5). Bourdieu’s attempt at theorising change is rooted in generational conflicts, transformations of the sense of the possible (1977:78; see also Bentley 1987:29), but without much in the way of an account of how these changes occur. In other instances, Bourdieu seems to revert to a Marxist position of class division and political and economic crises as leading to a practical questioning of the theses implied in particular ways of living, or, in other cases, crises stemming from culture contact, in a manner that echoes Sahlins (Bourdieu 1994:163 and 1997:168-169). Bourdieu also echoes Sahlins (or vice versa) in seeing change as rooted in “the conjuncture capable of transforming
practices...constituted in the dialectical relationship between the habitus and the objective event” (1977:82-83). In such situations, where doxa is critiqued, the boundaries of doxa shrink with the expansion of the boundaries of the heterodox and the orthodox, that is, “straight, or rather straightened, opinion, which aims, without ever entirely succeeding, at restoring the primal state of innocence of doxa” (Bourdieu 1977:169).

Sahlins’ critique of structural anthropology targets the manner in which it was set in a binary opposition to history (1981:3). Sahlins also agrees with Bourdieu that structural analysis seemed to “exclude individual action and worldly practice, except as they represented the projection or ‘execution’ of the system in place” (1981:3). Sahlins’ primary question in theorising a historical anthropology is: “How does the reproduction of a structure become its transformation?”—adding that his interest is in outlining how events are ordered by culture and how in the process culture is reordered (1981:8; emphasis added). Sahlins’ theory of culture, structure and practice focuses on the functional revaluation of traditional conceptions through the relationships generated in practical action, that is, how the “values acquired in practice return to structure as new relationships between its categories” (Sahlins 1981:35, 50). According to Sahlins, people “act upon circumstances according to their own cultural presuppositions, the socially given categories of persons and things” (1981:67). Sahlins’ emphasis is on the cultural encompassment of events that is “at once conservative and innovative”, an approach that balances continuity and change, transformation and reproduction, without ever seeming to suggest that one may prevail over the other (1981:68).

Problems of Culture, Structure and Agency

Even though I appreciate their advantages over their theoretical precursors, established theories of culture, structure and agency have certain limitations, added to certain problematic areas in older anthropological theories that pose a challenge for attempts to enhance and extend the potentials of these more recent theories. I will summarise some of these problems as those of history, conflations of culture and society, shared culture, power and knowledge, and the unit of analysis itself.
Of these various problem areas the one that strikes me the most concerns the notion of a "knowledgeable agent". While striking out against the view of "cultural dopes", one might argue that Giddens, for one, has possibly opened the way to the other extreme: the cultural genius. Constructing the knowledgeable agent strikes me as an ideal-typical approach. Are all agents equally 'knowledgeable'? Can we work with an undifferentiated concept of 'knowledge'? If knowledge of cultural taxonomies, social workings, and political economic orders is equally and evenly shared, then who are the specialists? Both Sahlins and Bourdieu seem to rest their theories on assumptions that actors share in their culture without any overt awareness of contradictions, until some aberrant crisis or foreign intrusion, an approach that resembles the more anachronistic anthropological theories of cultural integration.

The fixing of the anthropological 'Other' into place and time may serve to preserve the conventional outlines of anthropology as a discipline, but it also works to deny or diminish the possibility of change, contradiction, and all sorts of behaviours that diminish the 'Otherness' of the anthropological subject—at least this seems to be the thrust of Johannes Fabian's (1983) critique of the "scandal" of atemporality in anthropology (see also Falk Moore 1994:362, 363). Also of concern is the possibility that ethnography risks being reduced to ornamentation for various a prioristic theories, the theoretical position maintaining its primacy and even writing out large portions of the ethnography that might embarrass the theory or the canons of the discipline. The notion of "cold societies" emerging from Lévi-Strauss' structuralism, is an example of what Archer calls an "a prioristic denial of the existence or the significance of inconsistency" (1988:11). Interestingly, she also faults Giddens for reproducing that same logic, referring to his writing of "'societies confined implacably within the grip of tradition' because of the 'ontological security' conferred by unquestioned codes of signification and forms of normative regulation" which, in addition, serves to compact social cohesion with cultural integrity (Archer 1988:11). One of the modes for fixing the anthropological Other into time is to engage in what various authors refer to as an ongoing "salvage ethnography". Sally Falk Moore writes of how "traditional
societies" were so constructed that "unless some external change of circumstances intervened, they replicated their social and cultural structures from one generation to the next" (1994:363). In addition, even if the societies in question were recognised as having been subjected to conquest, colonisation, slavery, missionising, incorporated into the world economy, "and though they had changed substantially by the time they were observed", Falk Moore observes that some anthropologists nevertheless thought that, "their previous state of affairs could be reconstructed". It is this effort to "salvage" the "past", what Falk Moore calls an "untimely reconstruction", that anthropologists became interested in those forms that were reproduced from generation to generation (1994:363). Arguably, the interest in "survivals" and "continuity" is an extension of this project. "Adaptation" is another conceptual move for preserving the essentially unchanging anthropological Other, adaptation preserving coherence via a moving cultural equilibrium, which is a trademark of functionalist theory as Archer argues (1988:9). George Marcus (1994:45) also argues that the concepts of "resistance" and "accommodation" can serve the same purpose:

Distinguishing the elements of resistance and accommodation in the formation of collective and personal identities has become the almost sloganlike analytic formula for retaining a sense of the coherence and locality of place in ethnographic description while also recognizing the penetrations of world systems and consumer economies. The resistance and accommodation formula might be understood, in a way, as the remaking of the salvage rationale that has served ethnography for so long.

At the very least, I would agree that resistance and accommodation need not be automatically assumed in advance nor applied indiscriminately, while not committing the reverse error of dismissing resistance in advance.

One of the anthropological biases underlying the desire to preserve the Other by diminishing change and dispelling contradiction is an attachment to the assumption that "real culture" is eroded by invention, strategic mimesis, and so forth, thus some argue that "new ingredients, as well as evanescent elements and qualities and transformational possibilities, are surely as 'cultural' as old ones" (Falk Moore 1994:366). Jackson explained the problem in similar terms, saying
that “in order to be thought of as good, culture must not be seen as invented or created, except over a long period of time”, adding, “when we do speak of people as political actors who are changing culture, we run the risk of seeming to speak of them in negative terms, the implication being that the culture resulting from these operations is not really authentic” (1989:127). Jackson herself is untroubled by treading on what she sees as orthodox anthropological sensibilities.

The arguments sketched thus far underpin my own unwillingness to portray re-engineering as another means of affirming “cultural continuity” and “survival”, and my resistance to writing out of the ethnography any behaviour that does not meet expectations of “real” and “authentic” culture. Writing of behaviour that seems to undermine some notion of “authenticity” is just that, and not necessarily an affirmation of “fakery” or “impurity” even though it may be deliberately construed as such by some. Simply put, there is no such thing as a “fake invention” in this work, insofar as I see all manipulations of cultural elements as part of everyday life. It’s also important to leave the door open to actors’ strategic representations that are not necessarily aimed at being accurate, transparent or unmotivated depictions of that which they represent.

The larger issues of temporality in the structure-agency theories of Giddens, Bourdieu and Sahlin remain problematic. Writers have attempted to resolve the problem of temporality in structure and agency theories in different ways. Immanuel Wallerstein took a particularly stark approach by periodising structure and agency, arguing that during times of hegemony “free will” is so constrained that it is virtually negligible in terms of system transformation; on the other hand, when a functioning historical system enters a time band marking its demise or rupture, then “everything...is up for grabs” (1991b:235). Wallerstein’s perspective on system demise and transformation is closely related to chaos theory: in his outline of kairos as the “TimeSpace of human choice”, he writes that it is the “TimeSpace where . . . ‘cascading bifurcations’ ensure the transition to chaos, and out of this chaos, a new but not easily predictable order will emerge”, a situation which, as he sees it, allows maximum room for individual agency (1991b:147).
The conflation of society and culture is another weakness in theories of structure-agency that Archer critiques (1988:12, 305). Indeed, this is represented in the convention of writing “structure-agency”, even when writing about how both ideas and social organisation relate to agency. Keesing also recognised the problem of “swallowing cultural into social” or vice versa, of seeing culture as a reflection of social organisation (1974:81-83). One of the key points here seems to be the need to stress that while people live in the same social formation, they do not necessarily have shared ideas, and that people who do share ideas do not necessarily share the same social positions and their attendant interests.

Archer argues that cultural inconsistencies have been denied importance in mainstream social science theory, in spite of the fact that “pluralism is common, inconsistency is pervasive and syncretism is general practice” (1988:9). She sees “perversity and prejudice” in the perpetuation of this problem, which she says is rooted in previous anthropological debates of the so-called “savage mind” (1988:10). The notion of a “savage mind”, enshrines the view of a mentality which is “constituted entirely differently from our own”, a mentality that cannot sense or countenance cultural inconsistencies and discontinuities, or that it “merely” senses such contradictions whilst unifying and reconciling them at a deeper level of thought (1988:10, 11). Archer also targets the Geertzian view of culture as a web of signification, and while she still sees it as a web she sees it as one with unknit loose ends (1988:15). Within anthropology there are a numerous similar arguments that critique various angles of culture as a homogeneously integrated system (e.g. Falk Moore 1994, Kahn 1989, Keesing 1974, Marcus 1994, Vayda 1994).

Others have argued that agents’ possession of knowledge is differentially distributed and controlled, thus circumscribing generalisations of the ‘knowledgeable agent’ at least as an absolute category. The implications of these arguments are that if culture is not uniformly shared, then even less so knowledge (Falk Moore 1994, Keesing 1987). Keesing argues that the fact that social knowledge is unevenly controlled, distributed and created, requires that we situate symbolic anthropology within a wider theory of society (1987:161). As I discuss in the concluding section of this chapter, this approach limits the free range of
agency while opening up discussion to include knowledge specialists that I see as including cultural brokers.

Finally, and I will discuss this at greater length in chapter 6, the global setting of social action is often left out of, or insufficiently analysed in the dominant theories of culture/structure and agency. Kottak and Colson argue that what Meyer Fortes called “the field of social relations”, meaning the “range of social relations, in time and space”, is a range that is now international (1994:396). As both Wolf (1982) and Marcus (1994) intimate, we have to rethink culture, structure and agency issues across the somewhat arbitrary and often ephemeral borders demarcating modern nation-states. Giddens also makes a similar point, arguing that notions of structure and agency have to be widened to take into account “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens 1990:64). Local and personal contexts of social experience are thus transformed.

The Morphogenetic Perspective

Margaret Archer’s work on culture, structure and agency attracted my attention on a number of accounts, including the greater degree to which she incorporates history and power; her analytical separation of culture and society so as to better effect an analysis between them; the analysis of material and ideational interests and their interplay; and, her links between brokerage, reinvention and elaboration. My own interests intersect Archer’s in wanting to show the role of history and diverse agents and interests. In this section I will outline certain elements of her argument to the extent that it has provided me with some of the analytical vocabulary used in organising the chapters that follow.

To start, I will outline Archer’s definition of certain key terms that she uses and that I sometimes employ in different stages of this work. The way that Archer uses these terms is especially necessary for understanding her notion of ‘morphogenesis’. When Archer speaks of the “Cultural System” (which she capitalises), she restricts this to the “register of propositions existing in any given
social unit at a particular time”, noting that while the propositional is not exhaustive of the meaningful, it “constitutes the corpus of truths and falsehoods cherished in society at any given time” (1988:277). Archer calls this a system because items in society’s “propositional register” have to be intelligible and stand in some logical relationship to one another, whether that relationship is one of consistency or contradiction (1988:105). By the cultural “intelligibilium” she means, “any item which has the dispositional capacity of being understood by someone”, even if not everyone (1988:xvi). Within the cultural intelligibilia she distinguishes a “subset” of items that are the propositions mentioned above, that is, statements which assert truth or falsity and that can be discerned as being consistent or in contradiction with one another. Archer thus restricts the Cultural System to “the propositional register of society at any given time” (1988:xvi). Her working notion of culture is more akin to prevalent sociological notions of culture as ideology, or culture as idea systems, than notions of culture to which many anthropologists have become accustomed and which often combine the epistemological and the praxiological.

In her definitions, Archer addresses the distinction between “logical consistency” and “causal consensus”. Logical consistency refers to that which was just explained about the component parts of culture, her example of this being the statement that the ideas of X are consistent with or contradict those of Y. This is different from saying that the ideas of X were influenced by those of Y, she argues, which involves causal effects which are properties of people interacting; thus “causal consensus” is “the degree of cultural uniformity produced by the imposition of ideas by one set of people on another through the whole gamut of familiar techniques—manipulation, mystification, legitimation, naturalisation, persuasion and argument” (1988:xv-xvi). Logical consistency can acquire a taken-for-granted status similar to Bourdieu’s doxa. Causal consensus on the other hand is closely tied to the use of power and influence (1988:xvi). In Archer’s theorising, she speaks of the interrelationship between Cultural System (dis)integration and Socio-Cultural (dis)integration where the latter refers to causal forces operating in social relationships that act back on culture (1988:5, 6). An example of the
propositional register that I analyse in the next chapter is that of ‘Carib’ as a canon in narratives of Caribbean history, with the ‘Carib’ associated with cannibalism and the ‘Arawak’ associated with docility, the two forming propositional truths that were once taken for granted. Causal consensus is at work in Spanish colonisers’ ascription of ‘Carib’ to enemies, a construction at the level of Archer’s Cultural System that permitted slavery and exploitation at the social level.

At the centre of Archer’s approach is a critique of conflations of social structure and culture. She rejects the view of social structures as derivative of dominant values, of society as a mere reflection of dominant ideas, a position that she calls ‘downwards conflation’ and which she associates with Parsons. ‘Upwards conflation’, on the other hand, refers to the reverse, ideas generated entirely by social structures, a position that she identifies with Marxist theories of the ideational as part of the superstructure generated by the material forces that make for a particular social order. Where history enters as an especially salient element of her approach is in her critique of what she calls the ‘central conflationists’, naming Giddens and Bauman, who are faulted for conflating the material and the ideational, social structure and culture, and for failing to periodise agency (the grid lock position that I referred to previously).

History plays a fundamental role in Archer’s theorising of the relationships between culture, structure and agency. Her objective is to theorise the conditions accounting for stability or change, by specifying the systemic relationships that impinge on agency and by analysing which social relations affect how agents respond and act back on the Cultural System (1988:xviii-xix), an analysis effected through a myriad of case studies in her work. Archer stresses the need for positing autonomy between culture and structure for the purposes of analysing the interplay between them. She further breaks this down into the relationship between the material and ideational aspects of social life. Archer explains that theories developed about the relationship between structures and social agents and between cultures and cultural actors have to recognise the relative autonomy of structure and culture, “otherwise we would be violating our ability to understand social life

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3 Archer’s 1988 work focuses especially on the relationship between culture and agency.
as the interplay between interests and ideas” (1988:ix). Archer’s position is that constructs of the past act as a constraint on action and ideas in the present, thus the Cultural System predates any given social interaction, which by no means discounts the likelihood that such interaction will alter the Cultural System (1988:186). In addition, social structure pre-exists the action of any given individual or group. It is in the conjunction between Cultural System integration and Socio-Cultural integration that one finds the keys to explaining stability or change, and while Cultural System integration may be low, “unless its contradictions were actualised and amplified by sectional social groups, they could be contained and stasis would persist because of this high social integration”, or, “group antagonism could be profound (low social integration) without leading to significant change in society, unless it was linked to Systemic contradictions” (1988:xiv-xv). Moreover, a high degree of logical consistency in the Cultural System is a necessary but insufficient condition for Socio-Cultural integration; conversely, contradictions in the Cultural System may encourage but do not determine Socio-Cultural conflict (Archer 1988:28).

The theory of stability and change in relationship with culture, structure and agency is what Archer refers to as “morphogenesis”. Morphogenetic theory, she explains, highlights the unique feature of social systems as found in their capacity to undergo radical restructuring, a position similar to that found in Wallerstein’s works where he speaks of irreversible social processes. Morphogenesis refers to changes in form, structure or state, the end product referred to as “Elaboration”. When morphogenesis results, “then subsequent interaction will be different from earlier action precisely because it is now conditioned by the elaborated consequences of that prior action” (Archer 1988:xxvii). Thus the morphogenetic approach is both analytically dualistic (positing the autonomy between culture and structure) but is also sequential, dealing with “three-part cycles of Structural Conditioning—Social interaction—Structural Elaboration” in relationship with equivalent analytical phases in the
cultural field, i.e. “Cultural Conditioning—Socio-Cultural interaction—Cultural Elaboration” (Archer 1988: xxvii). The purpose of theorising in this case, Archer states, is to specify the conditions that constrain people to reproduce culture and structure and those conditions that allow freedom to transform it, a theoretical interest that matches Wallerstein’s in his outline of “Kairos” in the preceding section. In contrast to what she sees as the ambiguous dualities of Giddens structuration theory, as one example, Archer stresses that what is “crucially different about the morphogenetic perspective is the core notion that culture and agency operate over different time periods” (1988:xxiii). Archer explains further that the “core notion which is fundamental to the morphogenetic perspective is based on two simple propositions: that the Cultural System logically predates the Socio-Cultural action(s) which transform it; and that Cultural Elaboration logically post-dates such interaction” (1988:xxiii-xxiv). The morphogenetic approach that Archer outlines in her work demonstrates “structural-interest groups endorsing some corpus of ideas in order to advance their material concerns but then becoming enmeshed in the situational logic of that part of the cultural domain”, and, “ideal-interest groups seeking powerful sponsors to promote their ideas but then immediately embroiling cultural discourse in power-play within the structural domain” (1988:xxvi). With respect to my own research, “material interest groups” would include those that wield funding in pursuit of particular social goals, i.e., state patronage directed towards the ‘management of diversity’. “Ideational interest groups” would include those bent on promoting or vindicating particular notions, i.e., the value of indigenous knowledge in safeguarding biodiversity. I will return to this in my critique of Archer below.

Archer summarises the key themes of a morphogenetic approach to cultural analysis as follows: (1) there are logical relationships between components of the Cultural System (CS); (2) there are causal influences exerted by the CS on the Socio-Cultural (S-C) level; (3) there are causal relationships between groups and

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4 This is defined by Archer (1988:xxiv) as: “the prior development of ideas (from earlier interaction) [that] conditions the current context of action, confronting agents with both problem-free and problem-ridden clusters of beliefs, theories and ideas”.

5 These powerful sponsors are what I refer to as patrons, as discussed in chapter 4.
individuals at the S-C level; and, (4) there is elaboration of the CS due to the SC level modifying current logical relationships and introducing new ones. Taken together, she explains, these steps sketch a morphogenetic cycle of Cultural Conditioning—Cultural Interaction—Cultural Elaboration (Archer 1988:106).

Archer’s insistence on accounting for how discursive struggles are socially organised and how social struggles are culturally conditioned (1988:xxvii) introduces another valuable facet of her theory. Archer’s observation does not rule out the possibility that a conflict of ideas can occur independently of material interests, or that ideational interaction can generate its own vested interest groups, “collectivities...who first acquire different ideal interests through which they later develop different material interests by receiving differential material rewards from their cultural capital” (1988: 284).

Another of Archer’s key positions is that “ideas are forces in social conflict and that the socially forceful are also culturally influential” (Archer 1988: 287-288). With respect to the latter part of the formulation, Archer argues in a manner supporting Keesing (1987) that, “Socio-Cultural imbalances, and the power differentials deriving from them, affect the degree of awareness or ‘discursive penetration’ that actors have of ideational contradictions or complementarities” (1988:xxi). Like Yelvington (1995b) who argues that the powerful have the power to make their representations ‘stick’, Archer notes:

[when some] dominant material-interest group supports a set of propositions which are embroiled in contradiction, they will use their power to control the visibility of inconsistent items through a variety of ‘containment strategies’, the most blatant of which is censorship. If successful, the subordinate agents will remain unruffled by the inconsistencies attending the group’s beliefs for they are in the dark about them; the Systemic fault-line represented by the contradiction will remain unexploited, even by those who have the interests to split it wide open, because power has kept it unperceived. Consequently, in this instance, social imbalance produces orderly Socio-Cultural relations, maintaining the cultural status quo while ever agents’ access to information can be controlled. [1999:xxi]

In this formulation, Archer affirms the position that agents possess differential levels of knowledge, as does Keesing (1987). Archer goes further in examining
how power differentials and social differentiation can act as sources of symbolism, of symbolic strategies employed to advance sectional interests (1988:43).

Archer also combines situationality with a version of Giddens’ outline of unexpected consequences. She argues, for example, that by adopting a set of ideas a structural interest group will find itself engaged in some particular form of cultural discourse which raises certain problems, requiring the group to correct, protect, compete or diversify as a means of upholding their ideas, thus, “material interest groups become subject to some form of situational logic in the cultural domain” (1988:285). Contradictions create problems for actors if and when they realise or are made to realise that propositions they endorse are inconsistent. What actors then do, Archer says, is not pre-determined: “they have the options of irrational dogmatism or of abandoning the theory or belief altogether, but if they want to go on holding it non-dogmatically then their only recourse is to repair the inconsistency, that is the force of the situational logic” (1988:xx).

In summary, my interest in Archer’s approach lies in a combination of features: (1) the need to situate analyses of culture and agency within a wider social and historical context; (2) the relevance of power, contradiction, and situational logics; (3) the necessary analytical distinction between culture and social structure; and, (4) her relatively clear analytical vocabulary that I found amenable to application in select instances.

On the other hand, I have some reservations with respect to Archer’s approach in that it begs a number of questions. What is at the root of hegemony? How does one explain ‘cultural difference’? Unsatisfied on these accounts, I had to limit my interest to those items that I found particularly valuable. Furthermore, Archer sometimes conflates the social and the cultural in particular instances, especially with her reliance on a concept of ‘socio-cultural interaction’ and the difficulty this poses for understanding whether she is speaking of the analytical interplay between society and culture, or, the interaction of agents on social and cultural planes. In certain cases I find it difficult to clearly separate material from ideational interest groups, and perhaps it is not theoretically useful to always do so. It is one thing to have a clear view of the distinctions between analytical devices
such as the ‘material’ and the ‘ideal’; it is another thing to always write as if these were clearly separate in actual practice. Archer’s “propositional register” also seems less diversified and complex than Bourdieu’s distinctions between, and accounts of, doxa, orthodoxy, heterodoxy and habitus—her approach appears to be either more static in methodological terms, or, if one can map ‘propositional register’ onto ‘doxa’, and ‘causal consensus’ onto the activation of ‘orthodoxy’, then the question we have to ask is: why introduce these other terms? Thus I tend to use these terms interchangeably. Another problematic area in Archer’s work concerns the unit of analysis. What does Archer mean, in terms of delimiting the unit, when she talks about ‘society’? The global is still largely absent in her work, and where globalisation is concerned I prefer world systems approaches for reasons that I have already explained at considerable length elsewhere (Forte 1998a), and that inform analysis in chapters 2, 3 and 6. Finally, the definition of morphogenesis as referring to changes in form, structure or state, tends to leave me unsatisfied in that it conflates ‘form’ with ‘state’ and, at worst, can leave one with the impression of changes in ‘form’ and continuity in ‘content’.

Conclusion: Situating ‘Carib’ in Culture, Structure and Practice

Keesing argues that cultures “must be situated, placed in a context—historically, economically, politically (Keesing 1987:162). Likewise, Archer stressed the place of temporality in social theory, combined with a concern for power rooted in the interaction between material and ideational interests. Political economy becomes one way of framing cultural practice whilst attending to issues of power, history, and social structure in a way that intersects with Archer’s concerns. This is not designed to analytically smother conceptualisation of agency

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6 I must also agree with an anonymous reviewer that the concept ‘society’ ought not to be reduced to social structure or economic and political relations between interests and ideas, as I often tend to do when I write with less care, although I doubt that Archer could be faulted as easily on these grounds. Certainly, ‘society’ does include human subjectivity. However, I should also add that what is not being posited here is a binary opposition between ‘society’ and ‘subjectivity’, which is exactly the target of this chapter on structure and agency. Nor are the political-economic, interests and ideas, ever divorced from human subjectivity; that is not a position that I maintain.
in overwhelming structure, as it is intended to accentuate the range and intensity of agents’ interactions, the resources they use, and how and when they use them. Yet, I believe that we must also keep in mind that ‘having agency’ and ‘being an agent’ does not mean that agency is always deployed against the system, nor is the agent equally empowered as all other agents, nor is every agent conscious of his/her agency as being agency. I would not favour treating ‘agency’ in a manner that erases any conception of inequality or of downplaying individuals and groups that wish to ‘follow the rules’ because they see some benefit in doing so, in a manner that can be theorised in terms of the situational logics and the material and ideational interests that Archer outlines.

Temporality and power are keys to understanding the re-engineering of indigeneity in Trinidad. Representations of ‘the Carib’ today are being made when those representing the Carib heritage are at their ‘weakest’ in terms of structural power (Wolf 1990), ‘smallest’ in terms of demography, and actively dependent on others to assist them in making their own representations of the Carib heritage. Indeed, there are more non-SRCC agents reinterpreting and articulating the Carib heritage than there are people in the SRCC, a fact that has consequences for the practice of SRCC brokers and for how we theorise re-engineering. Were it not for the alliances they have cultivated and the assistance they have received, it would strain anyone’s credulity to suggest that such a small group could single-handedly win the degree of support and recognition it has gained from the state, the media, and various international bodies. Moreover, SRCC brokers make use of powerful representations to their advantage, which also underlies their need for what they see as credible and respectable representations since these are the ones most likely to legitimate them. The approach of SRCC brokers today is on the whole conservative and cautious, as we shall see, relying on established conventions to mark their own difference. Abner Cohen made a similar point in commenting that a group has to “redefine its distinctiveness in order to adjust to the changing realities of the distribution and redistribution of power” (1969:202). Beth Conklin, basing her comments on her study of the cultural politics of Brazilian Indians, states: “All politics are conducted by adjusting one’s discourse to the language and
goals of others, selectively deploying ideas and symbolic resources to create bases for alliance. Reformulated representations of ethnic identity are strategic adaptations to specific political and social environments” (1997:724). However, the apparent conservatism of the SRCC in adjusting to the expectations and representations of others, in respecting powerful institutions and prestigious authorities, whether due to pragmatism or loyalty, does not necessarily imply either stasis or servitude. With reference to the former, and as we will see in greater detail, the ‘Carib’ label no longer possesses any single meaning, nor is there only a single body responsible for defining the significance of the label; moreover, to make matters more complicated, there are now multiple labels at work beyond Carib, each emphasising some feature of indigeneity, and each valued and promoted by any one of many agents that have vested either material and/or ideational interests in articulating and reworking indigeneity in Trinidad.

Situating ‘Carib’ as a historically constructed label loaded with multiple meanings and associated with particular traits and practices, requires a notion of dialectical processes of social interaction and ideational construction. Handler and Linnekin (1984:285) observe that the notions of tradition and cultural identity reigning in the larger society become part of a group’s self-image. This can be seen as a top-down view of structured cultural process, or what Archer called ‘downwards conflation’. From a bottom-up perspective, Brackette Williams (1989:412) argues that when ethnic groups draw boundaries around themselves, they are marking their identity whilst also marking “ownership of cultural products and the symbolic significance they have in civil society”. Both the top-down and bottom-up angles above represent a dialectic. The SRCC, as the focus of the contemporary ethnography presented in this work, can be seen as mirroring the politics, social relations, norms and expectations of the wider society, that both condition and enable its existence, its development and recognition, its programs and its forms of expression. I say ‘mirror’ because the approach of SRCC brokers is cautious and conservative, because they actively select elements of the propositional register that will curry favour with select patrons, and because powerful interests are able to impose themselves on the SRCC, as in the case of
the state mandating that the SRCC be organised as a company. Indeed, in this example, once incorporated as a company, to the ongoing disbelief of certain leading members of the group, the state is entitled to a large measure of surveillance and control. If found guilty of ‘mishandling’ funds, not preparing accurate tax returns, or failing to hold regular elections, then depending on the ‘infraction’ the SRCC presumably could be wound up, placed under an administrator appointed by the state, or be fined, with all members liable for the penalty.\footnote{See the 1995 Companies Act of Trinidad and Tobago, Parts I, III, and V.}

Underlining the structure-agency issues behind the construction of identities, Yelvington (1995b: 4) notes that while most contemporary anthropologists agree that, “the social identities of ethnicity, class, and gender are socially and culturally constructed, often they are unable to specify the mechanisms by and through which these constructions take place”. My interest in the subsequent chapters lies thus in demonstrating the processes, agents and institutions engaged in the creation of the value of ‘Carib’ and in the articulation of this identity.

Stemming from the foregoing, the broker—in the role of the specialist agent, key spokesperson, representative—becomes a critical focus of attention in this work. First, the broker offers a clear way of interlinking elements of what Archer treats as culture and social structure. Secondly, the broker is, at least in this case, part of a long “chain of intermediaries” with many links that transcend the geographically local (see Kottak & Colson 1994:401). Thirdly, the broker as a special kind of agent, one who acts but also represents particular clients, thus introduces “nuances of activity and passivity” (Dirks et al. 1994:13). Fourthly, the broker helps us to overcome the problem of the “knowledgeable agent” by framing the broker as a specialist. Keesing, drawing on Gregory Bateson, spotlights the work of specialists in setting themselves up as unofficial masters of ceremonies, criticising and instructing, leading and representing, thereby contributing much more than their fellows to the elaboration and maintenance of ‘the culture’ (1987:163-164, 166). If brokers are intermediaries then, by definition, this
necessitates situating their agency within a wider social and cultural context, mindful of power relations and key institutions (the state, political parties, churches, etc.) and patrons that reward certain representations and practices. The focus on 'tradition' in terms of rituals, objects and discourses is one key mode for addressing practice (see Ortner 1994:398), whilst unifying brokers, history and power into one framework.
## Chapter Two

### CANONISING THE CARIB:
History, Indigeneity, and Colonial Political Economy

| 1493 | "...an island which is Carib...which is inhabited by people who are regarded in all these islands as very ferocious, who eat human flesh. They have many canoes with which they range through all the islands of India, rob and take whatever they can...wearing their hair long like a woman...use bows and arrows of the same cane stems....ferocious among these other people who are cowardly to an excessive degree".  
---*Christopher Columbus* (1992 [1493]:14-15). |

| 1500 | "We knew that they were of a people called *cannibals* and that most of them live on human flesh; and of this you can be certain Your Magnificence....Of this we were certain in many parts, where we met such people, because we immediately saw bones and skulls of some they had eaten, and they do not deny it; moreover their enemies, who are always afraid of them, also say so....These people we knew to be *cannibals* and that they ate human flesh".  
---*Américo Vespucci*, Letter to Lorenzo de Medici, of 18 July, 1500, on his landing in Trinidad (*Vespucci* 1963 [1500]:43-44). |

| 1518 | "In the island of Trinidad...the Indians are as good and kind as any to be found in all the Indies".  
---*Bartolomé de Las Casas* (the “Apostle of the Indies”), 1518 (quoted in E. Williams 1962:24). |

| 1902 | "Cuba, San Domingo, Jamaica, and the other islands in the West Indies, appear to have been inhabited, at the time of their discovery, by a mild and timid race, generally called Arouagues by Labat, Du Tertre and other French historians of the 17th century. The smaller islands, stretching from St. Thomas to Tobago, seem, on the contrary, to have been peopled, at that period, by a warlike and indomitable race of savages, collectively known as ‘Charaibes’ or ‘Caribs’, who heroically resisted every attempt at colonization on the part of European intruders....stubborn was the persistence offered by these dauntless savages...[with their] indomitable spirit[,] untameable nature [and] their remarkable passion for human flesh".  
---*Henry Hesketh Bell*, British Governor of Dominica (1902:3, 4, 5, 7); also on the Internet at <http://www.delphis.dm/caribs2.htm>. |
“Caribs were an intractable and warlike people; they were proud and dominating and preferred death to subjection. Throughout history the Caribs have always been indomitable and implacable opponents of all invaders. The early Conquistadors...found in the Caribs valiant and worthy opponents, and only too often the Spaniards suffered disastrous defeats”.

—K. S. Wise, Historical Sketches of Trinidad and Tobago (1938, 3:76).

“I am combating a tradition [that of believing that Caribs were the indigenous people of Trinidad] which is deep rooted and hard to destroy, yet it must be destroyed if people of Trinidad of today are to understand their history”.


Carib:
“American Indian people who inhabited the Lesser Antilles....Their name was given to the Caribbean Sea....The Island Carib...were warlike (and allegedly cannibalistic)....Raids upon other peoples provided women who were kept as slave-wives; the male captives were tortured and killed”.

Cannibalism:
“The term is derived from the Spanish name (Caríbales, or Canibales) for the Carib, a West Indies tribe well known for their practice of cannibalism”.

Arawak:
“They were driven out of the Lesser Antilles by the Carib shortly before the appearance of the Spanish”.

Trinidad and Tobago, The people:
“The original inhabitants of Trinidad were chiefly Arawak. Although there are inhabitants of the town of Arima who claim descent from Carib royalty, it is doubtful that the land was settled by Caribs”.


Introduction: On the Historical (Re)Construction of Caribbean Indigeneity

In the Introduction I put forth the case that historical processes and their textual distillates weighed heavily on SRCC brokers’ reinterpretations and articulation of Carib ‘traditions’, and that history serves as a resource in their quest to affirm their cultural presence and their ‘contribution to the national foundation’. I have also suggested that historical processes of political economy and identity construction have been central to framing the figure of the Carib in particular ways and at particular times, for a variety of purposes. I debated Lieber’s (1981) assertion that indigeneity was absent from the ‘repertory set down by colonial experience’, on the grounds that such assertions serve to marginalise, or even erase, at least the symbolic presence of indigeneity in the cultural development of
the modern Caribbean, and thus pose an obstacle to any thesis that seeks to highlight the re-engineering of indigeneity in the contemporary Caribbean. Indeed, if we were to proceed without a conception of the historical setting of re-engineering, then we would be forced to adopt an unusually extreme conception of ‘invention’ in positing ‘Carib’ to be an instantaneous invention of the present, which would require an equally radical conception of agency, and which would further imply that a small cluster of brokers has the power and influence to make its representations stick without the help of certain precedents, established discourses, and supporting conditions. Such a view of invention, then, would be anti-historical for rejecting the historical processes that worked to establish ‘Carib’ as an available, meaningful, and legitimate identification. In line with Mato (1996), I suggest that we can leave aside extreme notions of invention as outlined above, and still maintain our focus on construction. Therefore, one of the intended outcomes of this chapter is to establish the figure of the indigene—whether symbolically constructed or demographically recognised—as a ‘presence’ that is actively mediated in Trinidad’s post-Conquest cultural development.

What we must first examine is how colonial élites in their interactions with Caribbean natives set about establishing a field of signification that would institute and then condition the deployment of the label ‘Carib’. We are thus dealing with doxic representations in Bourdieu’s sense as explained in the last chapter, and what Archer referred to as the construction of a propositional register. Furthermore, in elaborating his concept of social fields, Victor Turner included a notion of the propositional register in terms of ‘concepts and beliefs, and he noted moreover that each ‘field’ provides people, “with opportunities, resources, concepts, beliefs; yet each...[imposes] certain limitations” (1974:132). The colonial experience generally, and the creation of ‘Carib’ in particular, have produced the ‘field’ from and within which current Caribbean Amerindian identities are developed and delimited—a ‘field’ that is represented by examples of the range of positions on the indigenes set out at the start of this chapter.

This chapter and the next chapter are concerned with the construction, dissemination, perception and manipulation of ideas, propositions and symbolic
resources shaping, and yet also re-shaped, by the development of current Carib identity. The focus, following Archer, is on those elements of the 'cultural system' that are constructed (as a result of previous cultural elaborations) and act to condition actors in their social interaction, resulting in a "causal consensus" that precedes further cultural elaboration (1988:xv-xvi). This part of the thesis focuses on colonial constructions of the meanings and value of 'Carib', the localisations of 'Carib' within Arimian history and identity, and, it lays the basis for the subsequent discussion of 'Carib' in nationalist constructions of Trinidadian indigeneity (chapter 5). The objective here is twofold: (1) to map the wider field of interpretations and constructions of the meanings and value of 'Carib', and the 'Amerindian' generally, which act to condition the practice of SRCC brokers; and, (2) to demonstrate the extent to which 'Carib' and 'Amerindian' acquired a doxic dimension and would eventually serve as canons of dominant Trinidadian reflections on the island's history and identity (as glimpsed in the quote from 1934 at the top of the chapter), either as a symbol of the past or as a living reality. As a result, 'Carib' is situated historically.

I must also indicate that I do not wish to unduly 'privilege' the temporal dimension, at the expense of the spatial, the latter being more the concern of the following chapter. Ultimately, the two are deeply intertwined as best expressed, I feel, in Wallerstein's term, 'TimeSpace' (1991b). For example, the temporal dimension of this chapter highlights the Caribbean as the place of the Caribs, and much effort is invested by colonisers in constructing that place, and in defining and redefining particular places as either Carib or not. On the other hand, the spatial dimension involved in the making of Arima as the last place of the Caribs (next chapter) is one that is set out in temporal terms, of rise and fall, resurgence and memory, legacy and tradition. In other words, I am aligning this chapter and the next with a 'spatial-history' orientation (as denoted by TimeSpace), in highlighting the past-present axis of the re-engineering concept.

The development of these arguments in this chapter and the next proceeds by way of a demonstration of the ways in which 'Carib' acquired a canonical status through specific historical processes, and acted as the wider framework of
Chapter Two: Canonising the Carib

ideas and symbols within which the current SRCC operates. One way of effecting this demonstration is to provide an overview of the historical bases of the value of the Carib label, how it came to be symbolic of a variety of meanings, and how this label and associated symbols have been disseminated. This demonstration begins with an outline of the colonial construction of ‘Carib’ as a category, the uses of the label, and the attendant propositions associated with the label and its value. In line with my objective of revealing the historical bases of the value of the Carib label, I sketch the value of the indigene in the colonial political economy, followed by colonial powers’ preservation and perpetuation of the special status of the Caribbean indigene. As the 19th century is deemed by several writers to be modern Trinidad’s foundational century (as in the Introduction chapter), in the next chapter I also examine how Amerindians were conceived of as ‘special’ in that period and the kind of attention they received from élites interested in preserving or even in recreating their communal integrity, what I loosely refer to as the two past ‘resurgences’ of 1813-1828 and 1870-1920. I discuss these apparent 19th century ‘resurgences’ of the Arima Amerindians as a community and as a category, followed by the demographic and socio-cultural decline of the Arima Amerindians during mid-century, and their subsequent symbolic and demographic ‘substitutions’ from Venezuela in the form of imported cocoa workers. Following this I suggest that there was a ‘re-emplacement’ of ‘Caribness’ in Arima within a context of construction of Arima particularism in a situation of inter-élite competition and inter-ethnic friction among cocoa estate workers. Thus the objective here is to outline how the Amerindian became enshrined at the local Arima level as symbolic of the unique identity of Arima within Trinidad. In chapter 4 and moreso chapter 5, being devoted to the present (which for the purposes of this project is defined as the 1960s-2000 period), I move into 20th century disseminations of images and symbols of the Amerindian, seized by nationalists, as well as the production of symbols and valorisations of indigeneity at the national level, and the transformations of perceptions of the Caribs. At the start of chapter 5, I will reveal how the current SRCC is shaped by and builds upon these anterior historical processes, social fields and ideational
resources in producing their own self-representations and their stances on Amerindian legacies.

The Colonial Construction and Consumption of ‘Cannibal’ Capital

Classifying Caribs versus Arawaks, 1492-1498

‘Carib’, as a classificatory category applied to certain groups, emerged from the confrontation between Europe and the aboriginal Caribbean, and was the first attempt at some measure of ethnic specification after the initial deployment of the generic term indio (Indian). Carib was a pejorative native term that was not used as an auto-denomination by any group at the time of the first European incursions; indeed, all we do know for a fact is that there is no record of any native ethnic self-ascription in the Caribbean at the time of contact. As Hulme explains, “the islanders Columbus encountered on his first voyage did not have a self-designation or, if they did, Columbus did not note it” (1993:200; also 1992:57). The seminal act of categorical construction and imposition is the original act of engineering: constructing and ascribing traits of the worst imaginable savagery (cannibalism), to all aboriginal enemies of Spanish geopolitical expansionism, in contradistinction to the construction of the peaceful and settled Arawak. ‘Arawak’ itself was a word “never used by any Caribbean Amerindians” as an ethnic self-ascription, indeed, “neither Arawak nor Taino were ever, as far as we know, self-ascriptions” (Hulme 1992:59, 61). The Carib idea emerged from a developing discourse that was an attempt to “manage Europe’s understanding of its colonial relationships with Native Caribbean societies” (Hulme 1992:xiii-xiv). On the one hand, during the colonial period, the native Caribbean was “produced for Europe through a discourse that imbricated sets of questions and assumptions, methods of procedure and analysis, and kinds of writing and imagery” (Hulme 1992:2). The earliest writings by Columbus and his contemporaries, in the 1492-1498 period, attest to an uncertain probing, with multiple questions of designating language, place, or customs in connection with native identities, endless mistranslations and
doubts, and constant redefinition and improvisation. On the other hand, this discourse soon became a reality ‘on the ground’ within the Caribbean, when conflict and cooperation between Europeans and natives opened the door to specific and clear purposes motivating particular designations. The earliest re-engineering lies in later native subscriptions to this label; the shifts in deployment of the label by various European powers in contest with each other; and, in the labour invested in redefining, reassigning and reinterpreting the labels (and their presumed ethnic constituents and their traits), a project of categorisation that has yet to cease.

As will be outlined below, ‘Carib’, a former cognate of ‘cannibal’, had, at best, indeterminate ethnographic substance; it was primarily a political label, often with real economic consequences. Applications of the label from the late 1400s have been flexible and open to manipulation. Interests were vested in this labeling process, as momentarily glimpsed by the often divergent and fluctuating ascriptions that lead to contradictory assertions about the Carib versus Arawak presence in Trinidad (see the quotes from 1500 and 1518 at the top of the chapter).

Along with a great degree of necessary ethnographic obscurity, this label of convenience helped to establish elements of the ideational framework within which current groups such as the SRCC navigate, both by constraint and by choice. What figures prominently are the processes of mediation and valuation in the ascription and adherence to Carib identity. The portability of the products of these historical processes, stemming from the valuation of the Amerindian in colonial political economy, lies in their being enshrined in accessible and, indeed, widely disseminated and taught texts and, ultimately, in being seized and reproduced in the nationalist imaginary.

The configuration of the ‘Carib’ within “the repertory set down by colonial experience”, to borrow Lieber’s words, was part of wider processes of a foundational nature. As Hulme put it, “the ‘discovery of America’ has been inscribed as a beginning” (1992:1). Hulme thus reiterates that, “discursively the Caribbean is a special place, partly because of its primacy in the encounter between Europe and America, civilization and savagery”, and partly because of its
location, both physical and etymological, as the place of “cannibalism” (Hulme 1992:3)—see Figures 3.1 and 3.2 below.

**Figure 3.1:**
1544 Map of the World

Section of Charta cosmographica cum ventorum propria natura et operatione, showing “Canibales” in the Trinidad-Orinoco region.

Source: University of Georgia, Hargrett Library Rare Map Collection, Map 1544 A5 Neg. 5715, Apian
<http://scarlett.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/1544a5.jpg>.

**Figure 3.2:**
1550 Map of the Caribbean

Section of Tabula nouarum insularum, featuring the “Canibali” and a bonfire with human limbs, at the entrance to the Orinoco River. Source: University of Georgia, Hargrett Library Rare Map Collection, Map 1550 A5 Neg. 5716, Munster,
The earliest phase, then, is that of engineering of categories by which Europeans were to interpret and re-map the Caribbean. This approaches Wallerstein’s (1991b) thesis that our current *gemeinschaften* emerge out of *gesellschaftliche* processes, insofar as we can speak of the institution of ‘Carib’ through globalising processes such as colonialism, and then localised as the appellation of particular communities in specific locales. With respect to this seminal construction of the Carib label, Hulme challenges us to question “the frequently-made assumption that new human groupings first come into being—and are then categorised”, noting that, “the Caribs may in some sense themselves have been a ‘new people’, created in the context of the sixteenth-century Caribbean” (2000:2, 9). The colonial reinvention of the Carib has “proved remarkably successful: colonial discourse may misrecognise, but it also has the power to call its categories into being” (Hulme 1993:213). Indeed, it is this dual process of categories of (mis)recognition that then assume a living reality, which forms the ideational thrust of the re-engineering process in the colonial era.

The Arawak versus Carib dichotomy grew out of Christopher Columbus’ earliest Caribbean enterprises, and, as Hulme noted, “one of his most lasting, if least recognised, achievements was to divide the native population of the Caribbean into two quite separate peoples, a division that has marked perceptions of the area now for five hundred years” (1993:189). European geopolitics and the imperatives of capital accumulation played leading roles in European constructions of the native that are still in use today. Hulme expands on these points:

Columbus and his close colleagues were involved in what can be called an ‘invention of the Caribs’ during the first two Spanish voyages to the Caribbean, an invention which may or may not have owed something to perceptions internal to the Caribbean polities encountered in the Bahamas, Cuba, and Hispaniola, but which certainly served as a discursive self-placement: Spain’s self-appointed task...was to identify and replace the Caribs as the dominant power in the region. [Hulme 1993:213]

For the Spanish, allies were Arawak, enemies were Carib. The European experience in the Caribbean was not with such groups as the Oyana, Trio, or
Wapishana, “but with one of two kinds of Indians, as different in the colonists’ eyes as night and day: the Arawak and the Carib” (Drummond 1977:78).

These two labels characterise the European perception of the native Caribbean, acting as the “central and pervasive couplet” marked in all European accounts, stemming from the radical dualism of European responses to Caribbean indigenes: fierce cannibal and noble savage (Hulme 1992:46, 47). As for Columbus’ ‘Caribes’, Hulme notes that it is a “far from self-evident term, implying much more, with regard to ethnic or cultural boundaries, than can feasibly be supported from the evidence” (Hulme 1992:67). Tzvetan Todorov explains that “nomination is equivalent to taking possession”, and that Columbus, amongst others, was not concerned with knowing what a name signified in Indian terms (1992:27, 29). In fact, it is this process of appropriating ‘Carib’, without its aboriginal social or cultural substance, that permits us to speak in terms of ‘invention’. Todorov (1992:38) argued that labeling “good versus wicked” only teaches us that it depends on the point of view adopted, since the labels “correspond to specific states and not to stable characteristics”, and, derive from the pragmatic estimate of a situation. In parallel fashion, other observers of colonial documentation note that descriptions “totter uneasily between identifying some measure of nobility in the scarlet savagery of the islanders (Drake)”, or emphasising “the desperate character of these ‘Canybal’ warriors of the Indies (Hawkins)—reflective of the same gross savage vs. noble savage debates characteristic of European thinking in those times” (Hulme & Whitehead 1992:45). As Axtell summarises, Europeans saw Indians “through a glass darkly; at worst, they never saw them at all but only tawny reflections of their own self-projections and neuroses, as in a mirror”, and that in any event, “the Europeans’ ‘ethnocentrism’, their monolithic concept of ‘savagism’, whether noble or ignoble, so clouded their vision that the human and cultural reality of native life was almost never recognised and less seldom acknowledged” (1988:126).

‘Arawak’, residing within the same discursive framework as ‘Carib’, merits some attention here and will again surface in other parts of this work. ‘Arawak’, as the ‘other half’ of the ascriptive equation utilised by European colonisers, is caught
within the same web of interests as Carib. Before proceeding further, it is important to note that both Arawak and Taino were treated by the Spanish as synonymous, with the Tainos being a specific group of Arawaks inhabiting the Greater Antilles. Neither Arawak nor Taino were ethnic self-ascriptions. Hulme tells us that, “‘Taino’ is by no means a universally accepted denomination; it was certainly not the name this ‘people’ called themselves; and there is increasing uncertainty as to the boundaries and nature of the group being referred to” (1993:199). Jiménez Román (1999:82-83) adds that there were no “Tainos” before 1492: expeditiously [Columbus]...designated the indigenous people whom he encountered ‘Tainos’ because he assumed that in greeting him with the word ‘Taino’ they were naming themselves. In fact, they were offering assurances of their harmlessness (the word, the Spanish would soon learn, actually meant ‘noble’ or ‘good’), and were trying to distinguish themselves from their more aggressive neighbours, the ‘Caribs’, who inhabited the islands to the southeast.

In fact, the friendship term, guatiao, utilised between these aboriginals of Hispaniola and Columbus, also assumed a synonymous stance with Taino. In Peter Martyr D’Anghera’s 1587 classifications of natives of the islands, those who welcomed the Europeans were called Taini; Martyr described the meaning of “Taino” as a “good man” and as “noble men” in opposition to the ‘cannibals’ (“id est, nobles esse, non Canibales”); this helped effect a contrast between Taini on the one hand and the Canibales on the other, Taini and guatiaos referring to the same people (P. Roberts 1999:60; Hulme 1993:202-203).

The central point here is that Taino was deployed as meaning “not Carib”, and guatiao as “friend”—and as both Tainos and the Spanish were interested in identifying themselves to each other as friends, in opposition to the Caribs, the native transference of guatiao to the Spanish acted as a means by which Indians conferred native status on Spaniards, thus establishing a bond of friendship (P. Roberts 1999:61; also Hulme 1993:201). Hulme argues, “the native cry of taino”, used upon encountering Spanish parties, “was not an innocent and unmotivated self-identification, it was a tactical move within a desperate game” (1993:204). The stark contrast between Taino and Carib itself became elevated to the heights
of a mythic construct that would last for centuries. Jorge Duany observes that, in contrast to the war-like Caribs, the Tainos, “become the prototype of Rousseau’s ‘noble savage’. The constant reiteration of the same adjectives—docile, sedentary, indolent, tranquil, chaste—from one author to another acquires ritual and mythical connotations” (1999:39).

The term ‘Arawak’ is, however, saddled with additional interpretive difficulties that are not addressed when most contemporary commentators critique the ‘Carib’ label. For example, some assume that the since there was a town in the Orinoco delta called Aruacay, and was identified as such from the earliest Spanish records of the region¹, that Aruacas, or Arawaks, “naturally” must have been naming themselves after their place of origin. The resultant legitimation of Arawak, and deconstruction of Carib, in academic debates is problematic today even for the SRCC when commentators confront them with the charge that they are Arawak and not Carib, a stance adopted and expressed in more moderate terms by even recent visiting researchers such as the British archaeologist Nicholas Saunders.² The above, coupled with the belief held by some (see the Bullbrook and Britannica quotations at the top of the chapter), that Caribs never held sway in Trinidad, and that the SRCC may not know its ‘true identity’ is a further source of one-sided problematisations of ‘Carib’.

In fact, there is little evidence to suggest that Arawak is any less empirically problematic than Carib. First, some writers have argued that “Aruac” was used as a pejorative term as well: “the word ‘Aruac’ is not the name given by these people to themselves; it is a Carib word meaning ‘Meal Eaters,’ and used contemptuously by the Caribs” (Wise 1934:11). Indeed, apparently the only self-designation used by some so-called Arawaks was Lukuni, meaning ‘The People’ (Wise 1934:11). Secondly, there are also place names in the Orinoco-Guyana region, such as Little Canniballi and Caribana (“from the Arawakan, meaning ‘place of the Carib’” [Whitehead 1988:104, emphasis added]), that could be used.

¹ For example, when we read that in 1531, Diego de Ordas, came upon a large Arawak village called Aruacay, containing 200 houses, nine chiefs, led by a ‘chief-priest’ (Whitehead 1988:12).
² This debate surfaced ‘on the ground’, with members of the SRCC, when Dr. Saunders made the argument that Arawak was an authentic self-ascription, in a meeting I attended one evening.
to validate ‘Carib’ as ‘originally’ rooted in a place name as well—that is only if in the cases of both Aruacay and Caribana we forget to question who recorded these terms and at what stage of the colonising process. Thirdly, there is also evidence to suggest that Aruacay was likely to be identified as *Carib* and not Arawak: (1) the shaman of Aruacay was identified as a “piache”, a term belonging to the Cariban linguistic family (Oviedo 1959:398); (2) the people of Aruacay were identified in early reports as “very close friends with the Caribs” (Oviedo 1959:397); (3) Aruaca also happened to be the name of a *Carib* chief from the Santo Tomé region (Whitehead 1988:84); and, above all, (4) there is no evidence that the natives called the town ‘Aruacay’ since early reports state that it was “also known as” *Huyapari* (Whitehead 1988), the same term as *Uriaparia*, which refers to the Orinoco River and not to a people as such. This is a mere glimpse of the confusion and ambiguities that we all face in navigating through often arbitrary designations, and the fact that original political arbitrariness has also become scientific convention, as when linguists speak of Cariban and Arawakan linguistic groups (while the various groups need have no recorded affinity in space or time, “it is enough that their languages are identifiable as belonging to a common linguistic stock” [Drummond 1977:76]), or when they argue that the Island Carib language was actually Arawakan (Hulme 1992:63; see also Davis 1992, Davis & Goodwin 1990).

Thus far I have been exploring some of the ideational elements involved in the problem of naming. As Whitehead summarises, Spanish actions themselves created the Carib stereotype, where ‘Carib’ marked consistent opposition to the Spanish, rather than being contiguous with any given language, which, at any rate, would have been lost on the first Europeans who would barely be able to distinguish between linguistic groups, dialects, and the *lingua franca* Amerindians utilised with each other (1988:4). As Samuel Wilson (1997b) adds, ‘Tainos’ used ‘Carib’ in name-calling; Europeans used ‘Carib’ to simplify the political map, and ‘Carib’ was economically expedient since Caribs could be enslaved. Having said this, and having introduced the general ideational framework positing the Arawak-
Carib dichotomy, I now wish to direct attention to the particular political economic uses of the labels in specific contexts during the early colonial period.

**Pearls, Gold, Tobacco, Slavery and the Early Colonial Value of Carib in Trinidad, Early 1500s to the Mid-1600s**

Even by the 1600s, the ambiguity over the ‘real identity’ of the ‘canybals’ or ‘caribes’ that Columbus initiated remained. This may be seen as reflecting “precisely the plurality of attitudes and actions on the part of both Europeans and native Americans, before the colonial enclaves stabilised” (Hulme & Whitehead 1992:45). As argued in the previous section, what the Spanish classification actually revealed was the response on the part of the Amerindians to the presence of the Spaniards (Hulme 1992:72). Furthermore, Spanish designations of certain groups as ‘Carib’ was motivated by the desire to secure slave labour in ways consistent with the wishes of the Spanish Crown and with the drive for capital accumulation (see Davis & Goodwin 1990:38). In 1503, with the growing demand for slaves in Spanish occupied territories such as Hispaniola, Queen Isabella issued her edict authorising the capture and enslavement of the ‘Canibales’ (“clearly envisaged as an ethnos inhabiting certain specified lands”), obviously swayed by accounts of anthropophagous savages actively propagated by slave traders such as the famous Juan de la Cosa (Hulme 1992:70).

If and when Trinidad’s Amerindians were deemed to be ‘real Caribs’ was a question framed within the dominant concerns of colonial political economy, with debates raging as glimpsed from the quotations at the start of this chapter. The discourses that emerged, filtered out of the early contexts, continue to condition debates and questions in Trinidad as to the ‘real identity’ of its past and present ‘Caribs’. From the early 1500s, and especially from 1503 as mentioned above, the trade of Trinidad Amerindian slaves to Margarita and Cubagua to work in the pearl fisheries had begun, with numbers also sent to Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo (Joseph 1970[1838]:132). This first phase of colonial political economy thus centred on slave trading and pearls. Given that it was legal to enslave Caribs only, due to their alleged state of irredeemable savagery, slaves were thus actually
branded with the letter ‘C’ on their thighs. The ‘C’ indicated either their destination—Cubagua or Castille—or their origin as Caribs—even a poetic verse was written about this fact: “Castille, Cubagua or Caribe, what might be the effect of this initial, left forever on the body of a free man, as a mark of opprobrium and death?” (quoted in Whitehead 1988:76).

Diego Columbus began a trade in Amerindian slaves, in 1509, from Trinidad to Margarita (Ottley 1955:2-3, Wise 1938:7). However, it was not then fully settled whether Trinidad’s Amerindians were ‘Carib’ or not, for, as Newson (1976:18) noted, “in 1510 it was said that there were no peaceful Indians along the whole coast of the Tierra Firme, except in Trinidad”. Indeed, a Royal Decree of 15 June 1510, addressed to Diego Columbus, ordered a stop to the Trinidad Amerindian slave trade:

> There are islands much nearer [to Hispaniola] from which they can be brought, and, moreover, as it is an island of some size and it is said to have gold and that it is at peace and that trade is carried on with the Indians for pearls, and, that by offending the Indians of the island [of Trinidad] we should lose the pearl trade because there are not at present any other Indians along the whole coast of Tierra Firme at peace, and, that, it is well to maintain peace in these islands, as the pearl trade is so profitable....Therefore I do order you that from now on you shall not allow nor permit anyone to take Indians from this said island [Trinidad], and, that these said Indians shall always be well treated and preserved. [Decree quoted in Ottley 1955:3, emphasis added]

The situation was not so quickly stabilised, however, given intense lobbying by slave traders, inflammatory first hand reports by partial observers, and changing strategies.

Thus, under pressure from the colonists of Santo Domingo for an increased labour force (Whitehead 1988:11) on 23 December 1511, the King then issued a *Real Cédula* re-legalising slavery:

> And I do hereby and I therefore give licence and permission to all those who are so ordered by me both in the island [and] in Tierra Firme of the Mar Oceana that up to now are discovered—in the future—that they may wage war against the Caribs of the island of Trinidad, of Vari, of Domynica, of Concepcion, Martinico, Santa Lucia, San[...] Vicente, Barbados, Cubaco and Mayo, and also that
these Carib Indians may be captured and taken to such ports and islands wheresoever, and that these Indians may be sold for profit without punishment or penalty for so doing, and, without paying any duty provided they are not taken or sold outside the Indies. [Decree quoted in Ottley 1955:4; see also Harricharan 1983:8]

Therefore, in 1510 Trinidad was not Carib; in 1511 it was Carib; and, by 1512, once more, Trinidad was not Carib. Orders to cease the enslavement of Trinidad’s Amerindians “were repeated in 1512 to San Juan and the Royal Officials were urged to take immediate steps to verify the Indian reports of valuable gold deposits in Trinidad” (Wise 1938b:8). The promulgation of the Ley de Burgos in 1512, stipulating the end to Indian slavery, also decreed that “Indians were to be paid just wages for their labour” (Bisnauth 1996:18). Yet, as the search for gold proved unsuccessful, “interest in Trinidad thereupon lapsed except as a place for enslaving Indians to be sold at Cubagua and San Domingo” (Wise 1938b:8-9). To summarise then, if the labour of Trinidad’s Amerindians was needed elsewhere, as in the pearl fisheries or in Santo Domingo, they were defined as Caribs and enslaved; if their labour was instead needed in Trinidad, for possible gold mining, or for a peaceful trade in pearls given the generalised anti-Spanish hostility of tribes in the area, they were to be freed and declared non-Carib. The calculations behind these formalised proclamations of identity were, apparently, simple and tightly geared towards efficient capital accumulation in tune with the Realpolitik of the early colonial aboriginal arena.

The need for some consistency in definitions became salient especially with the increasing outcry from members of the Dominican Order, such as Friar Bartolomé De Las Casas, and during the reforms of Cardinal Cisneros in Spain, “the distinction between ‘Carib’ and ‘non-Carib’ populations became a serious concern for the Spanish Crown, and, in 1518, Rodrigo de Figueroa was appointed a judge, with plenary powers, to produce a definitive classification of Amerindian cultures, throughout those territories known to the Spanish” (Whitehead 1988:9, emphasis added). Three centuries later, the traveler/explorer Alexander von Humboldt wrote of Figueroa and his report:
His ethnographic piece, called *El auto de Figueroa*, is one of the most curious records of the early conquistadores' barbarism. Without paying attention to languages, any tribe that was accused of eating prisoners was called Carib. All the tribes that Figueroa called Carib were condemned to slavery. [von Humboldt 1995:277]

Following the protests by Las Casas (see the 1518 quote at the start of the chapter), Trinidad was excluded from Figueroa's classification of 1518, “though...as in the meantime gold had been reported from the island, the change in the status of Trinidad’s Amerindians might be seen as reflecting a desire to preserve a native labour force, in situ, for use in future mining operations” (Whitehead 1988:11). Though Trinidad was thus declared an island not occupied by Caribs, this situation seemed in doubt as slave traders once again petitioned the Crown for permission to enslave Indians on the basis of their being evil, warlike cannibals (Newson 1976:18-19). In a pattern that should be familiar to the reader by now, “when the gold failed to materialise and Antonio Sedeño was given permission to colonise the island in 1530, Trinidad was, once again, declared ‘Carib’, by a *Real Cédula* of the 13th of September of that year” (Whitehead 1988:11, emphasis added). In addition, the strategic value of Trinidad was increased in this period by Spanish attempts to penetrate the Orinoco region in search of the mythical land of Meta (the province of the famed *El Dorado*), making an unhindered occupation of Trinidad highly desirable (Whitehead 1988:11).

The accusation of cannibalism, it seems, was also sometimes wielded by Trinidad’s Amerindians against the Spanish. When Antonio Sedeño, Trinidad’s first Governor, arrived in Trinidad in 1532, and, “with the aid of a contingent of 80 men proceeded to punish the Indians, ‘putting them to fire and sword and inflicting severe penalties’”, it was recorded that in this fight “the Indians refused to surrender, choosing rather to die in the flames, than to be made captives by Spaniards who, they had grown to believe, *ate all their prisoners*” (Ottley 1955:6, emphasis added). As Las Casas also wrote, “because they [their fellows] did not return to their lands they would say that they [the Caribs] ate them. They believed the same thing about the Christians and about the admiral [Columbus] the first time some of them saw them” (De Las Casas 1992:18). Writing in the 1530s, and
repeating some of the negative caricatures highlighted at the start of the chapter, Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdés (a Spanish traveller who spent decades in the early colonial Caribbean and interviewed many of the leading Spanish conquerors) wrote that, “the island of Trinidad...is populated by Carib Indians bearing arrows.... They are a very bellicose people, naked and idolatrous, and they eat human flesh, and beneath these vices one must believe that they have many others” (Oviedo:387). Apart from the persistent desire to imagine the Caribs as even worse than the evil they were already ‘known’ to manifest, Oviedo provides us a glimpse of early Trinidad Amerindian tactics in subscribing to these same negative depictions when it was convenient, that is, when striking fear into the hearts of Spaniards seemed appropriate. Oviedo describes the following situation faced by a small Spanish landing party in Trinidad:

Returning to the river...three or four Indians arrived...who appeared to be Caribs, and the Christians told them they came in peace and if they could get something to eat; and they [the Indians] responded that if there would be any eating to be done it would be Christians that would be eaten, if they [the Spanish] would wait there another day since many Indians would come. [Oviedo 1959:395, emphasis added].

Of course, while this may have been an actual Amerindian tactic in the 1530s, we must also be mindful of the possibility that this episode could have been entirely the concoction of Oviedo or his informants, designed to produce the requisite shock-effect back home. Yet, as writers of the time reflected, the Amerindians were necessarily 'conditioned' by the blunt edge of this constant flux between peace and war, as Oviedo wrote: “those Indians were conditioned from before [1530] and had killed Christians, and had also suffered injury from the Spaniards, and already from the time of the Catholic King, Don Fernando, they were sold as slaves for their crimes” (Oviedo 1959:387).

For approximately sixty years after the departure of Sedeño in 1534, Trinidad remained in the hands of the Indians, “who developed a fair trade in tobacco, corn, and other foodstuffs with the many adventurers who came to the West Indies in search of riches” (Ottley 1955:9). The problem with this situation was that the Spanish were eager to appropriate Amerindian trade networks as
another source of capital extraction in addition to more direct forms of accumulation; moreover, they were equally eager to secure these trade networks from themselves, to the exclusion of new contenders in the region such as the Dutch, the French and the British. More often than not, those identified as ‘Carib’ were those local polities that still controlled an independent trade in valuable commodities such as tobacco. Unsurprisingly, in 1547, “the King of Spain gave special permission to the inhabitants of San Juan to make war upon the Caribs and to enslave them....The natives of Trinidad, Guadeloupe, Martinique (Matinino), Dominica, and Santa Cruz were specially aimed at. These islands appear to have always been the chief strongholds of the Caribs” (H. H. Bell 1902:6). In 1550-1551, Las Casas engaged Juán Gines de Sepúlveda in Valladolid in a debate over Spain’s waging war against the Indians as a step toward Christianising them (Bisnauth 1996:18). According to Sepúlveda, the Indians were “so uncivilised, so barbaric, contaminated with so many impieties and obscenities....[they are] little men (hombrecillos) in whom you will scarcely find even vestiges of humanity” (quoted in Bisnauth 1996:19). Thus the propagation of the Christian faith among the natives demanded their subjugation. Sepúlveda “was widely acclaimed and even rewarded by influential Spaniards for his stance in relation to the Indians” (Bisnauth 1996:19). On the other hand, claiming ‘savage’ attacks against Spanish populations was a popular justification that in fact served to build a mystique around Carib military prowess, even while providing a basis for the very conquest of the Caribs (the heroism and tenacity of their resistance and their war-like nature is treated as a matter of fact in today’s texts and in conventional depictions produced in contemporary Caribbean societies).

By the end of the 1500s, when the indigenous population of Trinidad declined, colonists turned to the Orinoco as a new source of slaves (Whitehead 1988:29). Pointing to documents from the end of the 1600s, Whitehead tell us that when all the slaves on Trinidad were released as a result of the Spanish Crown ordering a cessation of the ‘armed conquest’ and the holding of personal slaves, “some 2,000 Caribs, mainly from the Caura and Cuchivero Rivers, were given
their freedom at this time...although the legal provision for the slavery of ‘rebel’ Caribs remained in force until 1756” (1988:29).

The Trinidad that the Spanish first encountered was one that had long been a hodge-podge of Amerindian groups from the Caribbean islands and northern South America, a virtual transit station in long-distance trading networks between the islands and the mainland, with various languages and tribal identifications recorded by subsequent European explorers. Spanish entry into a complex local political situation had a considerable impact on the local state of affairs described by colonial chroniclers, “introducing another player, of obvious power if markedly ignorant, whose presence and actions had immediately to be factored into all native calculations, responses, and words” (Hulme 1993:211). That some groups would be classified as cannibal (Carib) in order to justify their legal conquest and thus displace them as competitors for local labour power, would also serve to facilitate alliances between the Spanish and Amerindian rivals of the so-called Caribs.

**Figure 3.3:**
**Magnified Section of Map of Trinidad and the Orinoco River Basin**

This map shows the distribution of Amerindian groups circa 1600, according to colonial documents compiled by Neil Whitehead (source: Map 1 in Whitehead 1988).
With greater penetration and with the passage of decades, the map of labels changes and begins to diversify considerably, as pre-existing native complexity became enmeshed in a system of fluctuating ascriptions amongst competing European powers intertwined in contending networks of alliances with aboriginal groups. Thus, beginning with the term ‘Carib’ itself, we now have a dizzying array of cognates (from which today’s revivalist groups freely choose): from the Spanish—Caribal, Caniba, Canibal (Cannibal), Calinago, Califuna, Carifuna, Caríña, Calíña, Caliponam, Carini, Carinepogo, and Camajuya; from the French—Caraibe, Charaibe, Callinague, and Galibi; and, from the British—Carib, Caribbee, and even Caribou. Beyond this, the accounts written by the famed English adventurer, Sir Walter Ralegh, relating his raid on Trinidad in 1595, identified Arawak settlements, and near San José de Oruña (the Spanish capital in Trinidad), Carinepago, “probably a Carib group” (Whitehead 1988:15). Other groups named by Ralegh were the “Yaio (...Yao, a Carib-speaking group), Arwaca (...Lokono, or True Arawak), Saluaios (?), Nepois (...)Sopoios, another Carib-speaking group)” (Figueredo & Glazier 1991:238). Other writers in the early 1600s such as Vázquez de Espinosa, stated circa 1620 that the “Indian tribe of the island of Trinidad” was “Nepuya by name” (Espinosa 1968:37), a label which has surfaced as a contender for legitimacy as an alternative label for today’s SRCC in Arima, thanks to the involvement of certain historical researchers such as Pat Elie and British archaeologist, Peter Harris. Another archaeologist speaks of Lokono (Arawak) villages in Trinidad, noting that Trinidad was the major link in the Arawak-Island Carib trade relationship (Boomert 1986:10). Espinosa spoke of Caribs who were called Garinas, as dominant in the Orinoco delta, with Trinidad positioned at its entrance (1968:72), echoing the writings of Américo Vespucio and Alonso de Ojeda who also insisted on the ‘Carib’ designation in 1499-1500 (Whitehead 1988:12). Also in the early 1600s, Robert Harcourt wrote, “the Caribs had only recently driven out other Amerindian groups from parts of Trinidad” (Whitehead 1988:17). Writing in the mid-1600s, the Dominican cleric, Jacinto de

3 Throughout this text I opt for the original spelling of his name, as also used in the works of Whitehead.
Carvajal identified among “the Kalinago groups fleeing the Antilles...the Galeras, who had invaded the Punta de Galera on Trinidad, the Dragos, who had settled islands in the Paria Gulf and Orinoco Delta, and the Tobagos, Kalinago from Dominica and Grenada living on Tobago” (Whitehead 1988:16).

Whitehead argues that the fact that the documents of Ralegh and his contemporaries, some of whom were cited above, do not always square with one another, is due to the fact that with greater European penetration came greater discernment and thus more denominations were revealed (1988:17). As Whitehead notes, “by the 1620s, the Spanish were no longer referring to ‘caribe’ groups on the northern coast of Venezuela at all but, more correctly, to Cumanagotos, Parias and Guayqueris” (1988:17, emphasis added). I believe that it is too great a leap of faith to pronounce any label as ‘correct’ from our present vantage point, that is, as we look back at such overt chaos, and as we are forced to breathe such ethnographically thin air. Moreover, the notion that European penetration would ‘reveal’ more than it would change, shape or provoke that which was presumably revealed, is also debatable. Thus one could argue that, with greater penetration also came further displacements, diverse reactions, changed cultural fields, and even altogether new names, as is almost transparent in the case of naming groups Galeras, Dragos, Tobagos, names that are not repeated from one source to the next. I agree with Whitehead when he later reflects that “the European presence itself had already affected the situation considerably” (1988:18). Indeed, as we saw several paragraphs ago with some examples of Trinidad Amerindians playing up to the mystique of being man-eaters, we should now turn our attention to examples of how Amerindians themselves engaged this field of contested and motivated multiple naming,4 thus marking the deepening and widening of the re-engineering of indigeneity.

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4 We must bear in mind that how ‘we’ know of this is through the slanted representations of colonial chroniclers, so that the information is necessarily partial.
Natives in the Early Re-Engineering of Indigeneity

Starting in the 1600s, where we left off in the previous section, cultural transformations of Amerindian polities were already being recorded, along with evidence of pragmatic native appropriations of dominant European ascriptions. Even before Spanish rule had been consolidated in the Caribbean, the ‘Caribs’ were miscegenated to some degree and even ‘multi-ethnic’ in a sense, that is, consisting of a mix of peoples from the Americas, Europe and Africa. Dominica is often portrayed as the centre of the Carib regional domain, the base from where they launched attacks on the isolated plantations of Spanish settlers as far away as Puerto Rico, even capturing Spanish ships and occupants as they passed Dominica. Hulme and Whitehead note: “although European adult males were often killed outright during such attacks, many other individuals were simply taken into captivity as wives [and] servants” (1992:38). Moreover, there were common estimates of “there being up to 300 European and African captives on Dominica” (Hulme & Whitehead 1992:38). Bernáldez de Quiroz, the Procurator General of Puerto Rico, speaking of attacks from Dominica against Puerto Rico, wrote, “they have carried away a great quantity of negroes and left some in Dominica and distributed the rest amongst the Indians of these islands, which they take to their lands in order to serve them (quoted in Hulme & Whitehead 1992:40). Reportedly they also captured Spanish infants as well as ‘important’ Spanish women from passing ships. Some assimilation is remarked to have occurred by eyewitness accounts offered by escapees, who spoke of captives that “go about naked by day and night, and they paint them like themselves, making them sleep on the ground” (de Quiroz quoted in Hulme & Whitehead 1992:40). These accounts speak of Spanish men and women in Dominica “who were already as much caribes as the rest of them, and the women say that they no longer remember God….and they do just as the Indians do” (witnesses quoted by de Quiroz in Hulme & Whitehead 1992:42).

By the start of the 1600s already much had changed, with the Amerindians found to have incorporated many items of European culture: “the more rounded accounts that appear in the seventeenth century relate to a situation already
substantially changed from the ‘traditional society’ which they attempt to describe” (Hulme & Whitehead 1992:45). The chaplain to the Earl of Cumberland found Caribs in Dominica and reported in 1598, “they speak some Spanish words” (quoted in Hulme & Whitehead 1992:59), which presumably could have been learnt from their captives. In the mid-1700s in Dominica, “run-away slaves” made “common cause with the Caribs” in order to defend their forests (H.H. Bell 1902). Others note that acculturation must have begun at an early date as shown by the ‘Caribised’ words of Spanish origin included in Father Raymond Breton’s famous dictionary of 1665 (Taylor 1992 [1941]:315; see Breton 2001 [1665]).

Some analysts perceive some strategising in auto-denomination on the part of Caribbean Amerindians, of seemingly subscribing to European ascriptions for very specific purposes. As Whitehead put it, “‘Carib-ism’, along with its historical counterpart, ‘Arawak-ism’...represented alternative political responses, on the part of the Amerindians, to the European invasions” (Whitehead 1988:189). In terms of the ‘Arawak’ label, Boomert believes it “was rapidly adopted, possibly by several Amerindian tribal groups, due to the protection the name gave against Spanish slave-raiding expeditions, especially after Rodrigo de Figueroa’s report of 1520” (Boomert 1986:13). Boomert outlines groups that called themselves Arawak, yet traded and intermarried with the Kalina (mainland Caribs), whose languages possessed items of mixed lexical origins, and who could position themselves as either ‘Arawak’ or ‘Carib’, depending on the context and the prospective partners in question. Boomert also states that by about 1600, “the name Arawak had become a generic term undoubtedly including not only Lokono...but other, smaller ethnic groups in especially Trinidad and the Lower Orinoco area as well” (1986:10).

There is also evidence that by the second century of European colonisation, groups in the Lesser Antilles began to appear who adopted ‘Carib’ as an auto-denomination. In fact, there is some evidence that suggests a degree of active Amerindian self-consciousness vis-à-vis the European ascription of labels and the range of choices open to them in terms of auto-denominations. Father Raymond Breton, a French missionary who lived alone amongst the Dominica Caribs for
most of the twenty years that he spent in the Caribbean from 1635-1654, wrote the following:

I have finally learned from captains [chiefs] on the island of Dominica that the words Galibi and Carib were names that the Europeans had given them. Their true name was Callinago although they designated themselves only with the words oubaobanum and baloüébonum: that is to say either ‘from the islands’ and ‘from the continent’. [Breton 1929:1]

Hulme argues that by the late 16th century the inhabitants of the Lesser Antilles probably considered themselves as an ethnic unit and called themselves ‘Carib’, “the word at this point meant in the native language ‘brave and daring’, which perhaps suggests that it had been adopted from Spanish usage as a badge of courage and unity in the war of resistance, since the Spaniards employed it in fear” (1992:63). To some extent, the Carib ‘badge’ also served to boost the desirability of having Carib allies (‘Carib’ symbolising their military prowess) for different European powers, at different times, in various parts of the Caribbean. Irving Rouse wrote that when “the English explored the Guianas at the close of the 16th century, they found Indians living there who called themselves Carib” (Rouse n.d.). Additional testimonial evidence of groups actively adopting the Carib label is found in 1734, in a writer’s account of the rebellion by Chief Taricura, which mentions that the Chief persuaded parties of Guaraunos (Warao)5 and Arguacas (Arawaks) “to become Caribs” (quoted in Whitehead 1988:117). Boomert also observes that the serious decline of the Amerindian population in Coastal Guiana during the contact period resulted in, “the amalgamation of numerous groups whereby especially smaller ethnic unities were absorbed by the larger tribal groups, a development which can be reconstructed from the gradual disappearance of various Amerindian self-denominations from about 1650 onwards” (1986:12). Boomert says that by the mid-1600s, the original self-identifications of the original inhabitants of the Windward Islands, “had in fact long been forgotten” (1986:13). Others also find that on the mainland, with Carib monopoly of the trade with the

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5 The Warao dominated in the northeastern portion of Venezuela.
Dutch in Essequibo from the 1620s onwards, a variety of groups began to adopt the mainland Caribs' auto denomination (Whitehead 1988:190).

This section has stressed early processes of re-engineering indigeneity, of interests vested in the creation and projection of particular identities, a process whereby power brokers such as Amerindian chiefs and European colonisers mediated in the articulation of self and other and the ways these were denominated. Moreover, the products of these early processes, filtered out of their original contexts, condition current articulations of Carib indigeneity, as explored in more detail later, thereby achieving a status as 'truths' forming part of the propositional register defined by Archer (1988:xvi). Both Hulme and Whitehead argue that by 1650, 'Carib' had already become "as much a political category as a cultural one", and, they observe, "political alliances, cultural and social features, and a sense of ethnic identity were to an important degree the product of interaction with and resistance to European forces" (Hulme & Whitehead 1992:3). Hulme argues that it is in the "history of resistance and response that 'the Caribs' find their proper place, after the fact of their invention", leading to the emergence of new ethnic units that resisted and responded in a variety of "innovative ways" (1993:213-214). Other writers have also theorised an overall relationship between examples of 'name changing' throughout Caribbean history and the impact of colonialism, seeing the changing of names and adoption of new ones as defence mechanisms and as ways of accessing rights and privileges in a broad sense of these terms (P. Roberts 1999:72). The processes outlined in this section also echo in the work of Eric Wolf when he argued, without disputing that native North Americans did produce distinctive cultural materials of their own, that nevertheless "they did so under the pressure of circumstances and constraints of new demands and markets, and new political configurations" (Wolf 1984:395).6

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6 As examples of the latter he offers the following: "In 1657 the Senecas were said to 'contain more foreigners than natives of the country'; in 1659 Lalemant said of the Five Nations that 'these are, for the most part, only an aggregation of different tribes whom they have conquered.' In 1668 the Oneidas were estimated as two-thirds Algonkin and Huron...Or what shall we say of the Ojibwa when...there were no such people before the advent of the fur trade, but that an Ojibwa identity developed only gradually as local Algonkian-speaking lineages slowly coalesced on their trek to the west, to form larger groupings whom the French called Salteurs or Ojibwa, after one local group known as the Uchibus" (Wolf 1984:394-395).
Whitehead and Wolf offer some of the clearest statements of these early re-engineering processes. Indeed, in a statement of especial value to this perspective, one that is also consonant with world systems approaches, Wolf emphasises that, “in a majority of cases the entities studied by anthropologists owe their development to processes that originate outside them and reach well beyond them...they owe their crystallisation to these processes, take part in them, and affect them in their turn” (Wolf 1984:395).

Noble Warriors, Useful Allies, and Spouses

This chapter began with the first European formulations of the Carib-Arawak dichotomy, proceeding then to a discussion of the political economic circumstances in which the logic of European ascriptions unfolded, and the ways Amerindians responded to, and appropriated, these ascriptions. However, what also stemmed from these responses was a conditioning of further European responses to the ways Amerindians positioned themselves. A group identifying itself as Carib thus simultaneously announced its opposition to the Spanish and its potential allegiance to European powers that began to challenge Spanish hegemony from as early as the mid-1500s. While Amerindians thus cemented their incorporation into colonial political economy, it did not mean that they were passively constructed by it, and, indeed, they could and did do much to shape colonial political economy.

Imperial contentions, and the texts they produced that subsequently achieved a prestigious if not legislative authority for historians and today’s revivalist groups alike, are a necessary part of our consideration if we are to avoid the “ethnomyopia” criticised by Nancie Gonzalez (1983). The problem of “ethnomyopia” is that it fails to take into account global struggles for hegemony played out between various European actors in the Caribbean (Gonzalez 1983:145; see also Whitehead 1988:92), and thus poses an obstacle to understanding the consequence of the alliance of the Caribs with, for example, the French in St. Vincent or the Dutch in Guiana. How European powers were positioned against each other, and the ways Amerindians positioned themselves in turn had serious
consequences for all the European colonising projects insofar as they “were heavily dependent on Amerindian aid, their success or failure often being directly related to the disposition of the indigenous population” (Whitehead 1988:2). Unfortunately, the voluminous details of the complex histories of these multiple alliances far exceed the scope of this work.

Instead, I wish to only highlight those facets that are of particular relevance to the discussion as it has unfolded thus far. One of these facets is a continuation of the relationship between the construction and use of ethnic labels within the context of colonial political economy. The second facet involves a glimpse at the emergent affective ties between European powers and Amerindian polities, the beginning of a process that would develop into a privileged status for Amerindians in the evolution of subsequent colonial social hierarchies in the Caribbean. The third facet, and flowing from the second, involves laying the historical basis for later colonial projects to preserve Amerindian groups as separate entities and with certain rights and privileges. The fourth facet presents the emergence of missions as central to late colonial Amerindian existence in places such as Trinidad, a history that is increasingly told, re-told, and re-written in present-day Trinidad especially with reference to Arima and its Caribs.

Let us start by noting that in colonial peripheral zones such as Trinidad, the Orinoco delta and the Guianas, Amerindian allies were vital for colonial projects to succeed, especially as such zones produced no taxable flows of bullion. Whitehead thus notes, “Amerindian alliances were cultivated in an attempt to offset the lack of support from Europe and, indeed, so that these projects [i.e., the quest for El Dorado] might have any hope of survival at all” (Whitehead 1988:104). Whitehead also indicates that for the Caribs, “such alliances gave them a preferential access to highly prized items, such as metal goods, thereby enhancing not only the standing of individual leaders and traders within Carib society but also, through their associated kin networks, that of Carib groups generally” (Whitehead 1988:104).

While Trinidad itself was no longer considered a probable source of gold by 1600, it had a strategic and economic importance in other respects, primarily in
terms of Trinidad’s location as a base for searching for El Dorado; the cultivation and trade in tobacco, the first lucrative cash crop of the Caribbean; and, later, the export of cocoa, the second valuable agricultural commodity to be produced in the Caribbean (see Noel 1972:13). The search for El Dorado from Trinidad and the production of tobacco both dominated the late 1500s-early 1600s period. Cocoa became prominent from 1670 to 1725. The Amerindians themselves maintained a significant hold on the tobacco trade even into the 1600s. Dutch, English and French vessels illegally traded manufactured goods for tobacco in Trinidad in the early years of the 1600s (Wise 1936:17).

Trinidad became imbued with a “myth of place” associated with El Dorado, of the promise of great wealth even if it was never actually realised, a place where fantasy, ideology, discovery and conquest became fused in a type of magical rationalism (see Ramos Perez 1973). From 1583, with Antonio de Berrio’s inheritance of the title to the provinces of El Dorado, there began a new phase in the occupation of the Orinoco, and, in this period, “Trinidad rather than Margarita became the forward base for this penetration” (Whitehead 1988:80).7 Governor Antonio de Berrio sent a message to Spain, “to inform His Majesty of these new territories, how well-peopled they were with savages, and that they lay close to the provinces of Omagua, or El Dorado, about which, and their great wealth of gold and silver, many report were in circulation” (quoted in Espinosa 1968:55). He added, in a letter to the Council of the Indies (01 January 1593): “I went to Trinidad as it was of great importance for me to see and examine it....the best thing in it is its proximity to the mainland....I found it was thickly populated with natives” (quoted in Anthony 1988:309). In addition, the increasing presence of the English, French and Dutch in the Caribbean now made it “a matter of utmost importance that the Orinoco be secured for the Spanish Crown. Accordingly it was from this date [1583] that Carib populations began to experience the full effects of

7 Don Antonio de Berrio wrote: “I found it necessary to take possession of the island so as to bring the faith to the Indians, to obstruct the French and English corsairs who have been refilling and refreshing here for 14 years, to prevent the capture of the Indians and their sale as slaves in Margarita, to prevent the attacks of the Caribs from Dominica, Grenada, Matatino [?] and the other islands, and the killing and the eating of the Indians in the island” (quoted in Ottley 1955:10).
a permanent European presence” (Whitehead 1988:81). Sir Walter Raleigh’s attack on the Spanish capital of Trinidad in April of 1595, immediately followed by his exploration of the Orinoco in search of El Dorado, served to galvanise Spanish policy in the region: “this valuable area [Trinidad] was to be made secure at once and at all costs; an expedition was collected which the enthusiasm of the people swelled to...1,500 people including priests, women and children; moreover the Royal Exchequer loaned 70,000 and the City of Seville 5,000 ducats to supply this expedition” (Wise 1936:7, 8-9).

When Trinidad was finally settled by the Spanish in 1592, Governor Antonio de Berrio obtained Amerindian labourers and began to cultivate tobacco, thus breaching Amerindian control over labour and the trade in tobacco and suffering their attacks as a result (Ottley 1955:11). Succeeding his father in 1597, Don Fernando de Berrio had largely failed to conquer and penetrate the Orinoco region, “he therefore built an ajoupa at San José de Oruña [St. Joseph, the capital of Trinidad at the time] and occupied himself in the cultivation of tobacco, in which task he received the assistance of his Indian slaves” (Ottley 1955:16). The aims of the Spanish in Trinidad at the start of the 1600s were not to engage in total armed conquest of all the Amerindians in the area, rather, the interest was in gaining a foothold in the illicit tobacco trade with the English, Dutch and French, as well as maintaining a bridgehead into the Orinoco (Ottley 1995:15).

The Spanish had Amerindian allies in these various ventures, i.e., groups competing with ‘Carib’ access to European goods. How were these allied groups classified by the Spanish? One early designation was simply that of “Christian Indian” (see Oviedo 1959:391; Espinosa 1968:87). In other cases, their allies were referred to as Aruacas (Arawaks) even though in 1603 there had also been

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8 Indeed, other European powers were also aware of the potential value of the Trinidad-Orinoco region. Captain George Popham revealed, from letters he captured “on the high seas” in 1594, a memorandum concerning Trinidad, by a Frenchman called Bountillier de Sherbrouk: “He says that while being in Trinidad in [1591], he traded a knife with an Indian who gave him a piece of gold that weighed a quarter of a pound. This Indian told him that he had obtained the gold at the source of the river that reaches Paracoa in Trinidad, but added that in the Orinoco River it was to be found in great abundance” (quoted in Ramos Perez 1973:646).
alliances with the Warao who were dominant in the Orinoco and Trinidad (Wise 1936:13). However, one might ask if having Arawak allies would be any type of assurance of success given that the Spanish had invested so much labour in constructing the Caribs as the true warriors and Arawaks as cowards. Would the Crown not frown upon the poverty of such an alliance? This is where a rupture with the previous dichotomy became mandatory, with the resultant transformation in the traits associated with the Arawaks. Writing in the early 1620s, Espinosa certifies:

The tribe of the Aruaca Indians is among the most valiant...feared for their bravery by their neighbours and adjoining tribes, they are envied by the Indians of other tribes; they were always very loyal friends of the Spaniards, and when the latter came from Spain in the year 1595, they helped, served, and assisted them in all their needs. [Espinosa 1968:68]

Espinosa also glowingly speaks of Aracoraima, “the valiant cacique of the Aruacas”, whose “village of Caroa, which was at the tip of the island of Trinidad...went to the island of Margarita to pledge 24 of his women for the sum of 6,000 pesos’ worth of axes, knives, and other trade goods, in order to build a fleet of 120 vessels against these Caribs” (Espinosa 1968:68-69). The Arawaks of 1620 were no longer defined as the Arawaks of 1492, at least not when it was necessary to forget the classifications of yesteryear.

Whitehead rounds out this discussion, noting that it is well documented that the Spanish, from the 1500s, formed “formed strategic alliances with the Arawak (Lokono) of the Orinoco and coastal Guyana; both for economic reasons, especially the supply of food to Spanish settlements, and for political ones, specifically to gain a bridgehead into the Amerindian polity” (1988:18). Moreover, Whitehead stresses, “it is vital to grasp that many subsequent Amerindian conflicts, particularly those which persisted between the Caribs and Arawaks in Guyana, had their root in this early alliance of Spanish and Arawak” (1988:18,

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9 The Warao are not classified as either Carib or Arawak, nor is their language classed within the linguistic stocks of either of those groups.
As expressed by Espinosa above, the Spaniards heavily favoured the Orinoco Arawak over other Amerindians, even exempting them from the general liability to enslavement; in turn, the Arawaks gained great prestige through their early dominance of the trade in Spanish goods, especially the trade in metal tools, which the Caribs were to challenge in the 1600s through alliance with the Essequibo Dutch (Whitehead 1988:18). A further expression of the value Amerindian allies held for the Spanish is evidenced by the Spanish giving African slaves to the Arawaks, to labour on tobacco plantations that the Arawaks had set up in the Orinoco basin, as well as to work mines on the Lower Caroni River. The Spanish also gave the Arawaks intermittent military support as they occupied the lower reaches of rivers in western Guayana, notably the Essequibo, Moruca and Pomeroon, and parts of Trinidad (Whitehead 1988:18). After the 1620s the Dutch established an alliance with the Caribs in what is today eastern Guyana, with the marriage of Groenewagen, a Dutch West Indian Company representative, to a local Carib woman. The Arawaks planted in the region by the Spanish departed and travelled to Barbados to assist with English colonisation of the island (Espinosa 1968:68; Whitehead 1988:fn.7, 201). Thus we already see examples of patterns of privileging Amerindians within European colonial projects, and the development of affective ties even if strategically motivated (or, perhaps one could rephrase this as strategic ties with an affective insurance policy).

In their conflict with the Spanish and their Arawak allies, the Dutch and the English became allies of the Caribs. In various parts of the region the Caribs supported British settlements; along the Essequibo River, the Caribs and the Dutch jointly manned a fort (Whitehead 1988:85-86; Espinosa 1968:77). In 1629, both the English and the Dutch established themselves in Tobago and joined themselves with the Caribs (Whitehead 1988:88). On Trinidad itself, Sir Thomas Bridges planted a group near Toco, “helped by the Indians on the North Coast” in the

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10 Interestingly, today there is a common belief expressed by writers and commentators in the Caribbean, that the Amerindians were the ones to play European powers against each other, without considering the reverse case as Whitehead does here. The significance of this is that it adds to the resistance mystique of the Amerindians, a valuable component of post-colonial nationalist revisions of the colonial past.
1670s; in the 1680s, “the Dutch too, had made an alliance with the Indians in the South and had settled near Moruga about that same time” (Ottley 1955:22, 23).

The Dutch-Carib alliance produced an episode featuring a Trinidad chief who, in the 1990s, would be resurrected by researchers associated with the SRCC and hailed as a national hero: Chief Hyarima. Very little documentary evidence is available concerning Hyarima, mostly consisting of two letters written by Don Diego Lopez de Escobar, Governor and Captain General of Trinidad, in 1636 (Wise 1934:52-55). Hyarima is identified as a Nepuyo, a tribe belonging to the Cariban linguistic stock. A summary of these letters tells us the following: “The Nepuyo Indians whose Cacique was Hyarima lived three leagues (nine miles) to the east of St. Joseph, evidently at Arima. They had offered the Dutch as hostages all the old men, women and children of the tribe in return for the assistance of 80 men with arquebuses” (Wise 1934:58). In 1637, Hyarima joined the Dutch in a campaign up the Orinoco River and against St. Joseph, the Spanish capital of Trinidad (Wise 1934:70). More on contemporary reinterpretations and valuations of Hyarima will be presented in chapter 5.

Affective relationships between European colonists and Amerindian ruling groups became the norm in the post-1600 Caribbean. Spanish colonialists had developed systems for establishing kinship ties with Amerindian groups as a basis for forming alliances, through marriage and friendships (see Hulme 1992:71). In the case of what became British Guiana, it has been also noted that Caribs were the ones who had the closest relations with Europeans and who still continue to maintain favourable stereotypes of Europeans as their benefactors (see Sanders 1976:119, 134; also J. Forte 1996). Amerindians in Guyana also played an active role in maintaining the slave regimes of the 1700s and 1800s:

[they] had been encouraged in days of slavery by the Dutch to restore, dead or alive, those escaped slaves who ventured as far inland along the great rivers of Guiana. The Amerindians were sometimes extolled by the Europeans as the simple and unspoilt children of nature, but they could not be regarded in the same light by the Negroes, for even after emancipation their reputation as slave-catchers remained. [Wood 1968:6]
In return for the Amerindians quelling slave revolts, recapturing runaway slaves, and policing the interior of the Guianas, their chiefs' prestige was reinforced with gifts. Even a new language, "Creole Dutch", developed from the association between the Dutch and the Caribs. The British successors to the Dutch also maintained friendly relations with the Amerindians (Fox 1996:11-12).

In places such as St. Vincent, the French established tight alliances and affective ties with the Caribs. Jesuit missionaries, such as Pierre Pelleprat and Denis Mesland, were instrumental in founding the alliance between the French and the Caribs (Whitehead 1988:96-97). Hulme (2000:6) outlines how the French developed "a long commercial tradition as coureurs des îles, traders who would often dress as Caribs, have Carib wives, speak the Carib language—and presumably at least on occasion simply become Carib". French names were also adopted by the Caribs in St. Vincent (S. Roberts 1996:7). Hulme speaks of evidence of Caribs, possibly the children of French traders and Carib women, who set themselves up precisely as cultural intermediaries, living in European-style houses, wearing European clothes, but identifying as Carib (Hulme 2000:9). These sorts of alliances made their presence felt in Trinidad, as in July 1683, when a joint force of Caribs and French drove the Spanish from Trinidad (Whitehead 1988:101).

In an even more critical manner, these competing alliances and their impact on Trinidad led to serious changes in Spanish policy. As part of the attempt to restore Spanish control of the Orinoco, in 1686 Trinidad's Governor Zuñiga gave orders to abolish, "in the Province of Trinidad and Guayana, every sort of bondage contract of Indians, in order that they might enjoy their liberty" (quoted in Whitehead 1988:101). Encomiendas, the Spanish institution for coercing and administering Amerindian labour, were abolished throughout the Spanish empire by 1716 (Whitehead 1988:100). The Spanish turned instead to missionaries in securing Amerindian allies and coopting Amerindian trade networks.

The geopolitical utility of these alliances for the Europeans would necessarily decline somewhat, especially with the reinforced détente with the Caribs begun by the Spanish in 1639, an example of this being the Governor of Trinidad baptising "one of the most important caciques of the Orinoco,
Macuare...‘Don Martin, General’” (Whitehead 1988:91). Moreover in 1649 Holland and Spain signed the Peace of Westphalia. In the 1700s, there was a further decline in Carib power, with the Dutch turning to sugar, establishing stable relations with Spanish neighbours, and reducing their trade relationships with Amerindian groups (Whitehead 1988:107).

The Undoing of Carib Power, the Making of the Mission Indian, and Cocoa, Late 1600s-1700s

In 1642 King Philip II of Spain ordered that the armed conquest cease and in a royal decree of that same year he initiated the mission system, given that military invasions had largely failed to subdue Amerindian groups (Whitehead 1988:132). In addition, by the early 1700s, the Spanish sought to undercut and obstruct Carib trading patterns by first offering European goods apparently for nothing, thus reducing Carib influence amongst Amerindian peoples of the Orinoco (Whitehead 1988:106). With indigenous populations held in one place, access to them secured, and with men’s labour for the priests’ agricultural projects paid for in European goods, the mission system was thus designed to effectively undercut Carib dominance (Whitehead 1988:106). The King of Spain issued orders to the Capuchin fathers to establish missions in Trinidad in 1686. The official justification was a civilizational and evangelical one, as seen in the King’s letter to the Governor of Trinidad, dated 14 February 1686:

You on your part should hold these fathers in every possible way, assisting them to obtain their objects which are so important and aid them to reduce the Indians, and bring them, and, incorporate them, into the missions, so that they may learn to live a quiet and civilized life. This is a matter in which you must help, as it is important to bring all the Indians possible under the influence of these missionary fathers. [quoted in Ottley 1955:23-24]

As Whitehead describes it, the role of the mission was: “to ‘civilise’ the frontier, to instruct the Amerindians on the edge of Spanish settlement in the Catholic faith and to thus discipline them ideologically to the point that they could be used by the civil authorities for the benefit of the state” (Whitehead 1988:131). In addition, the mission was also a political and military institution designed to “defend the
outposts of empire from the encroachment of foreign powers and to extend them by opening up new lands” while turning ‘reduced’ and instructed Amerindians over to the state (Whitehead 1988:131).

Father Tomás de Barcelona, Prefect of the Capuchins, arrived in Trinidad in 1686. As was to be expected, he found “most disconcerting of all the grave disinclination of the native peoples for labour in the tobacco and cocoa fields”, given that, in effect, it would mean loss of autonomous Amerindian control over their own production and trade in these items (Ottley 1955:24). As the Spanish were interlopers in Amerindian trade networks, they also suffered constant attacks against their missions by Amerindians from the nearby mainland, most often the Warao (Ottley 1955:29). It would be relatively easy, then, for the colonists to reduce this struggle to one of civilized Amerindians and their protective Fathers versus the savage Warao. The Mission Indians, for their part, were seen by the Warao and other Amerindian rivals of the Spanish, as “relations of the Spaniards” (Whitehead 1988:117). In effect, from the 1700s to as late as the mid-1900s, and within the very localised sphere of Trinidad and eastern Venezuela, the Warao began to stand in for almost everything the Caribs had come to symbolise at the wider Caribbean level: war-like, engaged in fierce resistance, untameable, independent, elusive. To this day, in parts of Trinidad, one can hear of individuals perceived as wild, ugly, or gypsy-like in their behaviour being referred to as “Warahoons”. In addition, the “Warahoo” became enshrined in the annual Carnival celebrations in the figure of the Wild Indian (more of this later).

Also at this localised level of Trinidad, the Nepuyos, identified by the Spanish as sub-tribe of the Caribs, were allies of the Spanish missions. Historians write that the Amerindians of the Missions of San Agustín de Arauca (today’s Arouca), San Pablo de Tacarigua (Tacarigua), and the Partido de Quare (Caura), were of “the Nepuyo Nation, a part of the Carib stock who had generations before migrated from the Lower Orinoco and settled in the northern part of Trinidad and particularly between San Josef and Matura” (Wise 1938b:87). This latter reference is indeed very important, since, along with the passage on Hyarima the Nepuyo chief (above), it has found its way directly from Wise to SRCC leaders via historic
notes written for the SRCC by Peter Harris (1989a, 1989b), and has led to a nascent re-interpretation of the "true Carib" as being fundamentally a Nepuyo, as the SRCC Secretary and current Research Officer, Jacqueline Khan, asserted in an interview with me.

In the 1730s, Spanish municipal officials in Trinidad wrote to the King to impress upon him the loyalty and service of the Nepuyos. They wrote: "we have the greater reason to keep the Indians happy and contented, especially these Nepuyos, who are the only Indians who will supply men to oppose the enemies of your Royal Crown and who are always in the forefront of battle", and, "we know well from experience the loyalty and zeal with which they have always served Your Majesty", hence the need, they stressed, to "foster the best interests of these Indians" (quoted in Wise 1938b:87-88).

The Capuchin priests also succeeded in founding the cocoa industry by establishing plantations in their missions at San Fernando, Savana Grande, Montserrat, Santa Anna de la Savonetta and San Francisco de los Arenales, with cocoa becoming the major cash-crop export by the 1700s (Stephens 1985:10-11; Wise 1934:32). While the cocoa industry suffered a collapse during 1725-1727 due to blight, by 1750, "the industry was revived by the introduction of the hardier Forastero variety of cocoa by the Aragonese Capuchins who concentrated their activities at Arima, Toco, Siparia, Matura, Pt. Cumana and Salibia" (Stephens 1985:11, emphasis added).
Figure 3.4: Map of Missions in Trinidad

Amerindian chiefs, under the control of the Spanish, acted as internal rulers within missions (de Verteuil 1995:53-54). These co-opted chiefs functioned to bolster the civil, economic, military and geopolitical purposes of these missions, a fact that would also differentiate them from non-mission Amerindians, and thus serve to develop differing perceptions and valuations of mission and non-mission Amerindians in the eyes of the colonial élite. Each mission was organised as a pueblo, the same as a Spanish town with its cabildo, or town council. As a document of the period explained, the priests, in order to ensure “regular subordination in the villages and civility among individuals...elect from the most diligent and reasonable Indians a certain number of officials and ministers of justice...so that the Indians should obey them and be ruled by them” (quoted in de Verteuil 1995:58). Chiefs became the instruments of collection of tribute, the organisation of labour, and were given the title of “Don” (de Verteuil 1995:67). In addition, an array of other special privileges was granted to Amerindian officials. Special insignia were granted to these Amerindian officials, plus special places were reserved for them in Church, in order to add to their prestige; an “Indian Council” administered its own justice; Amerindian leaders would even run jails—“in fact much of the actual controlling of the Indians was done by the Indians themselves....this was the only way the two Capuchins in each mission in the
island could control the hundreds of Indians” (de Verteuil 1995:58, emphasis added). Moreover, as civic leaders, these officials were ascribed a higher status, with the cacique (chief) and shaman exempt from labour (de Verteuil 1995:67). Ultimate authority lay in the priests’ hands however: “the power of the priests was absolute but their government was paternal” (de Verteuil 1995:59; also Noel 1972:20).

Building on the desire of local chiefs for enhanced prestige and for special access to European goods, the priests were able to do the seemingly impossible, that is, in effect, to draft Amerindian leaders into colonising their own, as evidenced above. The Capuchins also had their Amerindians trained in military matters, and in Trinidad each mission had its Captain and Lieutenant with uniform and insignia, “and over the Naparima missions there was a General, trained by a Spaniard employed for this purpose” (de Verteuil 1995:59-60). Hence, we read of figures such as, “Antonio del Campo, Indian General of the Mission of Naparima”, and, “Captain Calixto, the Captain of the Indians of the Mission of Savaneta”, and in subsequent years we see documents for the appointment of General Antonio de la Cruz to the rank of “General of the whole Naparima tribe” (de Verteuil 1995:126, 116, 147-148). Amerindians in Trinidad were thus allied with the Spanish against the Dutch, forming an “Indian-Spanish army”, and in some quarters were even referred to as “Spanish Caribs” (de Verteuil 1995:67-68,68; Whitehead 1988:190). Companies of Indians to defend missions were also established with the intent of countering repeated Warao raids (de Verteuil 1995:68).

As a result of the establishment of missions in Trinidad, the church became an economic magnate in the colony, controlling almost all the labour as well as leading in the production of cocoa for export, one of the most lucrative agricultural commodities of the time. Even Trinidadian historians with a predisposition to favour the Catholic Church admit, “the mission was organised almost on a commercial basis” (de Verteuil 1995:57). All Indians in the missions were subject to the missionaries for a period of ten years, “during which time they worked free of charge in exchange for their board and the protection of their bodies” (Ottley
1955:26). Noel (1972:20) instead argues that the period of indenture was 20 years. At the end of this period of indenture and in keeping with their new status as ‘freemen’, “a tax of ten reales per annum was imposed on each of them” (Ottley 1955:26). The priests were also authorised to distribute the Amerindians for monthly service at a wage of 16 reales per month on private encomiendas. Nevertheless, with the expansion of the missions’ cocoa fields, within a short time “the missions absorbed all the available labour and little was left for the Spanish planters” (Ottley 1955:26). Thus the missions paid virtually nothing for labour and exported a crop of great remunerative value, inevitably boosting the dominance of the mission in the colonial economy.\(^\text{11}\) By 1701, planters in Trinidad sent a petition to Governor Don Felipe de Artieda, seeking the release of Indians from missions to supply labour for expanding their own cocoa cultivation (Ottley 1955:35). At this stage, the planters were now anxious to stress that the Amerindians were “already civilised” (Ottley 1955:36). (It is unsurprising, given the patterns we have seen thus far, that the planters would report that as missionaries abandoned the island after the King’s cedula ordered them to the mainland, the Amerindians went back to forest areas and, “continued ‘the idolatrous practices of their fathers’”, and thus, once more, they were “uncivilised” and needed to be conquered [Ottley 1955:37].) At this stage, civilised versus non-civilised, mission versus non-mission, became the dominant dichotomies in European colonial attempts to sort out native enemies and allies.

By the end of the 1600s, Capuchin missionaries had brought over 5,000 Amerindians under their control, incorporating them into agricultural settlements producing cocoa for export (Harricharan 1983:21). In the view of some historians, by 1716, “the great majority of [Trinidad’s] Indians had become ‘Hispanised’; that is, Christian, Spanish-speaking...organised into villages under some degree of control by the Church...[and] the Government”, and by Spanish settlers who used them as labourers on their estates (Brereton 1991:36). By 1765 there were 1,277 Christianised Indians in a total population of 2,503 (Brereton 1981:4). By the end

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\(^{11}\) Further detail on the economic organisation of the missions can be found in Whitehead (1988:133-134).
of the 1700s the Amerindian subsistence economy had been replaced by commercial estates; land was increasingly privately owned; Amerindians were moved into urban settlements; indigenous religious beliefs declined in favour of monotheistic Catholicism; and, Amerindian kinship systems became progressively Europeanised (Newson 1976:4, 229).

By the end of the 1700s the Amerindians of northeastern Trinidad were clamouring for a priest, "specifically a Capuchin" (Leahy 1980:105). In 1786 a mission town was formed in Arima, drawing Amerindians from various settlements throughout Trinidad. This occurred only two years after the proclamation of the 1783 Cédula de población which called for Catholic migrants (French planters and their slaves escaping French territories in turmoil) to settle Trinidad and transform its economy into one producing sugar. The Amerindians were cleared off of the productive lands that were to be used by these new settlers. The remaining Spaniards, according to British governors coming into Trinidad after the British takeover of 1797, were found to be few in number, impoverished, and virtually indistinguishable from the Amerindians in terms of lifestyle (Newson 1976:194; Brereton 1981:20). By 1797 the Amerindian population had fallen to 1,082 individuals (Brereton 1981:6, 20).

Throughout the 1500s and 1600s "vigorous Carib populations" were able to mount effective challenges to Spanish intrusions, until about the 1730s. After that period, the Spanish missionary orders proved effective in 'reducing' Amerindian populations (Whitehead 1988:28). In other Carib territories in the Lesser Antilles, such as Dominica and St. Vincent, Caribs also suffered a series of defeats and population declines that saw the completion of their transformation from original foes to interim friends to dependent subjects and wards.

The latter leads us to consider late colonial attempts to preserve and segregate the remnants of Amerindian populations in various Caribbean territories, under a variety of schemes, a fact that would serve to bolster the 'specialness' of Amerindian populations well into the independence period. However, before proceeding to that investigation, I now want to complete the discussion of the creation and valuation of categories and ascriptions of particular types of
indigeneity which has been the main thrust of this section and which lays some important bases for understanding and contextualising remaining sections of this chapter and this work as a whole.

The Political Economy of Ascription and the Valuation of Indigeneity

The ways that Europeans perceived Amerindian responses to their expansionism conditioned the manner in which Europeans classified Amerindian groups. The labels they ascribed would then condition perceptions of the home audience, future writers, adventurers, explorers, and even modern scholars. This situation of apparent morphostasis (Archer 1988), that is, of labels conditioning perceptions that reinforce the choice of labels, would have continued were it not for a number of discontinuities. One of these was the change in colonial powers’ motivations in ascribing labels, shifting from early colonial denunciations of the man-eating savage to late colonial preservation schemes designed to favour the remnants of noble savages, a transformation that is symbolised in Figure 3.5. Secondly, the same material interests were not at work in the ascription of these labels over the long-term; the political economy underlying the tradition of ascribing particular labels itself changed, as I have demonstrated thus far. Thirdly, Caribbean Amerindians underwent serious demographic declines, displacement, and incorporation. Following the creation of the Carib-Arawak dichotomy, labels multiplied in meanings with time. Hulme and Whitehead explain that ‘Carib’ is an, “especially complex term because it belongs to a whole series of ways in which Columbus and other Spanish travellers transcribed the name of some of the native inhabitants, or the place where they lived”; as for the synonymous equation of Carib and Cannibal, they note that, “Cannibal was eventually hived off in Spanish and English as a general word replacing anthropophagite, leaving caribe and its variants to describe the native inhabitants themselves” (Hulme & Whitehead 1992:354).

Speaking with reference to the North American and wider hemispheric contexts, some have detected broad cycles in the shift of perceptions and
valuations of the indigene, as outlined for the following periods (see Strong & Van Winkle 1993):

1. 1500s: civilized versus savage; natural servitude versus Christian freedom;
2. 1700s: noble versus infamous; assimilation versus separation;
3. 1900s: nostalgia, reservations, appropriation of the Indian as symbol of the nation.

I have mapped out similar transformations and developments in both colonial perceptions and valuations with respect to the Caribbean case, and that of Trinidad in particular, as outlined in Figures 3.6 and 3.7.
These two images show rather different views of the Caribs: the first depicts the classical Carib/Cannibal, the second presents an almost Hellenic view of the Caribs, a type of Adam and Eve couple, where the devouring of human flesh is notably absent.

This temporal chart provides a map of the main political and economic phases and the associated ways of labeling Amerindians.
In Figure 3.6 I have outlined Spanish colonial perceptions of Trinidad’s Amerindians over time, and in accordance with the dominant forms of political-military relationships between the Spanish and Amerindians (in the grey boxes), and with an indication of the commodities of greatest value to the Spanish in a given period (in the white boxes). The grey boxes are organised chronologically, their widths meant to depict duration. The white boxes are instead placed around the point in time in which they were relevant. The position of the grey and white boxes, above and below the positive/negative axis, is merely a graphical necessity, and is not intended to suggest that gold was held to be in low value in 1510, as an example. This also presents a summary overview of main themes, devoid of some of the subtle details presented in this chapter (i.e., how even the Spanish would come to designate certain Caribs as friends after the mid-1600s, i.e., the so-called ‘Spanish Caribs’ and the Nepuyo). Presenting broad brush strokes, the chart outlines a select list of labels ascribed by the Spanish, sorted according to their valences, as perceived and written by Spanish explorers, ecclesiastical and military officials, and chroniclers as cited herein. The Amerindian perspective is largely absent, even though in many cases it seems to have been an inversion of the Spanish perspective (i.e., adopting the Carib label to inspire fear in the Spanish,
and later, friendship with Spain’s enemies). The intention here is to present a map of the political economy of naming, attendant to issues of power, production, and accumulation. The cyclicity shown is not synonymous with repetition, in that the specifics of each phase do not replicate those of a previous phase.

While still retaining some graphic inexactitude, Figure 3.7 is a distillation of Figure 3.6, with the first aim having been to chart the ebb and flow in ascriptive valences according to a more evenly measured time line (Figure 3.6 presents a time line that gives generous space to the 1500s whilst squeezing the remaining centuries). Figure 3.7 demonstrates considerable early instability and rapid fluctuations, as supported by earlier discussions outlining the European entry into a politically and ethnographically complex situation, seeking ways to gauge native responses and endeavouring to sort out potential allies and enemies. Eventually, we see a certain measure of stabilisation emerging in this chart, with the ebb and flow appearing to be more or less regular. What is somewhat remarkable here is the apparently close correspondence between Spanish ascriptions of hostile intentions and negative attributes to Amerindians in periods of successive inter-European struggles for hegemony in the region. In other words, when local Amerindian groups became aligned or collaborated with rival European powers, Spanish ascriptions and valuations tended to stress their nature as savages. Whereas Figure 3.6 depicts a political economy of naming, Figure 3.7 resulted in highlighting, albeit tentatively and approximately, a geopolitics of ethnic ascription. It is thus remarkable that Figure 3.7 should approximate the long-waves and cycles of European hegemony regularly featured in the works of Modelski and Wallerstein that, roughly and in broad terms, this chart resembles (see Overbeek, n.d.).

Can identities be commodified? Yelvington makes the point that in justifying modes of colonial capital accumulation, colonial élites ranked groups according to a hierarchy of value associated with assumptions about the ‘race’ to which groups belonged. He thus explains: “there were certain cultural proclivities linked to each ‘race’ stemming from the justifications of colonial labour schemes” (Yelvington 1995a:25), and drawing examples from the 19th century context in
Trinidad, he points to colonial élites situating whites as respectable, blacks as profligate and uncultured, and East Indians as clannish and avaricious. Yelvington’s larger point, based on analysis of the shifting valuations of each ‘racial’ group in different periods of the accumulation process (i.e., blacks valued during slavery, then de-valued with the introduction of Indian indenture), is that by bringing identities “into the market and making them salient there, identities become commodified and are given value” (1995b:240). We can add that the story of value is the history of flux, given that values, as historical constructs, rise and fall, that is to say no particular value is permanent in its presence or unchanging in its ‘weight’ in the overall system of valuations.

Yelvington points to a scheme for linking material production and capital accumulation to cultural processes and means of valuing identities. Yelvington’s analysis is useful in its stress on the fact that not all identities are held to be equal—when some are held to be ‘better’ and ‘more deserving’ than others—and that identities do not exist in isolation from one another. In line with this emphasis, we should note Hulme’s observation that, “there is no way of being inherently Carib or Arawak”, instead, we are looking at complicated interactions between self-perceptions and perception by others, “rather than of being” (Hulme 1992:65).

On the other hand, Yelvington’s analytical framework provides us mostly with the conjunction of material and ideational interests, the latter shaped more by the former than vice versa, while Hulme in effect stresses perception as a process in itself, as when he states that, “ethnicity is to be viewed as a matter of perception” (Hulme 1992:65), even though Hulme himself never discounts the fundamental role of power and material interests in shaping these perceptions. This takes us back to Archer’s discussion of the interplay between material and ideational interests in the last chapter, and, as she argued, ideational interests can also have a dynamic of their own which may or may not be finely attuned to the predominant material interests of a given period.
Writing the Conventional Cannibal, from Late Colonial to Modern Times

‘The Carib Tradition’: Debates on Trinidad Indigeneity from the 1800s through the 1900s

As mentioned previously, European conflicts and alliances with Amerindians resulted in certain ideational products that, filtered out of their original contexts, continued to be mediated in subsequent historiographies, educational texts, and in conventional public reflections on Trinidadian history as written or voiced by teachers, historians, journalists, and politicians, amongst others. These ideational products consisted of the various European ways of labeling Amerindians, the ways Amerindians reportedly labeled themselves, and, the belief that specific cultural traits could be associated with each group qua ‘people’ or ‘nation’. In addition, certain valences were attached to each label and have proven to be remarkably persistent in their general outline. However, we must remember that while I am outlining the diachronic framework in which each phase of identity construction is occurring, elements of each of these phases, inscribed in texts for example, are synchronically conflated in the present. This does not mean, of course, that we should read backwards from the present and conflate all these phases into one when examining the long-term.

The ideational products of colonialism would be reproduced, appropriated or reconfigured both by Trinidadian nationalists and intellectuals in laying out the ‘history’ of Trinidad’s Amerindians, and Trinidad’s ‘Amerindian heritage’. They would also serve as definitional guideposts for the leaders and brokers of the Santa Rosa Carib Community who are always forced to ‘answer to’ these labels and historiographies, to give an account of themselves in defining their identity and ancestry, and to even respond to ‘charges’ that either Arawaks were essential cowards and Caribs were cannibals, and that maybe SRCC members are one or the other, or even neither. By and large the SRCC leaders have taken on board the various assumptions underpinning the trait-lists accompanying each label, while trying to find some room for manoeuvre between the various labels, as we shall
discuss in chapter 5. At this stage, I will focus on élite and colonial constructions of narratives on Trinidad’s Amerindian history in the late colonial period.

One of the primary debates about Trinidadian indigenous history centred on whether Trinidad’s Amerindians were either Arawak or Carib, continuing in the ‘either/or’ tradition founded in early Spanish colonial discourse. The search for a single denomination for all of Trinidad’s remaining Amerindians seems to have begun in earnest in the late 1700s, at a time when they were marginalised in the colonial economy in favour of sugar plantations and African slavery and thus reduced to a protected, if dispossessed minority confined to missions. In 1788, a British parliament report referred to Trinidad’s Amerindians as “Yellow Caribs”, a term hitherto reserved for the St. Vincent context (J. N. Lewis 1983a:5). Alexander von Humboldt, the famed traveler and writer, attested at the dawn of the 1800s that, “the native tribes of Trinidad, and the village of Cumana, are all tribes of the great Caribbee nation” (quoted in Ober 1894:301). E. L. Joseph, an English writer who resided in Trinidad in the early 1800s, instead insisted: “that the Caribes had no footing in Trinidad, may be learned from Las Casas….such enmity existed between the Caribes and the other races, that they never could have resided in the same island” (Joseph 1970[1838]:118-119). What Joseph does is to extract Las Casas’ assertions from the context in which they were written, thereby obscuring Las Casas’ motivation to fend off slave traders preying on groups designated as ‘Carib’, whilst also perpetuating the binary opposition of Carib versus Arawak. Another prominent French Creole historian wrote in 1858 that, when first discovered by Columbus, “Trinidad was apparently well populated, being then inhabited by Yaos, Caribs, Chaymas, and other tribes of the Carib-Tamanaco family” (De Verteuil 1858:172). Two decades later, a priest in Siparia wrote: “only a few years ago the Carib Indians, or Waraoons (as they are called by these different names) lived in the woods of Siparia”, one instance where Carib and Warao were thus conflated (quoted in Goldwasser 1994/96:16). Adding yet another twist to this sequence of arguments, a French historian of Trinidad wrote
that seven tribes occupied Trinidad, including the Aruacas, Chaimas, Tamanques, Chaguanes, Salives, Quaquas, and Caraibes (who were further divided into four “sub-tribes”: Nepoios, Yaios, Carinepagatos, Cumanagotos) (Borde 1876:40). As Borde explained, “while the other islands of the Antilles, even the largest, were inhabited by only one or two, or at most, three Indian tribes, Trinidad had an agglomeration of the greater part of those found on the neighbouring continent” (1876:39). However, even while highlighting this diversity, Borde himself posits Carib dominance: “Carib was the dominant language in the country....the Aruaca, Chaima, Salive, Quaqua experienced no difficulty in adding to the knowledge of the language of his childhood, that of the common [Carib] language of the country” (1876:42). Of the whole array of European and Euro-Creole historians of Trinidad in the 19th century, Joseph, De Verteuil and Borde are three of the most regularly cited in contemporary Trinidadian literature and research on the country’s Amerindian history, a fact that is important insofar as they represent the complete range of established positions on the question of ‘who were the natives of Trinidad?’

In the 1930s, historian K. S. Wise wrote and delivered a series of public lectures on the island’s history, producing materials that are still circulated amongst leaders of the SRCC via research papers prepared for them by individuals such as Peter Harris (archaeologist) and Patricia Elie (local historian). Wise noted the dominant conception that the aboriginal name for Trinidad is lere. Combing through the word lists of various Amerindian languages he argued that the only possible name was Kairi, which is the Aruac word for island, rather than lere which was commonly understood to mean “Land of the Hummingbird” ever since Joseph wrote it in 1838 (Wise 1934:7-9, 11). What is interesting is that such debates should consume the local intellectuals of the time, more than who got it wrong or right. Wise (1938:87) was also responsible for emphasising that the Amerindians of the last missions to be established in Trinidad were all of “the Nepuyo Nation” (adding a North American manner of designating indigenous

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12 Lewis' source is: Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons, Vol. XXVI, 1789, “Evidence about the Caribs in Trinidad given by Alexander Campbell before the committee enquiring into the Slave
peoples as Nations), and that these were all "of the Carib stock", labels and terminology which, as mentioned before, have had a resurgence with SRCC brokers during the 1990s.

In opposition to theses that Trinidad Amerindians were Caribs, another author of the time, John A. Bullbrook, a British geologist and amateur archaeologist, became prominent. Like Wise, Bullbrook was affiliated with Trinidad's Royal Victoria Institute and the Trinidad Historical Society, and also like Wise, he delivered and wrote a series of public lectures on the aborigines of Trinidad (Bullbrook 1940, 1960). Bullbrook spoke critically of the Carib presence thesis and cast doubt on the ancestry of the Arima Caribs (thereby also indicating that by the 1930s this is how they were known in Trinidad): "To this day we speak of the Queen of the Caribs at Arima, yet I doubt if there is much—if any—Carib blood in her or her race" (Bullbrook 1940:4). Bullbrook's argument, stated briefly, is that Caribs were never dominant in Trinidad. Why? His excavation of shell middens failed to reveal any number of arrow heads, and, given that Caribs were "known to be" war-like savages, this absence would in turn point to the absence of the people (Bullbrook 1940:4; also 1949a, 1949b). He describes the true Trinidad indigene in opposite terms: "the Trinidad Arawak was a mild, inoffensive person" (Bullbrook 1949b:14). Later, Bullbrook also called on early colonial chroniclers: "I have had the opportunity of reading extracts from the young Columbus (son of the Admiral), Dudley, Raleigh and Père Labas [sic]. All agree that from the time of the Discovery at least until 1700 AD there were no Caribs in Trinidad" (1960:4). Seeing himself as "combating the Carib tradition", Bullbrook emphasised in his critiques that:

Such a tradition, once firmly rooted, would not be lessened by time, nor easily be killed, unless some unusual event brought its fallacy to public notice. Such an event has not yet happened, and, so, Trinidad still has a 'Queen of the Caribs'—probably without a drop of Carib blood in her. Nevertheless, I hail the Carib Queen, for even fallacious tradition is better than none at all. At least, it affords basis for research. [Bullbrook 1960:57]
Bullbrook argued that this baleful belief in “the Carib tradition” arose as a result of the royal edict of 1503 permitting the enslavement of Caribs (as discussed earlier), thus leading slave traders to cause Amerindians to revolt in order to then name them Caribs (1960:55).

Though writing quantitatively less material on this topic, of special importance is the published work of Eric Eustace Williams, the founder of the People’s National Movement (of which SRCC President Bharath is a member and elected representative), and the first and longest ruling Prime Minister of Trinidad. Williams, an Oxford graduate, was for a long time Trinidad’s leading historian and published a number of seminal texts that are still prominent in Trinidad today. One of these texts, *The History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago*, was published by the PNM itself in time for the granting of independence. In the first chapter, titled “Our Amerindian Ancestors”, Williams wrote:

The Caribs tended to settle for the most part in the North and West, around what is today Port of Spain; two of their principal settlements were located in Arima and Mucurapo (west Port of Spain). The Arawaks seem to have concentrated above all in the southeast, and it is recorded that on one occasion the Arawaks took Tobago from the Caribs. [Williams 1962:3]

The import of Williams’ statement lies in two key facets: (1) it legitimates and underscores the view that the Amerindians of Arima were Caribs; and, (2) it also helps to recast the Arawaks in a more heroic light—not as victims of the fierce Caribs, but as also capable of vanquishing the Caribs.

In more recent decades, the published work of academics has also supported the designation of aboriginal Trinidadians as Carib. A map produced by Arie Boomert, a Dutch archaeologist and former lecturer at the Trinidad campus of the University of the West Indies, shows Trinidad and Tobago as inhabited by South American Kalina (“Mainland Caribs”) circa 1650 (Boomert 1986:4). Similar to Boomert, two anthropologists wrote recently that, “in 1732 ‘Nepuyo’ is listed as the common language of the mission Indians” (Figueroedo & Glazier 1991:238).
The Extinct Carib, the Mixed Carib, the Spanish Carib

Thus far we have covered the most prominent works on the Carib-Arawak debate from the 19th through the 20th centuries. However, two other conceptions of Trinidad’s Amerindians have also gained considerable currency since the end of the 1800s. One of these is that Trinidad’s Amerindians simply became ‘virtually extinct’, that is, reduced in numbers or ‘racially diluted’ through ‘mixture’ thus no longer exercising a presence as a ‘race’. The second major thesis, which does not contradict but rather refocuses the first, is that Amerindians and Spaniards had become mutually assimilated and miscigenated.

Starting with the prominent thesis that Trinidadian Amerindians became virtually extinct, De Verteuil commented that the Amerindians of Arima had “finally sunk under the ascendancy of a more intelligent race” (De Verteuil 1858:172). In a passage that is circulated in various texts of today (eg. Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994, Anthony 1988), De Verteuil also wrote:

The few aborigines yet remaining in the colony are leading an isolated life in the forests, depending for their subsistence upon hunting and fishing, using the bow and arrow in preference to the fowling-piece, and, in short, retaining their savage ancestral habits precisely as if the light of civilization and the sun of Christianity had never beamed on their lovely island of Jere. A few families of Indian descent are still, however, to be met with in different parts of the island, all speaking the Spanish language and having preserved Spanish habits—fond of smoking, dancing, and all other kinds of amusements, but above all, of the dolce far niente. They are, generally, possessors of conucos, that is to say of a few acres of land, which they cultivate in provisions and coffee, but particularly in cacao. [De Verteuil 1858:174-175]

De Verteuil provides a snapshot of nested themes that are still part of the conventional register for describing and conceiving of Trinidad’s Amerindian descendants: rural, linguistically if not culturally Spanish, essentially indolent, and cultivators of coffee and, above all, cocoa—an almost classical trait-list for what today is conventionally referred to as ‘a Spanish’, a ‘Cocoa Panyol,’ or a ‘Carib’,
these terms themselves often used interchangeably within the northern Trinidad context. The importance of De Verteuil’s writing is that he himself had been raised in the Arima district when it was still a mission in the early half of the 1800s (Rétout 1976), and his widely quoted text is a cornerstone of Trinidad’s 19th century historical literature, which is also some of the first published literature from or about Trinidad.

‘Extinction via mixture’, and regular allusions to the American Plains Indians, also featured in texts of the latter half of the century. In the 1880s, an author of a series of handbooks on Trinidad wrote that, “as in most other similar cases, persecution or civilization, perhaps both, have driven before them these wild children of the plains, until they have become, so far as Trinidad is concerned, all but extinct” (Collens 1886:7), and, interestingly, we see another hint (as with Wise above) of the influence of the North American setting in designating Trinidad’s Amerindians as “wild children of the plains”. Writing in the same period, and again with references made to North American Indians, L. M. Fraser wrote:

there are few traces left of those to whom the hills and forests once belonged. As, in North America the Red Indians have gradually disappeared before the encroaching white races, so in Trinidad the Aruacas and the Chaymas, the Tamanacos and the Cumanagotes have little by little faded away out of the community, and are now barely represented by a few families of mixed descent. [Fraser 1971 [1891]:1]

The latter is, like Collens’, an argument of virtual extinction, based on a conception of extinction via miscegenation, which in turn is logically rooted in notions of ‘racial purity’. Fraser’s argument above also has a remarkably contemporary resonance, representing perhaps one of the most dominant ways of thinking about Caribs today, and, would even be subscribed to by some SRCC leaders. During my fieldwork, Ricardo Bharath told a journalist: “there are no true Caribs anymore, what we now recognise as Carib is the mixed descendant of an extinct Amerindian race”, with the journalist adding, “he explained that interbreeding with other races throughout the years has depleted the original Carib stock in Trinidad” (McLeod 1998). We will come back to this theme again.
Histories written in the 1900s extend some of these themes. In a public lecture and book produced under the auspices of the Trinidad Historical Society, Dominican Father McArdle wrote that by the mid-1600s, with the complete ‘emancipation’ of Amerindians, it was “too late to save them from extermination as a Race in the West Indies” (McArdle 1937:10), further endorsing the extinction thesis. Carlton Ottley, in a text that was widely used in secondary schools in Trinidad, commented that by the 1750s, “Toco, Matura, Point Cumana, Salybia, and Siparia, in all of which at that time the remnants of the proud and ancient race of first Trinidadians, whose fathers had controlled the colony centuries before the white man came, were struggling for survival against the inroads of the many disintegrating forces which the white man’s world had brought to them” (Ottley 1955:54-55). He added that the “excessive drinking of rum was one of the gravest evils in their life, at that time, and it was one which....made the task of rescuing them from racial extinction ineffective and hopeless” (Ottley 1955:55). In the 1970s, Lowenthal’s still influential history text noted that in the wider Caribbean today, “however defined, only about 50,000 Amerindians inhabit the West Indian culture realm, a small fraction of the one or two million living there at the time of Columbus”; moreover, in Lowenthal’s estimation, “the surviving remnants are dwindling, socially demoralised, progressively less Indian in character” (1972:179). Lowenthal points out that, by the end of the 18th century, sources claim that the Arawaks were all extinct and that the few remaining de-indigenised Caribs were in a state of cultural and ethnic deterioration (1972:32). A seminal text on Trinidad’s aboriginal history also claims that “few if any” indigenous inhabitants remain in Trinidad (Newson 1976:3). Eradication and extermination are the key descriptors here (see Lowenthal 1972:31, 32). Contemporary Trinidadian historians also claim that by 1797 all of Trinidad’s Indian villages had virtually “disappeared”; moreover, isolated Indians who had not been brought under colonial control “must have been” an insignificant minority that also “disappeared” (Brereton 1981:7, 16, 20, 21). As Brereton also wrote (in contrast to her subsequent writing for school texts as we shall see later), “the Amerindians gave way to newer and sturdier people. Their day was nearly done, and they had
no role to play in the development of Trinidad by the later nineteenth century” (1979:131). Joseph Palacio, Coordinator of the Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous People, stated that the idea that there are no living, ‘real’ Indians left in the Caribbean is due, in part, to the fact that, “all West Indians learn in school that the Indians whom the Europeans met became extinct” (1992:55). In the 1990s, another key text made the observation that “by the 1880s the aboriginal tribe [in Arima] had disappeared and the Santa Rosa Festival was no longer truly Indian” (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:96). I am not disputing whether authors on either side of the extinction debate are right or wrong; rather, the focus here is on what are the terms of the debate, the language used, and their cultural institutionalisation.

Thus far, we see some of the salient themes that assert themselves in the contemporary ethnography coming to the fore. One of these is the unavailability of ‘race’ as a resource for modern Carib identification, given the weight attached to positions outlined above, and SRCC brokers’ subscription to these positions. Claiming to be a ‘descendant of Caribs’ is a much more likely contemporary stance, adopted by a wider number of Trinidadians beyond the SRCC alone (as we shall glimpse later), than is the stance of simply asserting ‘I am a Carib’. ‘Carib’ was, apparently, a special ‘race’, whose ‘dilution’ resulted in ‘impurity’, according to the conventions of colonial ‘race’ discourse. Secondly, we see the act of ‘double-dispossession’ in some of the academic writings: first, pre-1800s Trinidad was largely a deserted island, and second, post-1800s Trinidad hardly had any remaining Amerindians.

As noted in De Verteuil’s passage above, and as will be discussed later in this work, there is also a common association between Spaniard and Amerindian both in contemporary northern Trinidadian racial discourse and in ways of thinking about Spanish colonial history. Writing from an Anglo-centric perspective on the progress of Trinidad, it is often stressed that the Spanish were as indolent and backward as the Amerindians and that, indeed, the two could be considered as one. Writing of the “era of Spaniards and Indians” (Ottley 1955:41), and focusing on the 1725-1727 collapse of Trinidad’s cocoa economy, when
Trinidad entered a long, dry period of absent trade and commerce, forced to resort to a survival economy of basic self-sufficiency, Ottley wrote:

The handful of Spaniards, who had built their houses of mud and wattle, at St. Joseph, struggled on. They managed to eke out a precarious existence from the surrounding countryside. Since there were however, no exports, and no trade to speak of with the outside world, their life differed little from that of the native peoples. With their Indians wives and half-breed children, they gathered the fruit, fish, and game of the country. [Ottley 1955:40, emphasis added]

Ottley further describes, with a slight hint of revulsion, how Spaniards slept on straw beds, clothed themselves in “guyaco [guaiuco] (Indian rough cloth)”, and ate out of calabashes (1955:47).

A final, though ongoing, stage of the reinforcement of these discourses on Trinidad’s Amerindian indigeneity, is evidenced in some of the most prominent educational media of the present, which is the subject of the next section.

**The Contemporary Institutionalisation of the Amerindian Legacy**

Recognising that stereotypical notions of the Carib have their roots in Columbus’ first voyage, Drummond notes the continued popularity of the Carib stereotype: “the historical process that so thoroughly ‘deculturated’ the Carib in the Guianas and the Caribbean also created a vivid image or ethnic stereotype of the Carib that has had considerable appeal to the popular imagination” (1977:78). The colonial labels such as Carib and Arawak have become so enshrined that, as Hulme argues, “it would be impossible not only for an anthropologist to give an account of Amerindian society but even for Amerindians to make sense of their own life without using the terms” (1992:66). The apparent longevity, institutionalisation and perpetuation of the labels and trait lists emerging from the colonial period demonstrates, as Hulme puts it, “the quite spectacular success of the process of hegemonisation, in which even such a potentially disruptive notion as identity of ethnic origins has been controlled from the centre of political power” (1992:66). Institutionalisation of what Bullbrook called “the Carib tradition” has occurred via the education system in Trinidad, public discourse, and in
‘established’ or ‘legitimate’ sources of information. In this section I will present a basic sample of some sources that are of contemporary relevance and in current circulation, sources that also act as indices of the myriad ways in which the figure of the Amerindian is constructed, represented and valued. This sample includes encyclopaedias, anthropology handbooks, and school texts in Trinidad, and should be seen as being a further layer on top of the historical texts on Trinidad already cited and discussed above. In addition, this section will serve as a means of foregrounding the discussions in chapter 5 on the dissemination, reinterpretation, and mediation of images and symbols of indigeneity in contemporary Trinidad, in relation to the SRCC.

Figure 3.8: The Spatial Distribution of Caribbean Amerindians c. 1492

This map shows the Caribs dominating the Lesser Antilles, in contrast to the Arawak/Taino dominating the Greater Antilles, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Encyclopaedias continue to be the most regular source of recycled assumptions stemming from the early European encounter with Caribbean aboriginals, as seen in the quotes from the Encyclopaedia Britannica at the start of the chapter. In most of the cases I have surveyed, the depiction of Arawaks as settled and peaceful and suffering from the attacks of the fierce and cannibalistic Caribs goes virtually unrevised. In the case of the entry for Trinidad and Tobago in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, authored by Bridget Brereton (whose works were cited above), her suggestion is that the Caribs of Arima are most likely Arawaks, and that their identity claims are thus erroneous. The entry under “Carib”, authored by Nancy Owen (1974), in the Encyclopedia of Indians of the Americas, opens
with mention of the “war-like” nature of the Caribs, and is repeated in an identical entry in the Dictionary of Indian Tribes of the Americas (“Carib” 1993). The entry for “Caribs” in The Catholic Encyclopedia, not only labours the above points, but it also blames the Caribs (and not the Catholic Spanish conquerors) for the decline of Arawak numbers:

Had the landing of Columbus not interfered, they in all probability would have exterminated the Arawaks and spread over the Greater Antilles also....The almost complete extermination of the Antillean Caribs was brought about by their indomitable ferocity and particularly by their addiction to cannibalism. Every effort on the part of the Spaniards and French to abolish it proved fruitless....The Caribs have been considered the cannibals par excellence of Northern South America. [Bandelier 1999b]

As can be expected, these charges are repeated in the author’s entry for “Arawaks” (Bandelier 1999a). Similarly, in The Columbia Encyclopedia, the entry for “Caribs” states: “Extremely warlike and ferocious, they practiced cannibalism and took pride in scarification (ritual cutting of the skin) and fasting” (“Caribs” 2000; see also “Cannibalism” 2000). The Columbia Encyclopedia also claims that Arawaks were the occupants of Trinidad, and that they became extinct, in part due to Carib attacks (“Arawak” 2000).

The most ‘modern’ of these types of sources, the Microsoft Network’s Encarta Online Encyclopedia, posts the following depictions in the entry for “Carib”: “The Caribbean Sea is named after them. The Carib...were noted for their ferocity. The tribe practiced cannibalism....Carib men valued exploits in combat above all else....Male captives were tortured and eaten” (“Carib” 1997-2000). For the “Arawak” entry, the same MSN Online Encyclopedia states that the Arawaks have been extinct for several hundred years and had been subjugated by the Caribs; in addition, and this ascribed trait will resurface in chapter 5, the Arawaks are depicted as skilled potters, weavers, wood- and metal-workers, and have been noted for that since pre-Columbian times, a description the encyclopedia does not offer for the Caribs who are depicted as nomads (“Arawak” 1997-2000). All told, we see these key themes being repeated in these various encyclopaedia sources: Carib cannibalism, ferocity, and nomadism; Arawak
docility and skill in handicrafts; extinction; and, confusion over whether the Arawaks or Caribs dominated Trinidad and its surrounding region.

Handbooks written by anthropologists have not produced much that is different from these last sources. Irving Rouse, the noted archaeologist of the region, writing in Julian Steward’s *Handbook of South American Indians*, described the Arawaks as suffering from the incursions of the Caribs, and thus followed along the lines of the Carib-Arawak binary opposition (1948a:545). In addition, Rouse claims that “The Carib had a strong national consciousness” and that “Carib” was an auto denomination (1948b:549). More contemporary scholars, such as the historian of the Dominica Caribs, Lennox Honychurch, have been accused by some (see S. Roberts 1996:33) for perpetuating the idea of Carib cannibalism. Lastly, the same confusion over whether Trinidad was Arawak or Carib finds some moderation in Julian Steward’s and Louis Faron’s *Native Peoples of South America* with their statement that, “the island Carib occupied all of the Lesser Antilles and part of the island of Trinidad” (1959:322).

Having a more immediate presence, of course, are the school texts used to teach history and social studies to secondary school students across Trinidad. One of those reflecting on these teachings is Kim Johnson, a journalist with Trinidad’s *Express* newspaper. Johnson expresses the core of this discussion of the ways historical characterisations and ascriptions have become institutionalised, and the substance and weight of these teachings in the following manner:

The story of the Arawaks, the Caribs and the Spaniards is a well known tale told to every Caribbean child. We all, from the least educated to the most widely read, accept it almost instinctively that there were, before the Europeans landed on these our islands, a peaceful and gentle tribe of Amerindians called the Arawaks who had inhabited the entire Caribbean archipelago. So generous and guileless were these people that they embraced the Spaniards and provided every comfort for them, only to be repaid by being

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13 Here I must thank Gary Ribeiro, a Caribbean History and Social Studies teacher at St. Mary’s RC College in Port of Spain, for giving me an overview of materials that are taught, along with the actual texts from which I quote here.

14 Kim Johnson regularly writes articles on Trinidad’s history and has also authored a locally published book on Caribbean and Trinidad Amerindian history (Johnson 1997), as well as a website (Johnson 2000).
mercilessly slaughtered so that within a few decades not one Arawak was alive. [Johnson 2000: Part 1]

With respect to the other half of the dichotomy, Johnson adds:

there was another tribe, a ferocious one called the Caribs, who were on the verge of pouncing on the Arawaks and putting them to an even more horrible end. These Caribs were, you see, eaters of human flesh. Following hard on the heels of the Arawaks, they had gobbled their way up the Caribbean archipelago, settling on each island like a swarm of locusts in a field, and only moving on when they had gorged themselves on every available Arawak. [Johnson 2000: Part 1]

Johnson simultaneously highlights two features that are vital for this study: (1) depictions of the orthodoxies that are widely taught, as picked up from colonial discourses on Caribbean aboriginals; and, (2) the questioning, reinterpretation and reworking of these discourses in the modern context, guided by specific interests, and widely communicated via modern media. As an example of the second feature, Johnson is an author, journalist and Internet writer who reflects on the conventional depictions above, saying: “yet, also instinctively, the distastefulness of that story makes it difficult to swallow. Its nightmare quality seems to represent the final, ultimate indignity perpetrated against the first Caribbean people” (Johnson 2000: Part 1). Thus Johnson is motivated to question: “So we wonder, is that what really happened? Could there not have been another side to it? Now that the 500th anniversary of Columbus’s arrival has passed, perhaps we should look again at the chronicles of the time” (Johnson 2000: Part 1). Here Johnson refers to a watershed year for the resurgence of Amerindian identities and issues in the contemporary Caribbean: 1992.

We have already examined some material from Carlton Ottley (1955), which, as I learned, was once a commonly taught text in Trinidadian secondary schools. Ottley made a significant statement in that text, which served to endorse the extinction thesis, yet, made an exception for the Arima Carib community whose continuity and cultural influence Ottley validated: “but for a handful of them at Arima, these first inhabitants of Trinidad have gone. We have, however, inherited from then certain skills which today still serve us in as good stead as
they did those from whom they originated. The technique of making Carib baskets, of manufacturing fishpots of bamboo, the preparation of cassava bread on hot stones, are all of them cultural remains” (1955:4).

Bridget Brereton’s *An Introduction to the History of Trinidad and Tobago* (1996), and Jack Watson’s *The West Indian Heritage: A History of the West Indies* (1982), now comprise the two main texts used in secondary school history classes. Both begin with the mandatory chapter 1 on the Amerindians. While the latter feature may suggest specialness, in a history text following a linear chronological order it also suggests the acute degree of ‘past-ness’ associated with Amerindians (which in itself can lead some to perceive their contemporary descendants as a rare and thus valuable commodity, whilst leading others to cast doubt on individuals’ claims to Amerindian ancestry as a dubious construct). Watson (1982:8) asserts that “the Europeans eventually destroyed the Arawaks, and their way of life can only be pieced together by archaeologists and historians”. He also casts the Arawak within the same noble savage framework encountered previously, noting: “the search for wealth and the aggressive pursuit of power were not characteristics of the Arawak civilization” (Watson 1982:9). As for the Caribs, Watson declares unsurprisingly: “they were cannibals, who from time to time fed on the Arawaks” (1982:9). Watson ends this chapter in the school text by saying that only a very few Caribs survive in some parts of the Caribbean, owing to their fierce and protracted resistance, whereas all the Arawaks were dead by 1600 (1982:25, 39). Indeed, this is yet another orthodoxy added to the rest we have discussed, that is, of directly linking Arawaks with extinction while enabling ‘Carib’ to be associated with survival and resistance.

Brereton (1996) differs in some respects in her school text. First, unlike her earlier writings, she tends to avoid the Carib and Arawak labels and instead sticks with the generic ‘Amerindian’ label, even while noting that the Yao, Carinepagoto (sic), Shebaio, Arawak, Nepoio, and Kalina occupied Trinidad and Tobago. Also, the chapter on Amerindians in her text is specifically focused on Trinidad. Third, Brereton’s text does not insist upon either the extinction thesis or the standard traits associated with Caribs and Arawaks, as Watson does. Instead, Brereton’s
text offers a more nationalistic reinterpretation of Trinidad's Amerindian history and makes specific references to the contemporary Santa Rosa Carib Community. Her chapter is entitled, significantly, “The First Trinidadians and Tobagonians”, following Williams’ (1962) designation of “Our Amerindian Ancestors”. She repeatedly uses phrases such as “the first people” and “the first Trinidadians” throughout her chapter (Brereton 1996:1). The resistance theme appears in her text as well, without discriminating between Arawaks and Caribs: “Amerindians resisted...strongly. The Amerindians were good fighters and it was not until 1592 that the Spaniards could actually make a permanent settlement” (Brereton 1996:3). Instead of arguing that Amerindians became extinct, Brereton opts for the view of Amerindians declining in numbers (1996:4). Brereton also covers some details of the history of missions in Trinidad, up to the 1800s with the remaining Amerindian missions in Arima, Toco, and Savana Grande (1996:4). While not extinct, Brereton explains: “In the end, however, nearly all the Trinidad Amerindians accepted the Catholic faith, and by 1793 most of them spoke Spanish. By then there were few Amerindians left in either Trinidad or Tobago” (1996:4).

What is just as significant, if not more so, with respect to the contemporary context, are Brereton’s statements pointing to both the Trinidadian search for a national indigeneity and the special position of the modern SRCC, a subject that I will explore in greater detail in chapter 5. Brereton explicitly speaks of “Our Amerindian Heritage” in the following passage of her school text:

Only a few people in Trinidad and Tobago today have Amerindian blood, but we should all be proud of our first people. Their legacy is all around us. We can see it in many words and place names, reminding us that these people made the islands their own by settling down and naming places, rivers, bays, districts and things. We can see it in roads which date back to their paths. We see it in ways of cooking, especially dishes made with cassava. We also have a community in Arima, who call themselves ‘Caribs’ and are very proud of their culture. They are working hard to make us all more aware of the heritage of our first people. [Brereton 1996:4, emphasis added]
I must flag this particular passage as one that, so neatly and concisely, summarises and condenses the core of current, dominant Trinidadian nationalist thinking on the Caribs and indigeneity in general, expressing at the same time all the prevailing themes internal to that thinking. It is, in this sense, an epitomising statement, and instructive for being used to teach school pupils. In fact, Brereton also speaks of Hyarima, the Nepuyo chief from Arima, and points out, “there is a statue of him in Arima” (1996:4). More importantly, as a supplemental study activity at the end of the chapter, she writes: “Visit the Santa Rosa Carib Community in Arima, and speak to community members about their activities, taking notes on what you learn” (Brereton 1996:6). It is thus not surprising that one of the dominant year-round activities of leading SRCC members, such as President Ricardo Bharath and Shaman Cristo Adonis, is the holding of lectures and displays for visiting school children.

In line with the sentiments outlined by Brereton, in 1989 the Arima Public Library established its “Carib Corner” (see the panels in Figure 3.9 below). Librarians established this display as part of an effort to showcase the local histories of each of the locations of the various branches of the National Library System. In this instance, however, the Arima Public Library obtained national press coverage for the launch of its display (see Kassie 1989). The display, much like Brereton’s passage above, underscores the Amerindian heritage in terms of place names, a history of Caribs, and Carib traditions in food and weaving, as well as highlighting the current Carib community and its Santa Rosa Festival. In addition, school children were asked to submit sketches and paintings of how they pictured typical Amerindians, with the results shown in Fugure 3.9.\textsuperscript{15} The latter is one of a number of school exercises that inculcate “the Amerindian legacy” in the minds of school children, which also include an annual “Know Arima” quiz for primary school children organised by the Arima Borough Council and featuring a series of detailed questions on the Carib Community. The Carib Corner, according to the librarians, also serves as the main focus for the many children that I

\textsuperscript{15} I was impressed by the subtle ways the Amerindians depicted therein possessed East Indian and African facial types.
regularly saw crowding the library, and the associated materials are also heavily consulted by children for their various projects and essays.

Figure 3.10 consists of displays on Amerindian history and material culture as featured in the Dominica National Museum, which I visited in September of 1998 (unlike the National Museum in Trinidad, which has a very similar display, the Dominica Museum allows the taking of photographs). Needless to say, the intended audience ranges from all members of the local public to tourists disembarking from visiting cruise ships a mere twenty metres from the entrance. It too displays some of the canonical features of the institutionalised Carib legacy, especially the association of household subsistence culture (cassava grating and cooking) with ‘Arawak’ archaeological finds, and the arts of war depicted by ‘Carib’ items. In addition, where local artefacts were not in supply, they were imported from contemporary groups in Guyana, suggesting the perception of interchangeability, and reinforcing the widely voiced contemporary assumption of Amerindian cultural continuity, if not purity, in the apparent ‘ethnographic present’ that is Guyana’s interior. The Amerindian part of this small museum’s collection forms the starting part of the visitor’s tour, mirroring the chronological order found in history texts and thus spatially underscoring the “this was the beginning” approach to contemporary Caribbean historiographies. This chronological ordering, as embodied in the museum’s spatial patterning, can therefore suggest two key points: (1) that the Amerindians form the historical bedrock of the contemporary nation, the basis upon which everything else was added in later stages; and, (2) that the Amerindians are also to be associated with past history, thus rendering them somewhat of a relic of the historical imagination.

Where the contemporary Dominica Caribs enter the museum display is in photographs where members of the Karifuna Cultural Group (a dance troupe) posed as archetypal Amerindian characters as described in, and reinterpreted from, history texts, some of which were cited in this chapter, in a manner that suggests ‘life imitating the archives’. This type of exercise also works to enforce the view of ‘authentic’ Caribs as being creatures of the past, imprisoning contemporary
Carib activists within a constant dialogue (if not battle) with historical sources in order to explain or defend their present authenticity.

Figure 3.9: The Carib Corner at the Arima Public Library (1990-1999)
Panels 1-3: Overview and close-ups of sections of the Carib Corner.

Panels 4-8: Ways that Arima primary school children pictured typical Amerindians of the past.

Figure 3.10: The Amerindian Displays in the Dominica National Museum
1: The entrance to the museum, featuring a Carib canoe and various stone implements.
2: A glass case of spears and arrows, shown in the panel to the right (both the canoe and the arrows and spears were imported from Guyana and the Orinoco region.
3: Artefacts relating to the cassava culture, with the remnants of a stone griddle identified as Arawak in origin (also, some of these items were imported from Guyana).
4: A cassava grater.
5: A replica of the interior of an Amerindian dwelling, featuring a hammock, calabash bowls, baskets, and a woven cassava strainer at left (known as the matapi or sebecán).
Conclusion

Before proceeding to the next chapter, I want to gather together what has been discussed thus far in terms of ways of perceiving and classifying Trinidad’s Amerindians through various historical phases, while also introducing later ways of framing Trinidad’s Amerindians as we shall see in chapters 3 and 4. These are summarised in the following Table:

Table 3.1: Historical Phases in the Perception and Classification of Trinidad’s Amerindians.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HISTORICAL POSITION</th>
<th>CLASSIFICATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colonial Enemies/ Allies</td>
<td>Caribs, Arawaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperial Subjects</td>
<td>Remnants of Caribs and Arawaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected Populations, Wards</td>
<td>Christians, Noble Savages, second to Whites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ending of Missions</td>
<td>Indolent, inferior labourers, passive, child-like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Missions</td>
<td>Extinct, Mixed/ Not Pure, Peasants, Cocoa Panyols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Independence</td>
<td>Caribs as heroic warriors, resistance fighters; Arawaks as noble; or, elements of national folklore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Independence</td>
<td>Descendants of Caribs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Present</td>
<td>First Nations, Indigenous, Amerindian descendants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contrary to the “dearth of indigeneity” thesis, I have argued in this chapter that the indigene has been an important part of post-Conquest Caribbean and Trinidadian cultural development. As we saw, regardless of their actual or
perceived numbers, Amerindians did in fact exercise a presence within the unfolding of colonial political economy and even became institutionalised within historical narratives that continue to be of influence today. Moreover, as I argued, besides the Amerindian just being present, the figure of the Amerindian was also constructed according to certain value schemes. If the Amerindian had been of no value, that is zero value, neither positive nor negative, then one could truly talk about the complete absence and even erasure of the Amerindian from the "repertory set down by colonial experience", to use Lieber’s words. This was not the case. Instead, I argued, not only was the Amerindian valued, positively and negatively, the way the Amerindian was valued, at different times, and in different manners, under the constraints of changing commodity cycles, market pressures, and transformed political configurations, shaped the different modes of designating the Amerindian. In addition, this produced certain designations and characterisations, which, being ‘fixed’ into texts, result in a history that is accessible and ‘usable’ and provides a whole array of labels as seen in Table 3.2 below.

### Table 3.2:
**Temporal Range in Perceptions and Designations of Trinidad’s Indigenes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1500</th>
<th>To Mid-1600s</th>
<th>To Late1600s</th>
<th>Early1700s</th>
<th>1708</th>
<th>1786-1800s</th>
<th>Late1800s</th>
<th>1920s</th>
<th>1980s-1990s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carib</td>
<td>Dutch Carib</td>
<td>Dutch Carib</td>
<td>Warao Christian Indian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arawak</td>
<td>Arawak</td>
<td>Spanish Carib</td>
<td>Nepuyo Wild Indian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the far left, under 1492, "Indio" is present as the starting point in European ways of labelling the Amerindians in Trinidad, a term, which, like 'Carib', resurfaces in later periods. This table also foreshadows the next chapters by bring the time line up to the present. The vertical dash line represents the transition from Spanish to British rule of Trinidad.

As a result, the labels that have been produced, besides providing choices for contemporary historical reconstructions of the ‘Amerindian heritage of Trinidad’, can be, and often were, reified as a truth. Filtered out of their original contexts of
interaction, the labels and their associated traits become part of the propositional register and assume an almost legislative authority, such that ‘a Carib cannot be an Arawak’, or ‘Caribs were war-like’ and ‘Arawaks were peaceful’, notions that became enshrined as virtually unquestionable givens. As I have set out in this chapter, these were the outcomes of global colonising processes played at the broader regional level and then applied to Trinidad in particular. In the next chapter I will focus on how ‘Carib’ came to be localised within Arima.
Chapter Three

PLACING THE CARIB:
Amerindians, the First Two Resurgences, and the ‘Gens d’Arime’ in the Nineteenth Century

Introduction: Processes of Placing the Carib

In the last chapter I argued that towards the end of the era of European colonial expansion in the Caribbean in the 1700s, and with the decline of Caribs as a geopolitical force in their own right, Caribs began to receive the respect accorded to ‘noble savages’ whose integrity and identity had to be preserved and protected, that is, as a special people, with special rights vis-à-vis the relative newcomers to the Lesser Antilles and Guyana: African slaves and, later, indentured East Indians. After all, unlike these newcomers, Amerindians would be the only group next to the Europeans whose labour was not coerced, and who continued in their loyalty to Europeans. On the other hand, Amerindians in Trinidad also held little economic value or political importance, apart from the lands they occupied in the missions. These realities would serve to shape how they would be depicted and treated by colonial authorities. The strategic shifts between negative and positive valuations remained.

The aims of this chapter are twofold. The first aim is to describe the processes by which Amerindians attained an important symbolic status within the colonial order in ways that ensured the perpetuation and reproduction of discursive valuations (both positive and negative) of their presence. Secondly, I want to establish how Amerindians became enshrined in the quest for a local sense of
identity, especially at the level of Arima, that is, the localisation of wider processes of valuing the Amerindian figure. Both of these aims are an important part of explaining the bases for current revaluations of the Carib presence in Trinidad. However, in terms of the first aim, dealing with colonial preservation and segregation schemes, this material is of relevance in helping to round out previous discussions of how ‘Carib’ was institutionalised and valued at the ideational/discursive level, and how Amerindian groups were specially positioned at the social-interactional level. In terms of the second aim, that is, the ensconcing of Amerindian images and symbols, this chapter is necessary for setting the stage for later chapters, in highlighting the development of local and then national indigeneity via the trope of the Amerindian, configured within newly reworked local mytho-histories.

The argument will proceed according to the following stages. First, I shall outline the nature of what I loosely call the first resurgence of Arima’s Amerindian community, roughly from 1813 to 1828, under the guidance of Governor Sir Ralph Woodford, and the Protector of the Indians in Arima, Captain William Wright. Second, I will highlight some features of the ‘racial specialness’ of Amerindians within the colonial hierarchy of the 19th century and its impact on current ways of perceiving Amerindians. Third, I will present evidence of the symbolic institutionalisation of the Amerindian in the dominant historiography of Arima, a process that gained momentum with the demographic decline of Arima’s Mission Amerindians, and the eventual displacement of a large number of them from Arima. I argue that this upsurge in symbolic valuations of the Amerindian, and the assertion of the centrality of the Amerindian in Arima’s history and identity, stem from a second resurgence between 1870 and 1920. I see this second resurgence as resulting from a variety of converging processes: (1) late colonial romance, as reflected, in part, in writers’ depictions of mid- to late-1800s Trinidad as an “Indian Paradise”; (2) the dissemination of news about North American Indians in their last stands to protect their lands; (3) a sort of ‘indigenisation by substitution’ with the importation of large numbers of ‘mixed’ Spanish-Amerindian cocoa labourers from Venezuela who themselves created and
popularised new depictions of Amerindians in Trinidad, whilst also becoming amalgamated in Arima’s local Spanish-Indian historiography; (4) the creation of an Arima identity from the late 1800s, relying in part on its ‘unique’ position as the last seat of Amerindians in the country, and spurred by inter-élite competition between Spanish and French Catholics versus British Anglicans; and, (5) the 1870s-1920s cocoa boom that renewed the fortunes of old Spanish and French Creole families in Arima, itself a centre of the new boom, accompanied by a revival of interest in local Church and mission history and the development of ritualised and textual commemorations of the ‘Indian Mission’ past. Stated briefly then, this chapter examines the ‘emplacing’ of the Amerindian as an outcome of processes that both displaced and re-placed Amerindians in Arima.

In the last chapter we examined processes of canonising the Carib, with the institutionalisation of ‘Carib’ as one of the ethnic ‘givens’ of the Caribbean historical scene, where the Carib occupies a definitional place in now conventional narrations of Caribbean history. In this chapter considerable attention is paid to the institutionalisation of the Amerindian in the construction of historical representations of Arima and Trinidad, and how Amerindians were narrated in late colonial texts whose influence continues to be manifested in contemporary narratives. The process of institutionalising the Amerindian in Arima is considered in connection with the Mission of Santa Rosa de Arima. Subsequent to the success in attaching Trinidad’s Carib heritage to Arima as a special place within Trinidad, we can also see the emergence of modes of commemorating and ceremonialising Caribs, that is, the development of public events and performances in which the symbol of the Carib (or the Amerindian generally) is enshrined.

**The Mission of Santa Rosa de Arima and the Ranking of the Amerindian**

**Instituting the Indian Mission of Arima**

As noted previously, in the late 1700s, especially from the formal proclamation of the legal end to Carib slavery in 1756, Trinidad underwent a
second wave of missionary efforts by the Capuchin order (Noel 1972:34). Added to the seven missions that survived from the previous campaigns (at Aricagua, Tacarigua, Arauca, Naparima, Savaneta, Savana Grande, Montserrat), the Capuchins founded six new ones: at Arima, Toco, Siparia, Matura, Punta Cumana, and Salibia (Rétout 1976:xviii-xx). Amerindians had undergone significant ‘Hispanisation’ in the process. Historians write that by as early as 1699, “most if not all [of the Amerindians] were Christians (with Spanish names), the plantain had become ‘the most important fruit of the land,’ and oranges were grown; the Indians raised pigs and goats and chickens”1 (De Verteuil 1995:55). Similarly, Brereton writes that by 1716, “the great majority of the Island’s Indians had become ‘Hispanised’; that is, Christian, Spanish-speaking...organised into villages under some degree of control by the church [and] the Government”, and by Spanish settlers who used them as labourers on their farms; she adds that even “up to the 1780’s Trinidad remained essentially an Amerindian society” (Brereton 1991:36), and by this, I assume, she means in terms of demographic predominance. As Noel (1972:24) explains, following the 1725-1727 cocoa blight, and total economic collapse, “the Hispanic element of the population did not reach a sufficiently large enough size again in order to ensure a nucleus for another Hispanoamerican community” and, during the mid-1700s there were, he found, only 50 adult white males, 200 black adult males, and “thousands” of Amerindians.

However, by the 1780s, momentous changes began to occur. After a succession of European peace treaties, Trinidad decided to open its doors to French Caribbean immigrants and their slaves in an effort to revitalise the Trinidad economy by entering into lucrative sugar production and thereby also increasing the island’s population. These French immigrants were also seeking to flee from wars and uprisings affecting various French territories in the Caribbean. Hence in 1783 the Cedula de población was promulgated, stipulating that the new arrivals must be Roman Catholic and bring property with them. These transformations would have immediate impacts on Trinidad’s Amerindians, as similar European

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1 These are non-native animals.
treaties of 1783 would have on Caribs in the wider Caribbean and on Indians in the United States, which consisted primarily of schemes to place aboriginal groups on reservations and to institute Christianisation and assimilation campaigns (see Gregoire & Kanem 1989:52; Strong & Van Winkle 1993:12). In addition, in 1797 the British seized Trinidad, which was formally ceded by Spain in 1802. The transformation of the space that was Trinidad, and the relocation of diverse groups to Trinidad, would also serve to provide the new relational framework within which Amerindians would be defined, characterised, and valued.

By 1785, the last Spanish governor of Trinidad, José María Chacón, consolidated the northern villages of Tacarigua, Arauca and Cuara, at Arima (Leahy 1980:102). The Amerindian population of Tacarigua was 193 and that of Arauca was 297 (Noel 1972:97). A total of 632 Indians, led by the Venezuelan Father Pedro Reyes Bravo, were transferred to Arima (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:13). Indirectly, this might also suggest that Arima itself held no Amerindian population at the time. The reason for amalgamating in Arima the Indians from the quarter of Tacarigua/Arouca was probably twofold, argues a Trinidadian historian who belongs to the Dominican Order: “to give their lands to the new colonists, and to segregate the Indians, for their own good, from the newcomers” (Leahy 1980:102; also see Wise 1938a:40, Collens 1886:115). Hence, Arima was to be the place of the Amerindians. De Verteuil confirmed the specifics of this move:

Soon after the [1783] settlement of the colony, these Indians had been formed into two missions at Tacarigua and Arima. But as the formation of ingenios, or sugar estates, was proceeding eastward, they were removed to the quarter of Arima, where a village was formed, and houses built by them, on about one thousand acres which has been granted for the formation of a mission, along the right bank of the river, and as the full and unalienable property of the inhabitants. [De Verteuil 1858:299-300]

A travel writer of the late 1800s wrote that the “Indians” had been “gradually driven eastward from the haunts of civilisation” (Collens 1886:115). Collens also supports the fact that “each head of family [had] his own conuco or allotment” of
land to cultivate (1886:115). A Mission in Arima had been founded during a first attempt around 1757, according to one author (Rétout 1976:45), but had apparently been dissolved shortly thereafter for reasons unexplained. As for the second Mission of Arima, which concerns us here, it was dedicated to the first saint of the New World, Santa Rosa de Lima, born in 1586 in Peru, of Spanish parentage (Rétout 1976:46). Various authors give different dates for the founding of this new settlement (ranging from 1784 to 1786), with few disagreeing with the proposition that it was *formally* established in 1786, on the 200th Anniversary of St. Rose’s birth (Rétout 1976:46). The first entry in the baptismal register is for 15 January 1789; Father Reyes Bravo was in charge from 1786 until 1819 (Rétout 1976:46). As was the case with all the other missions in Trinidad, festivities were held on the feast day of the patron saint of the mission, thus the Santa Rosa Festival was born.

It seems clear that at this time Trinidad’s Amerindians were not particularly ‘valued’ in the overall scheme of things, and, indeed, were moved out of the way. This was, as some put it, the era of King Sugar, and the lands the Amerindians had occupied were suited to sugar cane, whereas Arima is located in a hilly area more suited to cocoa cultivation. By 1793, sugar became Trinidad’s main industry (Stephens 1985:12). In 1796 there were 159 sugar plantations and 60 cocoa estates; by 1802 there were 192 sugar plantations and 57 cocoa estates (Stephens 1985:12). By 1809 sugar was responsible for 68.7% of the total cultivated acreage in Trinidad; sugar production increased from 4.2 million pounds in 1802 to 25.95 million pounds in 1809 (Stephens 1985:13). Cocoa, however, faced a glut in the world market by 1827, and prices fell by 90% (Stephens 1985:14). Cocoa, we must note, was also the primary commodity cultivated by the Amerindians in the Arima Mission. Not only did this lessen the economic importance of Amerindians in the colony, there was also an associated decline in the fortunes of their ‘patrons’, Trinidad’s remaining Spanish landed oligarchs. Following the influx of vast numbers of wealthy French and free coloured planters from 1783 onwards, along with the formal takeover by the British in 1797, adding

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2 At this point, there is little indication of how ‘Amerindian’ or *indio* (the label conventionally used at the time) was defined, that is, whether or not amongst *indios* were also included people who
yet another strata of higher ranking élites, the Spanish found themselves progressively marginalized: in 1802, Governor Picton stated that there were only six or seven Spaniards of “any respectability” in Trinidad (quoted in Newson 1976:194). Of course, this may well have been a deliberate overstatement as a means of minimising the importance of the previous ruling class in the new, and now British, Trinidad. Others have also commented that, “the old Spanish Creoles of St. Joseph, impoverished and isolated, lost all influence over the affairs of their native island…. a number relapsed into poverty and obscurity, and disappeared from the historical record. This destiny was to be shared, ultimately, by the Amerindians” (Brereton 1981:20, emphasis added). This was yet another means by which the Spanish and the Amerindian became virtually fused in historical narratives.

Trinidad’s Spanish élite was the primary sector that had interests in the Amerindian missions of the late 1700s and in the early years of British rule. Governor Chacón himself is said to have taken a personal interest in the formation of these new missions, having personally named the mission of San Juán de Aricagua (Rétout 1976:6). Don Cristóbal Guillén de Robles, a Royal Officer of the Treasury who had been in charge of the treasury from the 1750s to the 1770s (Noel 1972:45), was responsible for granting land for the mission of Arima.3 Don Manuel Sorzano, who had held the post of Contador de ejercito, or Treasurer of the Military chest, under the Spanish Government (Fraser 1971 [1896]:15), is said to have actually founded the Indian Mission in Arima, and acted as corregidor (administrator) of the Indians until 1815 (see Governor Woodford in Fraser 1971 [1896]:101).4 His son, Martin Sorzano, was also Corregidor of the Indians (Joseph 1970 [1838]:102). In addition, it seems possible that the prominent Sorzano family, whose name is permanently inscribed on one of Arima’s streets, may also have been responsible for instituting the tradition of the Queen of the Caribs.

were the product of miscegenation.

3 This is according to a letter by Father Louis Daudier, Parish Priest of Arima, 27 April 1881. Here Father Daudier quoted “the oldest surviving Indians” of the area in establishing an oral history of the Indian Mission.

According to Douglas, “Adhemar [de Verteuil, another leading family in the Arima oligarchy]...married the first Carib Queen of Arima, Francis Sorzano” (1999:20). Spanish families in Trinidad retained, along with a paternal interest in the welfare of Amerindians (their workforce), significant tracts of land devoted to cocoa production, with a concentration of these in and around Arima.

Some demographic statistics for the Amerindian population of Trinidad, and Arima itself, were maintained. According to surveys, the Amerindian population in all of Trinidad was as follows:
Table 4.1: Trinidad Amerindian Population Statistics, 1782-1838

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>AMERINDIAN TOTAL</th>
<th>TRINIDAD TOTAL</th>
<th>AMERINDIANS AS % OF TRINIDAD TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1777&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2082</td>
<td>3433</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1782&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1495</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1786&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1391</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1414</td>
<td>11533</td>
<td>12.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1788&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1428</td>
<td>11722</td>
<td>12.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2200&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;/ 1432&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>13053&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>10.97%&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1408</td>
<td>13247</td>
<td>10.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1791&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1398</td>
<td>12009</td>
<td>11.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1195</td>
<td>14009</td>
<td>8.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1268</td>
<td>14744</td>
<td>8.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1794&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1144</td>
<td>15519</td>
<td>7.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1795&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1078</td>
<td>15279</td>
<td>7.05%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1797&lt;sup&gt;a,b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1082</td>
<td>17718&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1799&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1148</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1800&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1071</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>1801&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1212</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1802&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1166</td>
<td>28477&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1416</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1804&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1416</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1805&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1733</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1697</td>
<td>30043&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1809&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1647</td>
<td>32095&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1804</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>39935&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>956</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1824&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>41120&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1828&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>727</td>
<td>41020&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1838&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>39328&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:**

- b: "Plan for the Isle of Trinidad made from actual surveys in the year 1797".

**Historical Notes:**

- 1797: British capture of Trinidad
- 1802: Spanish cession of Trinidad
According to Coleridge (in Besson & Brereton 1991:123), the Amerindian population of the Arima Mission in 1824 consisted of 278 people alone, comprised by 60 men, 77 women, 81 boys, and 60 girls. Martin Sorzano, the Corregidor, testified that the Amerindians in the Mission, “never exceeded 600, and have now [1841] fallen off to less than half that number” (in Burnley 1842:109). From my own research of the Baptismal Registers of the Santa Rosa RC Church, I compiled statistics on the number of people identified as “Indian” who were baptised during the period 1820-1852, as shown in Table 4.2. It must be noted that these statistics can only give one a rough impression, at best, of what the total Amerindian population of the Mission might have been, assuming that all children born were also baptised. What is also noteworthy is that the priests involved always noted the ‘race’ of those baptised. The designation of Indio for Amerindians continued to be written in only until the start of the 1850s, when it abruptly disappeared, roughly at the same time as the Mission of Arima declined, thus when the group lost the legal status assigned to classes of labourers who were ordered in terms of the racial hierarchy.

### Table 4.2:

**Baptismal Statistics for Amerindians in the Arima Mission, 1820-1852**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME PERIOD</th>
<th>TOTAL # OF AMERINDIANS BAPTISED</th>
<th>TOTAL # OF PEOPLE BAPTISED</th>
<th>AMERINDIANS AS A % OF THE TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1820-1835</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>1511</td>
<td>12.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1835-1840</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>497</td>
<td>10.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1840-1852</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1446</td>
<td>0.48%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Baptismal Registers of the Mission of Santa Rosa, Arima: Book 1 (1820-1835), Book 2 (1835-1840), Baptismal Register of the Church of Santa Rosa, Arima: Book 3 (1840-1852)
Figure 4.1: Samples of Entries in the Baptismal Registers of the Mission of Santa Rosa, Arima

This entry, dated 11 September 1820, shows the ‘racial’ designation of the child in the margin at the left, the last word being “Yndia”, or Indian female. The entry reads: “On the eleventh of the month of September of One Thousand and Eight Hundred and Twenty [1820], I, Father José Candido Martinez, parish priest of this town of Santa Rosa de Arima, certify that on this day I have solemnly baptised a girl child who, as they have informed me, is three months old, and they presented her to me on this same day, to whom was given the name of Maria de la Cruz, legitimate daughter of Pedro Reyes and Maria Lucresia, Indian persons. Her godparents were Juan Francisco Alfonso... who was informed of his spiritual and parent-like obligation, with faith, Fr. José Candido Martinez”. Note the devotional names carried by the “Indians” of the Mission: Mary, of the Cross, Kings (as in the Three Kings). Interestingly, these are the sorts of names that begin to fade out of the registers by the 1860s.

This is an entry dated 06 February 1825, signed by Father Bernardo de Obon, for a ‘natural’ son (born out of wedlock), Josef Julian. The father’s name is not indicated. One can make out the word “Yndios” (Indians) at the end of the third line from the bottom.
This entry is of interest for its notation "Indians of this Mission" in the year 1840, a time when the mission was in the process of dissolution. The complete entry reads: "On the 4th of June of 1840, I the undersigned Curate of the Mission of Santa Rosa de Arima, certify that on this day I baptised in this Church a boy who was born on the 4th of May of this year, to whom was given the name José Ysidro, legitimate son of Domingo Dias and of Juana Pascuala, Indians of this Mission. His sponsors were Juan Martin and Juana Felippa, with faith, Joaquín Sanchis". Another difficulty is establishing a full genealogical record is to be found in the plethora of 'common' names such as Domingo Diaz or, as I noted, the popular 'Juan Urbano' (John Urban). One has to decide whether one is dealing with the same parent, or another parent, a decision which affects the charting of whom is related to whom, and, the determination of the size of the population.

What is also interesting to note in these baptismal summaries is the fact that, even within the Indian Mission context, the Amerindian population was a very small minority. The largest group of people consisted of black slaves and free coloureds, and later “natives of Africa” who arrived after Emancipation as immigrant labourers. Also noteworthy in the larger demographic tabulation in Table 4.1, is the fact that even almost two centuries ago the Arima Amerindians numbered only a few hundred, a minimal proportion of the total population for Trinidad, yet not for that was the fact of their presence ignored.

The history of the Arima Mission is not one that is locked in the past, that is, left unconsulted and inactive in the cultural politics of the present. The story of the Mission is one that continues to be told, and re-told, as the consequences and interpretations of Arima’s mission history are played out and elaborated in both current rituals and historical narratives. For example, for the High Mass of the August 1999 Santa Rosa Festival, Bishop Malcolm Galt of Grenada (a former parish priest of Arima), stressed “the facts” of the Arima mission’s history during the homily he presented as chief celebrant, and did so in a manner that was almost pointedly didactic and authoritative in tone, while the members of the Carib Community and their President sat in silence in the front pews of the church.
Bishop Galt stressed that the mission was founded in 1786 by Father Reyes Bravo, who named the mission in honour of St. Rose on her 200th birthday, and that he led Amerindians to Arima, from other missions. There is some tension between the church and the SRCC over which of the two can lay greater claim to ‘rights’ to the Santa Rosa Festival. SRCC leaders such Bharath regularly present a historical narration of the roots and development of the Arima Caribs. What is almost an ‘official’ history of the SRCC, as told to me on various occasions, was also told to a journalist from the regional Caricom Perspective magazine: SRCC leaders stressed that the Mission was founded in 1759 by Capuchins, adjacent to an existing Carib village. In this account, in 1783 Governor Chacón closed down “all other Mission villages in Trinidad”, and Christian Amerindians were sent to the Santa Rosa Mission, which is thus presented as pre-existing the others. More importantly, they add, “the Santa Rosa festival was established in 1759 and is the oldest continuing local festival in Trinidad”, moreover, the devotion to Santa Rosa began with her apparition to three Carib hunters and her urging them to convert to Christianity, as enshrined in a local legend retold by members of the SRCC. The SRCC leaders stress that Caribs were responsible for the preparations for the festival and had always been the ones to decorate the Church (Caricom Perspective 1990:46). The ‘slant’ of these two narratives, that of the Church presented above and that of the SRCC, differ not merely on a matter of historical detail, but on the interpretation of who can claim a paramount role in the Santa Rosa Festival, an argument fully immersed in attempts to historicise representations. These dynamics will be explored further in chapters 4 and 5.

The Social Organisation of the Mission of Arima

In spatial terms, the Mission of Arima, like most missions, was structured around the church. A central square dominated the mission, with the church located on the eastern side (where the sun rises), and the homes of the Amerindians located along the other sides, along with orchards, a small market, and later schools. The remnants of this spatial organisation are still evident in
Arima, in Lord Harris Square, located just about two hundred metres north of the modern centre of Arima.

Figure 4.2:
Lord Harris Square in Arima, 1999

According to De Verteuil (1858:300), the mission was under the governance of a municipal council headed by Amerindians of the mission, and under the control of the priest. In addition, under the British, a corregidor was appointed as well as a protector to whom the Amerindians could appeal against
any arbitrary act of the corregidor. At this time, the British vowed to uphold Spanish laws and institutions, in line with the terms of the Spanish cession of the island.

All the Amerindians of the Mission, who were fit for work, were obligated to work two days of each week for the support of the community, employed in such tasks as cleaning the village and farming common lands. In addition, each head of family had his own personal allotment of land (De Verteuil 1858:300). The Amerindians of the mission were not subject to taxation, but were bound to serve as a public workforce when ordered by the corregidor, and had to accompany the latter, when required, and be paid wages in return (De Verteuil 1858:300). The Amerindians were not entitled to sell or otherwise dispose of their property, which descended to their heirs. As De Verteuil argued, “the Indians were considered in the light of minors”, and this measure was in force to “protect” them since, “the moment they became emancipated, they sold what property they had for a mere trifle” (De Verteuil 1858:300). Indeed, De Verteuil’s suggestion here is that this is one reason why Arima’s ex-Mission Amerindians would eventually evacuate from Arima.

The church was the centre of the social, political and religious organisation of the Mission. The church building itself was in fact constructed by the Amerindians (De Verteuil 1858:300), and as noted by Governor Woodford, writing in 1817 on extant churches in Trinidad, “St. Rose of Arima: A thatched house built by the Indians” (quoted in Leahy 1980:37). This too forms part of the written history seized upon by current SRCC leaders such as Bharath, in stressing the Caribs’ role in the foundation of the parish itself, which entails some measure of necessary “respect and recognition”, Bharath insists. The church, and the ceremonies enacted within it, were themselves critical parts of mission organisation: “the missionaries very skilfully played upon every conceivable natural desire. They emphasised the externals of their religion—the ceremony, the music, the processions” (Whitehead 1988:141). In line with this, we see a number

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5 The role of Amerindians in constructing churches in mission towns has also been documented elsewhere in the region (Bisnauth 1996:23).
of patronal feasts celebrated throughout the various mission towns of colonial Trinidad, with records for the 1750s speaking of the festivals of Saint Augustine and Saint Paul, patron saints of the towns that bore their names, and governed by “the corregidor of the Nepuyos, Gabriel Infante” (Noel 1972:36-37). The Santa Rosa Festival in Arima had its roots in this milieu, as did Trinidad’s only other surviving mission festival, La Divina Pastora in the town of Siparia in southern Trinidad (see Goldwasser 1996). La Divina Pastora is a devotion that originated in Spain, a devotion that the Capuchin order made its own and spread throughout its missions, especially from 1795 when Pope Pius VI named the Divina Pastora the special patroness of the Capuchin missions (Rétout 1976:55).

The cultural and social organisation of missions inevitably played a role in the transformation of aboriginal cultural practices and social institutions. Amerindians were instructed in new methods of agriculture and handicrafts (Bisnauth 1996:20). The focus of the community also shifted under European domination, from the communal house (the Karbet or Tabouii) to the church or the priest’s house (Whitehead 1988:66). Family structure also changed, with the adoption of European kinship forms (Whitehead 1988:67), as well as transforming the sexual division of labour with men bearing the bulk of agricultural work.

**The ‘Racial Status’ of the Amerindian in Mission Times**

The alleged intent of the church itself was to preserve the ‘racial’ and residential integrity of the Amerindian community under its control. Friars had, “prohibited ‘mission’ Indians from contact with ‘bush’ Indians, Negro slaves, mestizos or other Spaniards and kept them confined to the missions” (Harricharan 1983:22). Noel argued that one of the successes of the Capuchins, “seems to have been the partial preservation of the Indigenous race as agricultural workers under the external guise of living a Catholic life” (1972:18). On the other hand, as we saw in the demographic profile above, even within Arima, Amerindians were a minority and contact was inevitable. Indeed, Venezuelan immigrants were encouraged to settle in Arima from the earliest days of the mission:
In an effort to maintain the dominance of Spanish customs, language and traditions, Padre Bravo encouraged Spanish speaking planters and peons from Venezuela to settle in and around the mission. These migrants from Venezuela brought their strong Catholic traditions, language and customs and so the dominance of Spanish culture in the mission continued unabated. [Ahee 1992:25]

Moreover, the arrival of large numbers of these 'peons'—"labourers and backwoodsmen of mixed Spanish-Amerindian-African descent", a term that in the Trinidadian context is reserved exclusively from the Venezuelan peasant labourers also known as 'Cocoa Panyols'—in addition to "the more prosperous Venezuelan immigrants, formed a considerable Spanish-speaking community in many parts of the island, reinforcing the dwindling numbers of indigenous Hispanised Amerindians" (Brereton 1979:8).

The status and meaning of the Amerindian can only be appreciated within the context of the valuative and comparative ‘race’ hierarchy upheld in colonial society. In the early 1800s in Trinidad, the population consisted largely of 'whites', 'blacks', Amerindians and Venezuelan peons. Only 'blacks' were enslaved and thus, per force, occupied the bottom rung of the colonial ‘race’ hierarchy. The Amerindian occupied a relatively privileged position in this hierarchy. One historian writes that censuses of the 1800s in Trinidad eventually included Amerindians in the 'White' category (Leahy 1980:104). In terms of 'physical traits' the Trinidadian Panyol or peon, "with his mixture of three races—black, white and Amerindian—was, according to the ideals of the Trinidad society, in a favourable position: his hair was straight or wavy, and his skin was light" (Moodie 1983:5). Attesting to the privileged 'racial' position of the Amerindian, in the French West Indies if 'coloured people' wished to marry into 'better' (i.e., 'fair-skinned') families, and thus needed to offset the stigma of their apparent colouration, they could purchase falsified birth certificates stating that they were of Carib birth (Lowenthal 1972:48). King (1995) outlines historical cases in colonial Haiti such as that of an aspiring officer in the militia accused by neighbours of having African ancestry. In a court case his lawyer argued successfully that the man's non-European ancestors were Amerindian, producing a name and some
family records suggesting that one of his ancestors was the natural son of a Carib in St. Kitts, leading King to speculate:

lots of people who were ‘passing’ as white in those days attributed the occasional somatype variation in the family to Indian ancestors. In fact, down in the Cayes and Jacmel regions, where almost all the wealthy people were of partly African ancestry, one sees quite commonly the story of Indian roots in family narratives.

Guyana furnishes additional examples of the racially privileged status of Amerindians under colonialism. The Quarter Master General of the Indians in Demerara, William Hillhouse, wrote in his Indian Notices on the Amerindian’s intellect and physiognomy, that the cranium of the Amerindian, “is uniformly superior to the cranium of a negro, whose powers of mind are as much inferior to those of the Indian, as those of the latter to the powers of the European”’ (quoted in Joseph 1970 [1838]:121). In Guyana Amerindians were also once classed as “next to” Europeans in the racial hierarchy (J. Forte 1996:6).

Current research focused on the Greater Antilles in the 20th century also suggests that Amerindians continued to possess an intermediate status in the racial hierarchy. Duany reveals that until the mid-1900s, influential anthropological thought in Puerto Rico on the Tainos usually classified them as an inferior ‘race’ when compared to Europeans, but superior to the Africans (1999:40). Duany outlines the degree to which this ranking has survived, noting that which many authors after the mid-1900s still imply:

that the Indians were neither white nor black, but brown or ‘copper-like,’ and their intermediate phenotype placed them in between European and Africans in ethnic, moral, and aesthetic terms....The current social studies curriculum from elementary school to the college level highlights such physical features as ‘essential’ to the understanding of Puerto Ricanness, as any nine-year old child on the Island can easily recite them. For example, a third-grade textbook widely used in Puerto Rico today lists the following ‘characteristic traits of the Taino race’: medium height, copper-tone skin, black and straight hair, prominent cheekbones, slightly slanted eyes, long nose, and relatively thick lips. These features are sharply contrasted with the phenotypes of both Spaniards and Africans. [Duany 1999:40]
Indeed, the enduring effect of these depictions continues to the present, as shown in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: History in the Contemporary Visual Depictions of Amerindians


Duany also argues that the idea that "the indigenous element is alive and persists" in the 'racial makeup' of contemporary Puerto Rico "has gained wide currency", and he points to, "a pseudoscientific study of University of Puerto Rico [in which] students even went so far as to classify one fifth of its sample as 'Indianic' (indiado), ten times as many blacks", noting also that other textbooks and brochures encourage readers to interpret the light skins of many contemporary Puerto Ricans in terms of descent from Tainos (Duany 1999:40).
Indeed, it seems that the continuing intermediate status of the Amerindian category derives from its relational position between the stigma of ‘blackness’ and the superiority of ‘whiteness’. The denial of the African in the affirmation of the Taino is in fact an argument largely endorsed by authors such as Duany (1999), Dávila (1999), and Jiménez-Román (1999). Corbett (1995) also spoke of Haitian students in his classes writing of family stories that they had “an Indian ancestor way way back”, in connection with recent arguments that there must be “some blood pool” from the Tainos “still around in Haiti”. In a listserv posting, Saint-Vil (1995) writes of contemporary Haitian attitudes toward race, whiteness and the Amerindian:

The term ‘Marabou’, for example, is still well liked by many Haitians...it refers to dark skinned people with straight (or slightly curled) dark hair....Some Haitians like to claim that they are ‘Marabou’, sometimes perhaps as a sort of psychological escape allowing them to stray as far away as possible from their origins in the ‘dark continent’...Some have claimed that their ‘Marabou’ features result from a mix of Taino, African and/or European genes. It is interesting to note that similar discussions rage around the origins of the Kreyol language and even the Vodou religion.

I have also received testimonies from Caribbean nationals in territories long seen as devoid of Amerindian descendants, attesting to an Amerindian presence in the family genealogy, such as the following message:

I am originally from St. Thomas, V.I., and my family on my father’s side are from Nevis. My Grandmother would tell us when we were little that she was Amerindian and that our people lived in Nevis for centuries and centuries. In the words of my aunt they always lived there. When the Europeans began coming and bringing slaves, they moved to the mountains....I have never met my aunt to my recollection physically, but we speak often on the phone.

These sorts of contemporary testimonies (see also Estevez 1999-2000), often shared and transmitted over the Internet, highlight, at the very least, a growing sense of pride in the region’s Amerindian history as evidenced by the enthusiasm of some individuals in determining their Amerindian ancestry; or, some might argue, as in the collection edited by Haslip-Viera (1999b), this is evidence of the
use of the Amerindian as a trope for whiteness, and as a means of evading the colour stigma associated with African ancestry. On the other hand, these authors also take ‘black’ as an unproblematic given in accusing ‘neo-Tainos’ of trying to ‘evade their blackness’.

‘Pathetic Primitivism’: Depictions of the ‘Indian Character’ in the Early Nineteenth Century

As I have already indicated, there had been various transformations in depictions of the Amerindian in different historical phases. By the 1800s in Trinidad, Amerindians, once depicted as war-like, were now cast as child-like. Janette Forte sums up these transformations with respect to neighbouring Guyana:

Looming domination was disguised first by stories of the armed, belligerent, intractable natives, to be followed later, when the natives had been reduced to a shadow of their former numbers, by descriptions of child-like, somewhat sub-human, beings, akin to the flora and fauna of the interior, and thereby banished from the coastal areas [of Guyana] when the European economy no longer required their services. [J. Forte 1996:6]

Here I wish to focus specifically on colonial European writings that characterise Trinidad’s mission Amerindians in the early 1800s, with especial emphasis on the ways they depicted the Amerindians’ state of being, giving us some indication also of how they were valued within the colonial social hierarchy. We can detect at least four major themes in these depictions: (1) Amerindians languishing in a perpetual state of indolent torpor; (2) cultural loss, dilution of tradition, and the lack of a conscious identity, as also a condition of their apparent lifelessness; (3) Amerindians as children, in a state of historical and cultural infancy as well, deprived not just of power but also of cultural self-knowledge; and, (4) the Amerindian as ‘untrue’ to his/her ‘race’, abandoning Amerindian marital bonds, and the resultant ‘mixture’ that resulted in ‘approximate extinction’.

In contrast to romantic primitivism, these characterisations amount, I would argue, to a form of writing and thinking about Amerindians that we ought to call pathetic primitivism, as oft expressed by the phrase “these poor Indians”, especially with reference to these apparently post-Carib creatures hospitalised within the missions.
These writings reflect and narrate a uniquely transitional period in Trinidadian history, of a colony in transition from Spanish ‘underdevelopment’ (according to the self-justifications of Trinidad’s new colonists and later generations of national developmentalists), to one that aimed to be a thriving part of the world economy; and, a colony uncertain about its mode of exploiting the lower classes (after all, this was a ‘cloudy’ period when abolition and emancipation loomed on the horizon) and thus uncertain about the comparative value of ‘freemen’ such as Amerindians versus that of African slaves.

H. N. Coleridge, a cousin of the more prominent Samuel Coleridge, spent some time in Trinidad and wrote about his various journeys throughout the island, including visits at its various Amerindian missions. “Every one, who goes to Trinidad”, Coleridge wrote, “should make a point of visiting the Indian missions of Arima and Savana Grande”, in order to witness these “poor dear Indians” (1826:82, 90). Joseph too stated that, “Arima is a neat village, and is interesting, because in and about it reside the largest assemblage of the remnant of the aboriginal Indians anywhere to be found in the island” (1970[1838]:102). With reference to the Arima Mission, which Coleridge visited in 1825, he described the Amerindians as sitting for hours in motionless silence (1826:94). Yet, far more elaborate was his ‘description’ of the Amerindians of the Mission of Savana Grande, one worthy of being reproduced at length here:

They seem to be the identical race of people whose forefathers Columbus discovered, and the Spaniards worked to death in Hispantiola....They are short in stature, (none that I saw exceeding five feet and six inches) yellow in complexion, their eyes dark, their hair long, lank and glossy as a raven’s wing; they have a remarkable space between the nostrils and the upper lip, and a breadth and massiveness between the shoulders that would do credit to the Farnese Hercules. Their hands and feet, however, are small-boned and delicately shaped....Nothing seems to affect them like other men; neither joy or sorrow, anger, or curiosity, take any hold of them; both mind and body are drenched in the deepest apathy; the children lie quietly on their mothers’ bosoms; silence is in their dwellings and idleness in all their ways....The Indians were all summoned forth, and the alcalde and the regidores stood in front with their wands of office. These were nearly the only signs of life which they displayed; they neither smiled or spoke or moved, but
stood like mortals in a deep trance having their eyes open....The governor [Sir Ralph Woodford] gave a piece of money to each of the children, which was received with scarcely the smallest indication of pleasure or gratitude by them or their parents....They were much more completely clothed than the negroes; the decency of the female dress was conspicuous, and both the maiden’s and the mother’s bosom were modestly shrouded from the gaze of man....The amazing contrast between these Indians and the negroes powerfully arrested my attention. Their complexions do not differ so much as their minds and dispositions. In the first, life stagnates; in the last, it is tremulous with irritability....I know nothing more delightful than to be met by a group of negro girls, and be saluted with their kind ‘How d’ye, massa? How d’ye massa?’ their sparkling eyes and bunches of white teeth....It is said that even the slaves despise the Indians, and I think it very probable; the latter are decidedly inferior as intelligent beings....Indeed their history and existence form a deep subject for speculation. The flexibility of temper of the rest of mankind has been for the most part denied to them; they wither under transportation, they die under labour; they will never willingly or generally amalgamate with the races of Europe or Africa; if left to themselves with ample means of subsistence, they decrease in numbers every year; if compelled to any kind of improvement, they reluctantly acquiesce, and relapse with certainty the moment the external compulsion ceases. They shrink before the approach of other nations as it were by instinct; they are now not known in vast countries of which they were once the only inhabitants....[they are] destined to be swept from the face of the earth. [Coleridge 1826:122-123]

**Figure 4.4:**

**Sketches of Amerindians of the Mission of Savana Grande**

Coleridge's depiction is special insofar as it is the one of the few that cast Amerindians as inferior to Africans, and claims that Amerindians avoided contact with the other ‘races’—indeed, the consensus among later writers is that just the opposite was true: miscegenation was intense. This passage, and those that follow, generally show the Europeans’ fairly low opinion of the Amerindians in the late 1700s and very early 1800s, as well as a certain ambivalence in terms of high regard for their appearance and light complexions, and low regard for their economic role in the colony.

E. L. Joseph also produced a characterisation that mirrors Coleridge’s for its incessant emphasis on the lifeless character of the Amerindian. In this regard, Joseph wrote the following:

Children of the island they are, in more than one sense of the word. They are as thoughtless, although not as lively, as infancy; left to themselves, they would become wanderers of the wood, or would starve in their encampments. They are remarkably free from all crime, insomuch, that I never heard of one of our Indians being accused of a crime. But their total want of mental and (unless violently excited) bodily energy is beyond credibility; the greatest earthly good of the poor Indian of Trinidad seems to consist in crouching on their haunches and remaining in a state of waking torpor or of somnolency, and it is not easy to tell the difference between the torpor and the sleep of the Indian….The glorious robe in which nature is arrayed delights not his eye; the charms of beauty have little influence on him—he views these as an ox regards a flower-garden, who merely looks amongst the blossoms for objects for the gratification of his appetite. Wine, which maketh glad the heart of man, seems to have no effect on the poor Indian; a moderate quantity of strong drink produces no visible effect on him; let him drink to excess, and he calmly crouches with his thighs doubled up and the whole weight of his frame resting on his heels; in this Simian posture he sleeps off the fumes of his tranquil inebriety. [Joseph 1970(1838):102]

To some extent, depictions of the indolence of the Amerindian seem to have ‘stuck’, at least insofar as Arima continues to be referred to as “a sleepy village” by public speakers such as politicians, journalists, and writers. As early as the 1830s, Joseph wrote: “I have often thought that the somnolent inactivity of the poor Indians is contagious, and has in some measure communicated itself to many
of the inhabitants of Arima” (1970[1838]:103). Recently a Trinidadian historian wrote of Arima as that “sleepy mission village that the Capuchins founded” (Anthony 1988:8). Likewise, a Trinidadian historian of Arima wrote: “Before 1940 Arima was a sleepy, agricultural community, greatly influenced by the Spanish-Amerindian heritage….It was a town developed through the adaptation of Amerindian influence” (Garcia 1991:iii). At a rally of the United National Congress that I attended in Arima during the July 1999 Local Government elections, the Member of Parliament for Arima, Dr. Rupert Griffith, pleaded that voters give the UNC a chance in Arima so that they could transform “that sleepy town” into a modern city. Also, some of my Arimian non-Carib informants more than once made the suggestion that Arima inherited its alleged ‘sleepiness’ from its Mission days, which is more of a persistent way of thinking about Arima than it is an adequate reflection of the reality of Arima as the busy and noisy ‘hub’ of northeastern Trinidad that I experienced.

As mentioned above, the theme of cultural loss and vanishing traditions was one of the common themes recurring in descriptions of Arima’s Amerindians. One 1833 account of the Arima Amerindians portrayed them as numbering around 200, only speaking Spanish, with no ancestral traditions, “still less are they aware that the whole island was formerly theirs”, and “their little world is now limited to Arima” (in J. N. Lewis 1983a:29). This alleged state of being ‘without identity or tradition’ was repeated even more emphatically by Joseph after his visit to Arima. He wrote that “little information has been obtained from themselves” concerning their origins and he adds: “as to the Indians of the present day, their tradition extends not even as far back as the time when the Spaniards first visited their island” (Joseph 1970[1838]:118). Joseph emphasises that “the Arawaks of the present day are not in the same situation that they were when these islands were discovered. During the last three and a half centuries, their national spirit was broken, their arts lost, and yet they have learned nothing of civilization but its vices and its crimes” (Joseph 1970[1838]:120-121). Joseph also took sides in the long established debate over the definition of Trinidad’s Amerindians, calling them ‘Arawaks’.
In addition to ‘indolence’ and being ‘without tradition’, European colonial accounts of Trinidad’s Amerindians in these early decades of the 1800s also stressed a third, major theme: that of the Amerindian as a child. Joseph wrote in this vein about the “harmless and inactive children of the island” (1970[1838]:102). Writing much later, but with reference to this period, Fraser (1911[1891]:3), tells us that “when the English became masters of the Island, the few Indians who remained were little better than ‘hewers of wood and drawers of water’. To a great extent this was due to the laws enacted for their protection, which by treating them as children who never came of age, crushed out of them all feelings of independence”. Possibly the only time one reads of something remotely ‘heroic’ about the Amerindians of this period, from a colonial perspective, is in the case of the Arima Amerindians aiding in the suppression of the famous uprising led by Daaga, as he attempted to enter Arima and was instead halted by the Arima Militia led by Commandant Martin Sorzano (Joseph 1970[1838]:268).

The fourth major way of characterising the Amerindian, one that would prove fairly resilient, relates to the question of whether the Amerindian even existed by this time, and the character issue involved is that of the Amerindian who is ‘untrue to his own race’. Thus, Joseph stated that, of the Chaima Indians, “but one family at present is known to exist in Trinidad” (1970[1838]:121). However, more than just plain statements of groups disappearing from the map, is the recurrent focus on the notion of approximate extinction by inter-racial mixture, a theme we have already encountered and that is vibrant at present, not just in Arima, but across all Island Carib communities in the Caribbean today. Thus, Joseph wrote, “this indolent harmless race is here fast merging on extinction—from no fault of the local government, nor from any disease: the births amongst the Indian women exceed the deaths in the usual ratio”, instead, he says the reason for this is, “that the Indian men, since they are obliged to live in society, choose mates of other races, and the women do the same (Mr. Coleridge was misinformed when he stated that the Indians will not intermarry with other races), hence out of every seven children born of an Indian mother during the last 30 years, there are scarcely two of pure blood, as I have been informed” and Joseph thus concludes that, “this
will of course decrease their population; for those of the mixed race, whether they be Samboes (between Negroes and Indians), or Mustees (between Europeans and Indians), or the countless castes that the admixture between the African, European, and Indian tribes produce, they are not the real aboriginal race, and leave the inactive community of Indians as soon as they reach the age of discretion" (1970[1838]:102-103, emphasis added). This is one of the first written statements associating the ‘real Indian’ with the ‘pure Indian’, a logic that dogs the current SRCC. Moreover the ‘real Indian’ is tied to the Mission, and the ‘mixed Indian’ is free. In line with Joseph, the ex-corregidor of the Arima Mission, Martin Sorzano, before the Burnley Commission, engaged in the following exchange:

562. To what, then, do you ascribe the gradual and rapid diminution in their number?—[Sorzano:] Chiefly to the gradual mixture of the races. As pure Indians they were compelled to remain at the mission, and conform to the regulations; but the children born of Spanish and Creole fathers could not be so classed, and would not submit to the restraint of remaining there. [Burnley 1842:109, emphasis added]

De Verteuil, writing not too long afterwards, also added that while,

it is highly probable that many did seek a refuge and home in the virgin forests of Venezuela...I also coincide in opinion with some judicious observers, who trace the approximate extinction of those tribes to the marked presence manifested by the Indian women towards the negroes and the whites, by whom they were kindly treated, whilst they were regarded by their husbands, of kindred race, more as slaves and beasts of burden, than as equals or companions. As a consequence of those connections, there exists at present, in the colony, a certain number of individuals of Indian descent, but of mixed blood. [1858:172, emphasis added]

Here again we see the launch of a discourse that persists almost as strongly today as it did in the early 1800s, that the mixed Indian is ‘not pure’, and that Trinidad only possesses people who can, ‘at best’, be classified as of ‘Indian descent’ rather than Indian ‘proper’, thus demonstrating the full racialisation of indigeneity in the 19th century Trinidadian context. Moreover, racialising and spatially placing the Amerindian are concomitant processes, as we learned above that ‘mixed’ offspring were free to leave the missions, while the non-mixed were forced to remain. This
way of writing about Amerindians in racial-spatial terms continued into 1877 when, in his popular *At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies*, the travel writer Charles Kingsley lamented: “At present, there is hardly an Indian of certainly pure blood in the island, and that only in the northern mountains” (Kingsley 1877:74).

In some colonial narratives, the ‘Indian’ was thus increasingly defined in terms of ‘race’. During the life of the Arima Mission, ‘being Indian’ was also defined as a matter of ‘place’. The mission experience, as we shall see in greater detail below, itself aided the development of this discourse by stressing—indeed formalising, legalising and institutionalising—that pure Indians were to remain on the Mission, or be returned there, while mixed Indians were free.

In the end, these arguments of the ‘approximate extinction’ of the Amerindian may also have been motivated by a desire to usurp the mission lands of the Amerindians, especially as some of the writers themselves belonged to the local landed élite (e.g. De Verteuil), or wrote their texts in consultation with the ‘old established families of the area’ (e.g. Joseph). There is no conclusive evidence to suggest that this was their motivation, it is merely a possibility.

**Labels and the Mission Amerindians of Trinidad**

By 1820, Trinidad was declared an island not occupied by Caribs, according to the sources examined by Newson (1976:18-19). In the Baptismal Registers of the Arima Mission, starting in 1820 with the first book available for examination, only once did I see the designation *Indio Caribe* (Carib Indian), with priests invariably using the term *Indio*. “Indian” was also the only designation used by the British colonial authorities in Trinidad in the early 1800s. By 1869, referring to the remaining ex-Mission families in Arima, Father Louis Daudier spoke of “my little Indians and their mules”. As appropriate to the sorts of conventional depictions of the Amerindians outlined in the previous section, *Indio* was generic, non-tribal, and homogenising in its conception.

It is also likely that *Indio* and “Indian” had different meanings for the Spanish and the British respectively. As Leahy argues, the designation “Indian”
often had a wider meaning for the British than the Spanish: “for several years it included peons or free labourers from the mainland, possibly because the peons were usually employed, like the Indians, in clearing forests for cultivation, possibly too because some of the peons may have been Indians” (Leahy 1980:104). Once again, the term ‘peon’, in the Trinidadian context, refers to Venezuelan immigrant labourers, also called ‘Cocoa Panyols’ and ‘Spanish’—even today, the label ‘Spanish’ and ‘Carib’ are conflated in popular usage in northeastern Trinidad, the two treated synonymously, with labels such as ‘mestizo’ (the offspring of an Amerindian-European union) having disappeared from local usage by the mid-1850s. It is interesting that in applying Indio and “Indian”, colonial authorities were reverting to the earliest of all instances of name transference (see P. Roberts 1999) in the colonial Caribbean: the first voyage of Christopher Columbus, prior to the development and application of ‘Carib’ and ‘Arawak’.

Under the Spanish, Indio became a category that signified a state of cultural loss. Speaking of colonial Mexico, Victor Turner explained: “the term ‘Indio’ is highly ambiguous....It cannot...be applied to any kind of tribal group with an indigenous political system and religious and other customs handed down from pre-Columbian times” (1974:138). Later usage of Indio in the 1700s and 1800s, Turner argues, seemed to refer to all the depressed and underprivileged masses, including mestizos (1974:138), in a manner that parallels the use of “Indian” to include the ‘peons’ in early British Trinidad. In all of these cases, from colonial Mexico to Spanish and then British Trinidad, the Indio classification also related to “a very real economic category” (Turner 1974:139). In the Trinidadian case, this category was that of free labour, engaged in peasant production. In addition, belonging to this category allegedly entitled the ‘Indians’ to certain privileges, as explained by Martin Sorzano, the ex-corregidor: “they were even exempted from taxes paid by other free classes in the community, and had medical attendance furnished to them gratis” (Burnley 1842:109).

6 Letter of 04 February 1869.
So what did the Amerindians of Arima call themselves? There is not much written evidence to answer this question. The only account is that of De Verteuil, who witnessed the Arima Mission in its last decades and attended its festivals. He says: “The Indians of Arima called themselves Califournans” (De Verteuil 1858:300). This source has occasioned some speculation, especially among the researchers who have aided the current SRCC (see Harris 1989b:9), suggesting that these must have been French-speaking Caribs from St. Vincent, where the name Califuna was in use.7 Leahy found that “though in Toco and Cumana the Indians were or had been Chaimas”, in later years, “when the parish of Toco, which included all the former Indian villagers as well as colonists, was regularly supplied with a priest, the name ‘Carib’ seems to have been the popular name for all Indians in the parish as the baptismal register (dating from 1837) invariably describes an Indian mother as ‘Caraibesse’” (Leahy 1980:103). It is therefore at least possible that some member of the family of cognates of ‘Carib’ survived at this level. What is also interesting is the increasing revelation of the ‘cosmopolitan’ nature of the Arima Mission indigene of the early 1800s, comprising groups from across northern Trinidad, Venezuela, and St. Vincent.

In the final analysis, we must be attentive to the seriousness with which names were treated in the colonial context. Exemplifying the degree to which this is so, Brereton quotes a member of the local élite in the 1800s: “there is much in a name, especially in a mixed community like ours, where the people are super-sensitive to social standing” (1979:211).

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7 In fact, Arie Boomert finds that “throughout the eighteenth and 19th centuries Amerindian groups from the mainland and Lesser Antilles went to live in Trinidad, with our without consent of the government”, and, in 1786, “Governor Chacón granted some land to a group of Kalinago (Island Carib) from St. Vincent. They settled in the Salibia area of northeast Trinidad. Most of them returned home in 1795 but other island Caribs came to Trinidad after a volcano eruption had
Sir Ralph Woodford and the ‘First Resurgence’ of the Arima Amerindian Community, 1813-1828

The Mission of Arima, from its inception until the early 1800s, was relatively inconsequential to the overall developments occurring in Trinidad, i.e., the transition to British rule, the development of the sugar economy, and the importation of slaves. Indeed, as one historian writes: “as early as the 1800s it was easy to see that the British paid no attention to the missions, for from the time they had taken over, all the missions began to disintegrate” (Anthony 1988:300). This was largely true, until the arrival of Sir Ralph Woodford in Trinidad on 14 June 1813 as the new Governor of the colony. As an acquaintance of the Governor and writer of the time noted, Woodford, “regarded himself not as representative of a constitutional British sovereign, but as a Spanish viceroy, armed with the most absolute authority” (Joseph 1970 [1838]:248). As late as 1838, the Spanish colonial code known as the Laws of the Indies, compiled in 1680, remained in force in Trinidad to some extent (Joseph 1970 [1838]:111). One of the titles inherited by the British Governors of Trinidad from their Spanish predecessors was that of ‘Royal Vice-Patron of the Holy Roman Catholic Church’ (Fraser 1971 [1896]:10). This title had been held by Spanish colonial governors as representatives of the Spanish Crown, with the Spanish monarch having been conferred the title of Royal Patron of the Church by

destroyed their settlements in St. Vincent in the early 19th century. They were granted land near the Arima mission” (Boomert 1982:37-38).
Pope Julius II (Bull, 28th July 1508) (Fraser 1971 [1896]:10). In line with this, one historian explained that “the office of Vice-Patron was not only one of dignity; it possessed many well defined powers and duties which Sir Ralph Woodford exercised with more strictness than any of his predecessors, whether Spanish or English” (Fraser 1971 [1896]:10-11). One of these duties, of course, was to uphold the Roman Catholic Church, Spanish laws, and the Indian missions. Interestingly, a monument in the Roman Catholic Cathedral of Port of Spain commemorates Sir Ralph Woodford as “Founder of the Church”, the foundation of the Cathedral having been laid “with great ceremony” under Woodford on 24 March 1816 (Collens 1886:79-80).

As ‘Royal Vice-Patron of the Holy Roman Catholic Church’, Sir Ralph Woodford also took a special interest in the Mission of Arima, and it was he who largely reconstituted it for its final two decades of life in Trinidad. In 1818, “desirous of re-establishing the Mission of Arima in the rights and privileges which the Laws accord to the Indian”, Woodford appointed Captain William Wright to take charge of the Mission (Woodford quoted in Harricharan 1983:45).

The following is a statement issued by Sir Ralph Woodford in this regard:

The Governor and Captain General being desirous of re-establishing the Mission of Arima in the rights and privileges which the Laws accord to the Indians, and of contributing by all the means in his power to its improvement and prosperity, has decided to name as its Corregidor an Officer of His Majesty’s Forces who possesses all the qualities needed for such an important post…. In Don William Wright the Indians will find all aid and protection, their person and property will be under his immediate care; he will encourage their industries and render their trades profitable to themselves, so that their children following the example of their activity, may be useful and virtuous, and the lands which the Law allows them may be constantly kept in cultivation by the able-bodied amongst them…. The Governor hopes that the Indians on their part will co-operate in his good intentions on their behalf by obeying all that the Laws enjoin upon them, by being sober and industrious, and carrying out their respective duties as submissive fathers, wives and children, and especially by seeing

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8 To this day, the street running along the eastern side of Lord Harris Square (named after a subsequent governor who also showed a paternal interest in the remaining Arima Amerindians), is named after Woodford, and runs past the door of the Church.
that the latter attend regularly to hear and to learn the Christian Doctrine so strictly enjoined by the Law, on the days and hours fixed by their venerable Parish Priest....The above notice is to be communicated to them and put up on the Casa Real of Arima—Ralph Woodford, Government House, St. Ann’s, Trinidad, 27 June 1818. [quoted in Fraser 1971 (1896):102, emphasis added]

As mentioned previously, the original Mission had set aside 1,000 acres for the use of the Amerindians. According to a late corregidor of Arima, Martin Sorzano, testifying on Friday 16 July 1841 in front of the Burnley Commission, more was granted to the Amerindians: “559. Do they [the Indians] not hold a tract of land set apart for their own use?—[Sorzano:] Yes, a tract of about 1,000 acres, granted to them by the King of Spain, to which Sir Ralph Woodford added afterwards 320 acres, in consequence of their complaining of a want of provision grounds” (Burnley 1842:109). Hence, a total of 1,320 acres were granted to the Amerindians.

Woodford also took charge of segregating the Amerindians as much as possible, to safeguard their own ‘racial integrity’, in a manner that presaged later British colonial preservation attempts in Dominica. In a letter to Captain William Wright, Woodford instructed the latter to execute the following commands, as quoted in Fraser (1971 [1896]:102-104): (1) Upon taking charge of the “Village of Arima”, Capt. Wright was to obtain a general return of the Indians from his predecessor. (2) Woodford instructed Wright to “proceed to make a return of them by families, shewing [sic] their lineage or descent as well as their trades, and if intermixed with other than Indian blood”. (3) Wright was to examine all dwellings of the Indians, noting their state, and make plans for their maintenance (in the case of widows, the elderly and the infirm) by demanding a “general contribution of labour”, or to compel ‘the idle’ to fix their own homes. (4) Woodford instructed Wright “to inquire into the tenures of the houses built by others than Indians of which many have been introduced into the Mission without my knowledge or concurrence”, to examine titles in order to learn if lands were purchased from Indians, and then to take action given, “the laws expressly forbidding and annulling any such sales”. (5) Similarly, Wright was to “call upon all persons not
being Indians, residing in Arima, to show my [Woodford’s] permission for the same, and in default of their possessing it”, he was at liberty, “to order them to quit the Mission within a reasonable time to be fixed according to the nature of their establishment; for those having none a very short notice will suffice”. (6) Similarly, Woodford requested that Wright “cause all strangers to be apprehended that enter the village not being furnished with my permission to reside in this Island”, and to prohibit “any person henceforward to reside in Arima that has not my express authority for that purpose”. On the other hand, Woodford added, it may be “desirable to attract respectable inhabitants and useful artizans [sic]; the former may be encouraged and the latter permitted to exercise their trades upon condition of teaching the same to one or more young Indians under the usual stipulations of apprenticeship”. (7) Wright was to formally delimit the boundaries of the village, and command the Indians to plant a lime fence along its boundaries. (8) Wright was required to “inspect with the greatest attention and care the Conucos or provision grounds of the Indians situated within the limits of the Mission, taking a note of the extent and condition of each, the nature and degree of the cultivation, notifying all persons encroaching therein to justify themselves before you in the first instance”. (9) Wright was commanded to “not allow any of the Indians to work abroad until you shall receive further orders for your guidance, and you will order back to the Mission those who now may be employed abroad”. (10) The Indians were to be ordered to maintain the public infrastructure of the Village, and their presence at Mass on Sundays and the ‘great holidays’ was to be enforced. Thus Woodford set about enforcing and consolidating the Mission of Arima, possibly to a greater extent than had been done before.

Woodford never failed to support the Cabildo, or municipal council of Arima in any move aimed at “guaranteeing Arima as Amerindian territory” (Anthony 1988:3). Indeed, Woodford took a leading role in preserving Indian rights over the territorial integrity of the Mission. Three individuals with commercial agricultural interests complained to Governor Woodford about the steep rents they were asked to pay for the use of lands in Arima. In reply, Governor Woodford wrote:
To the Marquis del Toro, Don Francisco Toro, and St. Hilaire Bégorrat, Esq.:—Gentlemen, I have received and considered your representation on the 12th ult. and in reply have to observe that the ground rent which the Indian Cabildo of the Mission of Arima have (sic) imposed on the lots occupied in the village by others than Indians received my consent and approbation....As regards the right of the Indians to impose this charge, the existing documents prove that the land of Arima was given to them (the Indians) as their property in community, with an exclusive and untransferable right to the employment thereof to the best advantage for their general benefit, and as I am not aware of their having by any act forfeited their right to claim rent for any land belonging to them in common, I am advised that it was competent to them to impose a ground rent on lots belonging to them in Arima.... As regards the transfer of lots, it is within my knowledge that Don Manuel Sorzano who established the Mission, never permitted any transfer but of the houses, and not of the lots themselves, and Mr. Goin and Mr. Francisco Febles have declared the same; they could not indeed legally authorise the transfer of any portion of any portion of the Mission lands or of the property of that establishment. As to the occupation of these lots since 1783, and the invitations given by the Spanish Government to strangers to resort to Arima, I have to observe that in 1797 only two white persons and nine coloured men (married to Indian women) were then living in the village, and notwithstanding every search I remain quite ignorant of any regulation of Governor Chacon or of His Catholic Majesty that might have altered the Law regarding the settlement of strangers in an Indian Mission—I have, &c., &c., Ralph Woodford, Government House, 26th October, 1819. [quoted in Fraser 1971 (1896):101]

Both Governor Woodford and Capt. Wright assumed a patronal role with the Amerindians of the Mission of Arima. In the case of the latter, very little is written except that I found evidence in the Baptismal Registers of the Church of Santa Rosa that Wright became a formal godparent to at least one Amerindian child. Wright also married a local ‘white’ Spanish woman, Serafina de Oroso, which resulted in a child born on 12 November 1825. On Woodford’s role much more has been written. For one, Woodford assumed the right to appoint or dismiss the Amerindian cacique (or Chief) at the head of the Cabildo (see letter of
18/01/1819 by Woodford in Fraser 1971 [1896]:100). In addition, Woodford stipulated guidelines for the corporal punishment of ‘disobedient’ Amerindians, generally stressing that the prelates of the Mission should avoid this, yet advising the following as a form of compromise: “it appears to me that although it is a troublesome business to manage the Indians, their natural indolence and their submissive nature requires that the rule should be severe in appearance but mild in reality” (quoted in Fraser 1971 [1896]:100).

Woodford also controlled Arima’s Amerindians as a type of public works labour crew to carry out some special projects of his own. As Fraser (1971 [1896]:97) explained, “the Indians formed a body of free workmen whose services were at the disposal of the executive”. One of Woodford’s key projects was the settling of ex-soldiers of the disbanded Third West India Regiment in 1822 along the way from Arima to the east coast, with Amerindians of the Mission of Arima opening up a road in that direction (Anthony 1988:140). Woodford did much the same in southern Trinidad with the Amerindians of the Mission of Savana Grande. As one historian tells us:

He [Woodford] saw it [the Mission of Savana Grande] not only as a colourful picture of a priest or two trying to convert Amerindians on a settlement, but as a stepping stone to conquering the wild and forested areas of south and central Trinidad. He had hankered after this, and in fact it was towards this end that he introduced several companies of Black American soldiers here in 1815 and 1816. Woodford placed them just to the east of the Mission of Savana Grande, and had the Amerindians of the settlement hew down some of the forest in preparation for the ex-soldiers. [Anthony 1988:229]

These ex-soldiers had fought for the British during the war of 1812. They formed the Fifth Company Village and, at first, depended on Mission Indians for food (Anthony 1988:92).^10

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^9^ It is unclear, to me, for how long Wright actually served as the corregidor given that, while still under the Woodford administration, one de Vertueil signs as the corregidor de Arima at the start of a new year of entries in the Baptismal Register for 1827 and 1828.

^10^ It was these ex-soldiers who would come to be known as the “Mericans” and their towns known as the “company villages” as they were named after the army companies to which the soldiers belonged.
Woodford's indulgence in ceremoniosity, maintaining a keen interest in the annual Santa Rosa festivities of the Arima Mission, was perhaps his most prominent role as a patron. In general, Woodford went to lengths to encourage elaborate ceremonies of state and public processions. While it is difficult to determine to what extent he may have influenced the development of the Santa Rosa Festival's ceremonial forms, it is largely acknowledged that the Festival had begun in very modest ways, with the simple saying of novena prayers and a mass, and to have later developed into a public feast celebrated with more pomp and splendour, with longer and longer processions and the decoration of the Church in a gay fashion (see Réout 1976:46; Harricharan 1983; Garcia 1991:3-4). What we also know is that Woodford had a "fondness for show and ceremonial. That he was so is undeniable; but it was not from personal vanity, but because he considered a certain amount of display to be necessary to his position" (Fraser 1971 [1896]:53). As Fraser adds, "Sir Ralph Woodford was not only a man of rank and influence, but he lived in days when it was expected that the Governor of a Colony should maintain the dignity of his position and be really what his title implied" (1971 [1896]:52-53). Fraser also offers us a description, which, insofar as it is in any way an accurate representation, can provide some telling clues as to the development of some of the key ceremonial procedures of the Santa Rosa Festival in terms of the public processions and the prominent role of officials of the Arima Borough Council and the occasional visiting Prime Minister or President:

On grand occasions, such as New Year's Day, and the Festival of Corpus Christi, he attended the celebration of High Mass in State, accompanied by a brilliant staff, by the Members of the Council, and of the Illustrious Cabildo, and the effect produced on these occasions is yet spoken of by the few survivors who remember those days....the streets leading from [Government House] to the Catholic Church...were lined with troops, both Regular and Militia. A Guard of Honour was drawn up in front of Government House to receive the Governor, who arrived from his residence in a carriage drawn by four horses, preceded by out-riders and accompanied by mounted aides-de-camp. Assembled in the Council Room, were the Members of Council, the Board of Cabildo, and the principal Public Officers, all in uniform, robes of office, or Court dress. A procession was then formed which was closed by the Illustrious Cabildo headed by the Governor with his wand of office as
perpetual Corregidor. In this order the procession went through the streets, the troops presenting arms as the Governor passed. At the door of the Church the Governor was received by the clergy and conducted to a Chair of State prepared for him. At the Elevation of the Host the troops presented arms and a salute of twenty-one guns was fired from the Sea Fort Battery, and at the conclusion of the ceremony the procession returned to Government House in the same order. [Fraser 1971 [1896]:11]¹¹

Of more particular interest to us is that fact that Woodford also regularly patronised the Santa Rosa Festival. As Anthony (1988:4) found: “Woodford never failed to journey to Arima for the feast of Santa Rosa, celebrated on August 31. Woodford, referred to as ‘Gouverneur Chapeau Paille’, because he always wore a straw hat, cut a merry figure on those occasions, enjoying himself with the Amerindians during this festival of dancing, sport, fruit and flowers”. Of especial interest is the following passage, by De Verteuil, quoted in full here given that at the time of Woodford’s attendance at the Santa Rosa Festival, De Verteuil was a boy, who grew up in the Arima area, and was an eye-witness to the festival according to Rétout (1976:46). De Verteuil thus describes the festival:

The village of Arima was formerly, and for a long time, celebrated for its festival of Santa Rosa, the patron saint of the mission. On that day the Indians elected their king and queen—in general, a young man and young girl—and all appeared in their best apparel and most gaudy ornaments. The interior of the Church was hung with the produce of their industry—bunches of plantains, cassava cakes, and the fruits of the season; game of various descriptions, coinços, lapos, parrots, &c., and draperied with the graceful leaves of the palm tree. After mass, they performed ceremonial dances in the church, and then proceeded to the Casa Real, or royal house, to pay their compliments to the corregidor, who gave the signal for dancing and various sports—among others, that of archery, in which the men exercised themselves until a prize was adjudged to the best marksman. People from all parts of the country would resort to Arima for the purpose of witnessing the festivities, which were invariably attended by the governor and staff. Sir Ralph Woodford, in particular, always took the greatest interest in the mission, and every year would distribute prizes to the children of both sexes, who deserved them by their good behaviour, and their improvement at school. [De Verteuil 1858:301]

¹¹ Similar descriptions are also repeated in a display at the National Museum of Trinidad and Tobago, in Port of Spain.
Apart from the ethnographic description, what is also significant about this passage—and is one reason that I searched for it—is the fact that it has been routinely recycled in a variety of local publications from the late 1800s to the late 1990s, in sources such as Fraser (1971[1896]), Rétout (1976), Anthony (1988), and Williams (1988). This renders the account as one with a more or less continuous presence during various stages of renewed historical interest and reinterpretation, when such materials are recited, reworked, and reproduced for contemporary audiences. Woodford himself has experienced a minimal ‘resurgence’ of late, in the form of new pages on the Internet that continue to speak of him in fairly affective terms as Gouverneur Chapeau Paille (see Paria 2000; CaribInfo.com 2000). One point that can be entertained is that these last few facts suggest that this is not merely ‘ancient history’, but also history that is accessible and ‘usable’ depending upon the interests and situations concerned.

Perhaps the gloomiest reflection of De Verteuil’s is his interpretation of the meaning of the Santa Rosa Festival. As he put it: “Santa Rosa’s day was really a gay anniversary, at which the poor Indians, the simple children of Jere, were, for the first time, the principal actors, and during which they forgot both the loss of their heritage, and their own individual serfdom” (De Verteuil 1858:301). One might be able to make the opposite case for the Santa Rosa Festival of today.

Governor Woodford’s presence created a discontinuity of sorts between what was in place prior to his arrival, and what came after, hence leading me to speak of his actions with the Arima Mission as amounting to a ‘resurgence’ of the Mission. Prior to Woodford’s arrival in 1813, the Arima Mission seemed to be, at best, of localised interest to certain members of the declining and diminishing Spanish oligarchy, and received little or no attention from the first British governors of Trinidad. The instructions and plans outlined by Woodford for ‘reconstituting’ the Mission are also, indirectly, an indication of the extent to which the Mission was in disrepair and, indeed, barely possessing any form of structural or communal integrity that would distinguish it as an Amerindian Mission. Following Woodford’s departure in 1828, the Arima Mission entered a
precipitous decline into almost total disregard and obscurity, and, indeed, eventual dissolution.

The Demise of the Mission of Arima and the Dispossession of the Amerindians

Speaking in 1841, Martin Sorzano, the former Corregidor of the Mission of Arima had these replies to questions posed by the Burnley Commission:

563. Is the mission, then, broken up? —[Sorzano:] Virtually it is so. No regulations are now enforced, and those who remain there follow orders, because they have the benefit of the crops of cocoa belonging to the mission....564. As they appear to have emancipated themselves from the regulations of the mission, do you think they have any legal claim to either the cocoa or the land at present?—[Sorzano:] I should think not; but it is a legal question, which I am not competent to answer. [quoted in Burnley 1842:109, 110]12

Another Arimian wrote: “in the year 1830 there still existed 689 survivors of that race; the ration of mortality among them being, in the same year, 3.49, and that of births 3.75 per cent. At present there cannot be above 200 or 300 Indians in the colony, so that the aborigines may be said to be almost extinct” (De Verteuil 1858:172). Though it may be a ‘conspiratorial’ thesis, one might argue that these assertions were designed to minimise the presence of Amerindians, and to diminish their ties to the Mission, in order to produce justifications for the seizure of their lands, the latter actually having occurred.

The decline of the Arima Mission occurred in a period that merits the designation of being post-Woodford, given that most of his concerns and interests in the Mission were largely swept aside by his successors. As one historian put it, “on the departure of Woodford from the scene the missions were again neglected—in fact, discontinued and forgotten” (Anthony 1988:229). After Woodford died en route back to England in 1828, “Arima was not preserved as a mission”, instead, “the Governors who came immediately after Woodford–Lewis Grant in 1829 and George Fitzgerald Hill in 1833–did not seem to care about Spanish-founded

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12 Sorzano’s testimony was given on Friday, 16 July 1841, at Port of Spain.
missions, which in fact were missions for converting the Amerindians to the Catholic faith, a faith which the British did not profess”, and, as Anthony observes, “in any case these were the years just before the end of slavery, and the Governors mentioned were much too busy making preparations for that crucial period” (Anthony 1988:4; see also Ahee 1992:26). The Spanish laws that Woodford was careful to uphold, were only retained until the period between 1832 and 1840, the latter being when the Mission was effectively terminated (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:156). Arima was opened up to other parts of the colony and became structurally more integrated into the colony’s communication and commercial networks. In 1828, the “Indian Track” between Arima and the L’Ebranche Road was opened as a public road (Williams 1988:10). In 1834, a Stipendiary Magistrate was appointed, and thus, “the Indians were brought under the common law, and the corregidorship was abolished” (De Verteuil 1858:300; Williams 1988:10).

Encroachments on the land base of the ex-Mission Amerindians of Arima occurred in a variety of ways. First, the law under the British began to posit pre-British Trinidad as a virtual terra nullius. Even Woodford had been advised by Mr. Huskisson, Secretary of State for the Colonies, in a despatch: “Immemorial possession in the strict and absolute sense of the term seems indeed to be acknowledged as a valid title. But it might perhaps be difficult to rest any title upon that ground with reference to Lands situate in a Colony which within a period comparatively recent was an unoccupied wilderness” (quoted in Fraser 1971 [1896]:222-223, emphasis added). The ‘deserted island’ thesis thus in fact seems to be articulated for the first time in order to justify the dismissal of aboriginal and pre-British land tenure.

Secondly, the administration of Governor Lord Harris (1846-1854) reorganised and defined geographic boundaries in Trinidad, thus creating Ward boundaries in 1849, and embarking on the collection of Ward rates for public works development; however, those who could not pay the new Ward rates, or did not understand the law, had their lands confiscated and sold (Anthony 1988:323). Moreover, formal title to lands had to be demonstrated, or land deeds registered, which worked against Arima’s Amerindians who either possessed no such written
deeds, were not informed as to the new policies, and in many cases could not read 
(Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:6). Therefore, in 1849, after the passing of a new 
Territorial Ordinance, “the lots in the village were put up for sale at an upset 
price—a measure the legality of which is highly questionable, as far as the Indians 
were concerned, since the lands lost in the mission had been granted to them as a 
compensation for property of which they had been deprived” (De Verteuil 
1858:300). Thus the Amerindians became the only group in Trinidad whose 
freedom from bondage was rewarded with the expropriation of their lands.

The whole process conducted by Governor Lord Harris was quite ironic 
given that he, next to Woodford, was the alleged favourite of the Amerindians of 
Arima. Father Louis Daudier learned from the few remaining elderly Amerindians 
of Arima of how Lord Harris Square (Figure 4.2) came to acquire that name:

It carries the name of Lord Harris only because this Governor, 
having the greatest interest in the Indians living at Arima and 
having deigned to put himself into good and amicable relations 
with Père Sanchez, often came to Arima, and gave on Santa Rosa’s 
Feast day innocent amusements to the Indians, on this square; and 
he had trees planted to beautify it but not to take possession of it, 
nor to change the order of things. So, in gratitude the Indians called 
the square Lord Harris and the name became official.14

By this time too, Father Sanchez is said by Father Daudier to have become senile. 
Perhaps it is also ironic that the only surviving Amerindian place name within 
Arima itself, is named after a non-Amerindian.

Thirdly, the land base of Arima’s ex-Mission Amerindians became of 
interest to squatters, and Amerindians themselves drifted away from Arima in 
search of plots on which to squat, moving thus to districts to the east and south of 
Arima prior to 1870 (Stephens 1985:27; Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:5). “As the

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13 An anonymous cocoa planter from Arima wrote on Harris’ plans for territorial regulation and 
taxation: “Should this law of indirect confiscation be passed, these planters will see their lands 
taken from them every year—those lands which many families have held long before the Conquest 
[the British takeover of 1797], and which were respected even by Sir Ralph Woodford as being in 
the Libro Becero. Little did the poor cocoa and coffee planters, and the small proprietors of every 
description, expect that, under a show of even-handed justice, the enormous [tax] burden would be 
laid on those least able to bear it….The Sturdy Beggars of Arima will employ every legal means to 
avert the destructive blow”. The Port of Spain Gazette, “Letter from ‘A Cocoa Planter’ in Arima”. 
Friday, 19 March 1847.
14 Letter of Father Louis Daudier, parish priest of Arima, to M. Michel, 16th April 1873.
population of Arima grew’, notes one historian, “the Caribs retreated into Calvary Hill and other outlying districts”, and, “as the town became more populated they moved to places where abundant land for planting, rivers for fishing and forests for hunting were available” (Garcia 1991:8). Following the emancipation of slaves in 1838, there was increased squatting on Crown Lands, becoming a “huge problem” according to one author (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:5), and was a development that would itself facilitate the development of the cocoa industry with most squatters found to be engaged in cocoa cultivation (Stephens 1985:14). In the 1850s new cocoa fields were being opened in Tacarigua, Chaguanas, and Arima (Stephens 1985:14-15).

The combined result of these various laws and developments from 1828 to 1849, affecting the Arima Amerindians’ land tenure, as well as the laws that worked to abrogate the Mission, was the dislocation of most Amerindian families from Arima and the depression of the few that remained. These, at any rate, form the core of descriptions of the post-Mission Amerindians.

Figure 4.6:
Painting of the Mission of Arima, by Jean-Michel Cazabon (1813-1888)

Cazabon’s painting, circa 1850, and seen from the vantage point of Calvary Hill to the north of the village, shows the Hill to be pasture grounds. In addition, one can see the Church of Santa Rosa de Arima, at the left of the painting, situated on the eastern side of Lord Harris Square, which, one can gather, appears to be thickly wooded. There are also what appear to be the rooftops of small homes lining the square on its south side, towards the top of this picture. What is also of interest, is that Cazabon should find the former Indian Mission an object worthy of being painted and displayed.
Writing in the 1850s, De Verteuil relates his meeting with some remaining Arima Amerindians. He begins by telling us that, “few of them are now alive”, and then proceeds to describe an elderly couple he met:

the patriarch (about one hundred years old), and his wife, are good specimens of the race or tribe. The old man is short and square-built, with high cheek bones, small eyes, and straight, white hair; his wife presents a similar appearance, and both are borne down by the weight of years. Pascual is always gay, and seems satisfied with his lot; he is fond of spirits, and becomes drunk whenever an opportunity is afforded; he is otherwise most honest and peaceable. The old man has sold his conuco, and now depends upon the padre or parish priest for his maintenance. [De Verteuil 1858:300-301]

De Verteuil also informs us that there were two schools, one for boys and another for girls, that, “were once maintained for Indian children, but, owing to the paucity of attendance, are no longer so” (1858:301). Speaking to the question of their economic dispossession, Father Daudier notes: “As to the indigenous population, they are ruined without means by the last fiscal measures of the Government, and there is nothing to hope for in any way”.15 The general picture is that of drastic decline.

Donald Wood wrote in his (1968) history of Trinidad of how the missions had been in a state of decline since the British takeover. Wood notes that while a Smallpox epidemic killed some of the Amerindians, others “had been debauched by the rum that became available to them as the missions had become more and more secularised”, indeed, “the expenses of the Arima mission were defrayed from the profits of a liquor store at the settlement” (Wood 1968:43), and I too routinely noted announcements in the local press posted by the corregidor, Martin Sorzano, for the sale of liquor licenses for the Mission of Arima.16 Wood also believes that a number of Amerindian families would have intermarried especially with the peons of Venezuela (1968:43-44). Moreover, as Wood indicates, “by 1846 the best of their lands at Arima, where they held 1,000 acres from the King of Spain and 320 acres from Sir Ralph Woodford, were deserted and only nine families remained” (1968:44). A Yellow Fever epidemic had swept Trinidad in

15 Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter, 04 October 1871.
1817, and in 1854 a cholera epidemic struck the Amerindians of the North Coast and is said to have “decimated the Amerindian population living in the hills around the old Arima mission” (Joseph 1970[1838]:253; Goldwasser 1994/96:15; Brereton 1979:130). In the 1870s a Smallpox outbreak also afflicted parts of Trinidad, including Arima. Perhaps one of the starkest overviews of this decline is provided by the Trinidadian historian Bridget Brereton:

One other racial group was swiftly passing away: the Amerindians, the aboriginal inhabitants of Trinidad. By 1870 only a few pure-blooded Amerindians survived. Their numbers declined very fast as Trinidad entered the mainstream of plantation development after the 1780s. By 1885 there were only perhaps a dozen half-caste Amerindian families on the north coast. In Arima the story was the same. In 1840 there were only about three hundred Indians of pure descent in the old mission, mostly aged. Occasionally surviving members of a group of Chayma Indians used to come down from the heights beyond Arima to the Farfan estate, to barter wild meats for small household goods. But after 1854 they were seen no more: cholera had extinguished the Chaymas. Indeed, by 1850 there were said to be no more than four hundred Indians of pure descent in the whole island; by 1875 only a handful survived, and of the people of mixed Amerindian-Spanish-African descent, very few knew anything of Indian languages or ways. They all spoke Spanish. The ‘half-caste’ Amerindians, living mostly in the valleys of the Northern Range behind Arima, were simple peasants and hunters, living in ajoupas, often preserving Amerindian arts of basket-weaving. [1979:130-131]

Here I must also note Brereton’s persistent, and apparently uncritical, proclivity for using folk concepts of ‘race’, ‘blood’ and ‘purity’—concepts whose usage ought to be explained rather than being used as analytical terms. Nevertheless, this is yet another valuable indication of the kind of discursive haze through which current SRCC leaders are forced to navigate.

Similar transformations in the nature of the Santa Rosa Festival were also recorded. De Verteuil himself observed that the “30th of August is a holiday still, but bears quite a different character”, and then he explains how different: “people still crowd to the village from different parts of the island, but there are no more Indians, neither are their oblations to be seen adorning the church; their sports and their dances have passed away with the actors therein, and, in their stead,

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16 See for example: Trinidad Standard & West Indian Journal, Friday, 14 December 1838.
quadrilles, waltzes, races, and blind-hookey are the present amusements of the village” (1858:301). Wood found that, as Governors of Trinidad customarily attended the Santa Rosa Festival, in 1857, “only seven Indians could be found to present him with a flag. After this time the Amerindians appear only fleetingly....The festival of Santa Rosa de Lima became an excuse for a holiday rather than a commemoration of the earliest Trinidadians and the mission to the Americas” (1968:44). In 1868, when Fr. François Esteva, then parish priest of Arima, invited the Monsignor to “the feast of Santa Rosa”, he wrote: “On one hand, I regret to make you disturb yourself for so few people”, people that he calls “Spanish”, and he added: “we will have a fête, all Dominican, very simple and very frugal”, suggesting that the festival had become smaller, simpler, and particular to the Dominican Order. Travelling through Arima in the 1880s, Collens (1886:115), noted in his guidebook, with respect to post-Mission Arima: “‘times are altered,’ the Indians at least are gone, and the once famous fête is now chiefly commemorated at any rate by the bulk of the people, by the annual races, coupled with not a little extra gambling and drinking”. Indeed a variety of sources have noted the secularisation of the Santa Rosa Festival by the late 1800s, becoming more noted for its famous horse races (the annual races at the Santa Rosa track are still popular with élites to this day), and for the new fashions for ladies to display when attending the events.

By the 1880s and 1890s, as suggested by the last statement, a near total transformation of Arima since the end of its Mission days was commented on by local observers, historians of the time, and travel writers. Fraser (1971 [1896]:104), said of the Amerindian presence: “now little more than a few names and half-forgotten traditions mark their former sites”. Wood goes as far as to compare the Arima Amerindians to the aboriginals of Tasmania in the same period, and, as I argue against in this entire project, he also commits the error of stating that they were replaced by “peoples with little interest in the preservation or their culture” (1968:44). In ending this section, I wish to quote at length one of the few detailed personal accounts of a visit with Arima Amerindians at the end of the

17 Letter by Father François Esteva, 18 August, 1868.
1800s, from a Belgian priest, Father Marie-Bertrand Cothonay, who himself would become active in ‘resurrecting’ Trinidad's mission history. In his journal, published in France in 1893, Cothonay writes the following on 30 November 1888:

I need to say a word on the ancient inhabitants of Trinidad. Bit by bit they were forced to disappear, for the most part dying of misery or moving to the coasts of South America. A certain number resided in the interior of the island, and mixed with the Spanish, forming a type which is very recognisable....It is in the parish of Arima where one finds them, most of all. Messieur le curé [Father Louis Daudier, whose letters I have cited] believes to have from 70 to 80 of pure Indian blood and around two hundred with mixed blood. I went to Arima, a few weeks ago, and he showed me a whole family that I examined and interrogated at my ease. These Indians are big and well built, but the makeup of their faces, the eyes above all, manifestly demonstrate that they are at least cousins, if not brothers, of the Chinese or the Japanese....The Indians of Arima are all Catholics and speak nothing other than Spanish....They have some franchises and rights which the government concedes to them; but, since ten years ago, they sold their lands, because, it seems, they were not cultivating them anymore. Today they live isolated in the forests and will one day soon be extinguished. M. le curé of Arima wanted to take up their cause with the government, but he was not able to succeed with these plans....Up to our time, these poor people have conserved a simulacrum of a king. The last, called Lopez, died this year....As he had no one to inherit from him, all the Indians gathered together and chose as king the relative nearest to the deceased. I have no details about him, but I know that he is a poor Indian who lives in a hut and has nothing royal to him except the title....What a strange country is ours! Not so?. [Cothonay 1893:98-99]

Thus Cothonay presents us with an indication of the structure of the surviving Amerindians of Arima, their King, their relative dispossession from Arima, and their ‘fusion’ with the ‘Spanish’. What this passage also manifests is the fixation on ‘racial types’, mixture, purity, and blood quanta. This is an indication of the way that the ascription and definition of indigenous identities were structured in 19th century Trinidad. On the other hand, while eroding the ‘racial’ basis for certain individuals to be defined as Amerindian, such discourses nevertheless permitted and enabled certain practices to continue to be defined and spotlighted
as ‘Amerindian traditions’, regardless of the ‘racial identity’ of those performing the traditions. This is critical, for as we shall see in chapter 5, it permits ‘the nation’ to claim a ‘heritage of Amerindian traditional practices’ regardless of whether or not an actual Amerindian demographic presence is recognised or asserted. Moreover, this implicit distinction between ‘racial purity’ and ‘heritage’ also allows the current SRCC to claim Amerindian indigeneity via ‘traditions’, more than via ‘race’.

The ‘Second Resurgence’ of the Amerindians of Arima, late 1800s-1920

As I mentioned at the start of this chapter, I want to establish how Amerindians became enshrined in the quest for a local sense of identity at the Arima level, that is, the localisation of wider processes of valuing and representing the figure of the Amerindian, and the ensconcing of Amerindian images and symbols in the post-Mission period. This section is motivated by one key question: If, as above, we accept that a major demographic dislocation and decline of the Arima Amerindian population had occurred by the 1860s, having been dispossessed of their mission lands and faced with a cocoa economy in crisis, then how and why is it that by the 1920s-1930s we see the reappearance of ‘Carib’, the Amerindians of Arima, and a Santa Rosa Festival closely associated with an Amerindian group and its history? I see the answer as lying in a ‘second resurgence’ having occurred from the late 1860s to the 1920s. What lies within that period is Trinidad’s second cocoa boom of the 1870s to the 1920s, which can easily be classified as Trinidad’s longest economic boom to date. In that period, Arima flourished. I see this context and its features as central in trying to answer my question. Here I will now consider that context in greater detail.

The Cocoa Boom, 1870s-1920s

One of the reasons the colonial authorities invited French sugar planters to settle Trinidad was due to the fact that, throughout the 1700s, Trinidad suffered
repeated failures of its cocoa crops. In 1787, Trinidad’s sugar exports were worth 65,360 pesos, while cocoa exports were worth only 8,400 pesos; by 1795 805 fanegas were under sugar cultivation, and only 142 were under cocoa (Noel 1972:114). The Arima Mission was thus of marginal value to colonial authorities and the Trinidad economy, and by the 1830s world prices for cocoa—the mainstay of the Mission’s economic production—began to plummet, indeed, by almost 90% (Stephens 1985:14). Spain, at the time, was Trinidad’s largest market for cocoa, and along with the fall in Spanish demand, Spain imposed high duties on cocoa imports from non-Spanish colonies, with even higher duties charged if the cocoa was transported in non-Spanish ships. In addition, crop failures were reported for three consecutive years from 1836 through 1838. As we saw above, between 1846 and 1850, Governor Lord Harris authorised the selling of 96 plots of land in Arima, and some Amerindian families had secured formal title to only nine of these, followed even there by a later sell-off. Perhaps as many as 200 Amerindian families found themselves in a depressed economic environment, without land, and without work. By 1849 the Mission came to a complete end. And, as Moodie-Kublalsingh reported above, there was a migration of squatters to districts to the east and south of Arima, presumably including many of these displaced Arimian families. Labourers often deserted for the higher wages available on sugar estates, thus setting the stage for the eventual labour shortage that areas such as Arima would face during the subsequent cocoa boom. An influx in immigrant labourers showed a pronounced presence in the Baptismal Registers of Arima, as I detected without difficulty.

However, a combination of high prices, high yields, and low wages set the stage for the cocoa boom of the 1870s-1920s. Moreover, demand for cocoa in Europe and North America expanded tremendously, and this was “the most important single reason for the expansion of cocoa in Trinidad” (Brereton

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18 See also Trinidad Standard & West Indian Journal, Friday, 13 July 1838: “As to any demand existing or likely to be created on the part of our Cocoa and Coffee planters, there is little to be feared on that score. The prices of these two articles of Produce, give no encouragement to extend the cultivations”.

19 Notes from displays at the National Museum of Trinidad and Tobago.

20 See Trinidad Standard & West Indian Journal, Tuesday, 13 November, 1838.
In 1870, 8.5 million pounds of cocoa were exported comprising 14.33% of export value; by 1920, after a steady increase, cocoa reached 62.7 million pounds exported, or 43.39% of total export value (Stephens 1985:17; see also Collens 1886:225; Brereton 1979:19-20; Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:1). In the 1870s, 19,000 acres of land was under cocoa cultivation, increasing to 200,000 acres in 1920 (Stephens 1985:17). Land in the traditional cocoa areas was in immediate demand (Stephens 1985:18). Indeed, in the 1860s, 80% of the 16,020 acres under cocoa cultivation were in the north (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:7). Moreover, from 1899 to 1920, the number of cocoa estates grew from 450 to 966 (Stephens 1985:64-64). Trinidad became the fourth largest producer of cacao in the world, and, in 1898, for the first time in the history of British Trinidad, cocoa exports exceeded those of the sugar industry in value (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:1).

The cocoa boom not only gave the traditional cocoa centres such as Arima a new lease on life (Brereton 1991a), but also spawned the creation of new towns, added to a vast influx of imported labourers. The 19th century, as argued by most historians of Trinidad such as Wood (1968), was the ‘foundational century’ for a modern Trinidad insofar as these narratives posit that what Trinidad is today owes a great deal to that post-Spanish century, especially evidenced by the importation of vast numbers of labourers from different parts of the globe. Towns such as Rio Claro were new creations, as Montique explains: “Rio Claro village as a distinct geographical entity...is a product of the twentieth century, according to oral, cartographical and documentary evidence” (1987:5). Settled from the early 1900s and with railway access, Rio Claro subsequently developed a “sense of community” (Montique 1987:1-2). The town of Caigual came into being in 1894, founded by an individual who cleared land to establish a cocoa estate, and was subsequently followed by others (Anthony 1988:23). The village of La Verónica, under the Heights of Caura, and in the vicinity of Arima, was established in the late 1800s and populated by Spanish-Amerindian peons from Venezuela (Anthony 1988:38). Indeed, the town of Lopinot, founded by these settlers of Caura, still

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21 Notes from displays at the National Museum of Trinidad and Tobago.
bears the very strong influence of this Venezuelan presence. The town of Comuto (Cumuto), immediately adjacent to the eastern side of Arima, came into being in 1900 (Anthony 1988:60). It was not until the 1880s that Sangre Grande emerged into what is today a large town east of Arima, and was populated by cocoa peasant settlers (Anthony 1988:263). The somewhat ‘famous’ Mission of San Francisco de los Arenales, the site of Trinidad’s biggest Mission Amerindian uprising in 1699 and dissolved thereafter, later became the town of Arena, then becoming Tumpuna, and finally today’s San Rafael, was brought to life by Manuel Luces who owned the San Rafael estate from 1892, with 37 cocoa estates established there by 1900 (Anthony 1988:280). Tabaquite, at Trinidad’s geographic centre, emerged from the colonisation of the area by cocoa planters in the 1870s-1920s period (Anthony 1988:314).

The Rise of the Cocoa Panyols: Amerindian Substitutes?

Along with the renaissance of old cocoa centres, and the creation of entirely new communities, there was also the importation of vast numbers of labourers to meet new demand. Many of these came from Venezuela (also called “the Spanish Main” [Moodie 1993]), from where previous generations of migrant labourers came since the late 1700s (and some of whom settled in Arima as mentioned before). These immigrants came to be known with time by a variety of labels, from ‘Spanish’ to ‘peons’ to ‘Cocoa Panyols’. The term ‘peon’ has fallen out of use; ‘Cocoa Panyol’ is seen as a derogatory term by those who are referred to as such; and, ‘Spanish’ remains the most popular of these terms to this day. In the North Trinidad context, and in the context of ex-mission areas of Trinidad, a ‘Spanish’ refers to persons of “mixed Venezuelan, Amerindian, and sometimes African blood” (Goldwasser 1994/96:fn.7, 6, Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:1). Ties between Venezuela and Trinidad were considerable throughout the 19th century (Fraser 1971 [1891]:355), leading some to stress that Trinidad be seen within a South American context (Noel 1972).
The ‘Spanish’ peasant, whether of Trinidadian or Venezuelan origin, was the central figure in the expansion of cocoa (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:1). Wood described the ‘Spanish’/‘peons’ in the following terms:

The peons prized their freedom and were scornful of field labour on sugar estates during the time of slavery....From the Spaniards they had inherited their language and their religion; from the Amerindians they had derived the art of weaving baskets and cassava-strainers, they ate cassava, unlike other Trinidadians, and slept in bark hammocks like the Indians of the Orinoco. [Wood 1968:34]

Here is an instance of the ‘peons’ and Amerindians being perceived as overlapping cultural and ‘racial’ entities, a conflation of sorts that has also had considerable longevity in Trinidad. The ‘peon’ was a convergence of the Spanish and the Amerindian, as Brereton (1981:22) put it: “in general, the Arawaks and Caribs influenced the life-style of rural Trinidadians in the 19th and twentieth centuries, particularly the people of the Spanish-speaking community of Venezuelan origin, called ‘peons’ in the island”.

These latter statements lead us to something fundamental, that is, the Venezuelan ‘peons’ reinforcing the dwindling numbers of Trinidad’s Amerindians, acting virtually as substitutes for the latter, and enhancing the presence of this Catholic Spanish-Amerindian and cocoa-cultivating melange within which the Arima Mission Amerindians and the ‘peons’ were amalgamated within conventional public discourses in Trinidad, both then and now. This is the closest we will come to a virtual demographic ‘resurgence’ of the Hispanic-Amerindian presence in Trinidad in the late 1800s.22 As Moodie-Kublalsingh explains, the “Venezuelans settled alongside the existing local ‘Spanish’ population....in British Trinidad the two groups merged to form a Spanish minority within a plural society” (1994:4; see also Brereton 1979:132). Brereton also writes that the ‘peons’ from Venezuela brought Spanish elements to reinforce those contributed by the

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22 In his search for the remains of the Mission of San Francisco de los Arenales, Father Cothonay details his encounter with a “pure blood Indian” in a house in the forest, occupied by a dozen people, noting that the family of the Indian came from Venezuela after the wars of independence (1810-1820); when his grandmother came to settle in this region, Cothonay relates, there existed a
original Spanish settlers and their descendants, and by the Hispanised Amerindians” (1979:152). The influence of these arrivals was very significant insofar as one can argue that it is probable that, were it not for these contract labourers, little of the Hispanic-Amerindian presence would have remained (Moodie 1993). One of the preferred locations of the new arrivals of Venezuela was the Northern Range, in towns and villages near Arima (Brereton 1979:165).

Fortunately, a rare personal testimony written by one of these ‘Spanish peons’ exists for us to examine. Pedro Valerio was born around 1880 in Tortuga, a small village in Trinidad’s Central Range, and was, as Brereton put it, “the son of a light-skinned Spanish-Amerindian father and a dark-skinned African-Carib mother” and his parents “were both born in Trinidad, but their parents had emigrated from Venezuela some time in the early nineteenth century” (Brereton 1979:133). Pedro Valerio tells us that “the section of the country in which we lived at that time was newly settled” (Valerio 1991:323), an area which had been opened by cocoa cultivators, some of whom, we might assume, had also migrated from the Arima district. In his autobiography Valerio gives us the following account of his family:

I was born in a miserable little thatched hut, on the outskirts of the small village of Tortuga, in the island of Trinidad, British West Indies. To the villagers, my father and mother were known respectively as José Tiburcio Valerio, and Eleonore Valerio; both being natives of the island. From them I have inherited a natural legacy, which it is perhaps the privilege of comparatively few people to fall heir to, and the possession of which I dare say the majority of them would be only too willing to ignore. This legacy consists of a mixture of three strains in my blood: the Caucasian, the Indian and the Negro. My father, a man of small stature, was born of white and Indian parents, and, in color and other external characteristics, would have had no difficulty in passing for a white man. My mother, a dark-skinned woman, also of small size, and very kindly disposition, is descended from the Negro and the Carib Indian; the latter being now almost extinct on the island. [Valerio 1991:322]

good number of Indians of “this country” (Trinidad), who are either dead, or went to settle elsewhere (Cothonay 1893:361-362).
This segment is valuable on a number of fronts. On the one hand, Valerio indicates a consciousness of ‘race’—a blood legacy—associated with Amerindian ancestry. In addition, he explicitly uses the term “Carib Indian” which, for most of the 1800s, as we saw, was not in use, thus hinting that it possibly came back into local use sometime in the late 1800s or early 1900s. Valerio’s account was written circa 1920. He also reinforces the constant theme that the Carib is “almost extinct”, an assertion routinely made in Trinidad and the wider Caribbean for at least the past two centuries, and, as I suggested before, this can be double-edged: highlighting the specialness of ‘those few Caribs that survive’, yet, also imposing a burden of proof on those claiming to be Carib. On three occasions, Valerio writes that, while he is personally proud of his ‘natural legacy’, there is a desire to leave this behind: he speaks of the “miserable little thatched hut” in which he was born (which he later describes in detail as a ‘Carib’ hut); he says that most people who possess this legacy would be only too happy to ignore it; and, he himself became a doctor in the United States. Valerio explained his choice thus:

The wretched condition in which my parents lived, the grinding toil and poverty, the hardships and sufferings of my childhood, had aroused in me the strongest sort of determination to better my condition....I must acquire an education, and, if possible, a profession, a physician for choice, because of the terrible suffering, due largely to ignorance, which I had seen and experienced among the class of people into which I was born. [quoted in Brereton 1979:133]

In fact, this introduces a theme which the current SRCC leadership finds itself struggling against: the desire to abandon ‘tradition’ on the part of those that the SRCC leaders class as Carib-descendants, mixed with their alleged sense of shame, and their striving to be seen as something other than ‘Carib’.

At the élite level, and unlike the ‘pathetic primitivism’ that marked colonial narratives of the Mission Amerindian in early 1800s Trinidad—a primitivism that was nonetheless ambivalent since Amerindians were still considered (in most cases) as ‘racially superior’ to African slaves—the cocoa cultivator and the ‘Spanish’ were almost always cast in highly favourable terms. One must remember that in colonial Trinidad each ‘people’ was associated not just with a colour and
place of origin, and possibly a religion and language as well, but also with a crop. In the case of the ‘Spanish’ this crop was cocoa, just as it was for the Mission Amerindians. Coleridge, though he seethed at what he saw as the lethargy of the Mission Amerindian, had this to say of cocoa cultivation:

If I ever turn planter...I shall buy a cacao plantation in Trinidad....The cane is, no doubt, a noble plant, and perhaps crop time presents a more lively and interesting scene than harvest in England; but there is so much trash, so many ill-odoured negros, so much scum and sling and molasses that my nerves have sometimes sunken under it....Sugar can surely never be cultivated in the West Indies except by the labour of negros, but I should think white men, creoles or not, might do all the work of a cacao plantation. [Coleridge 1826:72]

At the time, sugar was vital to the economy (hence the deference to the noble cane), yet, cocoa was for the ‘racially’ favoured. Coleridge’s enthusiasm overflowed when he spoke specifically of ‘Spanish’ women in Trinidad. Joseph agreed with Coleridge on the value of the cocoa cultivator:

Most of the inhabitants of Arima are cacao planters. The cultivation of the cacao tree is well adapted to the habits of the Creole Spaniard—people who are not destitute of vices, but in general possess noble qualities; they may be sometimes injured, but never insulted with impunity. In their ordinary intercourse with mankind, they are the politest of acquaintances, the most good-humoured of associates, and the most faithful of friends. [Joseph 1970(1838):103]

Joseph also wrote admiringly of the “beautiful Spanish Creole women” whom he called “South American” (1970[1838]:103). A local newspaper editor, writing in 1847 on the condition of the ‘Spanish’ cocoa cultivators, stated: “Here were a large number of people free from their birth, some of them natives of the Colony, many more, immigrants from the Spanish Main....who will blame the pride that forbade them to work side by side with slaves”, and he continues by saying:

23 “I love the Spanish ladies to my heart; after my own dear and beautiful countrywomen I think a señorita would be my choice. Their dress is so gay yet modest, their walk so noble, their manners so quiet, so gentle and so collected...A Spanish woman, whether her education have been finished or not, is in her nature a superior being. Her majestic forehead, her dark and thoughtful eye assure you that she hath communed with herself” (Coleridge 1826:73).
if they have now become attached to these pleasant though remote spots—if they have established their small plantations of Cocoa and Coffee, which, insignificant as their return may appear to the cane-grower, yield them a small nett income, and maintain them in an honest independence, let the dry and cold expounder of political economy pause a moment before he drives these fine, healthy, athletic...moral and religious people to expatriation, especially when our only present source of immigration [India] offers so glaringly deficient a substitute.  

In this passage we see a whole nest of attributes and valuations of the ‘Spanish’, which includes ‘natives’ of Trinidad. First, they are free, and thus higher than slaves, but also ‘better’ than the East Indian immigrants then beginning to enter Trinidad. Second, they inhabit ‘pleasant’ and ‘remote’ spots. These people are also independent, of strong moral fibre, as much as they are of prime physical condition. In addition, the editor is indirectly combating the interests of the sugar planters here, possibly because he may have had cocoa interests himself, or was allied to these. Such positive valuations could only be reinforced when cocoa itself became King in the later 1800s. Moodie-Kublalsingh (1994:4) indicates that by 1867:

the peons were being described by the establishment as ‘the most industrious class’ among the squatters on the island, ‘the most valuable of all pioneers’....Tribute was paid to them in the local press, which referred to them as ‘a sturdy race of immigrants from the Spanish Main who, plunging into the depths of our forests...laid the foundations for those valuable cocoa plantations.

Writing in 1904, Kingsley stated that the “half-breeds from the neighbouring coast of Venezuela, a mixture probably of Spanish, Negro and Indian, are among the most industrious” (quoted in Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:4). Cocoa was now King, and the ‘Cocoa Panyols’ stood in high esteem, even though virtually every other ethnic group in Trinidad became deeply involved in the cocoa economy.

The Baptismal Register of the Santa Rosa RC Church of Arima reflects some of the demographic shifts of this period. By the 1850s all notations of Indio

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24 The Port of Spain Gazette, “The Land Tax”. Tuesday, 23 March, 1847.
vanish from the registers, and at the same time there was a pronounced decline in the numbers of children baptised with devotional types of surnames, which as I said, were the surnames often (not always) carried by Mission Amerindian families. Interestingly, the overall percentage of Arimians with any kind of Spanish surname is also seen to decline in a marked fashion from the 1850s onwards. The surnames of families who are current members of the SRCC, surnames which were small in number up to the 1870s, and often designated as ‘white’, ‘coloured’, and ‘mestizo’, make a relatively massive appearance by the 1870s, with surnames such as Hernandez, Gonzalez, Medina, and Calderon suddenly multiplying. This is not the exact same thing as saying that there was absolutely no intermarriage between the latter and the few remaining ex-Mission families, which is likely to have occurred though I have as yet not had the occasion to trace this in the registers. In order to just glimpse some broad trends, a statistical test of data found in the Baptismal Registers should suffice (see Table 4.3). If we assume that all immigrants from Venezuela carried Spanish surnames, keeping in mind that all those with Spanish surnames included more than just these Venezuelan immigrants (i.e., ex-slaves, ex-Mission Amerindians, descendants of Iberian settlers, etc.), then the total number of Spanish surnames can be taken as the maximum-sized ‘container’ within which all Venezuelan immigrants can be found. In the tracing of the total number of Spanish surnames, the margins of error for this are minimal. However, I conducted no examination of the Anglican baptismal registers of the Church of St. Jude in Arima and some of Arima’s Hispanic families may have converted to that denomination.

Table 4.3: Broad Trends in the Spanish-surname Population of Arima, 1840-1916

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME PERIOD</th>
<th>TOTAL # SPANISH SURNAMES</th>
<th>TOTAL # OF CHILDREN</th>
<th>SPANISH AS A % OF TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

25 ‘Racial’ designations were entered in the Registers only when the designation carried a real legal status, hence, “black slave”, “Indian”, “apprentice”, “indentured—native of Africa”, and “coolie” (the term Indian was never applied to East Indian indentured labourers in 19th century Trinidad). As these legal statuses came to an end, so did the designations. Individuals of African descent, ex-slaves, ex-apprentices, and all those who were not voluntary migrants from Africa, for example, were never identified by the last available resort of “black” after this category lost any special legal status in the colonial labour scheme.
"Spanish Surnames" refers to all children baptised with any surname that is identifiably Spanish in origin.

NB: Under "Time Period" the reader needs to be cautioned that not all of these are divided into decade-long periods, instead the divisions follow the years covered by individual books of Baptismal Registers. Source: Baptismal Registers of the Church of Santa Rosa de Arima, 1840-1852, 1866-1876, 1877-1887, 1887-1899, 1900-1906, 1906-1910, 1910-1916.

This table shows us that there was in fact a progressive decline in the number of children with Spanish surnames being baptised in the Roman Catholic parish of Arima. This fact is also a hint of the degree to which families, such as those of Pedro Valerio, sought cheap lands in other parts of Trinidad, rather than an indication of a drop in the high annual numbers of Venezuelan immigrants reported by Moodie-Kublalsingh (1994).

In the final analysis, with time, writers began to associate Venezuelan ‘Spanish’/‘peon’/‘Panyol’ immigrants with ‘Caribs’, and the terms could then be used interchangeably. Of this group of terms, ‘Spanish’ has achieved the widest popularity in Trinidad. One ex-Arimian informant, residing in London, England, told me in an e-mail interview that his family was from Venezuela, where he still has relatives, and that “all of the people on my father’s side were referred to as Spanish (or ‘payol’ short for Español) when I was a boy”. As for Carib, conflated with Panyol, we have the following examples. On a drive to La Pastora, a village beyond Lopinot, to meet an informant, Sylvia Moodie-Kublalsingh encounters the informant’s wife and writes of her: “She was ‘Carib,’ Amerindian, with some sprinkling of creole African blood; a true, true panyol” (1994:33). In another instance, Moodie-Kublalsingh speaks of her informant, Ciprian Ruiz, noting, “he was mostly of Amerindian descent....He said that one grandmother was from Maturín [in Venezuela] and a grandfather had come from Irapa in Venezuela” (1994:40-41). Again, the conflation of Panyol and Carib, on the one hand, and the renewed Amerindian/mestizo presence effected by immigration from Venezuela,
on the other hand, both served to bolster the recognition and validation of the ‘Amerindian heritage’ of Trinidad in élite narratives and popular conceptions.

*Amerindian Masking*

There is more to this history than demographic shifts, commodity cycles and textual accounts alone. One of these additional dimensions involves the production of cultural forms on the part of the Venezuelan ‘Panyols’ that would form a large part of the dissemination of Amerindian images and symbols in the late 1800s and through the 1900s. One of the most prominent of these ways of representing and popularising the image of the Amerindians was the development of ‘Amerindian masking’ in Carnival, from the mid-1800s, which in their detailed study Bellour and Kinser (1998) explain as the product of Venezuelan settlers and the dissemination of stories and depictions of American Indians via the United States’ news media. Indeed, exposure to U.S. media, and to the dissemination of accounts of indigenes in neighbouring and distant regions, began from a very early period, as I found in my research of Trinidadian newspapers of the 1800s.26 The ‘Panyols’, many of whom observers say were of ‘mixed’ Amerindian descent, were instrumental in the earliest portrayals of the ‘wild Indians’ of their nearby homeland. The first description of Amerindian maskers in Carnival is provided by Charles Day, an English visitor to the Caribbean between 1846 and 1851. He witnessed a Carnival parade in Port of Spain in 1848 that included maskers portraying “Indians from South America”. These maskers were: “‘Spanish peons from the Main, themselves half Indian’, a racial extraction exhibited in their ‘small feet and hands’. They retained a sense of Warao hunting and trading practices, as seen in Day’s description: ‘Daubed with red ochre’ and, proceeding in parade, they carried ‘real Indian quivers and bows, as well as baskets; and, doubtless, were very fair representatives of the characters they assumed’” (Day quoted by Bellour & Kinser 1998:2). Bellour and Kinser also argue that newly emancipated Afro-

Trinidadians took up Amerindian masking, with its connotations of 'savagery' and 'wildness' as a means of challenging the élites by deliberately playing to their worst fears and stereotypes, thus "Carnival street festivals, with Amerindian masking among its features, became one of the few ways in which Afro-Trinidadians could protest or at least pretend to momentary liberation from the status quo" (Bellour & Kinser 1998:3). Even in the midst of the scarce presence of Amerindians given their demographic and politico-economic decline, this would not work to erase the figure of the Amerindian from popular culture. As Bellour and Kinser add, "among the one and one-third million people living in Trinidad [in the 1990s], few can claim purely Amerindian descent. Trinidad never instituted an Indian reservation system, and Amerindian resistance never produced great heroes like Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, or Geronimo. Yet the festival which many regard as Trinidad’s national emblem offers honoured status to Amerindian maskers" (1998:1).27

Amerindians in eastern Venezuela also continued to exist in large numbers in the 1800s and well into the 1900s, and retained their contacts with Trinidad. We should avoid taking an insular view of Trinidad in forgetting, for example, that Venezuela is clearly visible to most parts of Trinidad, being only seven to fourteen miles away. Canoe Point, at the south-western end of Tobago, is so named given the canoes that wash ashore from South America after the Orinoco River swells with rains (Boomert 1996). Accounts of bands of Warao Indians who had come to trade, were common not just in the literature of 19th century Trinidad, but even up to the 1950s and later in some cases.28 Another popular story one can hear is that of Waraos coming to the shores of southern Trinidad at night, to steal children and/or clothing hanging on lines. Goldwasser (1996) presents many more accounts from her informants in southern Trinidad, indicating that there is a continued mystique and enchantment with the Waraos, with some villagers in Trinidad even

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27 As I have shown, the mission system was the closest Trinidad came to an Indian reservation system, except that missions apparently were not intended to be permanent entities. In addition, Chief Hyarima is increasingly figuring as one of these 'resistance heroes'.

28 My father-in-law, a customs officer, recalls inspecting Warao canoes at the harbour in Port of Spain in the 1960s, laden with trade items such as bows and arrows, birds, hammocks, and other items.
believing them to possess supernatural powers: as one of Goldwasser’s informants put it, “Warao can fly....You can be out in a field, and they are suddenly there” (1994/96:8).

Figure 4.7:  
The ‘La Venezuela’ Monument

One product of the cocoa boom period and the influx of Venezuelan settlers is this ‘monument’ of an Amerindian warrior (spear missing here) guarding the entrance to the remains of what once was the La Venezuela Estate in Santa Cruz in northern Trinidad. A landmark of moderate renown (and one of only a few landmarks), it is enveloped in a local legend of ‘hidden gold’ kept at the estate, which this warrior was meant to protect.

Trinidadian exposure to the earliest internationalisation of news of North American Indians also had an influence on popular culture and the dissemination and adoption of stylised representations of Amerindians, as mentioned above. As Bellour and Kinser observe, and as I confirmed, “it is certain that some news reached Trinidad about the defiant Plains warriors causing such trouble for the
U.S. military in the 1860s and ‘70s, as American settlers streamed westward” (1998:2). The resultant representations were generic and allegorised, and in line with representations by European and American artists whose works provided the illustrations for texts from the 1500s to the 1800s (Bellour & Kinser 1998:3-4).

Figure 4.8: Images of Amerindians in Trinidad’s Carnival in the 1990s

The image on the left shows a more or less ‘typical’ depiction of ‘Wild Indians’, harking back to older depictions of South American ‘Wild Indians’. The image to the right shows a more modernized version of U.S. Plains Indians themes that also became popular in Carnival and still remain present.

Carib-Panyol Traditions and Popularised Depictions of the Amerindian

In addition to forms of Amerindian masking, the Venezuelan Panyols also continued a variety of traditions and practices that current SRCC leaders, associated researchers and other local brokers highlight in enumerating items in the inventory of ‘Carib traditions’. Amongst these are the ways of making dwellings with earthen walls and floors, and palm thatched roofs and internal partitions (Valerio 1991); local town celebrations for the birth of a child, involving
the firing of guns or fireworks to announce the moment of birth (Valerio 1991:323); 'special prayers', still known as oraciones, and feared by some, as well as a host of roles that modern writers label 'shamanic' such as those played by medicine men using prayers and herbal cures, and the roles played by their female counterparts, the parteras (midwives) (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:10). In addition, writers speak of the community events of the 'Panyols', centred on christenings, weddings and funerals, as a means of gathering scattered groups of individuals and families, as well as their collective labour arrangements known by the Amerindian word gayap, and the communal contribution to the needs of the sick, elderly, widowed, and orphaned (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:10). Indeed, amongst my various non-SRCC informants I detected a fair amount of nostalgia for these old communal lifeways of the 'country folk', some emphasising that 'country people' are always the most hospitable and generous since “they have values”. The valuations of these Spanish-Amerindian-African 'Panyols' is often what one would expect of people represented and perceived as the 'salt of the earth'.

In addition to communal practices and forms of Amerindian masking, the 'Panyols' also fostered festivals and performances in which they either highlighted Amerindian motifs, or decorated themselves as Amerindians. The Sebucán Dance is one example, the sebucán being the Amerindian term for the cassava strainer, a tube woven from the terite reed. The interesting feature of this dance is that it is metaphorically woven into a Maypole dance, since, as some argue, the resultant weave of ribbons around the pole looks like the cassava strainer, as put by one of my elderly Venezuelan-Trinidadian informants in Arima. Moodie-Kublalsingh’s research especially details this dance which, she explains:

depicted an Amerindian ceremony. A tall pole (palo or horcón) was placed in the ground. From the top of the pole hung fourteen multi-colored ribbons which were woven by boys and girls as they sang and danced around the pole. They sang as they wove the ribbons into the shape of a sebucán. There was a captain and a queen carrying her sable (sabre) and a maidservant. The maidservant gave the boys and girls guarapo (cane juice) from a totuma (calabash gourd) and shared cazabe [cassava bread] from a taparo (calabash cut in half). When the dancing ceased, the pole looked like a pretty sebucán. [Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:94-95]
Figure 4.9: The Maypole
Moodie-Kublalsingh also notes that there has been “controversy over the origin of the *sebucán* which greatly resembles the European maypole”, however, regardless of this, she points out that “it is significant that this is the only instance in Trinidad where the *panyols* actually chose to disguise themselves as indigenous characters in the performance of a song or dance. In Venezuela the dance has been performed to the accompaniment of a song about Maremare, an old Indian of legendary fame” (1994:95). In addition, she tells us: “It seems that the *sebucán* was a favourite with the Arima Indians. Today, the Arima area is regarded as a ‘Spanish/Carib’ district *par excellence*” (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:95).

One of my informants, an elderly Arimian of Venezuelan parentage and Trinidadian birth, also spoke of another dance in which the performers dressed as Amerindians. This dance, the *Guarandol*, he explained, involved the figure of a bird (with a man, arms held straight out to the side, stepping around a circle imitating the movements of a bird walking), a hunter (a fellow often wearing a grass skirt and armed with a bow and arrow), and a shaman (a man shaking maracas and wearing a feathered headdress). The dance depicts the hunter stalking and killing the bird, followed by the shaman bringing the bird back to life. In

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29 Cristo Adonis, shaman of the contemporary Carib Community, also sings a *parang* song entitled “Los Indios de Maremare”, which he recently acquired.
Trinidad, this dance was accompanied by parang music, according to my informant.

Besides these dances, Venezuelan immigrants also fostered the development of parang music, sung in Spanish and accompanied by string instruments and maracas, as practiced by roving groups of night-time male revellers (see D. P. Taylor 1977, Marquez 1979, and Moodie 1983 for more detail). This musical tradition has also become ensconced in Arima, as symbolised by the locally active and prominent National Parang Association of Trinidad and Tobago (NPATT) headquartered in Arima, which also actively disseminates what it portrays as the ‘Carib heritage’ of Parang and often works to support the current SRCC. Part of parang festivals of the past were dances depicting animal figures, with one popular dance being that of the burroquita, featuring a donkey figure and which was once a popular Trinidad Carnival motif (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:66). This too has become part of the amalgamated Arima-Venezuela, Carib-Panyol matrix.

Figure 4.10: The Burroquita Dance

These photos, taken at the NPATT headquarters in Arima, show the Burroquita figures described by Moodie-Kublalsingh above, the burro represented by a donkey head.

Inter- and Intra-Class Ethnic and Religious Competition for Resources

Beyond considering the cultural practices that were either introduced or popularised by the ‘Panyols’, as well as conventional associations of ‘Panyols’
with an Hispanic-Amerindian cultural history, the various demographic shifts, and the cocoa boom, we must also consider the dynamics bringing these phenomena together. In other words, simply listing these phenomena does not immediately suggest how identities were produced, defended, elaborated, or deployed in relation to other identities, even though we have seen hints of this at different points already. That which weaves these phenomena into a politics of identity is competition between ‘raced’ groups and within classes, for a variety of resources, especially lands, income and local political control.

To start with, the dominant classes in Trinidad were divided in the late 1800s and in competition with one another. As Wood indicates, the “free classes” were divided by religion and language, to a degree that set Trinidad apart from the older British colonies in the Caribbean (1968:1). Wood points out that the underlying tensions between the older Spanish and French Creoles and the British, both expatriate and Creole, “came to a head after 1840 when an aggressive English party sought to mould their fellow-citizens in their own image”, and, “as with Boer and Briton in South Africa, so also in Trinidad did the relations between two sets of Europeans sometimes take precedence in their own minds over their relations with those of other races” (1968:1). One of the media for this conflict was that of religion, especially when the distribution of state resources (i.e., funding for schools, property ownership) was at stake. In the late 1800s the majority of Arima’s inhabitants were Roman Catholics (Collens 1886:114). However, the Catholic Church faced growing competition from the Anglican Church, as well as finding itself in a conflict with the Governor’s office over its properties in Arima and over school funding. In 1891, out of a population of 8,500 in Arima, 4,500 were Catholic, and as many as 2,000 were Protestant with 2,000 ‘other’ (Cothonay 1893:448). For Trinidad as a whole, a religious census of 1891 (and the fact that this would be conducted is significant), showed a total population of 73,733 Roman Catholics, followed by 64,413 ‘Coolie’ and ‘Chinese’ (presumably meaning Hindu, Muslim, Confucian and Buddhist), and 46,920 Anglicans as well as 6,312 Wesleyans (Brereton 1979:12). As early as 1843 the Anglicans built their first church in Trinidad, in Tacarigua, adjacent to Arima (Rétout 1976:10). While
the dividing lines were not neatly drawn, in broad terms Roman Catholics tended to be led by Spanish and French Creole families who, in many cases, dominated the cocoa economy; Anglicans, on the other hand, tended to be mostly British and have large investments in sugar production. Both competed for labour, for quotas of immigrants, and for state subventions.

Arima also experienced tension along the lines of religion and in terms of institutional authority and the proprietary rights of the Catholic Church that were entailed. In the process, the history of the Mission Indians took centre stage. Let me first list some of the points of conflict here: (1) competition between Catholics and Protestants; (2) contestation of the Catholic Church’s claims to Mission lands; (3) directly stemming from the latter, conflict over the alienation of lands in Arima and the proposal to establish a public market in the park, Lord Harris Square, immediately opposite the Church of Santa Rosa; and, (4) the question of state funding for denominational schools.

Competition between Catholics and Protestants in Arima surfaces in some of the internal Catholic Church correspondence of the late 1800s. The departure of the parish priest in 1867 added to the deterioration of the old church building, led some estate owners to lament the apparent neglect of their parish, and they warned the Archbishop: “Our enemies, the Protestants, surround us on all sides. They profit from this abandonment to thus implant themselves in the parish, and then it will be difficult to get them out”.30 Catholics felt the need to be on guard against Protestant incursions, as reflected by this letter to the Archbishop from the parish priest of Arima, who complained that the “Parish Priest of Arouca insists that his parishioners give him in advance at least one dollar for the baptism of each child they bring to him, without which he refuses baptism… it would not be astonishing that several persons, under this practice, should refuse to baptise their children in the Catholic Church and bring them to the Protestant church”.31 By 1885, the Anglican Church of St. Jude was established in Arima. One might suspect that, in

30 Scheult, Ch. And Scheult, D. A., owners of Santa Rosa Estate, Letter to the Monsignor, 14 November 1867.
31 Rouger, Father M, parish priest of Arima, Letter to the Monsignor, 02 May 1871.
this environment, competing groups might feel the need to justify themselves and secure legitimacy at the expense of the other.

The question of the Catholic Church’s hold over lands in Arima was a hotly contested issue that reached boiling point on several occasions over a period from the 1870s though the 1880s. It is on this plane that we see the history, and even the presence, of the Arima Mission Indians take centre-stage once more. The fact that the Church backed its claims to lands by rooting its proprietary history within the Mission, an Indian Mission, served to fuse the interests of the Church with those of the Indians it claimed to protect. Indeed, at one point the parish priest would argue that the Mission never ceased to be, and that he was still protector of the Indians, into the 1880s. In these exchanges we also see clear evidence of the brokering role of the parish priest. Starting in 1871, Father Rouger spoke to the Archbishop about the “application which I am making to Government to obtain for the church in Arima the title to several lots of land which it occupies from time immemorial” (emphasis added), and thus using the language that one might associate with indigenist discourse. From that point, his successor in Arima, Father Louis Daudier, a Parisian and a prolific writer and campaigner, took over the contest. Père Daudier wrote emphatically in 1873:

The Catholic Church possesses land here since the last century. It is the Catholic Church itself which founded the locality, under the name of the Mission of Santa Rosa de Arima. The lands had been given to it by a Spaniard of the name of Cristova [sic] Robles, to establish a mission for Indians. The lands belonged to the Church, and around the Church the priests gathered the Indians; and the old certificates of baptisms have these words ‘I, parish priest of Santa Rosa de Arima, and proprietor of this village’.

Daudier also explained that “since then, by a change in the administration [of the island], Government took possession of one part of these lands, and even those which remained in the possession of the Indians, and above all of a part of the square on which the church was situated”. Daudier thus also entered a campaign to

32 Rouger, Father M, parish priest of Arima, Letter to the Monsignor, 19 July 1871.
33 From Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter to the Monsignor, 10 March 1873. Indeed, I too have seen this designation in scattered remnants of the first Baptismal Register on file at the Archbishop’s Residence.
gain formal title to Lord Harris Square. In addition, echoing the quasi-indigenist language of Fr. Rouger, Daudier wrote this: “May I add that the creation of the Mission of Arima is much older than the measure which the English Government took to relegate the Indians of the plains to the heights of Arima and to give them lands there” (emphasis added). With respect to the Indian lands on the ‘heights of Arima’ (the foothills leading north, also known by the Spanish as ‘cabezeras’ and today known as Calvary Hill, the residential home of many SRCC member families), Daudier is probably referring to the additional 320 acres of land granted to the Amerindians by Sir Ralph Woodford.

How would Father Daudier prove his case? The question of sources of information and verifiability was at issue. Daudier stressed that, “everybody is of the opinion, and knows by tradition, that these lands belong to the Church”. However, he also admitted that “it would be difficult to arrange to have affidavits signed, not only because witnesses are either all dead or infirm, but also because their affidavits would affect some deep-rooted interests”, and the latter is in itself a very curious statement since it might suggest the possibility that interests within Arima would also be compromised by Amerindian testimonies. How did Daudier know about the origins of the Mission given the lack of “evidence on parchment” as he put it? His answer was: “I was not able to invent it, knowing nothing of the country on my arrival in Arima. It is therefore by tradition that I found it out”, and attested to “by the oldest Indians”. Moreover, Daudier quoted an unnamed government employee who, he says, told him: “Basically it is certain that you have rights, but Government having begun to sell the Mission lands, cannot admit it for, once admitted, you will have the right to demand restitution”. Daudier had won a partial victory by the late 1870s, with the colonial government granting the church formal title to over six acres of land. The battle over additional lands continued nonetheless; indeed, in response to further agitation by Father Daudier, the

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34 Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter to the Monsignor, 10 March 1873.
35 Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter to the Monsignor, 20 August 1873.
36 Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter to the Monsignor, 27 April 1881.
37 Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter to the Monsignor, 27 April 1881.
Government simply responded, in “reference to certain old Indian lands at Arima” that “His Excellency [the Governor] had decided that these lands were liable to public competition”.

Daudier brought the question of history, tradition and Amerindian rights to the forefront of this debate, not just over lands the Church claimed, but also over lands for the remaining Amerindians. In response to a plan to outline the Church’s land claims in Arima, detailing sizes and historical interpretations, Fr. Daudier concludes firmly: “there is nothing of substance to this matter other than the fact that it was an Indian area and that there were two authorities both having rights in this area. Those of the Church have never been destroyed; that is precisely the question to be settled”. In a noteworthy letter of considerable length, Daudier expounds on these questions with great emphasis. He says of the Government’s counter-claims (i.e., that no formal titles were in evidence, and thus lands could be alienated and taxed), “I think that they exaggerate the rights of the State to the lands of the Mission”. Daudier harks back to Spanish laws in arguing that “the Spanish government generally exempted these lands from taxes, which was the case in Arima, and that made the land unalienable”. Daudier also argued that the Government “cannot deny at least that this land was Indian land or dedicated for use by the Indians”, and he repeated, “an Indian land, because all the documents subsequent to the Spaniards, in the archives of the government, show this evidence”.

Daudier also made his argument of continuity in Church proprietary rights by referring to living traditions, and he explains that, by and large, Arima was still a Mission, and he was, in effect, a Missionary. He thus states:

On arriving in the parish of Arima, I found myself involved in a traditional network. The priest, from old times, has been regarded...by the Indians...as the Protector of the Indians and as the representative of the Mission; my predecessors have done like I have....the authority of the Missionary has suffered from time and circumstances, but it has never been destroyed by any official act—

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39 Wilson, David, Sub-Intendant of the Commissioners Office, Letter to the Archbishop of Port of Spain, 05 March 1881.
40 Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter to the Monsignor, 22 March 1881.
41 Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter to the Monsignor, 27 April 1881.
it could be denied but it could not be destroyed as long as there are Mission lands and Indians.\textsuperscript{42}

In addition, he explains, "by tradition and custom, each time that the Indians are in trouble it is to me that they come, to be their intermediary before the Government in their difficulties; and several Governors have accepted my petitions to make the pursuit against them as squatters cease".\textsuperscript{43} He also tells us that,

On the other hand, as a sign that they recognise the power of the church on them, there is the obligation that they have maintained towards me of coming every Monday to work for the church. It is I who have begun to abolish this custom. However, if I call them for work, they come. Also, if they need a liana [vine] or some wood on the Mission lands, it is to me that they have always asked for permission...These facts also give witness to tradition.\textsuperscript{44}

Daudier's logic is that if he is recognised as the Amerindians' broker, and, if he still serves as their proprietary Father, and, the Government has previously recognised this at least tacitly, then the Mission is still in place and the laws governing the rights and legitimacy of the Church's hold on Mission lands, as decreed by the Spanish, were thus in effect, and therefore the problem is resolved. In making these arguments, it is of especial interest to us to see the degree to which he engaged in representation of Amerindian Mission history, the oral history of the "oldest Indians", and the parallel or back-up argument that, at the very least, these were still "Indian lands".

Father Daudier was thus also active in campaigning on a second front, that of Indian rights over Mission lands. Daudier reveals that this position was not winning him any friends in government: "They accuse me, in the Government, of mixing myself up too much in this affair of the Mission and the Indians of Arima....I have always thought that I was fulfilling my duty".\textsuperscript{45} In this same letter, Daudier tells us that letters "sent by me to the Government, at the request of the Indians" were returned unanswered. Daudier had joined, or perhaps led, a campaign by Amerindian parishioners to obtain formal recognition over lands they

\textsuperscript{42} Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, \textit{Letter to the Monsignor}, 27 April 1881.
\textsuperscript{43} Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, \textit{Letter to the Monsignor}, 27 April 1881.
\textsuperscript{44} Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, \textit{Letter to the Monsignor}, 27 April 1881.
\textsuperscript{45} Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, \textit{Letter to the Monsignor}, 27 April 1881.
claimed in Arima. Daudier’s argument was that, “what remains for the Indians of this Mission land is so little, that I cannot understand the hesitation to recognise such a real right”. Even though “a part of this land has been alienated through the passage of time and the vices of the Indians”, Daudier asked “why take away the rest?” Daudier also speaks of the fact that on Calvary Hill, “several Indians asked me to let them build their houses there, and I allowed them; and nearly all saw their houses sold, after they had cleared the land which was in high woods, they were thus obliged to buy land that they could regard as their own”, and he adds: “it is a new undertaking for the buying of lots on this land, possessed by the Indians which is the cause of all this correspondence”. He explains: “the Government could give to the Indians according to whatever scheme they wished, be it collectively as inalienable land, or be it individually and dividing it as private land, whatever remains of the Mission lands”, subsequent, of course, to the fulfilment of the church’s claims. As to the “cultivable lands petitioned for by the Indians”, Daudier emphasised that there are “two motives that oblige the Government to concede: (1) their status as the old Indian owners of the area, and the interest which they must inspire in their claim; (2) a kind of justice to compensate them for the Mission lands which they have lost when these lands should have remained intact”.46 Again, we see Daudier helping to put in place, as early as then, a discourse of indigeneity and indigenous rights, and of the need to respect and recognise indigenous citizens. The rights of those who were ‘here before you’ were paramount; the older the claims, the more legitimate; the logic here is that written evidence to substantiate claims is not necessary where tradition persists. The vital point here is that in order to justify its claims before ‘outside intruders’, the Church utilised the Amerindian as a means of planting its metaphorical flag in Arima, thereby laying the basis for enshrining the Amerindians as a definitional feature of the uniqueness of Arima’s history.

These arguments were extended into the issue of the government’s proposal to establish a market in Lord Harris Square. Daudier tells us: “several

46 Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter to the Monsignor, 27 April 1881.
times I have had to fight for this savannah”. Daudier again reminded the government that the Square “was created by the missionaries, then the real proprietors as in all the places which were under the missionaries, before the arrival of the English, and it was created with the object of protecting the Catholic worship from the noise and to surround it with the respect which it merits”. The government, one can infer from the text of his message, had reminded Daudier that it was the Ward, and not the church, which was responsible for the upkeep of the Square, thus eroding the credibility of the church’s claim to the Square. Daudier replied that, although that was true since the English took the island, however, “on the eve of great Feasts, if the square was too dirty, the Indians cleaned it, and this happened two or three times since I became Parish Priest”. Daudier also informed the government that the Square was church property as evidenced by the fact that the very first chapel of the Mission was built there: “The chapel on the square existed until the construction of the new church which was begun in 1789. I can still find, not witnesses of the existence of this chapel, but witnesses of the tradition received from their ancestors that the first church was there, on the Lord Harris Square itself”. Daudier pleaded that the government show respect for the sanctity of church services that would be interfered with by noise from the market, and he framed this in Catholic versus Protestant terms: “For though not believing in the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, you know that we Catholics believe in it”. The issue of government assistance for Catholic schools was another of these main sources of contention. Put briefly, the government had instituted a law that stipulated that government would fund religious schools only if a public school did not exist within a two-mile radius of a given religious school. As if to make a point, the government then established a public school right on the western side of Lord Harris Square, opposite the church, and immediately adjacent to the Catholic school—the second of the photographs in Figure 4.2 shows where a

47 Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter to the Monsignor, 27 April 1881.
48 Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter to M. Mitchel, 16 April 1873.
49 Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter to M. Mitchel, 16 April 1873.
50 Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter to the Monsignor, 02 June 1881.
public school still stands in that location. With the application of this law, Daudier complained to the government that Arima, with its population of “6,000 souls nearly all Catholic”, 52 would find it impossible “to bring up their children in their religion”. The law should not be implemented, Daudier warned, “because it will seem to be the beginning of persecution”. Daudier added: “We only want the good, we are not enemies. Why this hostility to Catholic schools?” 53

From a certain point of view, Father Louis Daudier was successful in inculcating certain main points of his arguments, later to be routinely recycled in historical reflections by Arimian parishioners. Thus, as one example, a letter signed by a group of prominent parishioners to the visiting Archbishop in 1909 recites what has itself become a virtual article of faith at the local level: “Arima was one of the first Catholic parishes in this country; it has existed since the time of the Spanish Missions, and on the list of its parishioners are many of the oldest Catholic families in Trinidad”. 54

Thus far we have focused on the religious medium of intra-élite conflict in post-Spanish Trinidad in the late 1800s. Both sides, the Catholic-French-Spanish, and the Anglican-British, had divergent economic interests. As Brereton (1979:20) indicates, cocoa was dominated by the Spanish and French Creoles, and was “the backbone of their prosperity in the 1880s and 1890s”, moreover, unlike sugar, cocoa estates were entirely locally owned. Indeed, the “economic basis for the recovery of the French Creoles after 1870 was cocoa” (Brereton 1979:49). Brereton also points out that, in 1875, out of 29 cocoa estates listed, 22 were owned by “French Creoles”, increasing to 26 out of 29 in 1880, 82 out of 111 in 1885, and then 146 out of 172 estates by 1890 (1979:50). The only industry in which British capitalists had significant interest was sugar, and, as Brereton found, “there was a distinct bias to sugar [in the government administration].... In 1870 out of eight Unofficials [in the Legislative Council], five were sugar planters, one

51 Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter to M. Mitchell, 16 April 1873.
52 Daudier also argued his position on the basis of numbers, stating: “I feel satisfied from the number of christenings I have registered here that there are at least 7 or 800 children of an age to attend school”. From: Daudier, Father Louis, O.P., parish priest of Arima, Letter, 31 March 1886.
54 Parishioners of Arima, Letter to the Archbishop of Port of Spain, 12 December 1909.
was a doctor with interests in sugar and cocoa, and two were barristers....Members were appointed to ‘represent’ cocoa, when that crop became as important as sugar, but often they also had interests in sugar” (1979:26). Stephens argues that, “the cocoa industry not only brought economic recovery to the French Creoles, but it also improved their political status which was reflected in their nomination to the Legislative Council during the 1880s and 1890s” (1985:24). While this division of interests served to set dominant élites apart, within the cocoa fraternity a tightly-knit system of association and inter-marriage developed. Indeed, the clannishness of the cocoa élite in Arima was seen in the following terms by a local writer: “And this was good old Trinidad/ The land of the red cocoa pod/ Where Ganteaues spoke only to de Verteuils/ And de Verteuils spoke only to God” (P. E. T. O’Connor quoted in Douglas 1999:8).

Competition between ethnic groups at the level of the working class also occurred in the cocoa growing regions. While thus far the role of the ‘Cocoa Panyols’ in this industry has been stressed, the fact is that since at least 1878 some cocoa estate owners began using indentured labourers from India, with cocoa estates on the whole beginning to apply consistently for East Indian labourers from about 1884; in 1890 cocoa estates applied for 244 East Indian immigrants, rising to 692 in 1911 and 560 in 1917 at the end of indenture (Stephens 1985:21-22, 45-47; Brereton 1979:181). With the sugar depression of the 1880s and 1890s, the flow of East Indians into the cocoa zones increased (Stephens 1985:22, 40). Free labour from West Indian islands also began to arrive (Stephens 1985:22). East Indians not only worked on cocoa estates, they eventually founded their own cocoa plantations, and they increased their purchase of Crown Lands, gaining between 1,500 and 1,800 acres of land per year in the early 1890s (Stephens 1985:23). By 1916, East Indians owned 97,962 acres, and out of this, 59,239 acres were in cocoa cultivation, which stimulated requests for further numbers of East Indian labourers given that time-expired East Indians who owned large estates tended to employ indentured East Indians (Stephens 1985:59). The influx of workers of diverse backgrounds changed the composition of the Arima workforce: “In 1888 in Arima there were French and Spanish speaking contractors, a few Portuguese, Madeirans,
Cape Verde Islanders, African creoles, Barbadians and free East Indians, supplying labour in one way or another to the cocoa areas” (Stephens 1985:43-44).

The fact of diversity alone is not what would lead to competition or even conflict. However, differential positions within the colonial ‘race’ hierarchy and the impact on wages resulting from inflows of new labourers are two forces that could foster competition and/or conflict. As we saw, both ‘Panyols’ and their local Spanish-Amerindian counterparts were cast in an intermediate position within the ‘race’ hierarchy, as nearly ‘white’, but certainly not as ‘low’ as ‘blacks’ or East Indians. As for the impact on wages, the introduction of indentured East Indian labour in the cocoa zones “meant a reduction in the rates of pay per task” (Stephens 1985:48). In addition, as indentured labour became more readily available, some cocoa estate owners simply refused to hire free labour (Stephens 1985:53). By the 1870s, over 2,000 Venezuelans and West Indians arrived every year; with the arrival of East Indians, “competition for employment was characteristic of the period, whereas previously there had been competition for labourers” (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:7-8). On the other hand, estate-based labour was only one form of income for most peasants, who had their own plots, and simply supplemented their incomes with seasonal contract work on estates. The ‘Spanish peons’ frequently owned small cocoa farms and were only employed on the big estates as skilled workers, usually on contract or task work (Stephens 1985:58-59). Larger estates utilised a combination of both resident labour (i.e., indentured East Indians), and contract labour. Other peasants found participation in road works a particularly important source of additional income, and virtually all groups except the East Indians were favoured for this kind of employment. By 1920, when the cocoa industry began to decline once more, 60% of the industry was in the hand of peasants, and about 26% in the hands of ex-indentured East Indians (Stephens 1985:60). Another ingredient in this setting of inter-ethnic competition was the figure of the shopkeeper. Shopkeepers were sources of

55 In fact, one estate attorney testified that wages were reduced from 40 cents to 25 cents per day, the latter being the minimum wage stipulated by the Immigration Ordinance, and, indeed, “twenty five cents became the standard rate of pay not only for indentured but also non-indentured labour” (Stephens 1985:48).
supplies for estates and workers, as well as providing loans to assist peasants in acquiring new holdings (Stephens 1985:33). Shopkeepers tended to be either Europeans or, in many cases, Chinese.

**Figure 4.11:**
**Remnants of King Cocoa**

A drying shed for cocoa, with a retractable roof mounted on rails, in the Paria-Brasso Seco region north of Arima. The estate dates from the early 1900s and is now part of an eco-tourist project that employs the shaman of the Carib Community as a tour guide.

The result of these processes, as Moodie-Kublalsingh explains, was a further consolidation of a sense of group difference among the ‘Panyols’. As she puts it: “among the panyols (including the mixed descendants of native Amerindians) there was a strong group consciousness. To a certain extent, it was they who continued, in the post-Spanish-colonial era (after 1797), to identify with the earlier dominant Hispanic culture. They were, therefore, a distinctive group among the native creole folk” (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:xi-xii). According to Moodie-Kublalsingh, the ‘Panyols’ showed “disdain and antagonism towards other subordinate groups” (1994:xi-xii).

One conclusion that may be distilled from this section is that, combined with religious self-defence, a feeling of being encroached upon by others, and local competition for resources, symbolic alignment with an Amerindian heritage would only serve to bolster and even enshrine indigeneity at the Arima level. When the figure of the Amerindian became imbricated with a diverse set of forces, from the reaffirmation of the paternal and proprietary interests of Catholic and
Spanish élites in Arima, reinforced by the cocoa boom, bolstered by the arrival of the ‘Panyols’ and concretised in intra-élite and inter-ethnic competition, followed by examples of how Arimians later defined themselves in the face of the wider society, then one may be able to make a plausible argument that, far from erasure, the Amerindian became a canon in the construction of an Arimian identity.

The Catholic Boom of the Late 1800s

I indicated that the 1870s-1920s cocoa boom renewed the fortunes of Spanish and French Creole families in Arima, which itself became a centre of the new boom. I also presented evidence that this was accompanied by a revival of interest in local Church and mission history and the development of ritualised and textual commemorations of the ‘Indian Mission’ past. The Catholic Church and its constituency invested great labour and financial resources into maximising the Catholic presence, a concomitant process of establishing its legitimacy if not its primacy, and this formed one important feature of the wider context within which renewed élite interest in the ‘Mission Indians’ was articulated.

One result of the cocoa boom and the efforts of cocoa élites to preserve and enhance their status within the wider society, was the greatly increased expansion and construction of churches in this period. I will simply list some examples of this development. In 1880 the church of La Verónica was erected in the heart of the northern cocoa district in a region densely inhabited by the ‘Panyols’ (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:14). The church of Maraval has its origins in “the vast cocoa plantations”, and was rebuilt in the 1870-72 period with donations of cash and labour from cocoa farmers, and with a marble altar donated by a cocoa baron, J. E. Cipriani (Rétout 1976:99). Rosary Church was reconstructed during 1892 to 1910 (Rétout 1976:102). The Roman Catholic church at Laventille had a 30 foot high statue of the Virgin Mary was imported from France in 1878, with the church reconstructed out of timber in 1879, and then reconstructed out of stone in 1886 (Rétout 1976:106). The church of St. Michael in Maracas was reconstructed in 1890, with the “old one” built only in the 1870s by Venezuelan immigrants (Rétout 1976:116). The Tunapuna church was built between 1880 and 1890
(Rétout 1976:118). In Erin, a new church was built in 1916-1923 “using ornate Italian styles” (Rétout 1976:63).

Of even more significance was the effort to resurrect a church in the place of the old Mission of San Francisco de los Arenales, site of the 1699 Amerindian uprising which itself resulted in repeated historical accounts, tales, songs, and even media-oriented commemorative activities well into the present. In 1877 Fr. José Perdomo established the parish of San Rafael near the site of the old mission, and was himself a member of the local Venezuelan élite being a relative of the Bermúdez family;\(^{56}\) funds for the construction of the church “came from estate owners who donated towards it the money of their first crops of cocoa”, and, “for many years this gesture became a tradition for the people of the village” (Rétout 1990:7). It was also during this period that a number of priests, such as Father Buissinck and Father Marie-Bertrand Cothonay, began to research and publicise the mission histories of Trinidad, in a manner not unlike Father Daudier’s research on the oral history of the Arima Mission. Of course it is also during the cocoa boom, in 1869, and under Father Louis Daudier, that the Church of Santa Rosa de Arima was reconstructed and expanded; in 1882, Arima’s church was further enlarged under Msgr. Charles de Martini (Rétout 1976:47).

**Figure 4.12:**
**The Churches that King Cocoa Built**

At left, the church of La Verónica, relocated from Caura to Lopinot. At right, the church of San Rafael, built near the site of the Mission of San Francisco de los Arenales, site of the 1699

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56 Today the Bermúdez family owns one of Trinidad’s largest manufacturing concerns, the Bermúdez Biscuit Company.
Amerindian rebellion, and twenty minutes' drive south from Arima. Saint Raphael was, for many SRCC members, the object of annual veneration rituals held in October.

The Emergence of the 'Gens d'Arime'

By the 1850s Arima had already begun to expand enough to be seen as one of Trinidad's key urban areas. In adducing evidence some cite the fact that a postal service was inaugurated in Arima in 1851, the same year that postal services of any kind were instituted in Trinidad, and in the same year Arima received one of the first Ward schools established by Lord Harris (Anthony 1988:5). With the advent of the cocoa boom in the 1870s, Arima underwent important transformations, evidenced by the establishment of the first railway line on the feast day of Santa Rosa on Thursday, 31 August 1876 (Anthony 1988:6). As Garcia (1991:6) notes, "cocoa was Arima's economic base". By 1881, the Government opened two new schools in Arima (Anthony 1988:6).

Observations written at the time provide testimonial substance to these recorded transformations. Writing in the mid-1880s, Collens observed: "Arima is fast blooming into importance with its multifarious streets, shops, post office, cabs, &c". (1886:114). Writing again in the 1890s, Collens' entry for Arima read thus: "Arima—The third borough; is a flourishing little town, an hour's journey from Port of Spain by rail. On Santa Rosa day, the 31st August, Arima is always en fête with races and festivities" (Collens 1896:20). The Editor of the San Fernando Gazette, writing in November of 1889 observed, "droves of donkeys, heavily laden with provision and produce", and he saw Arima, "as a commercial centre of the largest and most important agricultural districts in the colony" (quoted in Garcia 1991:7). Indeed, from as early as 1889, Arima began to serve as a regional commercial centre for satellite villages and agricultural districts such as Sangre Grande, Cumuto, Paria, Blanchisseuse and Arouca (Garcia 1991:7).

By the 1910s, some of the most prominent cocoa barons emerged in Arima, with the mean size of estates being 357 acres (Stephens 1985:36). A number of the most prominent members of the cocoa élite were behind agitation to secure borough status for Arima, and included Arimian magnates such as LeBlanc, Cleaver, Strickland, Warner, Sorzano, Sanchez, Farfan, DeGannes, Quesnel,
Lopez (Williams 1988:11; Garcia 1991:4). Streets in Arima still bear the names of most of these plantocrats. The objective of securing the Royal Charter which was applied for on Queen Victoria’s Jubilee in 1887 and granted on 01 August 1888, was the “desire for some degree of self-government and a chance to separate themselves from the Ward to which the town had given its name” (Garcia 1991:4-5), a fact that would also allow the new Borough to collect taxes for itself and free it from some of the administrative control exercised by Port of Spain, the source of much bane for Father Daudier. Beyond this legal fact, which itself has largely been forgotten, the Royal Charter became a great symbolic asset in the construction of an Arima identity with a sense of its uniqueness within Trinidad, and is a status whose achievement is still celebrated on an annual basis. As Anthony noted, “it was the first and only town in the Colonies that Queen Victoria had so honoured” (1988:7). In the process, the phrase “Gens d’Arimé”, meaning “Arima Folk”, a phrase that is still in popular use among members of the older generations in Arima, shifted from simply describing a class of French planters that arrived in Trinidad from 1783, to a “a representation of civic pride, a distinctive identity”, which also grew into “a strong feeling of independence after the actual handing over of the Charter of Incorporation in 1888” (Douglass 1999:1).

The Catholic cocoa barons developed paternal/patronal relationships with their workers, including the Hispanic-Amerindians from Arima and Venezuela. At Jouvence, the estate of the Chevalier de Verteuil located north east of the old Mission, every year two large gatherings would be hosted by the Chevalier, one in December and one in July, even when yields were low (Douglas 1999:14, 15). The Betaudier family, still a prominent name in Arima, received grants in the mid-1800s to lands within the Arima valley, and four plots within Arima itself, which was managed and developed with the assistance of the Hispanic-Amerindians from Arima and Venezuela (Douglas 1999:16). The Santa Rosa Festival received renewed interest and attention, and was also transformed in the process. According to Garcia (1991:9), since Mayor F. E. M. Hosein introduced horse racing in Arima, an entire week was set aside each August and coincided with the Santa Rosa
festivity. In fact, this secular aspect achieved, and still retains, national interest and became Trinidad’s version of the U.S.’s Kentucky Derby, or England’s Ascot. It seems that the “ruling gentry” of Arima decided to develop what used to be the “Carib Sport Day”—the sporting events held during the festival as described by De Verteuil (1858) in a previous section—by introducing the “Sport of Kings” (Douglas 1999:30). In continuing to develop the contents defining this new Arima identity, local élites and subsequent writers utilised, amongst other things, the figure of the Amerindian and the Mission. Currently, definitions of the “true Arimians” include recitation of the belief that it is Arima which not only was the last seat of the Amerindians in Trinidad, but which also “retains the last surviving links with the Amerindian past” (Ahee 1992:21). In explaining, indeed justifying, the somewhat clannish if not xenophobic tendencies of some members of subsequent generations of Arimians, as especially demonstrated against the influx of immigrant labourers from Barbados in the 1940s and the resettling of low-income tenants in new tenements on the outskirts of Arima from the 1970s, some writers argue: “Arima, it should be remembered, evolved from a mission settlement. In the 18th Century, the Indians were discouraged from mixing with outsiders” (Garcia 1991:fn. 37, 56; see also Douglas 1999:2). The elaboration of the contents of this Arima identity is an ongoing process, and usually enunciated as an inventory of disparate items—Spanish, Amerindians, French, the Mission, Parang music, the Royal Charter, etc.—culminating in a statement of difference within the Trinidadian framework, e.g.: “As a gen d’Arime myself...I [am] inherently proud of the city in which I was ‘born and bred’ and which possesses a distinct history and identity” (Douglas 1999:2). It is not surprising, however, that we see the cultural products established from the time Arima was an economic centre, and a dominant local metropole at the crossroads of various ethnic encounters occurring within a class hierarchy, and with differential rewards for a

57 *The Port of Spain Gazette*, “Santa Rosa Races: Friday and Saturday 26th and 27th Augt., ’92. At the Arima Savanna. Under the Patronage of His Excellency the Governor”. Friday, 29 July 1892, supplement; and, *The Port of Spain Gazette*, “The Santa Rosa Races”. Saturday, 27 August 1892, p. 4.
labour force differentiated by colour, having become part of the ideological reservoir deployed by certain Arimians' when convenient.

The Late Colonial Romance of the Amerindian and the Institutionalisation of the Encounter between Columbus and the Natives

In addition to the utilisation of the figure of the Amerindian as a vehicle for Arimians to establish and define their sense of local rootedness, distinctiveness, authenticity and legitimacy, the 1870s-1920s period also saw the newest phase in the positive revaluation of the indigene in the Americas. This was the period in which the largely defeated American Indian was romanticised and museumised, and broadcast to the world with the subsequent rise of the United States in world politics and its achievement of hegemonic status within the western hemisphere. This was also the period in which anthropologists in the United States embarked upon “salvage ethnography”. As already mentioned, some priests also began a historical search for the remains and the histories of old Amerindian Missions in Trinidad, in what may be seen as an upsurge in interest in local history as whole, as evidenced by the number of books on Trinidad published in Europe in the late 1800s, and cited throughout this chapter. Moreover, this period also saw the celebration of the fourth centenary of Columbus, the cocoa boom in Trinidad, and the establishment of reservations for Amerindians in different parts of the Caribbean.

Trinidad, in the minds of some members of the colonial élite, was likened to a paradise, sometimes with reference to the Amerindians. Lord Harris referred to Trinidad as “the pearl of the Antilles” (Collens 1886:vi). Caura, with its cocoa estates and Venezuelan ‘Panyols’ was hailed as “a perfect paradise” by De Verteuil, and according to Moodie-Kublalsingh (1994:13), “Caura fitted in well with the Europeans’ romantic vision of tropical exotica”. In his entry for 18 January 1885, Father Cothonay wrote for his French audience: “The inhabitants of this earthly paradise are not in effect Indians, as would seem to be indicated by the [place] names in this country; they are descendants of the Spaniards, more or less mixed with the Indians [Amerindians] and the blacks” (1893:241-242). Why did
Cothonay feel the need to write this clarification? It is probably in response to the way that local élites referred to Trinidad, from the mid-1800s, as “this Arawak island” (Anthony 1988:117), and as “our Indian paradise”.

While we are aware of the impact and coverage devoted to the Columbian quincentenary of 1992, it is also true that 1892 received some important media coverage and was the subject of various commemorations and festivities, in Trinidad and in other parts of the Americas. In 1881, a statue of Columbus was erected in Columbus Square in Port of Spain, east of the Roman Catholic Cathedral, and Collens wrote (1886:71): “The fountain, which was presented by the late Mr. Hypolite Borde, a wealthy cacao proprietor, is surmounted by a bronze statue of one whose memory should be perpetuated in this Colony—Christopher Columbus. This statue was unveiled and the Square opened with some ceremony by the late Governor Young in 1881”. Perhaps this was the beginning of a story that Trinidadians continue to repeat to themselves in popular culture and the media, that of the first encounter, of Columbus and the Caribs, as we will see in the next chapters. For the Fourth Centenary in 1892, the Port of Spain Gazette gave great play to the commemorative celebrations held then in Spain, in Genoa (involving the warships of fifteen nations “among them thirteen great ironclads”), in New York, and with plans to celebrate Columbus at the World Fair in Chicago in January of 1893. While the paper appreciated the holding of a Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving to the Most Holy Trinity for the occasion, followed by a celebration in the Cathedral, it regretted the lack of additional pomp and ceremony, “especially as our connection with the memory of Columbus [who named Trinidad] and the discovery of America is of a close kind[, w]e do not think that an official and a popular demonstration would have been de trop in the matter, and they would have formed a fitting pendant to the religious celebrations”. The paper was envious of “the mighty nation to the north, which has imported such pomp and circumstance into the Columbus celebration” and lamented that West Indian governments did not band together to mark the occasion. The paper also noted, in a thankful manner, the presence of the Consuls for France, Spain and Italy at the

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58 The Port of Spain Gazette, Tuesday, 20 April 1847.
celebrations in the cathedral in Port of Spain. The paper then detailed the events of the mass, from the presentation of arms, to a military band striking up “God Save the Queen”, and a sermon highlighting Columbus’ religious virtues.59 “Discovery Day”, commemorating Columbus’ arrival, came to be celebrated on an annual basis. In 1938, The Port of Spain Gazette drove attention to the fact that that year’s Discovery Day was special not just for being the 440th anniversary of the discovery of Trinidad by Columbus, but for also being the Golden Jubilee of the grant of a Royal Charter to Arima. Once again, the Gazette complained of insufficiencies in the celebrations: “The second happening [Arima’s Jubilee] might at least have inspired us to observe this year’s celebration of Discovery Day with certain éclat”, indeed, the paper added, “it sounds strange to say that in this year’s celebrations there seemed to be lacking...the public consciousness of the event as a National affair”, which is interesting both for its emphasis on the duty of public officials to instil this consciousness, and for its reference to Trinidad in ‘national’ terms and not as a colony.60 As to Discovery Day itself, the paper indicated that “this bit of legislation declaring 31st July—Discovery Day, a public holiday was the outcome of persistent efforts by certain prominent [nameless] public spirited men of this island extending over a period of years. It became an accomplished fact in 1931 and has been held as an annual event since that date”.61

The preservation and the perpetuation of the figure of the Amerindian in the late colonial period, received an added impetus in Trinidad’s neighbouring territories. Guided by a desire to preserve “a dying race” and descendants of “valiant warriors”, a Carib Reserve was established in Dominica in 1903, with the encouragement of Governor Henry Hesketh Bell (see H. H. Bell 1902 and 1992 [1899]). From 1804, the British established a reservation in St. Vincent for remaining Caribs. In 1897 the Crown Land Ordinance, gave Amerindians in Guyana rights and privileges to use crown lands, forests, rivers and creeks (Fox

60 The Port of Spain Gazette, “Our Discovery Day”. Wednesday, 03 August 1938, p. 11.
61 The Port of Spain Gazette, “Trinidad Celebrates its Discovery: Popular Events in Town and Country; Thousands Witness Fireworks Display; Big Parade of School Children”. Wednesday, 03 August 1938, p. 12.
1996:56). Also in Guyana in 1910, Governor Walter Roth, established the Aboriginal Indian Protection Ordinance (J. Forte 1996:43), which established ten reservations (Fox 1996:29). As Bellour and Kinser argue, the “ennobling of the Wild Man” emerges from “the slow European reconstruction from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment of aboriginal people as noble rather than barbarous savages”, and the transformation of savages into ‘wildly free heroes’ became embedded in the fantasy life of Western popular culture (1998:5). This may underlie the type of paradox pointed to by Moodie-Kublalsingh (1994:xii), of the widest dissemination and even popularity of cultural items associated with the ‘Cocoa Panyols’, for example, at a time when the group in question “was petering out of existence” both in demographic terms and as an identifiably distinctive communal body. Noting the spread of their influence well beyond their numbers, Moodie-Kublalsingh notes how the rural culture of the Hispanic Amerindians has “taken root in the national culture”, and that their “songs and music are even more deeply entrenched in Trinidad than when they were limited to the seclusion of the cacao valleys” (1994:xii-xiii). One focus of the next chapters is precisely an exploration into this paradox.

Conclusion

Adding to the previous chapter, an important part of this chapter has been the idea that a wide variety of interests were always vested in the creation, dissemination, perpetuation, or even elimination of particular representations and identities, processes mediated and articulated by various power brokers, and, taken together, I pointed to these as definitional features of re-engineering. ‘Carib’ is fundamentally a mediating label, a vehicle for communicating meanings that changed with different political economic contexts; ‘Carib’ is not, and really never was ‘ethnographically fixed’. The ‘presence’ of the Carib, or of the figure of the Amerindian in more general terms, was mediated by a wide variety of actors, for example: conquerors, adventurers, explorers, missionaries, chroniclers, travel writers, land barons, and governors. This has been a very crowded stage, with
much labour having been invested over the centuries in producing a field of signification for Caribbean indigeneity. ‘Carib’ is itself a deeply historical category, one that is inseparable from the politico-economic contexts in which it was deployed, or dismissed. Thus, one can argue that no one group or individual was, or is, capable of ‘inventing the Carib’ in isolation from a wide array of institutions, social interactions, and various interests. Indeed, it is this matrix of processes and agents that seems to have ensured that, regardless of actual numbers, ‘Carib’ continues to exercise a presence, both in temporal and in spatial terms, as a canon of Trinidadian and Caribbean historical narratives and as a placed identity, i.e., as in the construction of an Arimian identity.

Processes of transforming the Amerindian into an object of ceremonial commemoration, as well as the prior institutionalisation and textualisation of the Amerindian in Arima’s Mission history and in 19th century texts respectively, worked to place today’s SRCC within the phenomenon that is the construction of an Arimian identity. Here we saw multiple interests, working in different contexts, often with competing agendas, in the production of notions and valuations of Arima and its Caribs. In the next chapter, we will see the extent to which ‘Carib’ continues to be historically committed and the array of actors and institutions involved in brokering recognition and valuation of the contemporary Carib Community. Moreover, these processes have done more than create an object of commemoration: they have also enabled living actors to claim the identity and history being commemorated.
REPRODUCING THE CARIB:
Cultural Brokers and the Social Organisation of Indigeneity in Contemporary Trinidad and Tobago

“I see the remnants of my people scattered/ Far, in numbers few, in strength diminished../ I see the now oppressors of my race/ In turn themselves subdued and driven forth/ From blessed Cairi and all other lands../ I see their places taken by a race/ ‘Mongst whom the light proceeding from the Flaming/ Cross shines forth in greater brilliance./ And two such men I clearly see. The one/ Shall gather what remains of all my people/ Under his protecting arms here in/ This place where I was the Chief, and through/ His love and pity and by favours shown/ Shall gently lead them on to reconciliation/ And assuage the pain of being conquered../ The other coming next shall rescue all/ My people from a dark oblivion./ And He by gracious acts of courtesy/ And Love and Sympathy for a fallen/ And a broken race shall then create/ An interest in my unhappy people/ Not felt before, a people who/ Were always here, and met Columbus when/ He landed on their hospitable and friendly shores./ Hail potent, glorious Chiefs from foreign climes!”

-----Words spoken by Chief Hyarima, in the play Hyarima and the Saints, written by F. E. M. Hosein, a Mayor of Arima in the 1920s (1976:26-27).

“...there is the need to change the perception that the Caribs only exist to make cassava bread and coulev[r]es [cassava strainers].

-----Pearl Entou Springer: Poet, Africanist, and director of the National Heritage Library, Port of Spain, Trinidad (quoted in Almarales 1994:50).

“In staking their claim to Amerindian heritage, the SRCC does not aspire towards racial purity, but to establish Amerindian cultural practices as being as important to the brewing pepperpot of national identity as those who were introduced at a later date”.

-----Trinidad Guardian, 25 August 1993, p.16.
Introduction: Creating an Interest in the Carib

The three quotes that open this chapter embody and manifest some of the key themes of this project and this chapter in particular. The evocative words spoken by an imagined yet nonetheless emotionally potent Chief Hyarima, routinely recited by the current Carib President in his public speeches and paraphrased in interviews, were written by a former Mayor of Arima, F. E. M. Hosein (1880-1936), whom members of the local political class and SRCC brokers cite for his paternal interest in the Caribs. Hosein was possibly the first in a series of local politician-researchers who seized the image of the Carib as a token of Arima’s heritage. In the passage above we see the reference to the ‘few’ dwindling Caribs, an apparent favourite amongst ways of framing today’s Caribs and thus highlighting their specialness. Hosein highlights the role of chiefs in reviving the Caribs, chiefs who come from foreign climes, much like the Aztecs and Mayas pictured their returning gods as coming from abroad. These chiefs act to bring about a revival of these sanctified people, the moral rulers of the land, thus revived from ‘oblivion’ by chiefs who “create an interest” in them. Arima—“This place where I was the Chief”—is inevitably singled out as the seat of indigeneity, the prime locus of those who “were always here, and met Columbus”.

The second passage is attributed to a prominent local activist on the African-consciousness and local pride fronts, someone also in charge of collecting and delivering information resources on cultural heritage for a national audience, and whose poems and performances have her regularly featured in the press. Pearl Entou Springer addressed the subject of what the Caribs ought to represent, apparently taking issue with the docile domesticity of ‘mere’ cassava production, as enshrined in the SRCC’s logo and spearheaded by President Bharath. During the course of my fieldwork I encountered at least three more Afrocentric

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1 My thanks to Father Donovan, parish priest of the Santa Rosa de Arima R. C. Church, for sharing his personal copy with me. Also, a biographic overview of Hosein is available at <http://www.nalis.gov.tt/Biography/bio_Alcazar&Hosein.html>, from an article by Louis B. Homer, “Heroes of the Post-Emancipation Era”, Trinidad Guardian, 01 August 1998, p.43. In the latter piece, Homer also refers to Hosein’s “fatherly interest in the Caribs”.
politicians, scholars and religious leaders who would also seek to champion the Caribs as primordial heroes in the struggle against European oppression.

The third passage was extracted from the local media and was approvingly cited by Beryl Almarales, a SRCC member who is also a researcher of the group. This passage emphasises the theme of the Carib contribution to the national foundation, and in the process pays respects to the nationalist image of Trinidad as a creolised stew. Interestingly, the author does so by means of a subtle yet significant symbolic cue—the pepperpot, a culinary item of Amerindian origin, where virtually anything is stewed in cassareep, the boiled, starchy, liquid residue produced from the straining of cassava.

The three passages combined all underscore the role of the broker in promoting and shaping the meaning and value of the Carib. From the perspective of the project as a whole, the emphasis here is on the (re)production of indigeneity in Trinidad in terms not of a group reviving or reinventing itself, by itself, for itself, but in terms of mutuality and multilaterality, that is, as a vesting of interests and as a joint venture between various brokers and institutions, _contra_ analyses of groups constructing their own identities in almost autonomous terms as discussed in the Introduction. The multiplicity of cultural brokers and institutions connected to the SRCC each bring their own interpretation of indigeneity to bear. Similarly, in her study of the Tukanoan Indians of Colombia, Jean Jackson discusses the role of non-Tukanoans in the making of Tukanoan representations. She writes: “because...outsiders—priests, highland Indians, anthropologists, etc.—have their own axes to grind about which cultural forms should be valorised and which are better left where they fell by the wayside”, and, “because interactions between Tukanoans and these outsiders occur in conditions of asymmetrical power relations,” the outcome is that “these outsiders will have played an important role in the creation of any new representations of Tukanoan identity” (Jackson 1989:138). Unlike Jackson, however, I argue that in practice there is no clear dividing line between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, apart from the analytical

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2 Kris Rampersad, “Pearl Entou Springer: A Fire Raging”, _Sunday Guardian_, 21 November 1999, p.4. See also the biographic entry for Springer at the website of the National Library and
convenience of writing in such terms. To the extent that wider social institutions and social processes are enmeshed in the (re)production and valuation of Carib indigeneity, one can thus speak in terms of the social organisation of Carib tradition, to adapt the concept from Antoun (1989). The particular focus of this chapter is on the array of brokers, interests, institutions and processes whereby Carib indigeneity is brought to light in modern Trinidad, achieves official sanction and recognition, and is sponsored and rewarded in a manner that attests to the fact that the Caribs have attained some value. The reader should not make the mistake of believing that I am here trying to advance a simple, uni-dimensional, one-way theory of patronage and brokerage; neither my argument, nor the ethnography, is about trying to ‘prove’ that brokers are ‘forced’ into constructing indigeneity to meet the ‘demands’ of prospective patrons. To argue that would be to forget chapters 2 and 3 which outline the myriad ways in which ‘Carib’ has been conditioned and structured so that both brokers and patrons operate within what Bourdieu (chapter 1) would call a particular ‘habitus’, even while different signifiers of indigeneity are at play attracting different interests and agendas. At any rate, the patrons in this ethnography rarely issue ‘demands’, and are not even patrons until the various brokers have actively sought them out in the first instance.

In this chapter I discuss the contemporary key actors ‘on the ground’ as a means of spotlighting agency by bringing it to life through the ethnography. The aim is to demonstrate, via the brokers in question, the wide variety of different understandings and different meanings that have gone into creating a competing and complex field for the articulation and interpretation of indigeneity in Trinidad. This chapter’s focus on brokerage builds on the argument that “identity cannot be seen as divorced from the network of social relations” (Yelvington 1995b:22). Constructing identity, as in this case, is an active process that inevitably involves cultural brokers in selecting, interpreting, modifying and articulating a particular identity and its representations. As Thomas argued, “self-representation never takes place in isolation” (1992:213). These arguments and observations have had

some standing in anthropology, as Michael Moerman stated: “We have known for some time that a social entity ‘that is a whole all by itself’ is rarely, if ever, found”, and, “it is necessary to view every social entity as but part of a larger system” (1965:1216). The focus on brokerage foregrounds the actual actors and structures of interaction involved in articulating representations and in mediating relationships.

In this chapter we shall focus on the contemporary actors involved in the localisation of the Carib in Arima and in the nationalisation of the Carib via state sponsorship and recognition. Mediation is the focus of this chapter, that is, vehicles of mediation (organisation), agents of mediation (brokers), frameworks of mediation (patronage-clientelism), and the outcomes of mediation (recognition, funding). This focus serves to add a contemporary social interaction dimension to the historical and ideational dimensions covered in the previous two chapters. This chapter is designed to provide an ethnographic description of: (1) the interactions taking place between patrons, brokers, and workers involved in the production of rituals and objects for display; (2) the structures in and through which such interactions take place, meaning the various institutional contexts, settings and social conventions governing formal organisation and cultural representation in Trinidad; (3) the main representational products of these organised interactions; and, (4) some of the key outcomes and implications, whether intended or not, resulting from organised interactions designed to produce certain representations for certain purposes.

The diverse brokers themselves disagree over the substance and purpose of representations of the Caribs. The representations they produce or endorse are multiple and often contradictory. Some might argue that the more ‘authentic’ representations are those that are spoken by the ‘native voice’. The problem that this poses lies in the fact that there is no single ‘native voice’, no clear boundaries between ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’, between ‘native’ and ‘non-native’ perspectives. As may be the case in a kitchen crowded with individuals working on the same dish, there will be as many opinions as there are chefs, and not a few contending recipes. Determining the ‘right’ representation, in a given context, for a given
audience, is the subject of argument in addressing the questions of ‘Who are the Caribs?’ and ‘Why are Caribs important?’ The reality is that the Caribs have come to mean many different things to different brokers, both those who are formal members of the SRCC and those associated with select members. The SRCC has, in conjunction with diverse and divergent interests, developed multiple orientations, speaking with different voices, and emphasising different and even divergent organisational forms in particular contexts (i.e., as a family, a religious group, an ethnic group, a business, an arm of the Peoples National Movement).

Brokers involved with the Carib Community (and this inevitably includes myself) work to point to the presence of the Caribs in Trinidad, and, in differing ways, seek to ‘add value’ to the fact of their presence (i.e., investing intellectual, symbolic, political and even financial resources). The representational work of brokers is not restricted to definitional and propositional aims alone but also extends to debates over how to organise the Caribs. Lastly, not all the actors involved on the Carib stage are necessarily ‘brokers’: some might be more accurately called ‘patrons’ (those who receive representations and who may symbolically, politically or financially sponsor the Caribs as they perceive them), while others may simply be seen as ‘peons’ (for example, the almost invisible elderly members of the SRCC who act as if they were simply the mute workers behind the physical preparations of various events, and are often treated as such by brokers, observers and researchers). In addition, some of the brokers, who though they work as intermediaries between various interests, between a clientele and a certain audience, might instead be more accurately called ‘touts’ insofar as their aim is solely to positively promote the value and significance of the Caribs in particular ways and for particular prospective patrons. It is sometimes difficult to draw lines of distinction between patrons-brokers-peons, as a broker may be the patron of some but the peon of others higher up the metaphorical totem pole.

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3 I say this in the sense that this very work mediates between the SRCC and a wider audience, and necessarily involves a selection and reinterpretation designed for a particular clientele.

4 In adopting the ‘peon’ term, I merely wish to highlight their position as ‘proletarians’ and ‘underlings’ that brokers and patrons often take for granted and sometimes treat with mild disdain.
Wider Trinidadian patterns of social interaction and political organisation, along with various modern historical transformations of the encompassing society, have also had a direct impact in: (1) shaping the SRCC's own forms of organisation and decision-making; (2) helping to frame the SRCC's significance in national terms; and, (3) aiding in the development of the SRCC's promotional work. Following the order of this list, these influences include: (1) the 'bossist' politics of the PNM, that is, where a maximum leader lords over followers; furthermore, the legal imposition and subsequent personal adherence to formalised organisation and corporate managerial models; (2) the debates over which ethnic groups contributed more to the national foundation; in addition, the state acting as an interested arbiter in various inter-ethnic competitions for rewards and recognition; and, (3) the spread of institutionalised and legally incorporated forms for the promotion and recognition of ethnic heritages in Trinidad and Tobago.

In this chapter the 'political economy of tradition' is not as bluntly cast as in chapter 2, where the production of particular commodities, in conjunction with specific geopolitical interests and local alliances, led, for example, to the ascription and sometimes native employment of identities as either Caribs or Arawaks. Amerindians in Trinidad failed to garner any significant large-scale material interest ever since they began to be displaced by sugar production from the late 1700s, and did not exercise a dominant presence in the cocoa economy from the end of the 1800s. From this point onwards, interest in the Amerindians became decidedly more symbolic. However, we will still see the role of both the politics and economics of nation building, the influence of institutions of the enveloping society, and a range of local and global dynamics in shaping the organisation, development and representation of Carib traditions and Carib indigeneity in broader terms. The emphasis on the political economy of tradition in the contemporary period is based on a view of 'traditions' (especially those that are performed for a public audience) not as passive, routine re-enactments, but as deliberate, creative displays that can be reinterpreted for an audience. More than that, the work of representing traditions abides by certain social conventions, with an eye to prevailing social hierarchy and political organisation, and with another
eye on obtaining a just reward for one's efforts in displaying one's contribution to the national foundation.

The Appeals of Brokers, the Rewards of Patrons, and the Labour of 'Peons'

As I mentioned in the Introduction chapter, Elma Reyes, who for a long time served as the Public Relations and Research Officer of the SRCC, phrased the strategy of the SRCC as that of being "on the peacepath" (1978:11). The thrust of SRCC brokers' efforts has been "to make representation to the authorities", as Bharath puts it. The work of representation necessarily involves brokerage, and the aim is to achieve sponsorship, which is a reward in itself and can lead to further rewards, as well as further demands. As a subsequent SRCC researcher explained, "Ricardo is confident that with the perseverance and assistance from influential people outside of the SRCC, the community will achieve its aims and the nation will be proud to acknowledge their existence" (Almarales 1994:25). The emphases are clear: authorities, influential people, and representation.

Patron-client networks continue to form the core of Trinidadian politics and play an important part in individuals' and groups' quest for social mobility. Indeed, a significant portion of the SRCC membership received temporary work under the Unemployment Relief Program (URP) thanks to their PNM connections in the Arima Borough Council; for some members of the SRCC, state-funded work-welfare has been their only source of wages during their lifetimes. In his study of patron-client frameworks of local politics and public administration in Arima, Price speaks of a pervasive "pre-occupation with jobbery...and self-interest with the local political leadership acting as brokers and agents of the Central Government in general and the prime ministerial power in particular" (1987:142), the Prime Minister acting as the Paramount Patron. Speaking of the omnipresent role of the paramount party leader in Trinidad, Yelvington observed that, "'The Doc' [Dr. Eric Williams] alone defined policy, and the party demonstrated personal loyalty and deference to him. He became a legend, a charismatic and Messianic figure" (1995b:58), and, along with the personality cult
Williams enjoyed, a dependency cult was also fostered: Williams was to do everything for the masses. Selwyn Ryan, a Trinidadian political scientist, thus commented: “in a society in which there are many ‘motherless’ children, there is yet a critical role for the state as a ‘tireless’ mother” (Ryan 1990:72). One of Williams’ favourite methods for maintaining dominance via the patronage network was the founding of DEWD—the Development and Environment Works Division—employing workers on a temporary basis on road construction and maintenance (cf. Yelvington 1995b:59). On a personal level, friends beget favours and favours beget friends. Members of the SRCC demonstrate an acute consciousness of the need for patrons. In an interview at her home, Justa Werges, the Queen of the Caribs, stated this bluntly: “The Carib comes like a child. You must pet him and make good with him, or, he will be ‘wild’—he has a little ‘wildness’ in him, and you will see him moving away, angry, if you don’t make good with him”. The demand for patronage is asserted from ‘below’, and a patron who fails to adequately patronise is as good as a thief. To be assured of success, it is vital to accumulate positions in a variety of distinct patron-client networks. In effect, each broker of and for the SRCC assures this multiplicity of connections to various patron-client networks, especially those surrounding political parties and the state.

The multiplicity of brokers’ access to various patron-client networks can be as much a bane as a boon to the leaders of the SRCC. By that I mean that the SRCC as a phenomenon means different things to different interests, and SRCC brokers struggle to cater to these different and sometimes contradictory interests. There are those who represent it as an indigenous revival symbolised by the adoption of headdresses, guaïacos (loincloths), beaded necklaces, and the performance of shamanic smoke rituals; given the latter, some New Age spiritualists have been attracted to the shamanic, revivalist part of the SRCC, encouraging the use of crystal-tipped copper rods (“power rods”), accompanied by

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5 Unsurprisingly, DEWD, (the precursor of the LID [the Labour Intensive Development program] and then the URP mentioned above), has since come to be mockingly deciphered as “Dr. Eric Williams’ Darlings”.

the group study of gemology, Atlantis, ancient Egypt, and American Indian powwows, and symbolised by adorning one’s home with Dream Catchers and Medicine Wheels from the USA and Canada. Others, such as local politicians, emphasise the Caribs as a defining part of the “Gens d’Arime”, and of Arima’s “unique Spanish heritage”. Business interests maintain an eye on the potential tourist angle of Carib activities, in part given Arima’s strategic location on a tourism route leading to the Asa Wright Nature Centre, an eco-resort that has won international awards—and, as we might expect, certain interests immediately perceive indigenous people as going hand-in-hand with flora and fauna. Local eco-tourist entrepreneurs see some members of the SRCC as being valuable tourist guides for foreign visitors interested in bush walks and bird watching. Stalwarts of the Roman Catholic Church in Arima will instead maximise the historical devotion of the Caribs to the Church, as symbolised by the Santa Rosa Festival and Arima’s Mission history, and may, at times, pay token respect to the revivalist side of the SRCC by insisting that the Santa Rosa Festival has “Amerindian elements” to it, with these usually left unspecified. For others, Caribs symbolise the bedrock of anti-colonialism and nationhood, these others usually being politicians operating at the national level. For some Africanist activists and Orisha priests, the Caribs are embraced as “brothers” in the struggle against Eurocentric oppression and racism. For several academics, from Trinidad and abroad, the SRCC represents “Trinidad’s Amerindian heritage”. For the leaders of Girl Guide troupes, the Caribs are a source of valuable weaving and cooking knowledge. Local ethno-botanists have also literally set up shop, in part, on the basis of medicinal knowledge of herbal remedies held by the elderly members of the SRCC (see Rickwood 2000). Performing arts classes from the university are interested in the aesthetic styles of the Amerindians, their dress, music, and so forth. Government technocrats are interested in showcasing an indigenous theme for regional performing arts festivals. Disparate individuals may warm to the Caribs if they see them as symbolising a diminished or lost rural past of affective communality,

“values”, hospitality, and the simple, traditional life. While SRCC leaders may quietly revel in the attention, the fact is also that when a leader such as Bharath attempts to maximise benefits and increase recognition and promotion of the Caribs, by trying to cater to these various interests, he falls victim to ‘broker overload’, i.e.: unable to satisfy different, competing and even contradictory interests, all to the same extent. Conflicts must, and do, result, especially when the representatives of these various interests do not all interact with each other directly but instead compete with each other via proxies in the person of different SRCC brokers. Moreover, there are differential rewards associated with each type of representation and the leading broker of that representation, a fact that can cause some friction between brokers. Thus far, those facets of SRCC representations that are most highly rewarded are those centring on the Santa Rosa Festival, Parang, and weaving, whereas the more recent ‘New Age’ aspects sketched above are the most lightly rewarded at the time of writing.

Archer (1988:xx) argued that the force of situational logics impose themselves when actors confront, realise, or are made to acknowledge that the propositions they endorse are “enmeshed in some inconsistency”, thus actors can choose either to be dogmatic, or reject the original belief altogether, or simply seek to repair the inconsistency. In the case of the SRCC the practice seems to be that of ‘wearing different hats’ in different settings (intending this in both a symbolic but even in a literal sense in some cases: see Figure 5.1). SRCC brokers are themselves aware of the various inconsistencies in their own representations, but do not seem sure about how to go about repairing them, especially when a contradictory representation happens to be the favourite representation of one broker over that of another. Some of the inconsistencies are maintained because there is a pragmatic logic that unifies them, meaning a tactical approach that guides them to say one thing for one audience and another thing for a different

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7 See Ortner (1994:395) for her discussion of ‘strain theory’ as a counterbalance to interest theory: “actors in strain theory are seen as experiencing the complexities of their situations and attempting to solve problems posed by those situations....the strain perspective places greater emphasis on the analysis of the system itself, the forces in play upon actors, as a way of understanding where actors, as we say, are coming from. In particular, a system is analysed with the aim of revealing the sorts of binds it creates for actors, the sorts of burdens it places upon them, and so on”.
audience, and this can apply to which ethnic label they choose in announcing themselves, as well as the degree of support they have received from other agents and institutions.

**Figure 5.1:**
The Many Hats of Cristo Adonis

From left to right: (1) Adonis as a Foreman for the Unemployment Relief Program or when doing manual work for the SRCC; (2) Adonis in public performances as the lead singer in his Parang band; (3) Adonis uses this hat often in his work as an eco-tour guide and at one time used it in Indigenous gatherings and performances until Suriname Carib and Taino visitors from New York introduced the feather headpiece; and, (4) Adonis in public performances of his smoke ceremony as shaman of the SRCC.

As was argued in chapter 1, processes of elaboration and re-interpretation can carry an actor’s representational efforts down a winding path leading away from their original propositions (Archer 1988:17-18). This brings us back to Antoun’s explanation that the work of the culture broker involves selection from and interpretation of tradition, with culture brokers interpreting a representation (or “message” in Antoun’s text) for a particular clientele at the same time that they deal with various social and political hierarchies whose norms and aims may differ from those of the cultural broker and his/her audience (1989:4-5). This process of brokers reinterpreting traditions, on behalf of a given clientele and for particular audiences, also sees brokers active, much like Archer argues above, in accepting, rejecting, or accommodating the ideas representing various customs and traditions (cf. Antoun 1989:17).

The overall network of interests itself possesses a certain ontology. First of all, the network consists of the group in question (the SRCC), off-shoot organisations of the SRCC (two Parang music groups and two revivalist groups), allied organisations, local and national government and various ministries, political parties, small business interests (a development bank, a supermarket owner, a
photo studio owner, and the like), the church, the media, and a whole series of related patrons, brokers and specialists. Together, these patrons, brokers, and the relations amongst them, form the network. This is also the primary reason that my field research took me to various circles surrounding the SRCC, with informants in and amongst these various quarters. To the extent that the network as a whole is involved in the overall reproduction, perpetuation, and representation of indigeneity in Trinidad, one could argue that the network itself is the metaphorical generator of indigeneity.

 Patronage processes have been a relatively enduring part of local social organisation and continue to shape relationships within the SRCC and between the SRCC and institutions and agents in the wider society. Etched into the oral history of the elders of the SRCC are anecdotes dealing with celebrated acts of laudable patronage. These processes have also impacted on the nature of the organisation of, and relationships within, the SRCC. Queen Werges recalled how it came to be that the Caribs would receive a small annual stipend for the Santa Rosa Festival, a stipend that was given to the Queen. She recalled that Governor Sir Claude Hollis, who held office in the 1930s and who had also donated a cannon to the Caribs for the celebration of the Santa Rosa Festival, was on close terms with her mother in-law, the late Queen Maria Werges. On the day of the Grand Festival he would usually visit Maria Werges’ home accompanied by his party. In order for the Queen to prepare a “proper” reception, “suited to his position” and that of his party, Governor Hollis would pay her $200 in advance. Following the procession of the statue of St. Rose and the close of the High Mass, the Governor and his party would then join Maria Werges in her home and enjoy some refreshments, while the members of the Carib Community would be received under a tent in her backyard. The Queen regularly undertook to host such dignitaries, be they the Governor, President of the Republic or the Prime Minister in later years.

To the members of the SRCC, Ricardo Bharath also serves in the role of patron. Members work to make the preparations for the Santa Rosa Festival, and get paid in return. In October 1998, at an SRCC meeting, I observed Bharath distributing amongst the members small brown envelopes containing payment for
work they had done in August for the Festival. Bharath once argued, “the only way things could work is as a business, with the members working as employees. Their mindset demands that they be employed as workers and be paid. They could never believe they are working for themselves within a community structure”. Bharath later added, “this is not so much ‘community’ for them…it’s just ‘a work’ for them, their mentality is the ‘ten days’ mentality [referring to the usual allotments of ten days of work offered by the URP]. It’s like I am the ‘boss’ for them, when they come, I must feed them, give them rum, or they don’t work”. Like the Queen above, the intermediate position of brokers such as Bharath can lead us to sometimes see them as patrons of some, and peons of others, and indication of the ambiguities of their position as intermediaries.

Bharath indicated that two patronal figures of the SRCC, which have declined into what appears to be a fossilised remnant of past tradition, were the King and the Queen of the Festival Day. These worked under the Queen of the Caribs, who maintained overall authority, and would serve only for the work duties of the Festival. “Long ago”, Bharath explained, “ordinary members of the Community would be selected to lead the work duties for the Festival. For a whole year they would save aside from their earnings. They would then pay for and provide food and rum for the workers they were in charge of [the King was in charge of the men, the Queen in charge of the women]. Now, nobody does that, except me”. In a separate conversation, one of the elderly SRCC members spoke of times under Queen Maria Werges, recalling how the King, who he said was the husband of Queen Maria Werges, would take men to cut bamboo and rods in the forest, and under his arm he would carry a bottle of rum to share with the men. Afterwards, they would return to the Queen’s house, and in the yard she would have a huge iron pot and a big wooden spoon to stir the breadfruit that she stewed for them. The breadfruit was then ladled out in plates for each of the male workers, and they were given juice. Now, it is Bharath who has become the sole patron, substituting for all of these former patrons.

Bharath, schooled in the traditions of patronage operative in the wider society, occupies the position of capo of the Caribs: Bharath’s office combines
aspects of the party boss and the parish priest. Meetings are dominated by his speeches, his suggestions, and his instructions to members who, as some of my informants and I myself noted, remain silent throughout. Even when asked for their opinions, most of the members tend to remain quiet with one or two uttering an almost inaudible approval. It is only with the first general meeting that I attended in June 1998 that the seating was arranged in a circle, when formerly they were arranged in rows, as in a church or a classroom. Bharath, who said to me on a few occasions that he once sought to enter the priesthood in order to become the parish priest of Arima, leads his members in certain religious practices internal to the SRCC: saying prayers at the opening and closing of meetings; calling forth members to kiss the feet of the statue of the Infant Jesus that is carried by the statue of St. Rose during processions; leading recitations of the Rosary prior to supervising members as they decorate the Church for the Santa Rosa Festival; and, leading novenas to St. Rose in the nine days leading up to the Festival. In response to my questions about the duration of his presidency and whether elections for president are to be held within the SRCC, Bharath explained that sometimes, with regard to the members, it is necessary “to work over their heads”, and he emphasised that “the Divine Creator put me in this position, and until the Divine Creator removes me I will be President”. Ordinarily, in Trinidad, it is not at all unusual to hear the “divine right of Kings” invoked to justify particular leaders’ grip on office, usually invoked by fervent followers. Indeed, figures such as the Secretary of the SRCC also insist, as she did during a meeting, that “God put Ricardo as President”. This is not a norm that Bharath has invented for himself, instead, such forms of outwardly democratic and inwardly absolutist rule are validated by the established political institutions and customs of the wider

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8 Three of my informants volunteered the opinion that his priest-like role is a holdover from his earliest days back from the United States, in the early 1970s, when he sought to revitalise the Carib community, casting himself, according to their descriptions, in a messianic role and telling members of the then Carib community of his dreams and visions, allegedly leading them in prayers held while they stood in a river, and installing crucifixes in the ground under the four corners of their homes. Some of this, told to me sometimes with a note of scorn and ridicule, may be exaggerated or worse. On the other hand, Bharath himself was deeply moved by Hosein’s figure of Hyarima, and especially the passage at the outset of this chapter, with its clearly messianic and millennial thrust.
society. Bharath’s patronal role, vis-à-vis SRCC members, follows traditional styles of governance upheld by the PNM to which he belongs, with its established patterns of personalism, paternalism and authoritarianism.

On the ground, and face-to-face, it is very easy for these issues to become personalised, whilst forgetting established patterns and institutions of leadership and authority that have been inculcated in Trinidadian society at least over the last two centuries. For example, universal adult suffrage in Trinidad dates to only 1946, Crown Colony government (that is, direct rule from Britain) lasted until 1956, and the country has been self-ruling only since 1962. Unilateral decision-making, the supreme authority of the executive, limited popular input, the lack of accountability, amongst other features, were hallmarks of colonial rule added to what the Trinididian economist and political commentator Lloyd Best regularly critiques as the post-independence legacy of “Doctor Politics”. Looking within the SRCC, it would have been surprising to find a radical departure from such norms. Moreover, none of these patterns date to the institution of the presidency: many of the elder members recall past Queens of the Caribs who treated even elderly members as children, and, in one case, Queen Maria Werges slapped an adult member in the face merely for having disagreed with her during a meeting.

Patronage shapes the vision some SRCC members have on the question of how the SRCC ought to be organised. Some members complain of the SRCC’s lack of a material welfare dimension that would benefit its members. One member complained of the President’s failure to broker local work contracts for members, such as securing a deal to win a road works contract for SRCC members via the PNM and the Borough Council so that they could maintain orphan roads in the area. This view of the SRCC also stresses the need for the organisation to serve as a credit and welfare society. The notion of operating the SRCC as a cooperative, with communal sharing and reciprocity, is not very popular. The same informant who argued for a welfarist thrust for the SRCC, scoffed at the idea of members getting together to work on joint business ventures that they would own, saying: “partnership is leaky ship”.

In contemporary Trinidad, the politician, especially the maximum leader, the chief of the party, occupies one of the most important positions in patron-client relationships, and the demand for loyalty is absolute. At a PNM rally that I attended in Arima, on 23 June 1999, for upcoming Local Government elections, the main theme simply seemed to be the condemnation of the increasing numbers of elected PNM politicians defecting from the party, with many references to “Judas” and the “blight of frog-hoppers”.9 When Bharath considered approaching the ruling UNC with a project proposal for lands, a national holiday, and new funds for the SRCC, the weight of PNM constraint made itself felt. Once Bharath’s hopes for being selected as the next mayor of Arima were scuttled,10 he finally approached the UNC Prime Minister, Basdeo Panday, and by March 2000 he had won new funds for a regional gathering of indigenous peoples hosted by the SRCC as well as a promise by the Prime Minister to consider a national commemorative holiday as a “Day of Recognition” to be called “Amerindian Heritage Day” and celebrated each October.11

Apart from political leaders, business leaders also exercise an important role as patrons in contemporary Trinidad and in the case of the SRCC. For example, while attending festivals organised by the National Parang Association of Trinidad and Tobago (NPATT), which often works as partner of the SRCC (and includes two of its bands), I noticed the prominence of corporate sponsorship: Fernandes (rum), Carib (beer), Courts (department stores), Black & White

9 The Member of Parliament for Arima itself, as well as at least two former PNM mayors of Arima, had defected to the ruling United National Congress. When loyalty is taken as a given, such stunning behaviour is denounced as virtual treason.
10 As I mentioned Bharath’s mayoral aspirations, I should indicate that mayors in Trinidad are not necessarily elected as such, or may not be elected at all. A mayor is appointed by the central party executive—the maximum leader in practice—of the party winning the most seats on a municipal council. Either a winning candidate is selected as the mayor, or an alderman, the latter being appointed by a party to a council rather than elected. Councillors are instructed on how to vote by the leaders of their parties, as one of my informants on the Arima Borough Council explained while indicating letters from the PNM leader with the statement “You are hereby instructed to vote for...”. Indeed, the Mayor of Arima for the period 1993-1996, Rose Janeire, was not elected by a single voter: she was first appointed Alderman by the PNM executive, and then appointed Mayor by the same executive.
(whisky), Radio 100 FM—these alongside the physical presence and endorsement by the Member of Parliament for Arima, Dr. Rupert Griffith, and the Minister of Culture, Senator Dr. Daphne Phillips. A large part of the SRCC’s promotional efforts, projects, events, and goals are also directed at gaining patrons, that is, those who fund, who give gifts, who defend and otherwise aid the SRCC.

In terms of the structural position of those who do the manual work in the SRCC, issues of loyalty and trust are paramount. At least three of the elders indicated that it was a matter of courtesy and decency for them to perform personal service for the President, regardless of whether or not it was “Community business”. Two of these same individuals also recalled that, at one time, prior to the state’s funding of the Santa Rosa Festival, it was the established practice that SRCC members would set up vending stalls around the Church during the Festival, and all monies earned were passed on to Bharath to help meet the costs of the Festival. Most of the few younger SRCC members today view such a practice with suspicion and balk at the idea of turning over profits to someone else.\(^{12}\) While the ‘peons’ of the SRCC may be expected by their ‘superiors’ to provide work when required, they in turn expect some form of compensation. In times that compensation did not materialise, or was inadequate, members, even relatives of Bharath, abandoned the SRCC altogether.

**A Profile of the Broker-Patron Network**

Each individual broker injects certain inputs into the representation of the SRCC, and reflects certain tendencies present within the wider local and global settings. Some of the various interests, institutions and tendencies that are embodied even by single individuals, can be listed as follows: the party and the state (Bharath and Rose Janeire); the authority of the Catholic matriarch/healer/

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\(^{12}\) Of course, there are also elders whose favourite memories do not centre on such selfless devotion, as one of my informants who instead preferred to recount how Queen Maria Werges would collect a large wooden donation box that had been passed around the church during the High Mass for the Festival, and then gather the members round, unlock the box in front of them, and share the donations amongst them in equal amounts. This was a time prior to Bharath, when the Santa Rosa Festival had no overt, calculated costs, and when labour was donated in return for food and rum, and cash donations were shared out.
religious leader (the Queen); the mass media (Elma Reyes and Irene Medina); academia (Beryl Almarales and Peter Harris); New Age aboriginality and environmental consciousness (Cristo Adonis, Vincent La Croix and Courtenay Rooks); ties to Canadian First Nations (Susan Campo); pan-Caribism (Ricardo Cruz and John Stollmeyer); the Catholic Church and its ‘authorised’ history of Arima (Father Donovan and Patricia Elie); organised Parang (Jacqueline Khan and Cynthia Ross); private business interests (Rose Janeire, Balliram Maharaj), amongst others. Each leading SRCC member has at least one ‘important’ and ‘respectable’ ally from outside the SRCC. Moreover, a great deal of effort and time is spent by each SRCC member in either working with their extra-SRCC colleagues or in cultivating relationships with extra-SRCC brokers.

The predominant interests represented by brokers centre on the church and the state. At least two of the leading SRCC brokers have a strong attachment to the church. The conduct of the Santa Rosa Festival and the work of representing Caribs as a cornerstone of Arima’s history—both being vital projects of the SRCC and Bharath—demand a close working relationship with the Catholic Church in Arima. In addition, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, the SRCC headquarters is itself located on church property. The SRCC has also had at least three PNM politicians directly and immediately involved with it: Ricardo Bharath himself, Melan Garcia, and Rose Janeire (during the period of my research). Ties to the state are fundamental, given that the Ministry of Culture and the Arima Borough Council provide all of the SRCC’s funding. Bharath himself works within the local arm of the state, and is the Councillor responsible for Culture.

I now wish to turn our attention to an overview of some of the key SRCC and allied brokers mentioned thus far.
Brokers in the Carib Community

Ricardo Bharath Hernandez: President Of The Santa Rosa Carib Community

Ricardo Bharath once described his position to me as being “the one who got everything going”. On the other hand, he stresses that little of what I saw of the current SRCC was the product of his original intentions: “it just developed that way”, was his favourite way of summarising the SRCC’s reformulation. He emphasises that his original interest was the Santa Rosa Festival, “without knowing ‘Amerindian’ anything”, and not until he sought a formal hold on property did he ever expect the SRCC to be organised as a company. Of course, it is also true that Bharath played some role in the unfolding of the SRCC beyond his stated original intentions. While the corporate formalisation may not have been part of his original design, and the current SRCC does not function as a regular commercial concern, many of the rules, regulations, and organisational format of a corporation have nonetheless been maintained voluntarily, even after the SRCC’s status as a registered company lapsed in 1995. Formal incorporation was not necessary to gain the church lands that Bharath already occupied. What the act of incorporation did supply was an organisational framework that Bharath favoured. Bharath has kept the title of President, even when other options are available.

13 The SRCC actually already possessed church property when it submitted its application for registration as a limited liability company in 1976, as evidenced by the fact that Bharath’s home address then is listed on the application as being in the same location it is today, that is, on lands donated by the church (see Draft Copy of Declaration of Compliance of the Santa Rosa Carib Company Limited, Form 41, T-544, Companies Registry, Registrar General’s Office, Ministry of Legal Affairs. 22 September 1976).
Bharath’s attachment to modern and corporate forms of organisation continues into the present, evidenced by the care he takes at the opening of a meeting in announcing “this is a General Meeting” or “this is a Special Meeting”, terms extracted from the Companies Ordinance under which the SRCC was incorporated and which sets out the procedures and structures for company meetings. Moreover, Bharath’s preference is for establishing a “professional management team” to represent the SRCC.

Bharath’s experience abroad, and his reading of published materials on the Caribs, played a role in shaping his interest in, and vision of, the SRCC, by his own admissions. Bharath told Almarales (1994:23), as he told me, that while he lived in the US he was impressed by televised documentaries on American Indian Festivals. On his return visits to Trinidad he says that he was severely dismayed with the general state of disrepair and decline that the Santa Rosa Festival had suffered, especially its lack of “pomp and importance” (see also Almarales 1994:23). Bharath has also explained repeatedly to myself and others (Almarales 1994:23), that he was inspired to “restore the traditions and community spirit of my people” after reading F. E. M. Hosein’s play, Hyarima and the Saints. Most of those who have observed and participated in the life of the SRCC over more years than I have, agree that prior to Bharath “revival” was never seen as a course of action (Almarales 1994:34). Bharath invested considerable labour in elevating what he sees as the hallmark tradition of the Arima Caribs—the Santa Rosa Festival—to something worthy of national notoriety. On the other hand, even while claiming the Festival as his special area of expertise, Bharath has made an effort to include diverse interests in the development of the SRCC: “everyone has their area of expertise...someone might do or know something that I cannot do or do not know—likewise I can do or know something that they don’t”. On the other hand, Bharath is keen to maintain his primacy over these other specialists. Bharath emphasises that, above all, “recognition is the key: with recognition everything else will work out”. 
In order to build recognition for the SRCC, Bharath engages in a fairly wide field of interactions, with the following information based only on my own recording of events in 1998 and 1999. For example, in 1998, he produced the Amerindian Exhibit for the headquarters of the PNM. As Councillor responsible for Culture in the Arima Borough, he plays a role in organising most of Arima’s public cultural events, such as the annual ArimaFest celebrations of the various ethnic arts and crafts of Arima, and, he coordinates local religious bodies of all denominations for various festivals such as celebrations for Divali, Eid, Christmas, and the Santa Rosa Festival. Bharath also acquired connections, via the PNM, with two Africanist political leaders, Arthur Sanderson of Communities United to Fight Underdevelopment (CUFU) and Dr. Selwyn Cudjoe of the National Association for the Empowerment of African People (NAEAP). Bharath also has a working relationship with the person that parish priests have dubbed the “historian of the parish”, Patricia Elie, who herself works closely with parish priests. Moreover, Bharath maintains various catering contacts which regularly call upon him to produce cassava bread, wild game, and other “traditional foods”. As an expert weaver, Bharath gets contracts to produce items for boutiques in Tobago such as Roselle’s (which in January of 1999, for example, ordered 30 “finger catchers” at a price of $3.00 TT each), hotel shops, private villas, and the British High Commission. Bharath also runs courses in weaving for groups such as the Girl Guides and other school children. Bharath has delivered lectures at the Centre for Performing Arts on the campus of the University of the West Indies, where he spoke about the “retained traditions” of the Carib Community, usually providing a simple and concise survey and inventory of practices and items produced, often concluding with an outline of the SRCC’s aims and demands: lands, more funding, greater recognition, a national holiday, and so forth.

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14 Bharath’s memories may have retroactively enlarged and enhanced what the Santa Rosa Festival really was, or, he may simply have wanted to see something that was grander, with more pomp and circumstance.
Bharath’s field of interactions go beyond the Arima level. At the national level, he has to maintain contact with various ministries, especially the Ministry of Culture, on issues of funding, reports and budgets for the SRCC, and in seeking additional resources for the Carib Centre. As in 1997 and in September 1998, his interactions go as far up as the Prime Minister’s Office, especially when coordinating a planned visit by the Prime Minister to the SRCC. At the international level, and as will be covered in greater detail in chapter 6, Bharath has also represented the SRCC on trips to Guyana, Belize, and Canada during the course of the 1990s.

Bharath is, as mentioned, an elected politician, a fact that stems from his brokerage work on behalf of the SRCC. Bharath indicated that a former PNM Mayor of Arima, Leroy Morris (1983-1987), “brought [him] into politics”, since: “I had given service to the community, I was told I could be a representative, and once elected I could see about getting more for the [Carib] Community, seeking for ways to benefit the [Carib] Community”. Arima has been an electoral
stronghold of the PNM, off and on, for the past three decades, thus joining the PNM seemed an obvious way to gain the right contacts at the local and national levels, as Bharath explained; furthermore, at the time Bharath first ran for office in 1993, the PNM also held power at the national level. Quite apart from representing the SRCC, Bharath also has to act on behalf of his electoral constituents in such areas as street lighting, road repairs, sewerage, rubbish collection, and the regularisation of land tenure for squatters in the Jonestown district. Bharath’s work with the Borough Council, and at times its various emergency meetings, occupy a large portion of his time.

Bharath seems to suffer from ‘brokerage overload’ at times. Previously I mentioned ‘brokerage overload’ in terms of having to deal with a wide variety of brokers, each having particular expectations of the SRCC and wishing to cast the SRCC in particular lights, such that Bharath’s actions often do not satisfy all interests equally. Apart from this, Bharath also laments having to constantly be on call as a spokesperson when interested visitors arrive at the SRCC Centre, to which his house is annexed, seeking information, photographs, and interviews. Bharath sometimes expresses annoyance that visitors can “tie me up for a whole morning” and that he has to do this and “get nothing in return”. As a result, Bharath will often send visitors up Calvary Hill to Cristo Adonis.

Figure 5.4: Pressing the Carib Case through the Media

In a September 1998 appearance before print and television news media (see Burnett 1998b), President Bharath argued that given its “contribution to the national foundation”, the Carib Community “deserves greater recognition”. He lamented the delay in payments from the Ministry of Culture, and attempts to “politicise” a proposed visit to the SRCC by Prime Minister Basdeo Panday.
In part, Bharath’s ‘brokerage overload’ is also due to the fact that he placed top priority on his constituency and Council work as well as the general activities of the PNM. Work involving the SRCC, solely and explicitly, was sometimes of less immediate concern. On the other hand, the priorities were subject to change. In January 1999, Bharath explained that he valued his political career, and added, almost as an afterthought, “on the other hand, there is the Community”. However, following the Local Government elections of July 1999, which resulted in someone else being appointed by the PNM executive to serve as Mayor of Arima, it became clear to Bharath that he would never become the Mayor. By November 1999, Bharath exclaimed at an SRCC meeting: “I am totally disgusted with politics. Politicians just look to see how they could use you”. This ushered in 2000, which saw a year that was unusually packed with a variety of SRCC events, conferences, and almost a dozen media appearances, not to mention Bharath’s fruitful meeting with Prime Minister Panday, the outcomes of which shall be detailed later.

Figure 5.5:
Ricardo Bharath, Political Leader

At the podium is Ricardo Bharath, opening the PNM rally held in Arima in June of 1999, during the Local Government electoral campaign. Bharath was called upon, as an incumbent candidate for a seat on the Arima Borough Council, to offer a prayer for the opening of the rally. Bharath called upon God to help the PNM defeat the “forces of evil” besieging the society, a thinly veiled reference to the nationally dominant United National Congress.

15 Being elected to his third term restricted any future chances of being a Mayor as a PNM candidate, given that the PNM executive tends to frown upon and often impedes candidates from seeking municipal office for more than three terms.
Elma Lathuillerie Reyes: Public Relations and Research Officer of the Santa Rosa Carib Community

The late Elma Reyes, who passed away in 2000, first encountered the SRCC as a journalist in the late 1970s, and shortly thereafter became a full-time spokesperson for the SRCC as the group’s Public Relations and Research Officer. She authored a dozen newspaper articles on the SRCC, co-authored a chapter with British archaeologist Peter Harris (Harris & Reyes 1990), self-published a booklet on the SRCC (Reyes 1978), as well as a booklet that highlighted Carib cultural inputs into Trinidadian Christmas traditions (Reyes 1996). Reyes also prepared many of the SRCC documents cited in this work. Almarales summed up Reyes’ contribution thus: “[she] devotes a lot of her time to helping the SRCC discover and preserve their culture and oral traditions and to carve a niche among the I.P. [Indigenous Peoples] of the world” (1994:30).

Reyes entered journalism in the 1960s. In that decade she lived twice in the United States, for two-year periods, living in the Bronx and Brooklyn, New York, where she wrote for the New York Courier. Back in Trinidad, Reyes became, as she explained, a tabloid writer covering local beauty pageants. She was also an avid aficionado of Parang music. A great deal of the framing and reinterpretation

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16 The latter was a Black-owned newspaper and Reyes was hired for being a “Black West Indian”, as she said the editors described her, with the intention of helping to bridge the gap between African Americans and Caribbean Americans who viewed each other in antagonistic terms.
of the SRCC in terms of ‘the Amerindian contribution to the national foundation’, ‘Amerindians as the bedrock of the national heritage’, and in terms of Amerindians as possessing valuable ‘ecological wisdom’ and special ‘knowledge of alternative life-ways’, owes its origins to the promotional media work done by Reyes. She zealously promoted Trinidad’s Amerindians as the cultural cradle of an authentic, local, Trinidadian nationhood:

The only “roots” of this nation are those planted by the first nations, for all other aspects of our culture and survival systems are transplants, branches which were successfully “budded” to the main tree which existed long before their arrival. The denial of indigenous systems and the contribution of the “first nations” in present day Trinidad and Tobago can only be described as base ingratitude. [Reyes 1998]17

From the late 1970s until the mid-1990s, Bharath and Reyes worked in close partnership. Reyes first met Bharath when he approached various newspapers to post an advertisement, and she became interested in the SRCC then, added to interest she had in Arima given her family connections. As a researcher for the SRCC, Reyes was criticised on occasion, either directly or in veiled comments, for being an “outsider” speaking for the Caribs—these episodes occurred before my time in Trinidad, and the details are rather unclear, apart from these general outlines. Both Bharath and Reyes recounted these criticisms. The closest I got to this debate was in a 1995 Op-Ed article of Reyes in the Trinidad Guardian, where she wrote:

I want to publicly inform that I have never promoted myself as a member of the Santa Rosa Caribs although I do have some Amerindian branches on my family tree. I became involved with their representative body AT THEIR REQUEST [capitalised in the original] due to the fact that I am related directly or indirectly to several of the families of the community, and was at that time a member of the working press. My role has been that of research and public relations representative, and it is an insult to the intelligence and retained knowledge of the Santa Rosa Caribs and other indigenous people of the region for anyone to insinuate that

17 It is common practice for SRCC brokers to complain of neglect, even in the midst of recognition and funding. I call this “the value of a zero”, meaning that they take everything that has been gained and assign a value of zero to it, as a means of clamouring for further assistance and “greater recognition” as Bharath puts it.
the information I have been able to share did not emerge from them. [Reyes 1995]

Rising to Reyes’ defence, Almarales states, “she is in fact qualified to be a member of the community. Her ancestors were ‘peones’ from Venezuela” (1994:29), once more reaffirming this assimilation of Venezuelan immigrants into the Carib history of Trinidad (see chapter 3), and, more importantly, emphasising SRCC brokers’ own desire to blur the dividing lines between themselves and important ‘outside’ brokers.

Reyes’ work has not gone unacknowledged, at least at a formal level of recognition, a fact that added to her importance as a broker for the SRCC. In her home, I saw plaques and awards from the Arima Borough Council, Carib Breweries, and the United Sporting Organization for her “services in community development”. In addition, in 1972 she won the Best Children’s Illustrated Book award for her book on Trinidad’s heritage, *Trini and Toby Heritage*, as well as the National Text Book Competition.

Her closest contacts outside the SRCC were: Holly Betaudier, an Arimian who is nationally recognised as an ardent promoter of Parang; another friend of hers was the veteran Parrandero Paul Castillo, also responsible for promoting Parang nationally; and, the holder of the franchise for Trinidad’s arm of the Miss Universe pageant, Kim Sabeeney. This work, and the influence of these contacts, made their presence felt in the development of the SRCC.

Reyes’ work in community development with respect to the SRCC included the promotion of ‘Carib traditions’ to audiences of school children, still one of the primary and frequent classes of visitors that the SRCC receives. Moreover, Reyes, on the advice of Holly Betaudier, founded the Carib Fiesta Queen pageant which was held on some occasions in the early 1980s and which produced the SRCC’s long-standing Youth Representative, Susan Campo. According to Reyes, she realised after consulting with Holly Betaudier that, “we had to glamorise Carib culture in order to attract youths to the Carib community”, hence the adoption of the pageant. The Fiesta Queen, as in Campo’s case, won a prize which consisted of two airline tickets to Miami, courtesy of British West
Indian Airways (BWIA), Trinidad’s international airline, so that she could meet with “youth groups” in Miami and visit a Seminole Indian reservation near Miami.

At one time, Reyes argued that the Caribs were “discriminated against”, scorned, and “ridiculed” because of the alleged cannibalism of their ancestors; furthermore, she argued that “because they’re at the bottom of the economic ladder,” and have no financial clout, they can be “ignored safely” by the powers that be. Given this perspective, Reyes inevitably compared the SRCC to other ethnic groups in Trinidad, especially in terms of the SRCC lacking state funding and support. As a result of highlighting this state of comparative disadvantage, Reyes militated to remedy this situation on a number of fronts. She was instrumental in establishing various connections and designing a variety of key projects for the SRCC. One of the first strategies envisioned by Reyes was to “co-opt” the services of the University of the West Indies and the Ministry of Culture and Community Development (Almarales 1994:15) for the purposes of, in the first case, research support for the SRCC, and in the second case, funding for the maintenance of Carib traditions as well as aiding its institutional development. As Almarales observed, she was successful in obtaining the support of the Ministry of Culture and Women’s Affairs which “has turned the spotlight not only on the local Carib Community but also on those of the other areas of the Caribbean by hosting two gatherings of I.P. [Indigenous Peoples]” (1994:30). In a 1981 interview with Banyan television, Reyes claimed that she had secured an agreement in principle from the United Nations’ Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to provide advice, expertise and technical assistance to the SRCC once it had successfully obtained land. Also, she claimed to have secured the interest and support of the Unit Trust Corporation and the Organisation of American States for sponsoring a 1993 indigenous gathering in Arima. Reyes worked with Bharath on the proposed Amerindian model village, which was meant to focus on cassava cultivation and processing, with the objective of making it a viable economic activity. SRCC members were to reside in the settlement. Yet, she argued, that this was “not a museum, but a ‘living thing’”, that could also act as a “tourist attraction”. Indeed, I
think a degree of museumisation is underscored in Reyes’ provisional name for this model village, “the First Nations Botanical Park”, which assimilates Amerindians to the flora and fauna of the country, enclosed in a “park”.

We see here a medley of internationalised discourses in the naming of the SRCC as “First Nations”, their alignment with international institutions which also serves to render them more ‘legitimate’ and ‘respectable’ as a means of making up for their lack of financial clout, and the association of the indigene with the environment. In telling language, Reyes drew on the international validation of the SRCC in the following manner:

For the benefit of the general public, and media persons who regard the community as objects for the butt of their bigoted remarks, the Santa Rosa Caribs are part of the Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous People (COIP) which has membership in Dominica, St Vincent (West Indies), Guyana (South America), Belize (Central America), and is in constant contact with representative organisations of the First Nations of the Western Hemisphere, and the World Council of Indigenous People. [Reyes 1995]

Reyes was possibly one of the first brokers to seriously inject these internationalised discourses into the reinterpreted self-definition of the SRCC, a fact that has helped to attract further interest from like-minded brokers in subsequent years. Reyes helped to foster the association between the Caribs and the internationalised discourse of environmental preservation. As she explained to newspaper readers, Amerindians “had formulated systems which allowed their usage of the assets nature provided without bringing about their destruction, and this is now acknowledged by every one of the major ‘ace-rights’ organisations of what we are told is the ‘First World’” (Reyes 1998). Moreover, she argued that while “within recent years there has been a growing number of bodies which all claim concern for the problems caused by misuse and abuse of the land and waters of Trinidad and Tobago”, she lamented that “not one of them has ever publicly acknowledged the wisdom of the people met by the colonists” (Reyes 1998). Some of Reyes’ later efforts would seek to build on this aspect of Amerindian contributions to local knowledge of sustainable living practices.
Reyes was also responsible for putting the SRCC in contact with the now largely defunct World Council of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP), as well as establishing contact with, and eventual membership in, the Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous Peoples (COIP), established in 1988. Reyes’ contacts extended to St. Vincent and Guyana. Almarales also noted that “after consultation with Laureen Pierre of the Amerindian Research Unit of Guyana, she [Reyes] was part of the core group selected to organise a similar unit in the SRCC” (1994:29-30). Reyes was instrumental in contacting the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College on the campus of the University of Regina, Canada, and getting a scholarship awarded to Susan Campo for the 1992-93 academic year so that she could study Administration and Management of Amerindian Communities (Almarales 1994:29).

One of her latest efforts, starting in 1998, was to militate on behalf of the SRCC in urging Prime Minister Basdeo Panday to visit the SRCC in an official capacity and to grant an Amerindian Heritage Week, or Day at least—as she explained, “everybody has one”. As Reyes further propounded on this issue:

Each time a new holiday is proclaimed, some national or visitor asks the representative body of the Santa Rosa Carib Community about the possibility of their having a public holiday proclaimed as well. The answer is always no. What the organisation wants, and has been requesting of every government in power during the 20-plus years I have been associated with them is: Official proclamation of Amerindian Heritage Week; weather-proof directional arrows and signboard in the relevant places to aid persons who want to find the headquarters; and properly co-ordinated assistance in having projects and Programs instituted which will not only allow young persons within the community to have pride in, and want to be involved in the retaining of the traditions and systems handed down from their ancestors, but to be able to properly share such knowledge with the wider society of Trinidad and Tobago and the many foreign persons who manage to make their way to Arima. [Reyes 1998]

In her last years, Reyes broadened her efforts and interests to include newspaper articles on Trinidad’s history and inter-ethnic relations. She was intent on establishing a Trinidad and Tobago Heritage Foundation as a non-profit body, and on creating a “Heritage Garden” to attract school children, featuring
handicrafts and courses on self-sufficiency and survival using local materials. Her position as Research Officer of the SRCC was later filled by Beryl Almarales and the SRCC Secretary, Jacqueline Khan.

Reyes’ perspective did not endorse the view that Carib identity could be judged according to either ‘racial’ or cultural ‘purity’. Her view, then, was against the notion that Caribs had ever become extinct. Instead, as she often argued, the Carib had been amalgamated into the foundational basis of the Trinidadian national heritage. Moreover, almost all Trinidadians could claim to be Carib—she summed up her views thus:

The original inhabitants did not disappear without a trace, nor were they ‘wiped out’ by the superior fighting skills of Spanish colonists. What really happened is that succeeding groups of arrived people interbred with them so that if all persons with Amerindian ancestry within our nation were to raise a hand to be counted, the number would not only be formidable, but would be inclusive of people who ‘look’ white, African, Chinese, East Indian, and ‘ethnically mixed’. [Reyes 1995]

Carib identity, for Reyes, consisted of some ancestral linkage to the pre-colonial population added to knowledge of sustainable and ecologically sound lifeways. She was an avid proponent of the use of the ‘Carib’ label as a valid generic term, as well as the adoption of the designation ‘First Nations’.
Cristo 'Atékosang' Adonis: Shaman, Parrandero

Cristo Adonis is the unofficial “Number 2” man of the SRCC, as Bharath himself once referred to him as the Vice-President. Adonis was a Police Constable in the early 1980s, and then worked as a transport officer, an Estate supervisor, and as a construction foreman under the Labour Intensive Development Program (1989-1995), and under its successor, the Unemployment Relief Program (1997-1998), as well as working as a nature tour guide for Paria Springs Eco-Community and Rooks Nature Tours. Adonis describes himself as the “ambassador at large” for the SRCC, alluding to the wide range of contacts and institutions with which he works, and within which he promotes the SRCC. Adonis embodies several tendencies all at once, and, as one may surmise fromFigure 5.7, he represents an altogether different dimension of the SRCC. The tendencies and interests embodied by Adonis can be summarised as follows: pan-indigenous internationalism; shamanic practices; environmentalism and eco-
tourism; the re-learning of Carib traditions from published ethnohistories and ethnographic materials relating to contemporary Amerindians in South America and the Caribbean; Parang music; and, he maintains an active presence in the local campaigns of the People’s National Movement (see also Forte 1999f). In some respects, his cultural practice and position within the Carib Community echoes that of Ricardo Bharath, while extending himself with greater determination into the realm of what Bharath calls “the recovery of ancient ways”. Indeed, descriptions and representations of Cristo Adonis by various institutions tend to magnify these key themes of his cultural practice. A delegation from the United Nations’ World Intellectual Property Organisation described Adonis as a “shaman within his community”, adding that “that he acts as his peoples’ [sic] spiritual and medicinal healer and counselor”. The WIPO representatives further added, reflecting Adonis’ representational interests: “he spoke about the need to safeguard the plants and other resources he views as indispensable for his work by protecting the environment. He referred also to the strong spiritual element of traditional healing in his community”. In some respects, Adonis’ practice runs counter to that of Bharath insofar as he tends to eschew the value of the Santa Rosa Festival as emblematic of Carib indigeneity, stressing that, given its colonial origins and Catholic nature, it is “not indigenous enough”.

The expression of an internationalised indigeneity, drawing heavily on metropolitan influences, characterises much of Adonis’ practice of reinterpreting, articulating and representing indigeneity for the wider national and even international audiences. Adonis has an especial interest in popularised North American Indian rituals (smudging, vision quests) and motifs (dream catchers, medicine wheels, totem poles, etc.), with especial input from a co-broker, Vincent La Croix, who had lived with the Sun Bear Tribe in the United States. A number

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19 The Sun Bear Tribe is a self-described “tribe in-progress”, composed of “people who are constantly learning better ways of serving the sacred web of life”, and whose “cross-cultural teachings are based on many sources of Earth Wisdom”. In addition, it describes itself as “not a tribe bounded by geography or ethnicity, but rather by belief and action” and consisted of
of Sun Bear books have been published, copies of which Adonis possesses and consults (see Sun Bear et al. 1988). To an even greater degree than Bharath, Adonis shies away from ‘race’-based definitions of indigeneity, preferring to define indigenous people as “Earth People”. Adonis explains in his statements that, from his perspective, indigenous identity is rooted in “feeling indigenous”, feeling at home in the forests and by rivers, and not by purity of blood. Adonis has cultivated close associations with New York-based Taino revivalists who, in some cases, have also been confronted with hostile incredulity over their “black” appearance. Adonis is not embarrassed to explain that his paternal side derives from Martinique and his maternal side comes from Maturín, Venezuela. Adonis’ identification is with what he describes as an ecological and globalised sense of aboriginality that is not necessarily rooted in any one location or culture, and to highlight this, his adopted middle name, Atékosang, means ‘The Traveler’ as he explained, and his favourite ‘logo’ (as represented by his Parang band, Los Niños del Mundo, or The Children of the Earth) is the Globe. Indeed, on one occasion he said he felt that all the world’s peoples would become one people, speaking one language, a statement that does not neatly square with anticipations of an exclusivist ethnocentric core in indigenous revivalism.

One of Adonis’s primary endeavours within the SRCC and in line with one of its stated projects, “cultural retrieval”, has been the cultivation of shamanic rituals and his own development as a shaman. This process apparently took definite shape in the 1990s, building on an array of local personal experience and his own exposure to international influences. Adonis’ emergence into the SRCC’s own formally enunciated position of shaman stems, he argues, from his exposure


In this case, individuals such as Adonis have ‘plugged’ themselves into the world of internationalised indigeneity and the globally heightened attention to shamanic practices, what some refer to as the process of globalised “shamanic transfers” (see Chalifoux 1999 and Guedon
to his great aunts and godmother in the village of Paria in the hills of northern Trinidad, where he spent many of his childhood years, and these women whom he recalls served as *curanderas* or *parteras*, as healers and midwives, also possessed a repertoire of ‘special prayers’ referred to locally as *oraciones*. Adonis also explained to me that he developed a personal acquaintance with Spiritual Baptist and Orisha practices, rituals and meanings. As a youth, he was a pupil at an Arima Hindu junior secondary school, and is still able to recite lengthy prayers in Hindi. Adonis describes himself as an ardent student of all religious knowledge, and he joined a variety of different religious groups at different times. He often describes this in terms of subversion and “infiltration”, relishing that he learned their practices and meanings “better than their priests”. Adonis’ donning of what SRCC leaders call “traditional wear”, began some time after 1992, as did his public performances of the Smoke Ceremony (more on this in chapter 6). Much of Adonis’ public persona as a member of the SRCC literally *embodies* various currents of internationalised indigeneity, as well as reflecting diverse currents of transculturation within Trinidad.

Adonis’ voice in the SRCC has been one that stresses the label ‘indigenous’ over that of ‘Carib’, and militates for the adherence to non-Catholic rituals as opposed to the Santa Rosa Festival, although he is a Roman Catholic at least in nominal terms. Moreover, Adonis has facilitated the injection of environmentalism into the SRCC’s discursive repertoire, calling for the preservation of certain rivers as “sacred and spiritual to the indigenous people”, that ought to be declared off-limits to development and contamination from nearby quarrying activities. He has also emphasised “recovering” and developing bolder, public, and easily recognisable expressions of indigeneity. In SRCC meetings, in contrast to Bharath’s more ‘nuts and bolts’ pragmatic discussions, Adonis says he prefers “mystical and spiritual analysis”, that he prefers to rely on personal “revelations”, and sometimes speaks with a prophetic tone. Adonis is one of the few SRCC spokespersons that I heard arguing for the “return” of excavated

1999). Interestingly, Adonis has adopted this originally Tungusian word rather than the Mainland Carib word *piache* or the Island Carib word *behique*, which refer to the medicine men of
Amerindian artifacts to the SRCC, arguing further that artifacts and bones should never be unearthed since this violation can cause both local and global disturbances, conflicts, and disasters. At one time, this was not the ‘standard fare’ of SRCC discourses, according to current elder members of the group. Like his ceremonial costume, this is something many SRCC members shy away from as too bold a departure from past norms. Yet, his personal image and his pronouncements have served to impress an array of outside interests, students and researchers, and especially the local news media which appears to be infatuated with him (as examples, see Chouthi 1998a, 1998b; Calliste 1998; Burnett 1998a), seizing upon his every ritual as “authentic” and “ancient”. Indeed, as if to lament the apparent solemnity and rigidity of the 1999 Santa Rosa Festival he was observing, a local journalist uttered to me: “Now, Adonis, that is the real thing! That is the Amerindian culture”. One has to appreciate that having been raised on a North American diet of images of “Indians” that consisted of feathers, smoke signals, and whooping cries, as shown in countless Hollywood Westerns and in American publications (see also chapter 3), many Trinidadians may indeed expect these to be associated with anything “indigenous” and may be rather disappointed or confused by their absence.

In terms of the ways Adonis acquires and cultivates knowledge of what he refers to as traditional practices, and the way he represents these processes, these also point to the influence of various brokers, and Adonis included me amongst them. Answering a question on this topic asked by a visiting folklorist from UCLA, Dr. Michele Goldwasser, Adonis explained that he drew inspiration from “North American friends”, adding, “I get knowledge of American Indian culture from them. I also have contacts with Taíno friends from Boriquen [Puerto Rico]”. Finally, he stated, “And then I get plenty from the Creator—and I speak to the Creator every single day. What I do comes to me from the Great Spirit”. At a large gathering at his home, Adonis once described the nature of our friendship, in a manner that made me wonder as to his uncanny choice of words that closely reflected the title of this thesis:

Amerindian communities in those regions.
The friendship we have...has helped to engineer in me a deep appreciation and understanding of old things I knew, and new things...whenever we get together, we could talk about anything, laugh and lime, but you can be sure that at some point he will start talking about something academic, about history, about knowledge I never had, and so I always learn from him.

While the words are warm, it is also true that a number of people supply information on Amerindian history and rituals to Adonis. In my case, I would make photocopies of chapters and articles, or purchase books for Adonis on items that I knew interested him: South American shamans, Taino pre-Columbian art, Amerindian myths from Guyana, and colonial writings on Trinidad's Amerindians as I have presented in this work. Others have done the same, and even mailed him printed downloads from the Internet.  

Inspired in part by groups such as the Sun Bear Tribe mentioned above, Adonis founded a new organisation in March 1999, Katayana, a word which he explained is derived from his Carib Language Dictionary and means “spirit of the tobacco”, which he sees as a shamanic reference. The 'sub-title' of the group is “Indigenous Peoples Spiritual Consciousness”. Initially, Adonis actually described the organisation as a “business venture” (marketing a medley of products and services, i.e., handicrafts, ajoupas), with an orientation towards a “foreign clientele” since, as Adonis explained, “foreigners will tend to favour shamanism and these things more than locals”. Katayana represents another nested cluster of brokers acting to produce and promote differently slanted representations of indigeneity for a wider audience.

**Figure 5.8:** Katayana and its Founders

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21 There is much that I could write of a reflexive nature, on my position as a fieldworker and on the question of rapport and methodology, but this is best reserved for elsewhere and is the subject of another paper (Forte 1999c).
Adonis has also constructed the “alternate Carib Centre” outside his home on Calvary Hill, Arima, whose construction was completed at roughly the same time as the current concrete SRCC Centre, circa 1996. This actual structure is quite important in the brokering process. It serves as a meeting place for the brokers who are also members of Katayana. Journalists have regularly interviewed Adonis in his ajoupa. Groups of school children are brought there when he is asked to lecture pupils on Trinidad’s Amerindian heritage. Foreign visitors, researchers, and tourists on their way to the nearby Asa Wright Nature Centre also regularly stop there. It was also the ‘home’ of his Parang band, where practices and rehearsals were conducted. The ceiling of the ajoupa is decorated with stretched skins of deer that he hunted; small plaques of native wild animals decorate each post; carved calabashes and maracas that Adonis makes are on display; an ‘altar’ with a platted palm backing and an earthen table top is also evident, flanked by spears, and featuring small bottles of herbal remedies, Taino zemis, beaded necklaces, maracas, and a feathered headdress; crystals, shells, seeds, stones and 19th century gin bottles are also on the tabletop; some of the rafters have dream catchers and medicine wheels hanging from them; at times as many as three hammocks are slung between the posts—all of these serve as a bold depiction of signs and symbols of indigeneity as conceived from within a modern context.
Adonis has launched himself on a variety of platforms to promote the SRCC to a wider audience. He has been active in building ajoupas for a range of institutions and interests, including the National Parang Association, the Arima Borough Council, a concert pub in Arima, and for various eco-tourist facilities in northeast Trinidad as well as for the Tobago Heritage Festival (which on occasion has also featured Amerindian displays, smoke ceremonies, and children in Amerindian costumes). His brokerage network extends to music, as the lead vocalist of *Los Niños del Mundo*, performing in the National Parang Festival, on television and radio, and featured in newspaper articles stressing the ‘Carib’ and ‘shamanic’ qualities of his music (Burnett 1998a, Calliste 1998). Adonis rarely failed to hail his music as that of “the indigenous people of this country” prior to beginning his songs on stage—an act of “reclamation” as will be discussed further in the next chapter. The public prominence achieved via media coverage and competitions organised by the National Parang Association have expanded and bolstered Adonis’ network of partners and influential contacts, including Cynthia Ross, the President of NPATT who in turn has close working relationships with various sponsors and the Ministry of Culture. These connections have served to maximise the ‘Carib-ness’ of the Parang culture and the role of Adonis in promoting this heritage. His participation in the National Parang Festival has taken him across the country and placed him on television and radio. The NPATT President has frequently called upon Adonis to act as an ambassador for Parang in a variety of venues, including various conferences and tourist bureau meetings. His connections with NPATT also involved him in a Ministry of Information project on Parang and Trinidad’s *patois* language heritage, given that Adonis is also a fluent speaker of this French-based Creole language. Private interests, such as the popular concert pub in Arima (Sylvester’s II), and the Yacht Club comprised mostly of wealthy foreign visitors, have also helped to expand Adonis’ range of connections and opportunities to promote the SRCC. In addition, Adonis has been actively employed as a nature tour guide, and is often introduced to visitors as “the shaman of the Carib Community” and called upon to relate Amerindian tales while guiding tourists on various nature walks. Adonis regularly receives groups of
visiting schoolchildren, students from the University of the West Indies interested in what I call his ‘Amerindian aesthetics’ and performances, as well as job applicants for the Tourism and Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) who are required to write essays on Trinidad’s cultural heritage as part of their job applications. Last but not least, Adonis has also been an energetic campaigner for the PNM in Arima, in alliance with his friend, the Councillor for Calvary Hill, Melan Garcia. Moreover, he maintains an active presence on the local Village Council and the local PNM Party Cell.

Figure 5.9:
Cristo Adonis’ Cultural Practice

Left: Adonis on stage with his Parang band, Los Niños del Mundo, in 1998, as also shown on television. Right: Adonis as a Nature Tour Guide writing down his contact information for a visitor.

Adonis’ Katayana supplements but also competes with the SRCC from which it branched off, especially where the Santa Rosa Festival and issues of SRCC leadership are concerned. This has led to some strain between Bharath and Adonis in terms of representational objectives and differential rewards. Katayana, at the time of writing, was still largely nascent and definitely not as prominent and well connected as the SRCC, never having been featured in the press—indeed, I may have been one of only a handful of individuals to know of its existence.
Ricardo ‘Kapaupana’ Cruz: Shaman, Herbalist

Ricardo ‘Kapaupana’ Cruz, born in 1976, is one of the newer and younger members of the SRCC and in many ways his representational practice parallels that of Adonis. Like Bharath and Reyes, Cruz is also a return migrant from the United States, having spent several years in New York City where he had developed friendships with Belizean Garifunas (Black Caribs) and Puerto Rican Taino revivalists.

Like Adonis, Cruz has centred his energies on the revival/retrieval of traditions—yet, unlike Adonis, Cruz focuses especially on the recorded ethnohistory of Amerindians in the Orinoco region, more than American Indian cultures. Cruz is the one SRCC broker who comes closest to adopting a purist position, determined to specifically re-learn the Cariban language and Carib religious rituals. He was first introduced to me in 1995 by Bharath, who referred to him by his adopted Amerindian name only, and singled him out as the SRCC’s leading specialist on Amerindian cosmological beliefs, and as a
person who also possessed personal ties to Venezuelan Cariñas. Evidently, individuals such as Cruz are important to the development of the SRCC as a whole insofar as Bharath will frequently fall back on such figures when confronted with visitors’ perplexed or sceptical questions, such as “How is the Santa Rosa Festival Amerindian?” or “Do you have any Amerindian religious beliefs or traditions?” Cruz adopted an Amerindian name, prior to Adonis having done so, and has also been active in developing neo-Amerindian aesthetic forms in dress and body ornamentation. Like Adonis, he will use his Amerindian name, especially when meeting members of the press or visiting delegations of indigenous groups from abroad.

Cruz is frequently seized upon by the press, and others, as an “authentic”, “genuine”, and “pure” Amerindian. What observers see as his straight hair, aquiline nose, light brown complexion, and his manner of speaking with a soft voice in the somewhat staccato manner often associated with American Indian speakers of English, added to his fluent discussions of issues of Amerindian cosmology and culture history, only serve to maximise this perception, possibly like no other member of the SRCC. Appearing on CCN/TV6’s “Morning Edition” on Friday, 05 November 1999, the host, Paolo Kernahan, said to Cruz: “I may be a little town-centric,” but I have to say you are the first genuine Amerindian person I have seen in Trinidad”.

In a recent newspaper interview, held at the Cleaver Woods Amerindian museum outside Arima, Laura Ann Phillips reported the following:

A small group of students had just begun a tour there, and the forest officer who was conducting the tour spotted us. “Ricardo! Ricardo!” he called. Gesturing to Cruz, the officer said to the students, “This is one of them”. They peered at Cruz in the dim light. “This is what they used to look like. See the kind of hair?” He raised Cruz’s cap. “So, you have a real, live Amerindian in front of

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22 In Trinidad, “town” refers to Port of Spain.
Phillips describes Cruz as “an Amerindian shaman: a healer and holy man—a role found in most first nation tribes”, thus repeating the contemporary stock characterisations of native indigeneity in Trinidad: shaman, healer, First Nations, tribes. She tells readers, “his father, a member of the Taino tribe of Puerto Rico, used to tell people he was Hispanic or mixed with Chinese. Cruz’s mother is Trinidadian, originally from Lengua, and a mixture of the Karinya and Warao tribes”. Indeed, Cruz is one of the few members of the SRCC who will formally describe himself as “Amerindian”, to the exclusion of any other ethnic designation.

Cruz is particularly sensitive to the issue of ‘correct’ labels:

The terms indigenous peoples and first nations, Cruz said, were preferable to “Amerindian” or “Carib” as names by which to describe his people. “[The names don’t] define what tribe you’re from or where you’re from, but they reflect more respect for indigenous peoples, for first peoples”, said Cruz. The term “Carib” is a derogatory term, he said, introduced by the Spanish conquerors. “Carib means ‘cannibal’,” he explained. “That term was used to refer to people who fought back. That is the name which kind of stuck....Our goal is to eventually phase that out”.

[quoted by Phillips 2000]

Cruz undertook study in Agriculture at the University of the West Indies and maintains an interest in organic farming. He occupies a plot in the Cumaca forest northeast of Arima. In addition, he works with Francis Morean, the Arima-based director of HERBS, and is active in directing “guided herbal walks” for naturalists, hikers and eco-tourists, as well as furthering his ethnobotanical research on the medicinal applications of plants found in the Arima River valley. Cruz blends his environmental and eco-tourist work with his efforts at representing an Amerindian ecological philosophy, as in his interview with Phillips:

The Earth is our mother….Everything we need comes from the earth. The sun is a manifestation of God, who is our father….The sun is always there, looking over us. From the sun, we get light, heat, gravity and time. Everything would perish without the sun….Plants take light and energy from the sun, people, or animals eat the plants, people feed on the animal. People die and break down and plants feed on them. [quoted in Phillips 2000]
Interestingly, these statements are underlined as “Amerindian” by journalists, though on their own they appear to be ethnically neutral. Much like Adonis’ “vision quests”, Cruz also told Phillips that he “regularly spent periods of prayer and fasting in the forests to commune with...spirits”. Indeed, in emphasising that knowledge of herbal applications must be combined with spiritual ‘treatment’, Cruz thus maximises his cultural practice of representing the ecological and cosmological aspects of his view of indigeneity.

What Cruz does with more determination than Adonis is to de-emphasise the degree of deliberate revival characterising his practice, that is, the recent nature of both his acquired knowledge and mode of identification, preferring instead to cast these as passed down to him through the generations. In this instance, other members of the SRCC themselves take exception with Cruz’s self-representations. There is an anti-essentialist facet of some SRCC discourses on indigeneity, with some of the leading brokers fearful of overstating the degree of cultural survival in a way that would risk exposing the group to charges of over compensating for ‘cultural loss’—indeed, if anything, figures such as Bharath stress that the Caribs are a “dying people” (hence the need for recognition, ‘before all is lost’ as it were). Faced with these critiques and lurking scepticism, brokers associated with Cruz, such as John Stollmeyer (see below), are quick to defend his ‘authenticity’ as a representative of ‘indigenous cultural survival’.

Cruz has served as another of the SRCC’s human ‘bridges’ to indigenous-revivalist groups abroad, especially Tainos based in New York, maintaining personal ties with members of the Taino Nation of the Antilles led by ‘Cacique’ (Chief) René Çibánakan.

**Figure 5.11:**
*Ricardo Cruz and the New York Taino Connection*
Like Adonis, Cruz founded an organisation separate from the SRCC, *Kairi Tukuienyo Karinya* ("Hummingbird People of Trinidad and Tobago", or KTK), in October 1998, along with environmentalist/artist John Stollmeyer, and Jalaludin Khan, also an environmental activist. KTK formally described itself as an “offshoot of the Carib Community”, motivated by the “need to teach the younger generation”, and to “pass on the history, language and traditions of the Karinya (...the name the people, who the Europeans called Carib, called themselves)”. KTK’s founders stressed the need for “young ones to participate as equals with their elders in community events”. Moreover, KTK called on the society “to recognise the extremely important contributions made by the Amerindian peoples to our present knowledge and the necessary wisdom and understanding they offer to our future peace and well-being” (Kairi Tukuienyo Karinya, 1999). KTK, like Katayana, is an organisation whose brokers also form the constituent members.

**Figure 5.12:**
**Brokered Indigeneity**

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23 See also the KTK Webpage produced by John Stollmeyer, entitled “Kairi Tukuienyo Karinya” and located at: <http://www.angelfire.com/id/kairi/tukuienyo.html>
Myself (far left) perusing the pages of *Vine of the Soul: Medicine Men, their Plants and Rituals in the Colombian Amazonia* (Schultes & Raffauf 1992) along with Ricardo Bharath, Cristo Adonis (sporting a live Anaconda), and Ricardo Cruz in September 1998. The text, brought to our attention by Cruz, was eventually acquired by Bharath and Adonis via my access to Amazon.com. This is one very simple and everyday example of how "indigenous knowledge" is internationally spread, highlighted, and acquired via broker networks.

**Queens of the Caribs: From Traditional Authority to Titular Figurehead**

"Unlike the other tribes, instead of a King they [the Caribs] had a Queen. Now the Queen of this tribe was a gentle old Carib woman. Her hair was quite grey, but her dark eyes were full of laughter. She was simply called Mama, the Queen, and everyone loved her"—*The Caribs and the Birds*, in Norma McCartney's *Tales of the Immortelles: A Collection of Caribbean Fairy Tales* (1989:15-16).

**Figure 5.13:**

*Recent Queens of the Caribs*
The “Queen of the Caribs” is one of the oldest recorded offices of the pre-formalised Carib Community, one that has been subject to various transformations reflective of a history of brokering and patronage. It has also been the subject of shifting representations by both SRCC brokers and the Trinidadian media (see Burnett 2000, Elie 2000, Andrews 2000b, De Coteau 2000, Assing 2000). Contemporary spokespersons of the SRCC, such as Bharath and Reyes, argued that the position of “Queen of the Caribs” was an imposition of the Church and colonial state.\textsuperscript{24} The Queen of the Caribs had little authority over the Caribs outside of the Santa Rosa Festival. Her primary functions, during the Festival period, consisted of overseeing preparations for the Festival, and acting as the representative and spokesperson for the Carib Community—indeed, she was the prime cultural broker.

My impression is that the contemporary Queen of the Caribs represents a convergence of cultural influences and fossilised elements of practices pertaining to different moments in the history of Arima’s Amerindians, from various declines and revivals, obtaining from periods of neglect and interest, and shaped by immigrations of diverse peoples into Arima, and all shrouded by incomplete historical research based on fragments of knowledge and passing mentions in old texts. For example, in the mid-1800s local historical writings make reference to a

\textsuperscript{24} Reyes once advanced the argument that a female was chosen to lead the Caribs since women were the first to convert to Catholicism, but this is an argument that, in my view, lacks credibility as much as it lacks historical evidence.
King and Queen of the Santa Rosa Festival, selected from the Amerindian population of the Arima Mission. As de Verteuil wrote: “The village of Arima was formerly, and for a long time, celebrated for its festival of Santa Rosa, the patron saint of the mission. On that day the Indians elected their king and queen—in general, a young man and young girl—and all appeared in their best apparel and most gawdy ornaments” (1858:301, emphasis added). There is no indication whether these figures carried any responsibilities of any kind. De Verteuil further explained: “Once every year, they elected, with the sanction of the corregidor, a king and queen to preside over their festivities, and to act as their principals on solemn occasions” (1858:300). For this period, early- to mid-1800s, there is no mention of either a paramount King or Queen ruling over the young king and queen of the festival day. Indeed, the institution of an elderly lady as Queen, who remained in place for years, may well have started in the late 1800s, and may have emerged out of this previous and temporary institution. The SRCC’s official list of Carib Queens reaches back only to the 1880s, starting with Dolores Medrano (Ma Gopaul), followed by Dolores McDavid, Doyette London, Maria Werges, ‘Dolly’ Martinez, Edith Martinez, Justa ‘May’ Werges, and now Valentina Medina (see also Almarales 1994:19).25

By the time Bharath instituted the position of President, in the 1970s, the limited authority and representational responsibilities of the Queen were supplanted by the President, thus reducing her to a figurehead whose office was retitled “Titular Queen’. “It has always been customary for the reigning ‘Queen’ to

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25 It is possible that a more formalised position of overall Queen emerged in the late 1800s also as a result of Spanish-Amerindian immigrants from Venezuela moving into Arima. One of their most popular religious rituals was, and in some cases still is, the Velorio de la Cruz (the Cross Wake) and La Cruz de Mayo. The Cross Wake, often held in honour of a patron saint, one of the most popular having been St. Raphael, involved a ritual that structurally is very similar to today’s Santa Rosa Festival, though the latter occurs in public and on a larger scale (see Moodie 1993 for details on the Cross Wake). The person in charge of the Wake, is the Ama de la Cruz, the family matriarch who controls the ritual preparations and who literally “owns” and “keeps” the cross, much like the Queen of the Caribs used to keep the statue of St. Rose in her home. The ritual also involves the decoration of the Cross, much like the decoration of the statue of St. Rose for the Festival, and a procession around the exterior of the house (much like the Santa Rosa procession around the streets of Arima). The madrina and padrino of the household ritual are structurally equivalent and functionally similar to the King and Queen of the Santa Rosa Festival. As I suggested, it is possible that this core of the domestic rituals of the Venezuelan immigrants who came to dominate the
nominate her successor when she feels that she is no longer able to continue her reign”, according to Almarales (1994:19). However, the position of Queen, since the 1980s and the ascent of Bharath, ceased to be hereditary, and contemporary leaders of the Carib Community now claim that it was always an elected position, even though Queen Maria Werges passed her position on to her daughters, ‘Dolly’ Martinez and Edith Martinez (sisters in-law of the late Queen Justa Werges), the latter having selected her daughter, Norma Stephens, as her successor, which Bharath impeded (see Almarales 1994:19-20).

What authority and responsibilities do the Queens of the Caribs have? This is actually a contentious question, one whose answers will vary depending on the speaker and the time period one is considering when answering this question. “The Santa Rosa Carib Community is always headed by a woman”, argued Ahee (1992:21), a statement more reflective of past practice than is currently the case. Today, the Queen is little more than a titular figure, appearing for public occasions of the SRCC, and having little or no say in the running of the Carib Community. The President is the prime decision-maker, controls funds, and has the greatest input in selecting the Queen.

Previously, as in the period dominated by Maria Werges and Edith Martinez (1930s-1970s), the Queen was the sole authority figure, with authority limited to preparations for the Festival period. She was responsible for all cleaning and decorations of the Church for the Festival, as well as cooking and providing food for those who worked for the Festival, and in leading prayers and the procession on the Festival Day. The Queen also received and controlled whatever funds or donations were forthcoming for the preparations for the Festival.

In the contemporary SRCC, I was told by key spokespersons that the Queen was elected for her knowledge of Carib traditions, her ability to pass on that knowledge and offer training in weaving skills amongst other things, and for her ability to deal with the public, receive visitors, and maintain a high standard of protocol on public occasions. Queens were selected, in part, for their ability to cocoa-growing regions of Trinidad during the Cocoa Boom of 1870-1920, may have impacted on and shaped the Santa Rosa Festival, or may have perhaps reinvigorated it.
receive “important guests” with the necessary degree of ceremony. With reference to Queen ‘Dolly’ Martinez (sister to Edith, who reigned for a brief period), Reyes explained that she was selected for the position since “her father was a white man, and she was ‘fair’….She was beautiful….She could eat with a knife and fork, she could set a table in the European style, and she could deal with outsiders and foreigners”.

**Figure 5.14:**
**Queen Edith Martinez Teaching the Weaving of Terite**

A photo in the Santa Rosa Carib Community Centre of Queen Edith Martinez, circa early 1980s, teaching children to weave using the *terite* reed to form the cassava strainer (the *sebucán*, also known as the *matapi*) as seen at the bottom of the picture.

The recently deceased Queen Justa Werges was one of my primary informants on the subject of the rights and responsibilities of Queens. Justa Werges, with her patrician character and stately ways, was able to impress key SRCC patrons, such as former Prime Ministers, mayors, priests, bishops, and members of the press. In addition, her weaving skills have been held in very high regard by most of her visitors with whom I spoke.

**Figure 5.15:**
**Queen Justa Werges and Prime Minister Manning**

This photograph from Almarales (1994), shows Queen Justa Werges blessing Prime Minister Patrick Manning sometime between 1991 and 1993, during his attendance at the Santa Rosa Festival.
Queen Justa reinterpreted herself as an instrument of divine intervention and her fervent religiosity heavily marked the several visits I had with her (blessings, prayers in Spanish, prayers before entering her home, sprinklings of Holy Water, and so forth). “I am here doing the work of Jesus Christ!” she exclaimed on occasion. She recounted a time she had died from stroke: “When I passed away, Jesus Christ sent me back. He told me: ‘You have work to finish. You must return’”. As an expert in *oraciones*, much dreaded by some non-Hispanic Trinidadians for their allegedly malignant magical powers, Queen Justa pointed out: “When Queen and Government after you, you cannot escape”. “The Queen works for Church and State”, she would add. Justa Werges would proudly point to a framed certificate on the wall of her tapia home, indicating Pope John Paul II’s official blessings for her ascent to office, and she recalled with stout pride the mass said on the day of her coronation, presided over by the admiring parish priest of Arima, Father (now Bishop) Malcolm Galt. “The Queen”, she emphasised, “is St. Rose’s representative”. “When the members elected me, it was God working through them. Only God can remove me”, she added. The current Secretary of the SRCC, Jacqueline Khan, stated that regardless of any “troubles” with the Queen, “there must always be a Queen of the Caribs: when people come to the Carib Community they expect to see the Queen. The Queen is what dignifies the Community”. As one testament to the honour in which her position was held,
one ethnographer recorded the fact of *parranderos* of northeastern Trinidad going to Arima, “to sing for the Santa Rosa Queen” (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:65).

**Other Carib Community Brokers**

There are several other individuals who play important roles as brokers for the SRCC, yet whose positions are somewhat secondary to those outlined above and whose activities as brokers are less extensive, not as in-depth and less frequent. I will thus provide only a few brief notes on each.

Beryl Almarales, the current SRCC researcher whose membership in the SRCC and involvement in its development dates from the early 1990s when she researched the group for her Bachelor’s thesis (Almarales 1994), has a number of important connections with institutions that on occasion have been supportive of the SRCC; moreover, she has also used her network of contacts as a means of promoting the SRCC. Beryl teaches Spanish classes at the Venezuelan Embassy and is also tied to the embassy’s Andrés Bello Cultural Institute. That institute has worked to promote “Venezuelan culture” in Trinidad, as well as strengthening “common cultural ties”, as in Parang music, whilst also producing research on Trinidad’s “Venezuelan heritage” (Marquez 1979). Beryl also regularly serves as judge for Parang festivals organized by the National Parang Association (NPATT)—in fact, along with the SRCC Secretary, Jacqueline Khan, and Cristo Adonis, she is one of a group of SRCC members to have close ties with NPATT and to simultaneously work within NPATT’s administrative structure. Much of this work has helped to promote the “Spanish heritage” dimension of the Carib Community’s historical legacy and national contribution, part of the now taken for granted fusion between “Spanish” and “Carib” at least within the Arima arena, utilising Parang music as a vehicle for this expression.

Susan Campo has been the SRCC Youth Representative through the 1990s. She has also served as an “international ambassador” for the SRCC via her trips to visit indigenous communities in Dominica, Florida, and Canada. She is graduate of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College’s program in the administration and management of Amerindian communities, one of a group of students from
Caribbean Amerindian communities granted scholarships by that institution during the Columbian quincentennial year of 1992, a fact that also allowed her to directly interact with individuals from Dominica, St. Vincent, Guyana and Belize. In 1991, along with Bharath, she represented the SRCC at a hemispheric gathering of hundreds of indigenous communities at a conference held in Ottawa and hosted by the Assembly of First Nations of Canada. It is especially in the context of international indigenous delegations gathering in Arima, the media events that result, and the receptions that the SRCC organises, that Susan Campo is most visible as a representative.

One individual, who is not a formal member of the SRCC and yet exercises some presence not just within the SRCC but on the national plane as well, is Catherine Ramirez, who resides in Miami. The first time I met her was on the occasion of the SRCC press conference in September 1998, and she is shown seated at the left of Bharath in Figure 5.4. She has proclaimed herself the “Carib Indian Tribal Queen of Miami”, and claims to represent a Trinidadian Carib community resident in Miami.26 While her title is self-appointed, she does in fact wear the title on her sleeve, as it were. She appeared on television donning a jersey with “C. Ramirez, Miami’s T&T Carib Indian Tribal Queen” printed on the front. She also hands out business cards with the same title, the symbol of an American Indian headdress, and the further title of “Tribal Historian”. Ramirez is also responsible, along with figures such as Reyes and Adonis, for injecting an American Indian discourse and symbols of indigeneity into the SRCC’s public self-representations. Speaking to the Trinidad and Tobago Television (TTT) News camera, she announced that the members of the SRCC were “pure Caribs”,

26 When asked by a member of the press to detail how she came to call herself “Queen”, given that the SRCC already has one, and how she came to be involved with the SRCC, she became defensive and grew angry. She argued that she was the great granddaughter of “the last Carib Chief” and that her family was from El Tucuche, in Trinidad’s Northern Range. None of my SRCC informants, I must add, was able to confirm her statement, but were nonetheless quite willing to tolerate her
explaining that, “you only have to be 20% Carib to be considered a pure Carib under Indigenous law”. Of course, this is not a “law” that is indigenous or even known to Trinidadians and the SRCC members, who looked somewhat surprised as she spoke. Her comment seems to derive from American debates and definitions of who is indigenous, and the surrounding issues of ‘race’ and blood quanta in defining who may or may not be included in tribal membership registers. Ramírez also explained that she is a regular participant in the International Pow Wow Festival, and that she is also “closely involved” with the Seminole Indians of Dade County, Florida. Ramírez has been especially active in “touching base”, as she put it, with Prime Minister Panday in lobbying for lands to be granted to the SRCC. On both of her visits to Trinidad she managed to arrange to have herself as a guest on the TTT morning program, Community Dateline, hosted by her popular media friend, Allison Hennessy, who, encouraged by Ramírez’s comment about her “beautiful Carib face”, stated: “Yes, it’s true, I too have some Carib blood in me”.

Brokers Acting in Partnership with the Carib Community

Courtenay Rooks, the director of Rooks Nature Tours and co-owner of Paria Springs Eco-Community Ltd. (see Rooks 1998), works closely with Cristo Adonis. Rooks’ primary interest is eco-tourism, and a great deal of Adonis’ energies are directed in this regard as well, serving as a nature guide, helping to refurbish the estate on which the planned eco-resort is to be based, and aiding Rooks in locating hitherto unknown or little researched plants or animals. In some periods, this is the primary source of Adonis’ income. Through Rooks, Adonis has attended a series of conferences and seminars oriented towards the budding eco-tourist industry in Trinidad. This has opened up a new field of contacts and opportunities for Adonis, also aiding him in his attempts to link the SRCC with

given her energetic representations on television and in meetings with the Prime Minister and Minister of Culture.

27 A recent case in point being the fierce debate and division between “pure” Seminoles versus “black” Seminoles in Oklahoma over who may be considered a member of the tribe and receive
environmental entrepreneurs and activists, a field of associations that in some senses is ‘ready made’ given the predominant and popular perception of indigenous peoples as guardians of the natural patrimony.

Francis Morean is the director of Herbal, Educational, Recreational, Biological Services (HERBS), and works closely with a number of SRCC members, especially Cruz, Adonis, and a few of the elders including Benedicta Perreira and Ian Capriata. Morean owns a large store in the centre of Arima specialising in herbal remedies, or “bush medicine” as it is referred to in Trinidad. On the wall inside the store is a photograph of one of his key aides and informants, Ian Capriata, an elderly man I spoke with and interviewed in 1995 and one who is often described by some SRCC members and those closest to the SRCC as “the medicine man of the Carib Community”, others also describing him as a “pure Carib”.

Morean highlights the “Carib heritage” in existing knowledge of herbal medicines in Trinidad. He has a manuscript ready for publication that begins with a section on the Amerindian heritage and its contribution to traditional herbal medical practice in Trinidad. A magazine feature on Morean was thus headlined: “Herbalist Francis Morean goes back to Trinidad’s Spanish and Carib past to retrieve the remedies of old” (Rickwood 2000)—once more stressing, in folkloric and bucolic terms, the Trinidadian association between “Spanish” and “Carib”. Morean works at highlighting the commodity value of Amerindian knowledge: “After gold and silver these (herbs) were the most eagerly sought-after among colonial products” (quoted in Rickwood 2000). The association of Amerindian cultural remains with gold, or with the promise of gold,

monetary benefits from a recent Federal settlement—see the article by William Glaberson, “Who is a Seminole, and Who gets to Decide”, in the 29 January 2001 issue of the New York Times.
is still one of the enduring legacies of the El Dorado myth. Morean has helped to broadcast and promote the depiction of surviving Amerindian traditional knowledge in herbal medicine, which still attracts many clients in Trinidad. “I’ve based a lot of what I have developed on intrinsic folk knowledge, oral tradition. I’ve spent a lot of time listening to older people”, he told Rickwood (2000).

John Stollmeyer, somewhat of a renegade member of Trinidad’s ‘white’ minority and a descendant of one of its most prominent families, has cultivated a close relationship with all the main brokers internal to the SRCC. Stollmeyer, a graduate of the University of Western Ontario’s Fine Arts program, is an environmental activist and artist, whose reputation is fairly well established in the national news media and is also present on the Internet (see Stollmeyer 2000, 1998a, 1998b). He is a founding member of Kairi Tukuienyo Karinya, a member of Katayana, and a friend to Adonis, Cruz and Bharath. In fact, he is one of the few brokers to maintain equally strong ties to all of the SRCC brokers, respecting all the main public facets and varied traditions promoted by the SRCC. Stollmeyer specialises in the design and sale of artwork and jewellery inspired by indigenous motifs and utilising native materials such as the calabash, coconut, and various seeds, crystals and feathers. Moreover, Stollmeyer, via his business, John-John Enterprises, and his foundation, Turtle Island Children (Stollmeyer 1998b), has a formal platform for regularly promoting the environmental and communal ethos of the Carib presence as he reinterprets it for the national audience.

In the official brochure of Turtle Island Children, founded in December 1998, Stollmeyer aims to promote a “bioregional vision” combining an emphasis on renovating community fused with ecological sustainability, a vision that frames his approach to valuing and promoting the SRCC. Stollmeyer explains that bioregionalism, “recognises, nurtures, sustains and celebrates our local connections with: Land, Plants and Animals, Air, Springs, Rivers...Families, Friends and Neighbours, Community, Native Traditions, Indigenous Systems of Production and Trade (emphasis added)”. Furthermore, bioregionalism, “embodies heightened awareness of place. As an emerging way of thinking and being in the world, it values the local and regional. We see the revitalisation of
places, people, and local cultures as the only sure way of healing the planet”, for, indeed, Stollmeyer hails indigenous knowledge and traditional lifeways as the only alternatives to “a crashing Western civilization”. His “Vision Statement” celebrates the indigene, with a stress on, “recovering our links with native tradition....Respecting the indigenous human cultures who have loved their home places for thousands of years, crafting a life according to the attributes of their specific geography”. He tithes sales of his products to the SRCC so as to, “further the process of educating the public to the important contributions made by indigenous peoples to our present knowledge and the necessary wisdom and understanding they offer to our future peace and well-being”. His work, he says, “completely satisfies the environmentally conscious new age consumer interested in intentional ceremonial accessories” (emphasis added). Stollmeyer’s motto is: “Think Globally, Act Locally”.

One of Stollmeyer’s projects, that grabbed media attention (see Mejias 1999), was his “return to nature”, involving the construction of an Amerindian ajoupa with the aid of Ricardo Cruz, on a five acre plot in Las Cuevas, in Trinidad’s hilly northeast.

**Figure 5.19:**
*John Stollmeyer ‘Returning to Natur*
Photo source: Stephen Doobay, Trinidad Express, 06/01/1999, p. 19.

Peter Harris, a British archaeologist with extensive experience in Trinidad, and who worked in the Department of
History at the University of the West Indies, played a fundamental role in obtaining official state recognition of the SRCC and annual funding from the Ministry of Culture to aid in the maintenance of the Santa Rosa Festival. Harris authored a series of ethnohistoric monographs on the Amerindian history of both precolonial and colonial Trinidad, along with some hypotheses on the likely lifeways of Trinidad’s Amerindians derived from modern day ethnographies of Amerindians in the Orinoco delta and the Guyanas (see Harris 1989a, 1989b). These have become a firm part of the SRCC’s knowledge base. In addition, along with Reyes he helped to broadcast and promote the SRCC further afield, at an international conference organized by the Organisation of American States (Harris & Reyes 1990). Harris also authored a few short pieces published in local newspapers aimed at encouraging wider interest in the preservation of Carib traditions and recognition of Trinidad’s Amerindian heritage (Harris 1990). For several years Harris worked in close association with Reyes and Bharath, until he took up an appointment at the Florida Museum of Natural History at the University of Florida at Gainesville.

Political activists in local Africanist organisations also took an interest in the SRCC, seeking to promote Caribs in symbolic terms as fellow travellers in the journey from slavery to emancipation, and as a fraternal community needing compensation. Arthur Sanderson, a former Junior Minister in the government of the National Alliance for Reconstruction (1986-1991), now head of a self-described “Afrocentric” organisation called Communities United to Fight Underdevelopment (CUFU), addressed a General Meeting of the SRCC that I attended in July 1998, stressing that he wanted “to make sure that the Carib Community gets a share of the national pie”. At the same time, however, Sanderson wanted the SRCC to join in with his campaign and wished to lobby on behalf of the group. Sanderson seemed to encourage the need for “Carib revival” given their apparent “dilution”: their degree of miscegenation and the perception that they only possessed a few paltry traditions. Indeed, Sanderson seemed dismayed and somewhat unsettled by the fact that the SRCC consisted of “mixed”
people, indicated in subtle terms in his reference to the Caribs of Dominica as
"having preserved much more".

Dr. Selwyn Cudjoe, another Afrocentric activist based part time at
Wellesley College in Massachusetts, owner of the Callaloux publishing company,
and founder of the National Association for the Empowerment of African People
(NAEAP) established in Trinidad in 1998, approached the SRCC early in 1999 via
Bharath's political ally, Rose Janeire. Dr. Cudjoe's own interest in the SRCC was
in helping it to become professionalised and independent of government funding
(controlled by the UNC). Otherwise, Cudjoe added, his interest in the Caribs was
in promoting "educational tourism", stressing the importance of "one's history and
community as an educational asset". He worried that "the Carib Community is
dying" and that it struck him as "quiet and passive". Cudjoe emphasised the "need
for affirmation" and the "mobilisation of resources" and said there was a "need" to
make the Carib Community a "viable economic project". In that vein, Cudjoe
promised financial aid in helping the SRCC to establish a museum-like
documentation centre on its compound, offering classes, lectures, producing short
publications, and so forth.

When she speaks of the Carib Community, Rose Janeire often says "we".
Janeire, described by Bharath as a "non-descendant", is a
former PNM Mayor of Arima (1993-1996), a former Alderman
on the Arima Borough Council (1993-1999), now a Councillor
on the ABC (1999-2002), the PNM’s Public Relations Officer,
and she recently became the Secretary of NAEAP (above). She
has been a long-standing friend of Bharath’s, and as an
established patron of the SRCC she can manifest somewhat of a
proprietary attitude toward the group. Though not a formal
member of the SRCC, nor one of its officers, her influence can
be decisive. For a considerable period of time, Janeire had
offered 10 acres of her land for the establishment of a Carib
Village, whilst retaining ownership and trying to dissuade
Bharath, who was interested, from approaching the government
while the UNC was in power. Her plan was not realised given that public funds could not be accessed for the development of a private project, funds necessary for paving a road into the land, electrification, and so forth. As mentioned before, Bharath lost interest in waiting for a change of administration and did, after much internal division within the SRCC, finally approach Prime Minister Panday who coincidentally was re-elected to a second term in December 2000.

In the past, according to one informant, Janeire had contributed “thousands of dollars” to the SRCC. Given that her patronage came with a certain political cost, as in keeping the SRCC within the PNM fold, some of the other key SRCC brokers objected to her involvement. Equally problematic for almost all of the leading SRCC brokers was Janeire’s suggestion to Bharath that he “quit” the SRCC, form a private business with her, and then selectively hire some of the SRCC members.

Melan Garcia, the PNM’s Arima Borough Councillor for Calvary Hill from 1987 until 1999, has also had a significant presence as an ally of SRCC brokers such as Cristo Adonis. In some respects, Garcia is to Adonis what Janeire is to Bharath. Garcia is also an avid Parrandero of some repute, and is a leading member of Los Tocadores, subsequently teaming up with Adonis to form a new band, Rebusca, which recently toured New York and Toronto, thus also helping Adonis to meet with representatives of US-based Taino organisations while touring. Garcia was also a participant in the smoke ceremony for the founding of Katayana.

Melan Garcia has worked on four major fronts. First, given that most SRCC members reside in his constituency, and given that he was responsible for Public Works in the Borough, he managed to secure URP jobs for most of the SRCC members, and especially a foreman’s job for Adonis. Second, following in
the tradition of some previous Arima politicians with interests in ‘Arima’s Carib heritage’, Garcia compiled a series of recorded oral history interviews with now deceased elders of the Carib community who had been active in the pre-formalised association a generation or more prior to Bharath.

Third, Garcia has taken a leading role in the Borough Council in transforming Calvary Hill View Park into a potential tourist attraction designed according to Amerindian themes. Garcia has received the backing of the Council and of the Mayor, Elvin Edwards, who indicated that over $100,000 TT had been invested in the project that began in August 1997. A local journalist wrote with respect to this project: “The completion of this ‘long awaited’ resort is geared towards preserving the Amerindian culture in the island. Edwards hopes the Carib community will pool together to make the park into a major tourist attraction” (McLeod 1998b). The Park occupies a somewhat ‘strategic’ location, not just for overlooking Arima, but as the base of the cannon used to signal the start of the month of Santa Rosa on 01 August each year, a cannon that Mayor F. E. M. Hosein had succeeded in having returned to Arima by Governor Hollis as a donation, reportedly, to the Carib Community (Garcia 1991:9). Melan Garcia himself was successful in “rescuing the cannon from neglect” by relocating it from the public market to Calvary Hill View Park in 1996, where it was subsequently refurbished and “relaunched” in a formal ceremony that also involved the British High Commissioner. With the aid of his friends in the Regiment (Garcia once served in the military), he secured a regular presence of the Regiment to “blast” the non-functional cannon on 01 August and three times during the Festival Day. Garcia once explained to me that the cannon “belonged to the Carib Community”, however he added, “you know how politics is”, saying that as the Councillor for the area he had the cannon moved so “I took it upon myself to act in the Community’s interest”. Indeed, Garcia argued that he was responsible for “reviving the tradition of the blasting of the cannon for Santa Rosa”. On every 01 August, it is Garcia who acts as the Master of Ceremony for the event, and not Bharath. Moreover, Adonis benefited from Garcia’s move in being hired to
construct a number of his ajoupas for the Park, as well as being paid to supervise URP work in cleaning up the grounds.

Fourth, and perhaps most ambitious, was a plan engineered by Garcia involving the Regiment in helping to construct infrastructure for the SRCC’s planned Model Village, gratis. This information was gathered from a series of interviews I conducted with almost all of the participants in the one and only organisational meeting in 1994 involving Garcia, four officers of the Regiment, Father Assing, Rose Janeire, Bharath, Adonis and Queen Werges. Plans fell apart over Father Assing’s urging that a home be built for the Queen, angering Bharath who had become estranged from the Queen. The Regiment was to provide materials and manpower to fence off a tract of Janeire’s land and to build a road onto the site along with other facilities. The Regiment also offered to renovate a building in downtown Arima, offered for free to the SRCC, that had also been rejected by Bharath, ironically, on the basis that renovations were required, but more likely because it was suggested as a possible home for the Queen and would thus stand in competition with the more remotely located SRCC Centre that Bharath occupies. An Officer of the Second Battalion that I interviewed, speaking on the condition of anonymity, explained that as many of the officers had families in Arima, were friends with Melan Garcia, and whose battalion had been embraced by Mayor Janeire as “her battalion”, the officers sought to do some “community work” in Arima. The Regiment was motivated to aid the SRCC since the officers were told that “the Carib Community was dying...Arima was losing its history...the Carib Community lacked land, a communal spirit, few youths were getting involved, and there was little historical awareness” of the Caribs. The Regiment can act autonomously in these matters, not relying on directives from Cabinet, and can also access its own resources. This episode is one of the few cases where contests between SRCC brokers took precedence over gaining wider recognition and support from interested institutions.

Mayor Elvin Edwards, a return migrant from Toronto,
indicated in an interview with me that “the Council feels very much for the Carib Community” (Edwards 1998). He stated that this was due to many if not most Arimians having “some measure of Carib in them”, adding, “I am sure that I have a bit of Carib in myself”. Mayor Edwards spoke of his perception that during the annual ArimaFest celebrations in August, of which the “Carib Santa Rosa Festival” forms part, “you will find there is much togetherness between the [Arima Borough] Council and the [Carib] Community”. Edwards stressed his intentions regarding the Caribs: “I want to...make sure that Arima is always looked upon as the main site where the Caribs descended and that there is still that Carib presence here in Arima”. Noting that during his tenure as Mayor the annual Council grant to the SRCC had increased from $500 TT to $5,000 TT, Edwards said, “the Council has looked at that Carib situation very closely. We have committed ourselves, annually, to a grant...to develop their festival...which is of great benefit to the people of Arima....I’m assuming it’s well spent”. In a manner similar to Bharath, Mayor Edwards framed his ties to the Carib Community as going back to his childhood and memories of the Santa Rosa Festival:

I grew up very close to the Carib Queen, in fact in the very same block. I remember from my early childhood, from the age of four or five, I remember the Festival of the Caribs...the Carib King...the actual view of that procession through the streets.

With reference to Calvary Hill View Park (mentioned above), Edwards revealed that the Arima Borough Council had conducted an essay contest amongst local schools to seek “an indigenous Carib name” for the Park. His intentions for the park included building stalls for members of the SRCC to sell their arts and crafts.

While Mayor Edwards publicly admitted to having had a very warm and close relationship with Queen Werges (Burnett 2000), he did not overtly align himself with any of the SRCC brokers in particular. With respect to Bharath, Edwards was apparently proud to boast on national television, on TV6’s Morning Edition on Wednesday, 07 July 1999, in the context of the July 1999 Local Government elections, that “we [the PNM] have Ricardo Bharath with us, and he is the President of the Carib Community. Now look at that!” The Arima Borough Council has also formally awarded and recognised members of the SRCC for their
“community development” work, including: Elma Reyes, Norma Stephens (daughter of late Queen Martinez) who in 1988 received a certificate of recognition from the ABC for community service; and, SRCC elder Julie Calderon honoured with a plaque from ABC on 05 August 1994, for her “dedication to the preservation of our Indigenous cultural traditions”.

The Santa Rosa Roman Catholic Church has long had a very important role to play in the history of the Carib Community, as we saw in the last chapter. What I wish to signal here is that priests have often acted as if they carried the responsibility of screening and vetting SRCC representations of the Carib role in the Santa Rosa Festival, often endorsing a particular local researcher, Patricia Elie, dubbed the “parish historian”, as the only reliable “authority on the Caribs” (sometimes even saying this in the presence of key SRCC spokespersons). Unlike Father Daudier and his “little Indians” in the 1870s, the current relationship between the Church and the SRCC is often fraught with tension and mutual suspicion, especially over the reframing of the Santa Rosa Festival as, in some senses, a Carib Festival, a perspective gaining currency in the local media and with local politicians. At the same time, and given this interest and support by politicians and the media, the Church has had to be very cautious in its attempts to circumscribe the ethnification and secularisation of the Festival. The result is an often ambivalent and contradictory endorsement and muted critique of the SRCC.

A significant actor during my fieldwork was Father Leo Donovan O.P., an Irish priest in the Dominican Order. He had an especially close relationship with Queen Werges, and an amicable relationship with Adonis. He also made no bones about his interest in countering what he perceived as the excesses of SRCC brokers’ self-representations as Carib,

Figure 5.24: Father Leo Donovan, O.P.
sometimes saying openly with respect to one or another SRCC member, "there isn't a drop of Carib blood in him". His emphasis was that "they are no longer pure, they are dying, they are small, always declining. It's sad but it's true", and he objected to the manner in which he saw them as "making up traditions as they go along". Moreover, he was firmly opposed to any attempts to secularise or commercialise the Festival.

The State and the Caribs

Brokers internal to and affiliated with the SRCC have indeed achieved a fair amount of success in obtaining official recognition and financial support from the state and from all the political parties in government (Table 5.1). As Bharath explained, "all the parties, in power, have done something good for the Carib Community". Two of the most striking of these forms of state recognition and support came in 1990 and 2000, with a formal Cabinet decision to recognise the SRCC, and, with Prime Minister Panday's decision to establish an annual "Day of Recognition" for Trinidad's Amerindians.28 In both cases, the language of multiculturalism is present, along with formalised recognition of the representative role of the SRCC. In a speech of 29 June 2000, Prime Minister Panday opened the "Third International Gathering of Indigenous Peoples" at the SRCC Centre in Arima by saying: "we stand on land that was the land of the ancestors of our hosts, the members of the Santa Rosa Carib Community. This land was their land. Then came the colonisers from Europe. The indigenous peoples of the Americas were the first victims of Europe's colonisers. The first nations were the first to be colonised in the Americas". Moreover, he stated, "We must recognise that this place was their space long before the other people who came before Columbus, as well as those who came after, those who came from India, from Africa, and from

Europe included”. Panday added, “it was inevitable that in these times of rising consciousness, the Caribs of the Caribbean would call for recognition and respect”, adding, “it is our obligation to work to ensure that our aspiration, our commitment, our belief that every creed and race should find an equal place should embrace those whose ancestors came before Columbus, as well as those who have come since”. The Prime Minister concluded by saying: “it will be fitting that Trinidad and Tobago concedes to its Carib citizens the position that should never be denied them, that they are our nation’s first people” (Panday 2000).

The Cabinet decision of 1990, and the full text of Panday’s speech in 2000, condense and epitomise the outcomes of brokered promotion and careful representation of the SRCC and indigenous identity and traditions, reflecting not just the ideational foundations of Carib indigeneity laid during the colonial period, but also nationalist, multiculturalist and more contemporary discourses on identity and indigeneity. The contemporary reinterpretations are what I signalled at the beginning as the products of mediation and brokering, and the formal acts of recognition and material support are what I classed as the outcomes of these processes.

Table 5.1: 
State Support and Recognition of the Santa Rosa Carib Community

- The post-1976 formalised SRCC received the assistance of the Community Development Division under the Office of the Prime Minister (Almarales 1994:14).
- The President of the Republic, Sir Ellis Clarke, attends the Santa Rosa Festival and receptions organised by Queen Edith Martinez.
- Under Williams’ successor, Prime Minister George Chambers, in 1982 the SRCC “managed to obtain a grant of $20,000 from Cabinet to build their [first] headquarters” (Ahee 1992:31).
- Prime Minister George Chambers attends the Santa Rosa Festival.
Work is started on Cleaver Woods Park, at the western entrance to Arima, featuring a replica of an Amerindian ajoupa housing archaeological artefacts and contemporary handicrafts and photos of the SRCC. This is carried out under the Division of Forestry in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Under Prime Minister Robinson, the SRCC obtained formal recognition and state support. The following is an extract of the text of the document of recognition.

**News Release, No. 360, Information Division, Office of the Prime Minister, 1990 May 08: Recognition of Santa Rosa Carib Community and award of annual subvention:**

"Cabinet has decided that the Santa Rosa Carib Community be recognised as representative of the indigenous Amerindians of Trinidad and Tobago, and that an annual subvention of $30,000 be granted to them from 1990. Cabinet also agreed that an Amerindian Project Committee be appointed to advise government on the development of the Community....as the oldest sector of this country's multi-cultural society, the Amerindians have, for some time, been recognised as having unique needs for their cultural and economic viability. Such needs come into higher relief and sharper focus as the country prepares to celebrate, Columbus' Quincentennial in October 1992"

- In addition to the $30,000 TT annual payment from the Ministry of Culture, the SRCC also received $5,000 TT for Amerindian Heritage Week in 1991 (Ahee 1992:33).
- SRCC Secretary Jacqueline Khan states that the SRCC formally received a "six or seven acre piece of land" on the outskirts of Arima, of unsuitable quality.

- In 1992, as Trinidad played host to Carifesta V, Prime Minister Manning's government allocated $250,000 TT to the Arima Borough Council and the SRCC, as the centre for Amerindian delegations from across the Caribbean (since referred to as "The First Gathering" of Caribbean Amerindians).
- In August 1993, the state in cooperation with the SRCC hosted "The Second Gathering of Indigenous Peoples" in Arima, in line with the United Nations' proclamation of 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous Peoples.
- In August 1993, the government's Director of Culture, Lester Efebo Wilkinson, formally applauded the SRCC for its "support of indigenous causes world over" and a plaque stating this was awarded to the SRCC.
- On 31 August 1993, the SRCC received the National Award of the Chaconia Medal (Silver) for Culture and Community Service, from the President of the Republic, Noor Hassanali.
In 1995 the state again aided the SRCC in hosting Caribbean Amerindian delegations for Carifesta VI, on a much smaller scale.

Under the PNM, the SRCC’s modern Community Centre was finally completed.

With the “Cultures of Trinidad” exhibition in 1997, Prime Minister Panday met with SRCC leaders and promised to “hold talks” with them about what they wanted.

In March 2000, Panday met with members of the SRCC and agreed “in principle” with allocating lands to the SRCC, as well as agreeing to fund the hosting of a “Third International Gathering of Indigenous Peoples” at the SRCC Centre in August of 2000, and agreed with the proposal to establish an annual “Day or Recognition” for Trinidad’s Amerindians.

The significance of these various phases of support and recognition has been the transformation of the SRCC into a public asset, both nationalised and memorialised, one increasingly dependent on state support and with a decreasing capacity to build on internal sources of material self-generation. Almarales noted, “as most of the members of the Community are either pensioners, unemployed or recipients of low wages, financial contributions are not collected at the meetings” (1994:12). Financial support from the state and its various arms at the local and national level have also served to increase the value of the SRCC: “for years the SRCC has had the unenviable lot of belonging to the lowest rung of the social ladder and to the lowest income bracket....no longer content to eke out an existence at the bottom of the social ladder....They are saying ‘Look at us! We are the First People!’” (Almarales 1994:55). Indeed, in comparison with state funding for other groups and festivals in Trinidad, the SRCC’s $30,000 annual subvention is substantial. Like the Santa Rosa Festival, the Hosay festival also received $30,000 (Baptiste 1999), except that Hosay occurs over several days, in a busy and
popular district in Port of Spain, involving dozens of bands each constructing a series of mosque replicas, involving the work of dozens of families and thousands spectating. In other words, the same amount of funding is provided for a festival that is, on all fronts, several times larger and more prominent than the Santa Rosa Festival.

It is also true that this degree of incorporation and reliance on state funding carries a burden as well, especially in recent times where the state has domesticated the policies of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank and sought to apply corporate managerial models to the making of social and cultural policy. The SRCC has come under the weight of what some call the new “audit culture” and the “political technology of neoliberalism” (see Shore & Wright 1999:558-561, 564), with maximum emphasis on state surveillance, accountability, budgeting, efficacy and profitability. Indeed, from my own reading of correspondence between the Ministry of Culture and the SRCC, I noted the Ministry’s emphasis that the SRCC should lessen its “dependency” by seeking alternate sources of funding and by developing commercial ventures (see SRCC 1998a, SRCC 1997, Rose Foundation 1997, Gomez 1998, Bharath & Khan 1998, 1997a, 1998b). We thus see the state decisively acting to shape and recast the role and character of the SRCC, pushing them more into profit-gaining activities and heightening its degree of formalisation and internal bureaucratisation by requiring annual reports, and audited statements.

**Conclusion: Mapping the Broker-Patron Network**

The focus on patron-client networks, mediation, cultural brokers, and the organisation of a matrix of multiple interests in the promotion, reinterpretation and recognition of indigeneity in Trinidad has been the centre of this chapter’s attempt to bring to life the ‘social organisation of Carib tradition’ that underlies the reproduction of the ‘Carib’ in Trinidad, and the multiple directions in which the ‘Carib revival’ is pulled. This focus was presented through an overview of the key contemporary patrons and brokers. The sedimentation of ideas generated in previous contexts and by previous actors—from the colonial canonisation of
‘Carib’, to its localisation in Arima, its nationalisation as a symbol of the ancestry of the modern nation, and its memorialisation as a ceremonial product that can be put on display—have varyingly been seized upon by an array of brokers in the present, each of the brokers working in a ‘joint venture’ of sorts with the SRCC. From an ethnographic point of view, I felt that it was obligatory to provide a detailed overview of who the cultural brokers actually are in this case, focusing on their interests and concerns, and the constraints acting on them, rather than leaving them as purely theoretical constructs. I thus sought to avoid discussing agency without detailing who the agents are, or unduly minimising the range of agents involved in a manner that would oversimplify and distort social realities on the ground. The complexity of the network of brokers and competing interests is evidenced not just by the number of brokers (even here, I could only detail the few who were prominent during my limited fieldwork) but also the many different social fields that they occupy and their relationships to one another. I examined the structure of interactions of patrons and brokers in terms of Trinidadian conventions of patronage-clientelism. An attempt at mapping the relationships between brokers and patrons and their various reinterpretations of the Carib is presented in Figure 5.25. I also sought to describe the spread of representational products that have emerged from various brokers’ reinterpretations of ‘the Carib’. It is this representational multiplicity and interactional multilaterality that I flagged as a defining feature of re-engineering.

Figure 5.25 presents a deliberate arrangement of the key SRCC brokers. These are grouped around three main figures, Bharath (the corporate leader of the reformulated SRCC), the Queen (the matriarch most closely associated with the Church), and the shamans, Adonis and Cruz (New Age and Carib revivalism). These divisions also reflect the generational transformations within the SRCC, the Queen being in her eighties, the President in his forties, and Cruz in his twenties. The arrangement of the public facets and offshoot organisations is aligned with these brokers. In addition, brokers affiliated with the SRCC are aligned with the particular SRCC brokers to whom they are allied. In line with the arrangement of SRCC brokers, their offshoot organisations, and affiliated brokers, are the
dominant representations associated with each tendency. Finally, in the outer ring, are the various patronal bodies that sponsor particular representations, brokers, and bodies of the SRCC. The arrangement shown in Figure 5.25 should thus be read in neither a random nor an entirely rigid fashion.

A primary aim of this chapter has been to detail the multiple interests vested in the ‘Carib revival’, as I discussed in more theoretical and analytical terms in the Introduction and chapter 1. The range of interests, even more than the range of brokers, tends to elude neat summarising. As I have shown throughout this chapter, these various interests range from the New Age consumption of indigenous spirituality, eco-tourism and ethno-botany, the construction of Caribs as central to the making of the Gens d’Arima, Caribs as the devout subjects of the Roman Catholic Church in Arima, Caribs as symbolic of the bedrock of nationhood, Caribs as part of the history of resistance against ‘white’ domination, Caribs as a folkloric cornerstone of Trinidad’s national heritage, to Caribs as a fount of different artistic aesthetics. One group of brokers therefore often does emphasise one set of symbols over another set emphasised by another group of brokers and, indeed, this wide range of symbols is available and offers diverse opportunities for attracting the interest and investment of a range of potential patrons each acting with different (yet established) assumptions of the ‘value’ of ‘Carib’ indigeneity in Trinidad. I am inclined to believe that without this multiplicity of interests vested in reinterpreting and valorising the Carib, there would not have been anything that could be called a ‘Carib revival’ in Trinidad.

In terms of analyzing the positions and roles of cultural brokers in this project, what I found interesting is the ‘transgression’ of the boundaries between ‘outsider’ and ‘insider’, of brokers sometimes also serving as the constituency that they represent, that is, a case where the brokers are not only intermediaries between a clientele and an audience, as Antoun (1989) defines the cultural broker, but can themselves be part of that clientele as well as (former) members of the audience addressed. I am inclined to believe that without these many and varied cultural brokers, there would not have been anything that could be called a ‘Carib revival’ in Trinidad.
The critical outcomes of these multiple processes, interests and brokers engaged in what I have termed the re-engineering of indigeneity in Trinidad has resulted in two critical outcomes, at least from the perspective of both SRCC brokers and myself. One of these is that one cannot speak of the SRCC as an isolated, possibly pathological group, comically or perhaps tragically insisting on an identity and history that are dismissed by the wider society. The second critical outcome has been consistent state support and recognition for the SRCC. Both of these outcomes reflect patrons' and brokers' legitimation, valorisation and dissemination of the 'Carib'. Both of these outcomes thus underline the *presence* of 'the indigenous' in the modern cultural development of Trinidad, which will be explored further in the next chapter.
Figure 5.25: The Network of Brokers, Patrons, Organisations and Valuations

LEGEND
A: Queen
B: President
C: Shaman
1: SRCC BROKERS
2: PUBLIC FACETS OF SRCC, OFFSHOOT ORGANISATIONS
3: AFFILIATED BROKERS
4: INTERPRETATIONS/VALUATIONS
5: PATRONS/INSTITUTIONS

PNM
UNC
NAR
"Ancestors of the Nation/ Foundation of the Republic/ First Trinidadians"

AFN, AMC, FSIN, SIFC, COIP, Dominica Caribs

"Carib Foundation of Parang Music"

STATE:
Ministries,
Arima
Borough
Council

"Heroes in the Fight against Colonialism/ First to Suffer Slavery"

CUFU,
NAEAP;
NEWS
MEDIA;
SCHOOLS

"Gens d' Arime" Caribs and Arima Identity

CATHOLIC
CHURCH

"Devotion to Church and Saint"

ARIMA
BUSINESSSES

Rural Past/
"Community"/
"Values"/
Household
Traditions

"Carib Catholic Devotion in Parang Music"

NATIONAL
TAINA

New Age/
International
Indigeneity

PARIA
SPRINGS
ECO-
COMMUNITY

NATION
TAINA

"Native Spirituality"/
Shamanic

ROOKS
TOURS

ECO-
COMMUNITY

TIDCO

Eco-Tourism/
Traditional Herbal
Knowledge/
Environmentalism

H.E.R.B.S.

TURTLE
ISLAND
CHILDREN

"Trinidad's Amerindian Cultural Patrimony"
Cultural Survival/ Indigenous Wisdom/ Recognition
and Preservation/ Heritage Tourism

WIPO, UNESCO, OAS, WCIP, UWI, NEWS MEDIA

"First to Suffer Slavery"
“Cultural identity rooted in traditional cultural entities has long constituted an important means of achieving social visibility and public recognition”.


“Particular constructions of Indian identity privilege those who correspond best to the idealised image.... The feathered headdresses that formerly were part of Kayapó sacred rituals have become secular political props and the sine qua non of activist apparel.... in an era when it often pays to be a ‘real’ Indian”.


“You will find everybody claims to have some little Carib blood in them”.

-----Ricardo Bharath, President, Carib Community.

“Villagers, like anthropologists, are culture historians, who are interested in the imagined origins of a custom and who take that origin to be a demonstration of the custom’s essential ethnicity”.


Introduction: Dual Articulations of Indigeneity

In chapters 2 and 3 I outlined the historical processes, social contexts, and ideational bases that went into making ‘Carib’ a canonical identity. Moreover, I also discussed how the figure of the Amerindian and the ‘Carib’, emerging from the political economy of European colonialism in the Caribbean, came to be ‘localised’ and enshrined in Arima. In chapter 4, I added the contemporary social
interaction dimension in the reinterpretation and valuation of the ‘Carib’, and of
the indigene in broader terms, with a special focus on the social organisation and
political context within which contemporary expressions of indigeneity in Trinidad
are developed and promoted. With respect to promotion, I focused on the role of
cultural brokers in mediating between diverse ideational materials of the past (the
canons of Caribbean history such as ‘Carib’) and current social institutions and
interests. I also identified patronage as the pervasive means by which “symbolic
investments” are made in Trinidad, underpinning the political economy of

The primary aim of this chapter is twofold. On the one hand, I will discuss
the question of nationalism and the reinterpretation of the Carib, that is, the
development of a sense of national indigeneity that is anchored within the
Amerindian past and articulated via the symbolic device of the Carib. In the
Introduction, I discussed the challenge raised by John Stewart (1989), whose
argument is that the anthropological literature on Trinidad emphasises its migrant
and “nonindigenous” character while largely neglecting the struggle to establish a
(Trinidadian) sense of indigeneity. In addition, I noted that David Lowenthal
(1972) found that at least from the 1970s Amerindian history played a key
symbolic role in West Indians’ search for national identities, framed by an
emerging cultural nationalism. Thus we witness in Trinidad the increased
recognition and institutionalisation of the Carib in narratives of national history,
added to the state’s nation-building efforts in seizing upon the proclaimed Carib
“contribution to the national foundation”. This is similar to the approaches of
Dávila (1999) and Duany (1999), who write of the canonisation of the Taino in
Puerto Rican nationalist discourse.¹ The Carib has been increasingly privileged in
nationalist discourses as the bedrock of the nation, as the territorial precursor if not
the biological ancestor of the modern Trinidadian, thus acting as a trademark of
locality whereby “Trinidad’s Amerindian heritage” imparts antiquity to the
concept of a Trinidadian nation. In this context, I will highlight examples of the

¹ Indeed, in various parts of Latin America the “Indian” has been folklorised as a founding element
of (mestizo) national identities, albeit much earlier than in the Commonwealth Caribbean.
nationalist articulation of indigeneity, as well as the organised dissemination of images and symbols of this indigeneity, and the regular and ritualised replaying of the colonial encounter of 1498 in Trinidad which created a new “Trinidad” whilst simultaneously paying homage to the ‘Carib presence’ in the encounter. In general terms, Rhoda Reddock observes that recently there has been “increased acceptance of aspects of the ‘folk’ culture as ‘national culture’” across the Caribbean (1996:3). This part of the chapter will therefore focus on the articulation of the figure of the Carib within this nationalised folk culture. If one had to choose a guiding motto for this dimension of the chapter, it would have to be Eric Williams’ designation of Trinidad’s pre-colonial population as “Our Amerindian Ancestors”.

On the other hand, I also explore the development and articulation of a Carib sense of indigeneity, within the framework of the wider society, by defining certain practices as ‘traditionally Carib’, and enacting and displaying ‘Carib traditions’ for a wider public, whilst extracting cultural elements from the wider society in defining and projecting Carib indigeneity, thus reinforcing the process of ‘the nation’ finding and seeing itself in ‘the indigene’. I investigate various modes of self-representation that SRCC brokers articulate and how presentation is itself an act of constitution, building on the material presented in the last chapter. The focus here is on the contemporary definition and presentation of Carib indigeneity by the key SRCC brokers, utilising the vehicle of ‘tradition’ as a means of projecting Carib-ness, in accordance with distinct and sometimes divergent aims of ‘maintenance’, ‘reclamation’, and ‘retrieval’. I therefore emphasise the SRCC’s work in producing ‘cultural events’ that display Carib-ness for a wider audience, and the resultant development of a ceremonialised or commemorative Carib indigeneity, meaning that it is intimately bound with, (1) public presentation in the contexts of key ceremonies, and (2) the SRCC’s official valuation by the state.

It is in the asserted ‘authenticity’ that is constructed around a body of ‘traditions’ through which brokers tie the SRCC to an ‘ancestral heritage’. Given that Bharath describes SRCC members as the “mixed race descendants of an extinct tribe”, he stresses that it is with the maintenance of certain “traditional
practices" that they mark the Amerindian "heritage", since 'race' (as in physical appearance) is unavailable as a clear marker of Carib ethnicity in Trinidad. In proclaiming themselves as 'mixed' and 'Trinidadian', even above 'Carib', this only helps to reinforce their own sense of belonging to the nation and of being perceived as such by the wider national audience. In being 'mixed', they belong to all Trinidadians—'true Trinis', a 'truly national indigene'—insofar as 'they are a bit of all of us'. Indeed, non-SRCC participants in key Carib ceremonies will often remark at the extent to which SRCC rituals resemble Hindu, Orisha, Baptist and Catholic practices—quite unsurprisingly as well given that the key SRCC brokers themselves experienced, and were exposed to, these various bodies of ritual. The converse of this process of the nation finding itself in the indigene is given in Bharath’s statement, “everybody claims to have a little Carib in them”, that is, 'the indigenous' is in 'the national' as well, a perspective, as we saw, that was echoed by Reyes' public arguments (1995) that “Carib blood” may run “in the veins” of most Trinidadians. Rather than arguing a case of strict continuity and 'racial purity', certain SRCC brokers (not all) have adopted, in varying ways, what might be called an 'essentialist anti-essentialism': anti-essentialist in the sense of openly calling attention to massive historical change and in utilising multiple identifications, and yet essentialist in emphasising certain traditions and motifs as long-standing traits of the Carib heritage (cf. A. Bell 1999). Similar to the representational strategies of Cristo Adonis, Dávila (1999) also finds a manifestation of essentialist anti-essentialism amongst many contemporary Puerto Rican Taino groups in the United States. Dávila notes that some “Taino activists are simultaneously involved in challenging essentialist constructs of identity that prioritise authenticity and continuity by stressing their identity as one that is fluid and dormant, more cultural than biological, and thus, less based on a proven heritage or on the maintenance of a language, or a defined spirituality or tradition” (1999:23).² On the other hand, in Caribbean societies where 'race' still plays a central role in placing people in particular ranks and categories with associated

² In this vein, some of the activists produce "broader proof" of tradition and continuity, stressing identification and sentiment, or even dreams and spirituality, rather than 'ethnohistorically correct'
cultural attributes, such activists may be judged as virtual ‘frauds’ for possibly failing to respect their ‘racial identity’, in this case deemed to be avoiding their presumed ‘blackness’, a perspective that is unfortunately reproduced by many of the scholarly contributions to the Haslip-Viera (1999b) volume on the Taino revival.3 One argument that I do not make is that a national sense of indigeneity is in any way dependent upon the ‘actual physical presence’ of individuals who are ‘identifiably Carib’, however these terms may be defined by whomever. Indeed, I will mention other cases in the Caribbean where Amerindians are seen as demographically absent and yet are nonetheless symbolically present in the making of national identity.

By way of joining the two sides of this dual process of articulating the Carib, the national and the ethnic, I argue that a sense of national indigeneity, joined with the revivalist efforts of the SRCC in defining and promoting their own Amerindian indigeneity, has produced a powerful translation of the Carib into the “First Nations”, the “First Trinidadians”, and the “First Peoples”. This contemporary translation receives the validation of internationalised discourses of indigeneity embodied by agents which have made their presence directly felt in Trinidad (see chapter 6). The concept of ‘indigenous’ in Trinidad is also split between its dual applications as either signifying ‘national’ or ‘Amerindian’. The steelpan is usually referred to in the media and by government ministers as the “indigenous” instrument of Trinidad, and was officially declared “the national instrument” by former Prime Minister Manning. Even Lieber, whose argument is that the Caribbean developed within a vacuum of indigeneity, will turn to the concept in speaking of “indigenous music, dance, folklore”, where indigenous is apparently synonymous with local and “distinctively Trinidadian” (1981:10).4 At the Arima level, one commonly finds a dual distinction between local and

3 I say this is unfortunate because this perspective takes ‘black’ as a non-constructed and almost natural given, and, because it suggests that academics should act as arbiters in deciding on ‘correct’ identities.

4 Lieber’s use of the term “indigenous” here, echoing Stewart’s discussion of ‘national indigeneity’, resembles in some respects the attempts of descendants of European settlers in New Zealand in articulating a sense of their own unique, national identity as local and native, producing an indigenised identity as “Pakeha” (Barber 1999:33, 34, 35, 38).
aboriginal: “We are all citizens of Arima and its environs, but not all of us are original inhabitants” (Williams 1988:6). ‘Indigenous’ can also refer to Amerindians, yet even here there is a further breakdown of conceptual associations. As I have learned from several Carib and Taino activists in the wider Caribbean, ‘Amerindian’ can be seen as connoting a distinct ‘racial type’, whereas ‘Indigenous’ can be more fluid, miscegenated, and physically non-distinctive—i.e., the Black Caribs of Belize are “indigenous”, whilst Guyanese Caribs are “Amerindian”.5

The two sides of this discussion, the national and the ethnic, are also echoed in the question of nationalism and the construction of a folk culture. Stanley Tambiah observed that in the 1960s period of independence, the emphasis of nationalists was on ‘nation making,’ strengthening ‘national sovereignty,’ creating ‘national culture’ and ‘national identity,’ and achieving ‘national integration’ (1994:435). It is from within this national identity paradigm that we find the earliest attempts at reinterpreting the Amerindian legacy in terms of local authenticity, independence, and the primordial constitution of nationhood. As various writers quoted throughout this work observe, the search for national identity involved highlighting rural folklore and in creating inventories of ‘national traditions’. This lends some credence to arguments which posit that in nationalism, “the traditional has been associated with small-scale communities located within peripheral areas of the state, whose seemingly changeless culture is identified with the cultural roots out of which modern nation-states have grown”, hence it is “in the fringes of the nation-state” that nationalists find “remnants of its cultural heart” (Olwig 1993:89; see also Beriss 1993:114). Similarly, Duany argues, following Benedict Anderson, that nations are typically imagined as communities with a long and illustrious past, and following Hobsbawm, he argues that “nations” are “invented” because “they are fabricated and represented as ancient and sacred essences when they can often be traced to recent and deliberate attempts by intellectuals, politicians, and social movements to create and transform a State”;

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5 This seemingly arbitrary distinction surfaced in the naming of the Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous People, founded by a Belizean, and the more recent Pan-Tribal Confederacy of
moreover, the “quest for native origins is a common discursive practice to ‘narrate the nation’ by including certain ‘autochthonous’ ideological elements and excluding ‘foreign’ ones” (Duany 1999:31). The paradox here, as noted by Ernest Gellner, is that while nationalists point to folk culture as the heart of the nation, they still need to teach this folk culture to citizens of the nation, who apparently might not have otherwise ‘understood’ or ‘recognised’ their own elemental ‘folkness’. As Gellner explained:

nationalism is, essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society…. It means that generalised diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication…. But this is the very opposite of what nationalism affirms and what nationalists fervently believe. Nationalism usually conquers in the name of a putative folk culture. Its symbolism is drawn from the healthy, pristine, vigorous life of the peasants, of the Volk, the narod. [1983:57]

It is thus not enough to indicate that the Carib is the bedrock of the nation; this has to be taught as, indeed, it is. Moreover the history of the Caribs is taught as the history of the nation, thus acting as a local and autochthonous anchor for modern nationhood.

Tying in with the dualistic nature of reinterpreting and articulating the Carib, that is, caught between the national and the ethnic, is the question of the duality of nationalism on the subject of ethnicity in Trinidad. Yelvington sees nationalism and ethnicity in Trinidad as characterised by two opposing yet related processes, in emic terms: “On the one hand, there is the conflation of nation/ state/ ethnicity to construct a ‘non-ethnicity’, in which there are ‘Trinidadians’ and ‘others’, that is, ‘ethnics’”, on the other hand, “there is the construction of ethnic and cultural differences to prove and justify contribution, authenticity, and citizenship” (1995b:59). While the state seeks to inculcate and sponsor a Trinidadian nationality that transcends any ethnic particularity, the problem is, as Ralph Premdas argues, that the Trinidadian state “as a carrier of a dominant cultural core and as an exclusive unit of loyalty is challenged and being redefined”

_Amerindian_ Tribal Nations, led by a Guyanese.
(1997:1). In addition, he characterises the current situation as one where "the state increasingly assumes the fissiparous form of a fragmented place of exile lacking a center of gravity in a sea of cacophonous contestations over shares, equity, redress, rights, wrongs, etc" (Premdas 1997:1). The re-engineering of the national position of the 'Carib', whether on the part of the state or the SRCC, also directly confronts this problem. The state acting as an arbiter amongst competing ethnic groups also treats the SRCC as another of these groups, as implied in the comments by Prime Minister Panday (2000) towards the end of the last chapter. Accompanying those remarks was a commitment to providing the now standard menu of rewards: land, funds, and a day on the calendar. The SRCC, for its part, while working to articulate the meaning of Carib identity and traditional heritage, does not do so merely for the 'use value' of the exercise, that is, to simply satisfy themselves about maintaining 'traditional cultural practices' for their own private satisfaction. Instead, as Bharath emphasises, the aim is to affirm the position of these practices within the inventory of cultural contributions to the foundation of the nation, an argument that, in Trinidad, has usually accompanied the request for recognition and rewards.

A similar national-ethnic duality emerges with respect to the cultural calendar. By the 'cultural calendar' I mean the allotment of different parts of the year to the commemoration and celebration of certain events, festivals, and special days. Here too we see a certain balancing act being performed on the part of the state. The calendar is almost evenly divided between those holidays and commemorative days that are of a universalist, 'non-ethnic', and inclusively national nature and those holidays and commemorative days that are particular to ethnic and non-Christian groups, as shown in Table 6.1 (see NALIS 2000d; also Ryan 1997:20). Given the preponderance of Anglicans and Catholics, and the fact that dominant élites belonged to these faiths, even Christian holidays possessed a taken for granted nature as 'national', which has been questioned only in recent years. Taking these observations and the data in Table 6.1 into account, it seems that of the 22 days listed, nine are particular to either a specific ethnic group or a non-Anglican/ non-Catholic denomination. One could say that there is a temporal
distribution between *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*, that is, between the ‘small’ communities (in this case defined in ‘ethnic’ terms) and the larger society. Indeed, I noted that in the April-May period of 1998, government ministers would appear in the appropriate ‘ethnic costume’ for Shouter Liberation Day and Indian Arrival Day, hailing Trinidadians’ attempts to “rediscover roots” and “celebrate their ethnic heritages” and feel “ethnic pride”. Prime Minister Panday publicly applauded the head of the Emancipation Support Committee, Kafra Kambon, for “revitalising interest in African roots”. By December 1998, Panday placed concerns for cultural heritage, ‘race’, and ethnic pride on the same plane as “division, insecurity, inferiority complexes and hatred”. December is also the “Christmas season”, and Christmas is increasingly becoming the “season” for social awareness in Trinidad, especially with prominent media-organised campaigns such as the Trinidad Guardian’s “Neediest Cases Fund” designed to provide relief for the poor during Christmas, along with Project FEEL. There is thus an almost periodised tension between ‘national welfare’ versus ‘ethnic selfishness’.

### Table 6.1:
The Annual Cultural Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONTH</th>
<th>PUBLIC HOLIDAY</th>
<th>COMMEMORATIVE DAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>01 New Year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 Eid ul Fitr (Muslim)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>23 Carnival Period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>30 Spiritual Baptist/</td>
<td>Sunday after the Full Moon—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shouter Liberation Day</td>
<td>Phagwa (Hindu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>10 Good Friday</td>
<td>13 Easter Monday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 Easter</td>
<td>25 National Rapso Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>30 Indian Arrival Day</td>
<td>25 African Liberation Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td></td>
<td>11 Corpus Christi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19 Labour Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>01 African Emancipation Day</td>
<td>24 Republic Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31 Independence Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>19 Divali (Hindu)</td>
<td><strong>14 Amerindian Heritage Day</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>01 All Saints Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>02 All Souls Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
December

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>25 Christmas Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26 Boxing Day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: Some of the dates are specific to 1998—Eid, Phagwa, Carnival, for example, are moveable dates.

The timing of events of recognition has impacted on the SRCC in various ways. The first of August has been recently highlighted at the Arima level as the start of the “month of Santa Rosa”, however it is also the same day as African Emancipation Day, the anniversary of the Royal Charter of the Borough of Arima, and the commencement of ArimaFest. This can lead to a certain ‘crowding’ as seen in Figure 6.1, which some SRCC leaders resent. However, two more days have been set aside that spotlight the SRCC—the annual Santa Rosa feast day on 23 August, and the new national day of recognition of Trinidad’s Amerindian heritage to be observed every 14 October, starting from 2000. On 01 August, the SRCC shares the stage with Africanist organisations and the Arima Borough Council. On 23 August, this is a feast day for all of (Catholic) Arima, where the SRCC shares the stage with the Catholic Church. It is only on 14 October that the SRCC has the stage to itself, yet under the auspices of a “national day”.

**Figure 6.1:**
The Carib Slot

![Image of banner adorning the Calvary Hill Community Centre on 01 August 1999, showing the medley of diverse cultural elements that go into the making of this day in Arima: African Emancipation, the launch of the month of the Santa Rosa Festival, the shaman's smoke ceremony, steelpan music, bamboo bursting (usually a practice associated with Trinidadians of East Indian descent), and a DJ in the afternoon (playing everything from calypso, Jamaican Dub, Rap, R & B, to Parang).]

The “seasonality” characterising the mode in which various cultural performances, events, rituals, and festivals are allocated national attention (i.e., by government and the media), is widely commented upon in Trinidad, and sometimes resented. There is a “Carnival season”, a “Calypso season” and a
“Parang season” (itself tied to the “Christmas season”), manifesting the way certain cultural manifestations are confined within the boundaries of particular national time slots. As one of my non-SRCC informants commented, “it’s as if some mastermind decided to select diverse ethnic traditions and sequester them to select times on the calendar”. While this seasonality helps to spotlight particular episodes in the cultural life of the country, focusing attention on elements in the inventory of cultural contributions to the national foundation, it just as easily serves to remove them from public view for most of the year in a kind of ritualised forgetting. This is something that Ahee also observed in his thesis on the Arima Caribs:

It is only during the month of August when the Santa Rosa Festival takes place that the group is given a small measure of prominence. The media dutifully accords them some exposure and attention when these festivities are held, however, once these are over, the descendants of the Caribs return to their humble existence, forgotten, only to be remembered again the following year. [Ahee 1992:32]

In addition, the SRCC’s own organisational and promotional efforts are constrained by times such as Carnival season, forcing the SRCC to ‘lay low’ and postpone meetings and activities until afterwards. That “the Carib community of Arima is forgotten except during the month of August when the Santa Rosa Festival takes place” (Ahee 1992:29), albeit an overstated and increasingly outdated observation, is an example of this seasonality that marks the way ethnic commemorations in Trinidad are officially organised and balanced with national commemorations, whilst also demonstrating what local commentators have called the syndrome of “fête and forget”. In this sense, in the hands of the state and media, ‘cultures’ in Trinidad are compared, funded, timed, placed, and publicised or marginalised.

In connection with the temporal dimension of the dualist nature of articulating and valuing the Carib, there is also a spatial dimension. The symbol of the Carib belongs to the space of the nation when commemorated as the ancestral bedrock of the nation. On the other hand, the Carib belongs to the place of Arima when articulated as a local ethnic group, represented by the SRCC as a body and
by the notion of "Arima: home of the Caribs". Similarly, 14 October is a national time; 23 August is an Arimian time.

Finally, the processes examined in this chapter can be framed within the context of a political economy of tradition that is post-colonial, that is, one that differs in key respects from what was outlined in chapters 2 and 3, and which can be sketched using the following four features. First, we are now dealing with the making of a modern, 'independent' nation-state, with familiar problems of identity and nation-building common to many of the decolonised states of the post-World War Two era. Second, starting in the late 1960s, there has been increased agitation in promoting the learning and appreciation of local history and local customs, in a generalised sense of local pride that was spawned by independence in 1962 and further encouraged by both the 1970 Black Power Revolution, with its dual cultural nationalist and ethnic pride orientations, and the post-1973 petroleum boom. The latter period led to increased local wealth and was accompanied by economic nationalism articulated through a 'Third Worldist' political philosophy and enacted in the policy of nationalising foreign owned industries. Third, from the late 1980s and through the 1990s period of neoliberal structural adjustment policies, adopted by all Trinidadian governments under the 'guidance' of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, there has been increased state emphasis on three main areas of policy: (1) increased "self-reliance", (2) the "marketing of cultural products", and, (3) the development of community-based cultural components in new national tourism policies. Thus once more there was emphasis on local customs and culture, albeit for different purposes than in the

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6 See for example: "Editorial: Black Power Remembered", Trinidad Guardian (Online), Saturday, 21 April 2001; Peter Ray Blood, "A Season of Consciousness", Trinidad Guardian (Online), Saturday, 21 April 2001; "Black Skins, White Masks: Women Using Chemicals to Look Lighter", Trinidad Guardian (Online), Wednesday, 18 April 2001; and, Donna Pierre, "Ethnic Fashion". Trinidad Guardian (Online), Thursday, 19 April 2001.

7 For further insight as to how these processes impacted on and spurred the development of local pride and ethnic consciousness, see Henry (1983) who speaks of the Yoruba Orisha revival in the 1970s and its growing appeal to the middle-class youths.

8 This was one of the main platforms of the NAR government under Prime Minister Robinson (1986-1991).

9 These are the words of Prime Minister Robinson, speaking in a television interview in 1991 on the upcoming Seville World Expo and Carifesta V hosted in Trinidad in 1992.
1970s. Fourth, as a multi-ethnic society, yet one where each of the main ethnic-based political parties endeavours to appear as ‘nationalist’, ‘inclusive’ and ‘patriotic’ as possible, the state has often acted as an arbiter between competing ethnic groups, funding displays that emphasise diversity whilst ostensibly supporting the national ideology of “where every creed and race has an equal place”, words enshrined in the national anthem. It is especially at this level of state patronage of cultural representations, of making investments in the symbols of national unity, that I see as a key foundation for thinking of a “post-colonial political economy of tradition”. Taken together, these four main factors manifest some of the intersections where politics and economics are intimately tied to questions of locality, identity, modernity and globalisation.

“Our Amerindian Ancestors”: The Articulation of the Carib in the Search for a National Indigeneity

Starting from as early as the 1930s, there is evidence of a renewed and growing prominence of reflections on the indigenous history of Trinidad, and on the figure of the Carib, in some of the élites’ writings of local history. As K. S. Wise wrote in his *Historical Sketches of Trinidad and Tobago* in 1934: “No one can live long in Trinidad without being told that Iere was the aboriginal Indian name for the Island.... so much so that this name has become part of the traditional history of Trinidad and has been adopted as a place name” (1934:7). In 1940, in a public lecture at the Royal Victoria Museum and the Historical Society of Trinidad and Tobago, John Bullbrook stated: “Probably, if I were to ask any of my audience this evening what was the predominant or even the only race in Trinidad at the time of the discovery by Cristobal Colon, the reply would be unhesitatingly: ‘Why, Carib, of course’” (1940:1). Indeed, Bullbrook, as a partisan in the local debate over whether the true natives of Trinidad were Carib or Arawak, lamented (and thereby recognised) that the “tradition” of believing that Caribs were the

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10 Prior to the 1990s, when ‘oil was King’, Trinidad largely shunned tourism, so this is indeed a recent development.
indigenous people of Trinidad was "deep rooted and hard to destroy" (1960:54-55).

The Carib gradually attained the status of a primordial hero in the struggle against colonialism. Again, from as early as the 1930s, writers and public lecturers such as Wise played a role in disseminating the proud and heroic attributes of Caribs as supposed warriors of resistance: “Caribs were an intractable and warlike people; they were proud and dominating and preferred death to subjection. Throughout history the Caribs have always been indomitable and implacable opponents of all invaders. The early Conquistadors...found in the Caribs valiant and worthy opponents, and only too often the Spaniards suffered disastrous defeats” (1938:76). Arima, which since the end of the 1800s had been cast as the last remaining seat of Trinidad’s Caribs, also figured prominently in new constructions of the anti-colonial valour of the Amerindian (and even their post-colonial resurgence), as in F. E. M. Hosein’s Hyarima and the Saints.

The view that holds Arima as a special locus of Trinidad’s Amerindian heritage has been validated and disseminated by local scholars. This view of a surviving Amerindian heritage that privileges the place of the Arima Caribs as the anchor between the present and the long-term past, found renewed expression in Carlton Ottley’s (1955) An Account of Life in Spanish Trinidad, which, as mentioned previously, was once a commonly taught text in Trinidadian secondary schools. In his text Ottley (1955:4) wrote of the survival of Trinidad’s first inhabitants in Arima and of the inheritance of Amerindian household practices that now formed part of the national patrimony, speaking in particular of basket weaving and the making of cassava bread. Indeed, these two “cultural remains”, as Ottley referred to them, are also two of the practices promoted as hallmarks of "maintained Carib traditions" by SRCC brokers such as Bharath. Moreover, the production of inventories of ethnic contributions to the constitution of the national cultural patrimony endures to the present. Brereton thus also points to the national inheritance of various Amerindian practices:

Techniques of preparing food were also influenced by the Amerindians. Rural folk of diverse racial origins in Trinidad adopted Amerindian foods and cooking methods....From the
[native] Indians, later Trinidadians learned the techniques of making bark hammocks and weaving baskets; log mortars and wooden pestles for pounding maize, cocoa or coffee, until recently still found in rural kitchens, were probably Amerindian survivals. The Indian corial, or canoe, made from a single tree trunk, continued to be used. In general, the Arawaks and Caribs influenced the life-style of rural Trinidadians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly the people of the Spanish-speaking community of Venezuelan origin, called ‘peons’ [Cocoa Panyols] in the island. [1981:22]

In the sunset years of British rule in Trinidad, one may perceive another side to the valuation of the indigene as the ancestor of the nation. This is not a case of the Amerindian holding a positive value in the articulation of a sense of modern nationhood, but rather an important negative value: as a foil for measuring the progress of modern Trinidad against a ‘primitive’ and ‘backward’ historical background comprised by ‘the Amerindian past’. There is thus a double-edged value of indigeneity: a positive sense of local primordiality and locality, and, a contrast between the ‘traditional primitive’ versus the ‘modern progressive’. In metaphorical terms, the nation salutes its first root and erects an edifice on top of it. One modern Trinidadian discourse on the pre-British “era of Spaniards and Amerindians” accuses the Spaniards and their Amerindian kin for their failure to “develop” the colony, a fact owing to the Spaniards’ laziness and lethargy and the Amerindians’ indolence and primitivism. The languid backwardness of Spain’s inertial imperialism and the unprogressive sloth of the colony’s Spaniards are seen as having led them to adopt Amerindian ways. Ottley reinforced and disseminated the modern Trinidadian prejudice towards the pre-British era: “Time marched on but Trinidad slumbered serenely”, living an “indolent life of poverty and social inactivity”; in the 1740s, “Spaniards in St. Joseph and Indians in the forests had once more fallen completely asleep”; “the Spanish word manana [sic] (tomorrow) became household”; “the people of Trinidad during that era, sat quietly on their

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11 As Strong and Van Winkle argue with reference to the American case, the Indian has been imagined and appropriated as a symbolic resource for American nationalism: “Anglo-Americans have both opposed their ‘civilization’ to Indian ‘savagery’ and yearned nostalgically after that savagery; they have both predicated American nationalism on the subjugation of Native Americans and identified with their subjugated opponent” (1993:19).
rickety doorsteps, waiting philosophically for their fairy to turn up and wave her golden wand to change the face of things” (Ottley 1955:48-49).

Appropriated by the late-colonial and post-independence ideology of progress and development, the Amerindian still served a function, if anything as a reminder of ‘how far Trinidadians had come’ (or had yet to go).

The figure of the Carib is also embedded within mediated representations and ritualised re-enactments of the foundation of post-Conquest Trinidad. The landing of Columbus on Trinidad in 1498 is a story that is replayed annually on 01 August (formerly the date of the Discovery Day holiday) and the village of Moruga on the south coast of Trinidad, the presumed site of Columbus’ landfall, takes centre stage for these occasions, at least since the revival of Moruga’s celebrations in 1963 (Gobin 1998:13; also Charan 1998, Homer 1998, and the Trinidad Guardian 29/07/1998). The event serves to reinforce the place of the Caribs in national history even while celebrating their succumbing to European colonisers. As Sterling Belgrove, one of the organisers of Moruga’s Discovery Day celebrations for 1998, emphasised: “Trinidad’s development in the modern world began in 1498…. Moruga is the place where Trinidad got its name; it’s the place where the first European came to our shores; and it’s also the place where Christianity was started” (Gobin 1998:13). In recent years, especially for the 1998 quincentennial of Columbus’ landing in Trinidad, the celebrations have drawn some protest from Africanist organisations. Even here the figure of the Amerindians occupies an important part of the stage, as a journalist wrote of the protests: “the grouse lies in the fact that the arrival of Columbus brought ensuing hardships for the Amerindians, the people Columbus met living here” (Gobin 1998:13). The annual event is reportedly gaining new interest, featuring its re-enactments of Columbus’ landfall and his encounter with the Amerindians as in Figure 6.2. Columbus and his encounter with the Amerindians has also been the

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12 In the copy of the book I signed out from the library of the University of the West Indies, a previous reader scribbled in the margin of the page: “Still doing that! No progress”.

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subject of extensive attention in the print media (see for example: *Trinidad Express* 23/04/1999:1998:37; Ramlakhan 1998; Milne 1998a, 1998b).  

While Amerindians are privileged within narratives of the foundation of the nation, the act of foundation is seen as emerging especially from the crucible of the European encounter with the natives. As mentioned above, the nation builds on but also seeks to surpass the Amerindian substratum (this is the negative value of the Amerindian in nation-making that I referred to previously). The entry of the nation into the modern world, to paraphrase Pastor Belgrove (above), is epitomised by the arrival of Columbus, a moment that is fixed within Trinidad and Tobago’s national coat of arms (see Figure 6.3).

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13 In addition, the annual event is now being advertised internationally, especially via the Internet, as a tourist event. See for example Island Connoisseur, “Destinations—Trinidad and Tobago” at <http://www.caribbeansupersite.com/trinidad/scoast.htm>.
These photos show the increasingly popular re-enactments of Columbus' landfall at Moruga, Trinidad. The presence of hostile or suspicious 'Caribs' is always a part of these re-enactments.

Source: Sookdeo Baney, Trinidad Guardian, Tuesday, 03 August 1999, p. 24
Interestingly, the coat of arms shows three ships to symbolise Columbus's arrival. In fact, this harks back to 1492, as a generic landmark of Caribbean regional history. The three ships shown seem to refer to the Nina, Pinta and Santa Maria. Only two ships visited Trinidad in 1498 under Columbus.

The Amerindian element is, if one were to engage in an interpretive stretch, disguised in the form of the Hummingbirds, a possible reference to what many have believed to be the indigenous name of the island, "The Land of the Hummingbird".

Also shown here are the "Trinity Hills" sighted by Columbus and reminding him of his promise to God to name the next island he discovered after the Holy Trinity.

The ambivalent treatment of the Amerindian as a symbol of the antiquity of the roots of the nation and as a primitive savage at one and the same time is a complicated phenomenon. Narratives of the Amerindian as a savage pre-date the rise of cultural nationalism in Trinidad (as we saw in chapter 2). These narratives survive in texts and are also drafted in the construction of a modern nationalist sense of progress. In addition, narratives of Amerindian savagery can be enduring, especially among élites and members of the older generations in Trinidad. As an example, Gaylord Kelshall, a former head of the Coast Guard and a 'white' Trinidadian, exclaimed at the opening of the Chaguaramas Military Museum:

'The Amerindians were left behind by time, about 5,000 years....It was a clash of cultures....It was not brutal conquistadores destroying a way of life. The Amerindians had to die'. He suggested that members of the...audience...would have lent a hand in killing Amerindians too had they walked into a temple and met one of them, his teeth filed, hair greased with human blood, and knew his job was to rip human hearts out of the chests of living sacrificial victims. 'You too would have killed him'. [Johnson 1998a]

This statement, of course, derives its 'strength' from the earliest colonial texts depicting the Caribs as horrendous man-eating beasts. The occasion for the

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**Figure 6.3:**
The National Coat of Arms of Trinidad and Tobago
remains was the museum’s commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Columbus in Trinidad, as well as 300 years of Spanish rule, the types of commemorations that can serve to perpetuate the presence of the Amerindian even whilst reaffirming colonial perspectives. Interestingly, Kelshall’s remarks went unchallenged by spokespersons of the SRCC, and in some cases also went privately unquestioned.

The presence of the Amerindian in modern reflections on Trinidadian national history and identity became increasingly indispensable. Researching the Amerindian heritage, and colonial history, garnered new interest throughout the 1900s. As an example, one pronunciation of the contemporary importance of researching national history was made by Ottley on the eve of Trinidad achieving internal self-government in 1956: “If we are to understand the present we must know the past, for the present is but an extension of the past, with sundry changes wrought by the hands of circumstances”; moreover, as he added, “the behaviour patterns of Trinidadians today—the way they walk, the way they talk, the way they cook their callalloo—have their origins deep down in the cellars of our social structure” (1955:iix). One of Ottley’s primary objectives in discovering the “swiftly-flowing river down which our barque has travelled during the centuries” and in “connecting up of the Trinidad of today with that of yesterday”, was to highlight the history of what he called the “early Trinidadians—the Indians” and to describe the lifeways of “the First Trinidadians” (1955:x, 1). Indeed, Ottley may have been the first writer to refer to the Amerindians in this manner. Furthermore, Ottley also assimilated the Amerindians into the national history of struggle for independence: “Freedom was as dear to those early West Indians as it is to us today” (1955:3). Kim Johnson, a Trinidadian journalist and author writing today, also brings together the themes of historical self-consciousness, modernity and national identity in a telling manner: “having taken our place in the modern world, we must define what we have brought to it. And to do so, what better place to start than at the beginning?” (Johnson 2000: Part 1).

Intersecting issues of modernity, class, locality, national identity and self-reliance can also be found in local theses that seek to recoup the native in
Trinidad’s cultural legacy. For example, in studies of Trinidad’s architectural history, the late John Newel Lewis, a prominent upper class Trinidadian architect of considerable repute, played a key part in highlighting the “Amerindian architectural legacy” in the form of the ajoupa, also the title of his volume on the subject (1983a; see also 1983b). Lewis argues that the ajoupa has never been absent as a basic structural model in the construction of homes in Trinidad, tracing its continuities from pre-colonial times, through colonialism and the homes built by slaves and indentured East Indians, into modern times. Indeed, he sees many of the basic forms of the built environment of Trinidad as a simple substitution of materials laid over a basic Amerindian form (J. N. Lewis 1983a:14). For Lewis, the Amerindians were the “first great architects of Trinidad”, having produced the “prototype”, the “leitmotif”, the “basic vernacular form” that is the “purest expression of Trinidad architecture” (1983:23, 25). Moreover, his argument also resonates with populist class themes in certain moments, discrediting the alien constructions of the snobbish upper class, with all their imported materials and environmentally inappropriate designs, whilst praising the “defiance” of the working classes and rural dwellers. Coupled with his own form of class critique is his critique of modernity: “the growth of all middle classes discredits the achievements of vernacular architecture” (J. N. Lewis 1983a:85). In contrast, he writes:

many country people have defied the prefabricated timber systems and continued to use jungle wood. In spite of all the imported technology and in spite of the fact that the rest of the Caribbean has been hooked on the standardised system of the timber houses for centuries, in Trinidad, many people just continue to do what the Arawaks did. [J. N. Lewis 1983a:85]

Lewis called for the “revival of indigenous culture”, where city dwellers should draw upon, “the countryman’s natural simplicity, taste and good sense”, emphasising that “we should salute our roots and understand its achievements” (1983a:85). Turned into a symbol, the Amerindian dwelling also has certain nationalist political connotations. The walls of the ajoupa were often made of tapia, a mixture of mud, grass and pebbles pasted onto a wooden frame or bamboo
lattice, left to dry and then perhaps coated with plaster. The *tapia* inspired Trinidad’s critical dependency theorists of the 1970s, such as Lloyd Best, an economist and political activist who heads the *Tapia House Movement*, the tapia acting apparently as a symbol of local-ness and reliance on locally appropriate resources and designs.

**Figure 6.4:**
*The Amerindian Vernacular Form: The Ajoupa and Tapia*

Above is an example of what John Newel Lewis sees as the Trinidadian ajoupa, with wooden shutters, wood posts, and walls of tapia. This was the home of the late Justa Werges, Queen of the Caribs, in the hamlet of Mundo Nuevo. At right is a close up view of exposed tapia, from a home on an abandoned cocoa estate in the hills of north Trinidad.

In today’s context, there are further rehabilitations and appropriations of the Amerindian in Trinidadian nationalist discourse. Burton Sankeralli, a columnist for the *The Daily Express*, wrote in 1997: “These Amerindians, whom we call ‘Caribs’, are the primordial tribe, the red ancestors of all ‘Trinbagonians’. They are the first children of our earth” (1997:29). More than that even, speaking of Trinidad’s dominant ethnic groups today, Sankeralli declares: “We here need to note that all four tribes consider themselves indigenous. This land is home for all of us. Hence these tribes are all descended from the primordial tribe—the Amerindians” (1997:31). In defining the locus and genesis of Trinidadian identity, Sankeralli urges that, “we need to turn to the Caribs” (1997:31). Kamal Persad, one of Trinidad’s more militant Indocentric newspaper columnists, also wrote:

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There are multiple ways of interpreting ‘red’ in this context, i.e.: (1) “Red Indian”, (2) the Trinidadian notion of ‘red’ which can be synonymous with ‘Spanish’ or a person who is ‘mixed with white’; and, (3) in some instances ‘red’ might also connote being of no race as a result of being the product of all races.
December 1 [the anniversary of the 1699 Amerindian uprising] must be built as an important occasion when the entire country can reflect on the first nation of Kairi, their origins, way of life, their conquest and genocide at the hands of Spanish and Catholic imperialists, and a clear agenda for the future. Hindus and Indians and Africans can share the perspectives of the Amerindian, and identify with their causes, especially so since our experiences were so similar. Clearly, the initiatives must originate from the Amerindians. [Persad 1999]

Persad repeatedly refers to the Amerindians as the “first nation” and argues in support of renaming Trinidad “Kairi” and of building a monument to commemorate the insurgents of 1699 (a monument erected by the Church only commemorates the Spanish victims).

Besides serving as a figure for grounding modern Trinidadians within a local history, the Amerindian can also be used either as symbol of unity, as expressed in the words of Sankeralli, or as tool in ethnic contestation as when local Africanist activists embrace and absorb the Caribs within a paradigm of those who suffered slavery as opposed to the allegedly ‘more privileged’ descendants of indentured workers, the East Indians in Trinidad. However, this is not a strategy reserved for Afrocentric activists alone, as Kamal Persad will also argue: “The Amerindian experience is very similar to the Hindu and Indian experience. Indian children who were orphans during indentureship and were placed in Catholic institutions were immediately converted and given Spanish names. This is the origin of the 40,000 Indian Catholics in Trinidad” (Persad 1999).

Most prominent, however, is the symbolic role of the Amerindians, now referred to as First Nations by some prominent figures in Trinidad, in developing a longer-term view of national history. “The Amerindians were key to defining the foundation of the Republic”, as John Donaldson, the Vice-Chairman of the Peoples National Movement, stated on Republic Day in 1998 for the opening of the PNM’s “exhibition to commemorate our First Peoples”. Indeed, Donaldson also devoted some time to explaining that “First Nations” was the most appropriate way of
talking about the Amerindians, and he mentioned how the term is in frequent and regular use in Canada.

From a nationalist perspective, positing Amerindian history as being of foundational importance to the creation of the modern nation-state also serves to bolster the construction of a national history that dates back not just to European conquest, or the transplantation of workers from other continents, but even several thousand years further back. The Amerindian thus bestows on the new nation a sense of antiquity and a sense of continuity of occupation of the territory that is Trinidad. Given Caribbean nationalists’ often invidious comparisons between themselves and their former European masters, the new antiquity of a national history that appropriates the Amerindian renders Caribbean states as ancient as any in Europe. Cultural brokers, who specialise in excavating, disseminating and promoting the past and the concept of an Amerindian heritage, cater to and to some extent also nurture such perspectives. The role of museums and archaeologists thus comes to the forefront. The National Museum of Trinidad and Tobago plays an important role in graphically inculcating the notion of Amerindian culture as the starting point of the nation’s history. Archaeologists themselves, despite often being nonnationals, have also worked to foster local pride in Amerindian heritage. Dutch archaeologist Arie Boomert wrote in a 1982 article in the Trinidad Naturalist, entitled “Our Amerindian Heritage” that due to Trinidad being, “one of the world’s most cosmopolitan populations,” as a result, “it is often forgotten that a few of the people now living in Trinidad are descended or partly descended from the original inhabitants of the island, the Amerindians.” He also declared: “Trinidad can boast of the fact that it is the oldest settled site of the West Indies”, the remains of “Banwari Man” having been dated to 7,200 BP (1982:27, 28). The cover of the magazine showed a picture of a well known monument in Trinidad, the Amerindian warrior atop a pedestal at the remains of La Venezuela estate, with a bold caption: “The First Trinidadians".
Boomert’s research is also featured prominently on laminated boards within the Cleaver Woods museum located at the western entrance to Arima, which features the reconstruction of an Amerindian dwelling and various archaeological remains and current arts and crafts of Arima’s Carib Community. The Museum itself was the result of an initiative taken by the National Parks Section of the Forestry Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food Production in 1982. Their aim to construct an Amerindian house (*ajoupa*) in the Cleaver Woods Reserve, west of Arima, was “as a tribute to the original inhabitants of Trinidad and Tobago” (Boomert 1982:60). The Museum “commemorates the Amerindian past of Trinidad and Tobago”, and as Boomert adds:

The Arima *ajoupa* is meant to keep our Amerindian heritage alive and, judging from the reactions of the several thousands of interested people who already have visited Cleaver Woods
National Park since its official opening in March of this year [1982], it serves its purpose well! [1982:60, emphasis added]

As indicated previously, British archaeologist, Peter Harris, was also instrumental in securing the state’s official recognition of, and financial support for, the SRCC. Prior to obtaining this recognition and support, Harris told a newspaper reporter: “The Amerindian story goes back 8,000 years and the Santa Rosa Community is the only surviving one, but society as a whole has never really given them the normal recognition that is due to these unique survivors of our Amerindian past” (quoted in Kassie 1989, emphasis added). Following the Cabinet’s 1990 decision, Harris’ (1990) letter to the editor of the Trinidad Guardian added: “I must congratulate Cabinet on their acceptance that the cultural survival of the Amerindian Community is a traditional problem. For too long the Santa Rosa Caribs and perhaps other groups have had to struggle on their own”. Ahee (1992:35), commenting on Harris’ statements in the media, lamented: “it is ironic that a foreigner must remind us of our responsibility towards the preservation of our country’s historical and cultural traditions”. In placing emphasis on the need for Trinidad to secure an identity as a nation-state in the modern world,15 similar to Johnson above, Ahee urges: “As a society, Trinidad and Tobago must not be so caught up in the race to be part of the developed world that we neglect to place emphasis on the values and traditions that distinguish us from other societies” (1992:35, emphasis added).

Other archaeologists and local champions of archaeology have also publicly pushed for the preservation of Amerindian archaeological remains and the establishment of heritage tourism. Recently, writers have lamented that although Trinidad’s “rich and important Amerindian heritage” has attracted interest from foreign researchers “far afield”, not enough is being done by Trinidadians to properly research their “Amerindian past” (de Verteuil 1999:40, 43). De Verteuil notes in contrast that Grenada, “is now beginning to pay serious attention to its own Amerindian legacy”, and Jamaica, Barbados, Antigua, and the French and

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15 See Handler (1988) on the importance of a ‘nation’ having a singular, almost personalised culture.
Dutch Antilles have all shown an "active interest in preserving Amerindian sites". Moreover, he argues that they have all worked at "developing the economic benefits to be realised through heritage tourism" and they "enjoy the consequent pay-back, including opportunities for education and a fostering of civic pride" (de Verteuil 1999:45-46).

Popularised, mediated and institutionalised depictions of the Carib or Amerindian presence (whether conceived in historical, symbolic or demographic terms), while often not overtly 'nationalist' in content or tenor, serve to bolster the nationalist articulation of the Carib insofar as they furnish the 'material' that permits such articulation, whilst also framing the Carib as a fixture of local history, an object of local pride, or a landmark of Trinidad's local cultural landscape. Below I will provide certain examples of this purposive dissemination of what Rogers (1996) calls the "corpus of images" utilised in the definition and articulation of indigeneity.

The news media have played a key role in endorsing depictions of Amerindian cultural survival, seizing upon any ritual or performance of the Carib Community as being necessarily "ancient" and "authentic". The news media have also played a key role in disseminating the concept of "Our Amerindian Heritage" and of the Amerindians as "the First Trinidadians" (see Chouhti 1998a, 1998b).

Contemporary school texts have rehabilitated the previously savage and extinct Carib, transforming the Carib into a surviving entity, further recast as the First Trinidadian as we saw in Bridget Brereton's *An Introduction to the History of Trinidad and Tobago* (1996). Also at the level of educational institutions, one finds growing interest in the Carib Community on the part of students of the University of the West Indies, with at least two Caribbean Studies theses having been produced in the last decade (Ahee 1992, Almarales 1994), whereas none were written before the 1990s.

In terms of popular literature, I have already cited Hosein's play on the Arima Caribs. Recently, books of poems, tales and historical novels have been published that feature Trinidad's Amerindians. Examples include Norma McCartney's (1989) *Tales of the Immortelles*, which has two fairy tales centred on
the Caribs of Arima. Knolly La Fortune’s (1999) *Manzanilla*, a collection of poems, begins with a poem in memory of Chief Hyarima, part of a renewed contemporary interest in this Chief, dubbed the first national hero of Trinidad in the plaque adjoining his recently erected monument at the entrance to Arima (see Figure 6.6). Arthur de Lima’s (1993) *Don José*, is a novel devoted to the life of the popularised last Spanish Governor of Trinidad, a possible expression of increased local interest in the Spanish and aboriginal history of Trinidad. Other recent, locally published texts on select aspects of Trinidad’s colonial Amerindian history have also appeared (see de Verteuil 1995, Johnson 1997), as well as those that pay special attention to the “Amerindian background” (see Besson & Brereton 1991; also Brereton 1981). Locally published books on the histories of Trinidad’s towns almost invariably begin their entries for Arima with discussion of the Caribs, the Amerindian Mission, and the Santa Rosa Festival (see for example Anthony 1988).
Figure 6.6:
Chief Hyarima, National Hero

**HYARIMA**

The last great leader of this nation's indigenous people was Hyarima. He was a Nekuypo, a sub-tribe of the Carinpeogoto (Carib), whose villages were established throughout north-east Trinidad.

Hyarima, it is said, could summon hundreds of warriors from the villages that then surrounded Arima of which he was the chief.

He was feared and respected by the Spanish who were attempting to colonise Carí which they renamed Trinidad, and by the Dutch who wanted to settle in Tobago.

Hyarima joined the Dutch in 1636 to raid Spanish outposts in Trinidad, and also those of the Orinoco in 1637. He was involved in the last successful revolt by this island's indigenous people, this took place in December 1699, against the Capuchin missionaries of San Francisco de los Arenales and the then governor Don José de Leon y Echales in Arena.

Hyarima is quite rightfully considered their greatest known legendary personage by the Santa Rosa Carib community of Arima and is considered by them as the first national hero of Trinidad and Tobago.

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**CONTRIBUTORS**

- Guardian Life of the Caribbean
- Caribbea Steel Mills Ltd.
- Marlay (1861) Ltd. Est. 1888
- N.E.M. (West Indies) Insurance Ltd.
- Max Drugs Ltd.
- Ideal Supply Stores Ltd.
- Second Crossing Hardware Co. Ltd.
- Photo House Studio and Lab. Ltd.
- Maharaj Group of Companies
- Republic Bank Ltd.
- Harripaul's Coatings Ltd.
- Trinidad Rope Works Ltd.
- Santa Rosa Drugs Ltd.
- Bhagan's Drug Store
- Hometown Pharmacy
- Jadoo's Trading Ltd.
- Kouy's
- Home Restaurant
- Pres-T-Con Ltd.

At left: the plaque adjoining the figure of Chief Hyarima shown in Fig 6.5. At right: a list of corporate endorsements of the monument to Hyarima, listing the leading national banks and insurance companies, along with various heavy industries, and small Arima businesses.
A once prominent mural, painted by the celebrated Trinidadian artist, Carlisle Chang (see Raymond 2000), greeted those arriving at Piarco International Report. At the left of the mural (Figure 6.7) we see the figure of an Amerindian man, and below, an Amerindian woman, almost as if at the dawn of humanity, the dawn of time, or the dawn of the Trinidadian nation in particular—or, perhaps it was meant to convey an impression of all of these simultaneously.

Figure 6.7:
Carlisle Chang’s “The Inherent Nobility of Man”

In the realm of commercial advertising one sees a few select cases of the perpetuation of important indigenous labels such as Carib and Arawak, as well as more veiled references to the Caribs of Arima (see the examples below).
Figure 6.8: Sponsored Indigeneity

Mpule Kwelagobe, the winner of the 1999 Miss Universe pageant hosted in Trinidad, poses for Carib Beer under a sentence with obvious double meaning—"there's a bit of Carib in everyone"—that also provides a reference to claims increasingly voiced by Trinidadians as to possessing some degree of Carib ancestry. The Carib label was adopted in 1950 by the Caribbean Development Company, a Trinidadian corporation that has achieved transnational corporate status (see Carib 2000).

"Arawak Chicken" prominently displays its advertising in newspapers and on billboards as seen at the right along a highway in Trinidad—note also the appeal to "tradition" and "first in the land" associated with the "Arawak" brand on the billboard. One may wonder whether the brand name was chosen for chicken as a result of long-held stereotypes of Caribs eating Arawaks, the latter often cast as cowardly and easy prey, or if that is a purely accidental outcome.

Figure 6.8 continued on next page
The performing arts and festivals have been another arena for the expression of interest in, and the dissemination of, symbols of indigeneity, whether this be in the form of professional dance troupes creatively enacting imagined Carib dances, such as that of Julia Edwards, a noted local choreographer who conducted some of her own research with SRCC members, or in the much broader field of Carnival with its categories of Fancy Indians, Red and Wild Indians, and Plains Indians (see Bellour & Kinser 1998). A recent Children’s Carnival parade,
spotlighted by the Tourism and Industrial Development Corporation, included a band of children masquerading under the banner of the “Arima Caribs” (TIDCO 2001). In addition, the National Carnival Commission (Trinidad’s main organisational body for all Carnival activities) feels the need to even locate Carnival within an Amerindian historical heritage: “The evolution of Carnival in Trinidad and Tobago could be said to have started through the encounter of the Europeans with the earlier settlers (the Amerindians)—on Kairi—the former name of Trinidad” (NCC 2001). In the past, Carnival was noted for its resistance themes and the image of the Amerindian as a figure symbolising resistance via motifs of savagery (see Bellour & Kinser 1998). One such figure was the “Midnight Robber”, a bandit figure that gave eloquent speeches in public about his fearsome feats of treachery. “Benbow the Brave”, played by Rupert Archibald, featured the Amerindian in his following sample of “robber talk”:

I am the incredible master Benbow
Descendant of the Amerindian
Amalgamated with Carib and Arawaks
I arrive here by hurricane, storms and volcano
Having to be shaking, shattering and plundering this earth
For the avenge of my ancestors.
I am the jaws of death and the ruler of mankind.17

As the late Daniel Crowley observed in Trinidad’s Carnival in the early 1950s, amongst the robber characters there was one type, referred to as the “Blanket Robbers”, that used to wear “Indian Blankets” from the United States, based on American Indian weavings (Crowley 1956:263).

The National Parang Association of Trinidad and Tobago (NPATT), the body responsible for the promotion of Trinidad’s Spanish Christmas music, itself maintains a small museum and archives that routinely highlight what NPATT directors see as the Carib heritage and basis of this popular musical form, with boards on display that feature the “Carib Legacy” in local knowledge of medicinal plants, religious rituals, and the “sebucán festival”. Sylvia Moodie-Kublalsingh,

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16 In the present, Carnival in Trinidad has become largely dominated by middle-class participation (those who can afford the costumes) and is also highly commercialised.
Trinidad’s leading researcher on Parang, observed that Trinidad’s Parang came to be increasingly reinterpreted as symbolising the rural folk roots of the nation: “At present, there is a growing interest in this culture and particularly in the Christmas parang....It is part of the search for a ‘national identity’, an obsession which has characterised the post-Independence period” (Moodie 1993:22). The location of the figure of the Carib also within Parang is thus significant.

Amerindian motifs and practices are also the subject of increased interest on the part of performing arts students in Trinidad. The Centre for Performing Arts at the University of the West Indies regularly sends students to interview leading members of the Carib Community about Carib rituals, traditions, and styles of dress, in addition to hosting lectures by spokespersons such as the Carib President. The interest in Amerindian aesthetics, and the development of Amerindian derived styles in furniture design and interior decoration is also exemplified by the emergence of Manzanare Design Solutions, which has recently held exhibitions of some of its Amerindian-inspired furniture pieces and decorative items. Basketry and other arts and crafts shaped or imaginatively inspired by Amerindian designs, or simply imported from Guyana, are also receiving commercial and media attention (Trinidad Express 10/10/1998:39, 10/10/1998:28, 27/08/1999:23; Trinidad Guardian 06/05/1998:5; Mitchell 1998; John 2000; Small 1998).

The Internet has also seen the emergence of Websites on Trinidad’s Amerindian heritage (see Johnson 2000, Bermúdez Negrón 2000-2001, Marchock 2000, and PanTribago 2000a, 2000b). Judging from the feedback received by sites featuring Trinidad’s Caribs, in the form of email, postings on message boards and entries in guest books, these sites seem to have acted as a magnet for expressions of national pride and local interest by Trinidadians at home and especially abroad. While as much as half of all the messages are genealogy-related, with numerous individuals either asserting their Carib ancestry (“my paternal grandmother belonged to the Carib tribe”) or wishing to research it further (“I am engaged in genealogical research of my mother’s family”), another large

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18 See <http://community.wow.net/manzanare/manznewstuff.htm>
proportion of visitors consists of Arimians residing abroad, and the dominant thrust in the majority of messages is that of local and national pride in the Amerindians. Indeed, the number of such visitors claiming a Carib ancestry and/or expressing pride in the Carib heritage easily outnumbers the membership of the SRCC, pointing to the wider spread of this phenomenon. The following are some examples of these expressions: (1) “It is about time that the Caribs are recognised for their contribution to the island”. (2) “Hi, I am a Trinidadian, also a Carib descendent living in Oakland, California, U.S.A. I was surfing through the different sites and stumbled upon yours. Seeing the artifacts brought back a lot of memories”. (3) “Born and grew there in Calvary, Arima: Keep doing what you doing in enlightening people of the Carib people history in Trinidad”. (4) “I’ve been away from home for over 12 years now. I grew up in Sangre Grande, Toco, and Tunapuna. I am very, very proud to see that after all these years Trinidad, as a nation is coming to form and that the people who gave us the names of those homes we know so well are still there and that another generation will know that there is a Carib nation.”. (5) “This site not only took me back to my youth but also made me a bit homesick. I grew up with the Santa Rosa festival, it is part of who I am. Arima and the Carib Community are not mutually exclusive. You cannot separate one from the other. I am from a family of Parranderos and so proud to call Trinidad and in particular Arima...home!” (6) “My grandmother’s grandmother was Carib and I have cousins in Arima who are married to pure Carib Indians. We do have to keep our culture alive and there’s no better way to doing it than thru [sic] this medium. Although I now reside in the U.S. I know I can always browse home and my American friends/children can visit and experience what a diverse environment I was raised in”. (7) “I am a Trinidadian and lived in Arima. I attended Arima Girls RC School. I always attended the Santa Rosa Festival. Now that I am living in USA (Westchester), I miss the parang and the whole spirit of the festival. I am quite happy to see that the Caribs, natives of the island, is [sic] making headway i.e. in making other people see what they have to offer. (8) “May

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the ancestors guide and protect all the descendants of the indigenous peoples in Trinidad & Tobago". 
The tourist industry is also increasingly seizing on the image of the Carib/Amerindian in Trinidad and Tobago in promoting another element of Trinidad’s “uniqueness” as a locale. The Trinidad Tourist Board advertised the Santa Rosa Festival in Arima as a celebration of the town’s first peoples. A tour package offering “six days of birding in Trinidad and Tobago” features “visits to Amerindian communities” in its itinerary. Other tourist sites, especially those located on the Internet (offering easier and immediate access to information for the tourist market), also feature Arima and its Carib Community as an attraction in

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21 See Earthfoot at <http://earthfoot.org/places/tt001.htm>
various tour packages. Once again, the news media have promoted the Carib Community and loci of Amerindian heritage as tourist attractions (see Chouthi 1998c, 1998d; Herrera 1998; Mandol 1998; McLeod 1998b; Roberts-Griffith 1999; Rostant 1998). The Tourism and Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) is also currently discussing plans with the SRCC to establish an "Amerindian Heritage Complex" and eco-reserve with nature trails, part of a plan to grant 400 acres to the SRCC whilst also catering to the growing eco-tourist market. The objectification of culture in the context of tourism, via heritage display, is an increasingly important component of the complex of re-engineering processes marking the production and valuation of the Carib presence in Trinidad.

Nationalism and the Amerindian in the Wider Caribbean

In previous sections I referred to the fact that other Caribbean states have devoted attention and resources in an effort to preserve and promote their "Amerindian legacy", primarily via showcasing archaeological remains, as in the case of the Jamaica National Heritage Trust and the Institute of Jamaica in documenting and highlighting Arawak remains in Jamaica. The Jamaican national coat of arms specifically spotlights two Arawak Indians, as in Figure 6.10, in a manner that is even more singularly focused on the Amerindian root of the nation than is the case for the seal of the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, an institution that has played a critical role in fostering the view of the Taino as the first root of the nation (see Duany 1999). With reference to the Jamaican case, Hulme raises the possibility that a national sense of indigeneity that utilises the symbolic device

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22 As examples, see Exploring Trinidad at <http://www.discovertobago.com/trinexplore.html> and Elder Hostel International at <http://www.elderhostel.org/catalog/int/FAJ/sumi06D01000.html>

23 A TIDCO documentary aired on TTT on 26 December 1998, titled "Dis Place Nice," spoke of "Cocoa Panyols" as "descended from Caribs", the Cocoa Panyol described as the main inhabitant of the Northern Range, one who can be characterised as a "hunter, herbalist, French Patois speaking, religious, Parrandero". A TTT documentary shown on Sunday, 21 February 1999, titled "Trails and Traditions", focused on the eco-tourist angle of the Northern Range, on "rustic traditions", "pristine ecology", and showed local museums featuring Amerindian artefacts and Carib crafts.

24 See Amerindian-Trail at <http://www.amerindiantrail.com/articles/village.html>; this is also the result of a collaborative project that I worked on with the SRCC, producing a project proposal that
of the Amerindian may even "flourish most in the complete absence of an existing indigenous population", where in the case of Jamaica "the Arawaks on the national coat of arms provide a sense of a long pre-European history, but there aren’t any contemporary survivors to get in the way with their awkward demands and their implication that they are the descendants rather than the society as a whole".\textsuperscript{25} Indeed, in the case of Trinidad, where a body such as the SRCC asserts a living connection with the past, at least via the vehicle of "traditional practices", we find the duality of national and ethnic articulations of indigeneity that we do not find in Jamaica, even though the SRCC itself has not articulated any "awkward demands" that would either antagonise the wider society or the state authorities.\textsuperscript{26} The appropriation of Amerindian symbolism in Caribbean nationalism is also exemplified by the fact that after the Haitian revolution the new regime chose to rename its part of Hispaniola "Haiti", an Amerindian word that means "high ground".\textsuperscript{27}

was later submitted to the Prime Minister. The full proposal can be accessed at <http://members.tripod.com/~SRCC1CaribCommunity/project.htm>

\textsuperscript{25} Peter Hulme, personal communication, email of Wednesday, 21 February 2001.

\textsuperscript{26} Even in the case of Jamaica, however, there has been recent questioning of the "myth of extinction" and the implication that a number of Jamaican traditional practices, once presumed to be of African origin, are possibly of Taino origin, i.e., "Hammocks (hamaka in Taino) are still made from tree bark rope (Taino-style) by Maroons in Accompong" (Auld 2000). Others point to the reported discovery of 'syncretic' African-Arawak pottery among the remains of early Maroon communities, leading some to the conclusion that, "one of the probabilities that this points to is that there is also a number of Jamaicans who have both African and Arawak Indian blood". On the other hand, this questioning is still relatively peripheral to the mainstream of discussions of national identity. See "Black Indian Resistance" at: <http://members.nbci.com/~XMCM/firethistime/en/rezreggae.htm>

\textsuperscript{27} See The Complete Dictionary of the Taino Language: <http://www.taino-tribe.org/terms1.htm#anchor31107>
Nationalism in the Caribbean has led to a revaluation of the Amerindian in other ways. In Dominica, on 29 November 1978, just weeks after becoming a sovereign state, the first sitting of the new Parliament passed the Carib Reserve Act, reinstating the formal property rights and political administration of the Caribs that had been abrogated by the British after “The Carib War” 48 years earlier (Gregoire et al. 1996:124; Gregoire & Kanem 1989:53). In St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the government promised to grant a 3,500-acre estate to the Caribs at Sandy Bay when it finished acquisition procedures, an amount slightly larger than the Dominica Carib Reserve (Palacio 1989:50). The government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines also helped to fund the 1987 conference of Caribbean Indigenous Peoples that led to the establishment of the Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous People (Caricom Perspective 1991:11). The St. Vincent government
has “formally adopted a view of Caribs as a proud and indomitable people, declaring the legendary Carib leader Joseph Chatoyer to be a national hero” (Palacio 1989:50). The Chatoyer Youth Movement of Sandy Bay, St. Vincent, has composed a song, broadcast over the Internet, titled “Yes Man, Vincy Land”, that thus declares: “Our fore-parents fought to defend this land/ We hail Chief Joseph Chatoyer/ A brave and courageous leader/ Who fought with dignity”. Chief Chatoyer is formally commemorated on “National Heroes Day” each 14 March. Further afield, Honduras also commemorates its Garifuna (Black Carib) population, descended from exiles from St. Vincent, with one example being the 13 June 1996 issue of a set of three stamps depicting scenes related to the Garifuna in celebration of 200 years since their arrival in Honduras (Washburn 1999:166-117).

In the case of Guyana, regimes since independence led by the Afro-Guyanese dominated People’s National Congress have viewed Amerindians with suspicion, especially after the Rupununi rebellion, and some Amerindian groups’ reported ties to Venezuela and their support for its land claim over a third of Guayana, added to long-standing perceptions of Amerindian allegiance to European colonial powers and their role in capturing runaway slaves. Even in the Guyanese case, however, Amerindian “traditional culture” was often utilised as a “showpiece” for Guyfesta (the annual festival of the performing arts), or to entertain visitors from abroad (J. Forte & Melville 1989:2). Frances Johnny, one of Janette Forte’s informants, spoke about her village and how it has been showcased: “Karasabai is a very traditional village. We hold on to the old ways and I think that is why in 1975 Karasabai was chosen as a place for the Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau to visit” (quoted in J. Forte & Melville 1989:73). In another case, school children in Lethem were taught to perform “traditional dances” for the visit of the Governor General of Grenada in 1987 (J. Forte & Melville 1989:44). The “Umana Yana” in the capital, Georgetown, a large Amerindian meeting house constructed by Wai Wai Indians, was erected for the Non-Aligned Foreign

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Ministers Conference of August 1972 as a VIP lounge and recreation centre (Caricom Perspective 1991:10). The ‘showcasing’ of ‘traditional Amerindian culture’ has become an enduring feature of the way many Amerindians are articulated with the national political system and the new eco-tourist economy.

The showcasing of Amerindians has also become an established feature at the regional level, as in the case of staged Amerindian performances for Carifesta (the Caribbean Festival of the Arts), at least since the 1981 Carifesta held in Barbados. Janette Forte, a Guyanese specialist on her country’s Amerindians, criticises Carifesta displays of Amerindian Heritage as “carnivals of the industrial age” where the Amerindian is cast as “the ultimate Other to contrast with us” (1996:8)—much in the same vein as I discussed the utility of the figure of the Amerindian in the construction of a narrative of modern Trinidadian progress. Janette Forte thus argues that ‘modern’ Caribbean citizens, “need Amerindians to be different, to be Other, so that we can define ourselves, our nation” (1996:8). Amerindian performances held in Arima for Trinidad’s Carifesta in 1992 certainly attracted considerable public interest and fascination, but they also attracted some loudly voiced ridicule and scorn from Trinidadian spectators observing a Guyanese “Monkey Dance”. The display of Amerindian heritage continues up to the present, as Janette Forte notes, “with Amerindians dressed in spurious grass skirts trotted out for each Carifesta, each visiting Head of State, sent abroad to Commonwealth exhibitions, to mark the Quincentennial, Republic Day celebrations and so on” (1996:8). On the other hand, Carifesta events are also one index of Caribbean states’ political and financial valuation of the Amerindian presence, whilst simultaneously providing a free venue for delegations of the region’s Amerindians to gather and organise (see chapter 6).

Jorge Duany has argued that “if anything characterises nationalist thought and practice, it is the search for indigenous ‘roots’”, to the extent that a “common gesture of anti-colonial projects everywhere has been to recover, reappraise, and

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29 Likewise, an anonymous reviewer also commented in this vein: “Holding on to and continually re-inventing the social category of the ‘Savage’ persists as [a] crucial structural means by which Western-influenced societies make claims about being modern”. 
commemorate the ‘historical patrimony’ prior to European and U.S. colonisation” (1999:31-32). Puerto Rico provides compelling examples of how the figure of the Amerindian is present in the construction of cultural nationalism, as the “first root” of the (latent) nation, with the concomitant that “the Taino heritage has been canonised through state-sponsored institutions, such as museums, monuments, festivals, contests, crafts, and textbooks” (Haslip-Viera 1999a:2). Indeed, Haslip-Viera argues that the growing appeal of Puerto Rican cultural nationalism “is due in large measure to the increased popularity of the Taino heritage” (1999a:2). Jiménez Román (1999:84) explains that the Taino, as “the original ‘root’”, helped to establish a sense of modern Puerto Ricans’ “legitimacy of island tenancy”.

The “resistance” of the Amerindian during the colonial era is a prominent construction of the ideology of cultural nationalism in the Caribbean, an historical over-simplification used in defining the true nation in opposition to the European Other. One of the most curious examples of this portrayal that I have encountered is the recurrence across the Caribbean of legends of dramatic Amerindian mass suicides, done in order to evade capture by colonisers, usually by jumping off a cliff, possibly the ‘purest’ expression of anti-colonialism in showing that even death is preferable to slavery. I counted at least four such accounts. Barreiro tells us, “near Baracoa, Cuba, at a coastal village named Yumuri, a promontory stands in mute tribute to the many Taino families who, according to local oral history, jumped to their deaths off its cliffs while taunting their Spanish pursuers”(1990:11). In Trinidad, the story of the end of the 1699 Amerindian uprising at Arena also ends in a similar manner, with the insurgents finding themselves between their pursuers and the open sea, choosing to plunge to their deaths off the edge of a rock cliff (see for example De Verteuil 1995). I have also heard a similar story pertaining to St. Vincent in 1785. Grenada has an actual landmark called “Carib’s Leap” or “Leapers Hill” that marks the site of a similar episode in 1651, which is advertised as a landmark in tourist sites on the Internet.31

30 Some of my informants heard spectators shouting and laughing: “They just like monkeys! Where you live? In trees?”
The Amerindian ‘presence’, even if constituted only in temporally distant and symbolic terms as an image of an ‘ancestor’ or as a heritage, is embedded within modern articulations of nationalism in the wider Caribbean, a fact that is normally bypassed in conventional discussions of the emergence of nationalist ideologies, especially in the case of the Anglophone Caribbean. While nationalist reinterpretations of the Amerindian, both within Trinidad and the wider Caribbean, have been discussed thus far, we now need to turn our attention to the special positioning of ‘Carib’ within Arima, as a particular feature of a ‘special locale’ within Trinidad.

Arima and its Caribs: Identity, Heritage, and Tradition

An important part of the SRCC’s work at self-representation hinges on the specialness of Arima, ‘the place in which the Caribs fit’ and through which they are articulated within the wider national setting. In this section I will underline those aspects of the construction of an Arimian identity and associated notions of heritage and tradition, and the way these are intersected by the representational practices of SRCC brokers. In terms of the project as a whole, this section updates the material presented in chapter 3 on the way Caribs were ‘placed’ in Arima.

Melan Garcia, Borough Councillor for Calvary Hill and actively involved with the Carib Community, composed the locally famous “anthem” Arima Was. It is a song that is often performed at local Parang festivals and some official functions, and is sung like a Calypso. The words are as follows:

In years gone by/ This eh\textsuperscript{32} no lie/ And I’m sure you’ll remember/ Arima was a place of plenty water.\textsuperscript{33}/ With fertile soil/ That and all spoil:/ We hardly gettin’ good cassava/ Quarries are polluting our rivers.

\textit{Chorus:}
So let us try and see/ If we could make Arima just like it used to be./ Doh\textsuperscript{34} mind!/ Doh mind!/ We population more/ But it’s we the Arimians to make things like before./ We have our duty to perform

\textsuperscript{32} This is a Trinidadian pronunciation for “aint”.
\textsuperscript{33} A commonplace translation of the Amerindian meaning of “Arima” is “a place of water” which people believe to have been inspired by the various rivers that run along Arima’s boundaries.
\textsuperscript{34} This is a Trinidadian abbreviation for “don’t”.

Now because/ I’m sure/ We’d like to see Arima just like Arima was./ We have our duty to perform/ Now because/ I’m sure/ We’d like to see Arima just like Arima was.

The Spanish came/ And settled here/ Along with Peons from Venezuela./ Together they did dig plantations for we./ Then came the French/ And Africans/ Who accepted parcels of land./ You see/ Arima was always cosmopolitan./ Yes man!/ 1797: British came/ Planted their flag/../ In 1806 we got some Chinese too./ East Indians joined/ Up in the fun/ Followed closely by the Syrians./ That’s true/ Arima was one big pot of callaloo./

Yes Arima/ This eastern star/ Wallen bought a Dial and gave her\
A gift you hardly find any other place./ Them years ago/ Was love for so/ But where the love gone?/ Boy, I doh know.../ I think it’s since they opened the Yankee base./ Oh Arima/ Oh Arima!/ Like we heading for a disaster/ I think is time we call upon the Master./ Is endless crime/ And endless slime/ Rape and robbery/ Even mass murder./ Well if it eh Sodom/ Then is Gomorrah!/ Chorus.

While there is a fair amount one could say in relation to various facets of this song, for the more limited purposes of this chapter I wish to flag those dimensions of the song that either refer to or imply some sense of local pride, nostalgia, pristine beginnings and contemporary gloom. Arima, the place of water, and the singling out of cassava, followed by references to the Spanish and the Venezuelan Peons (the composers are conscious of chronological order), serve to reinforce, by subtle means, a sense of the specialness of the local, the aboriginal and the Hispanic in the making of an Arima identity. Indeed, as the song progresses, more ‘peoples’ arrive, the population increases, and so does social entropy and anomie, even while the song overtly celebrates the cosmopolitan and Creole character of the Arima populace.

As described in historical terms in chapter 3, the figure of the Amerindian has been an important marker of the distinctiveness of Arima within the wider national setting. Within Trinidad, Arima is regularly cited as “perhaps the only district in Trinidad where remnants of the native Amerindians can still be found”

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35 This line refers to Arima Mayor John Wallen, who purchased a town clock (known in Arima as “The Dial”) from Switzerland in the 1880s and which became a central landmark in the town.

36 “For so” is a Trinidadian way of saying any of the following: very much, a lot, in excess, an abundance of, all round, etc.
Echoing John Newel Lewis’ appreciation of the Amerindian motif in Trinidad’s cultural infrastructure, local researchers write that Arima “was a town developed through the adaptation of Amerindian influence”, and note that “out of a total of 1,909 dwellings in 1946...1,528 were built with tapia walls” and “thatched roofs, the typical Amerindian practice” (Garcia 1991:50, iii, emphasis added). Even by the 1970s, Garcia’s research uncovered that over 25% of houses were made of tapia (1991:50). Garcia also argues that in “many Arima homes” one can find Amerindian cooking implements (corn and cassava graters) adding that “many persons report that food prepared with the Carib implements have a much better flavour” (1991:50-51). The twin themes of the presence of the Amerindian in Arima are those of persistence and miscegenation: “although even here [in Arima] it is difficult to find anyone of pure Amerindian stock...they have always been concentrated here, long after they disappeared from the other villages and towns, and Arima has always been regarded as their special home” (Anthony 1988:2, emphasis added). Other researchers have written, “the mixed descendants of the local Amerindians were still to be found in El Calvario, a village on a hill overlooking the town of Arima” (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:90). The “always here”, “always their home” and persistence as a unit despite mixture/assimilation, are emphases that only serve to underline the place of Arima in defining the Caribs’ indigeneity. Bharath echoes these statements, even while commenting that the Arima Mission was comprised of an amalgamation of tribes from different parts of Trinidad, nevertheless returning to the theme of Arima as the home of the Caribs. In these narratives it sometimes seems that the Caribs are natives first of Arima, and secondly of Trinidad. This may well point to the presence of a regional consciousness in Trinidad, something one might not expect to find in a relatively small island, especially gaining force since Arima became a virtually self-governing entity since 1888 (well before such forms of governance became

37 Arima was located close to an American military base during World War II.
established on the national or Caribbean level). The result, arguably, has been the formulation of a Trinidadian equivalent of *patriachiquismo*.

The Amerindians constitute “anchors and memories” of what Arima was, in spite of modernisation (Anthony 1988:9; Ahee 1992:20-21). Arima as “home of the Caribs” remains a common theme in popular and official narratives, as well as the proclamation of Arima as “the seat of the Carib chief Hyarima” (Williams 1988:10, 11). As such, the Ministry of Local Government explicitly referred to Arima as “the home of the Caribs, the indigenous people of Arima” (*Ministry of Local Government* 1999:9). Referring to the SRCC, one of the dailies claimed that the “cultural practices of these people have become woven into the fabric of the Arima society and many have grown to accept and love their celebrations and look forward to sharing with them annually” and hailed Arima as “one of the cultural centres of the country” (*Sunday Express* 13/08/1995). Stamps commemorating the 100th anniversary of Arima’s Royal charter featured Queen Maria Werges (*Sunday Guardian* 28/08/1988). Indeed, SRCC brokers such as Bharath make a regular point of reminding journalists, researchers and visitors of the “historical significance of the Caribs to Arima”, underscoring Arima’s origins as an Indian Mission, how Amerindians built the church, and how Santa Rosa (St. Rose) became established in Arima as a result of the Amerindian Mission experience (see also Douglas 1999:28). I also noted the many landmarks, areas, and shops in Arima that have adopted the name “Santa Rosa”. While articulating their significance in national terms certainly requires far greater representational labour, the efforts of SRCC brokers in reaffirming their local significance in Arima have progressed easily, at least at the élite and official levels as well as in schools.

While the notion of Arima as a place with an Amerindian (and Spanish) historical heritage is commonly accepted amongst local officials and teachers for example, there is some ambiguity over whether to refer to Arima’s Amerindians as

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38 This term refers to “la patria chica” (the small fatherland) as an affective and ideological thrust present in regionalist literature in Spain.

39 By this I mean that the nationalist reinterpretation of the significance of the Carib is, as a phenomenon, comparatively more recent and not yet as well established as it is in Arima.
either Carib or Arawak, harking back to seemingly antiquated debates as presented in chapter 2. Moreover, this particular debate is sometimes tied to the ways individuals interpret and construct notions of the way that Arimians "are". For example, at a reception at the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago in Arima, that featured arts and crafts of the SRCC, a number of Arima bank managers as well as Borough Council members, commented separately and without solicitation that "Arimians are peaceful people". Noting that Caribs were "war-like", whereas Arawaks were "peaceful", I "as an anthropologist" was asked if this might mean that Arima had an Arawak heritage more than a Carib one.\footnote{My response was, "I am not sure".}

The now conventional fusion of the Carib and the Spanish, at least within the localised sphere of Arima, is also a constitutive part of local definitions of what a 'true' Arimian 'is'. Some of my non-SRCC informants, resident in Arima, and possessing definite opinions on Arima and its population claimed that "Arima people are different" and often cited a vaguely "Amerindian resemblance" as one of their distinctive features (as a librarian put it: "their high cheek bones and tiny eyes"). One of the bank managers I mentioned above, and a bank teller, both of whom work in Arima but are from other parts of Trinidad, also claimed that they found "Arima people" to be "different", that they "looked different", were "more warm and friendly than other people", and attributed this as possibly due to "their Spanish heritage". Others argue more critically that Arimians are overly conscious of 'race', and claim Spanishness or Caribness as a means of evading 'blackness'—as it was put to me by one of my non-Arimian informants, a professional from Moruga who works in Arima: "even if they are as black as night they call themselves Spanish". I visited a series of secondary schools in Arima and found one that had a huge mural with words in Spanish prominently emblazoned, and another with school signs and mottos written in Spanish—one school principal explained that this was a result of "the fact that Arima's heritage is Spanish". It is up to SRCC brokers then to define a sense of their specialness as Carib, within the framework of definitions of Arima identity, yet at the same time in consonance
with the creolised nature of Arima’s social and ethnic constitution, in order to gain wider acceptance and support.

Finally, the Arima Borough Council is also active in the articulation of ways of defining the identity and heritage of Arima. As Mayor Elvin Edwards stated in a public address on 04 December 1998, the ABC is “not just about digging ditches and repairing drains…it is also about contributing to the cultural life of the Borough” (see also Price 1987:19). Primary school students are instructed in the history of Arima, and asked over a dozen questions related to the contemporary SRCC and Arima’s Amerindian history in the annual “Know Arima” quiz sponsored and managed by the ABC. In order to answer these questions, students consult the Arima Public Library and visit the SRCC in organised groups, thus moving within a formal network of brokers and institutions engaged in disseminating and defining the Carib presence in Arima. The ABC, as indicated before, is also actively involved in supplementing Carib activities during the month of the Santa Rosa Festival, beginning with the blasting of the cannon on every 01 August. Though the cannon blasting, to mark the start of the month of Santa Rosa, was only recently revived as a practice after an absence of as much as 18 years (see chapter 4), one news daily asserted the following:

Caribs and cannons are synonymous in Arima....the two go hand in glove. Blasting...the cannon has great significance for the Caribs of Arima during the celebratory period of the Santa Rosa Festival.
[Sunday Express 13/08/1995:02]

In addition to this, the ABC also produces an annual “Cultural Heritage Day” which begins by featuring the “Amerindian element”.

"Descendants of Caribs": SRCC Representations and Articulations of Carib Indigeneity and Tradition

The identification with the ‘Carib heritage’, as articulated by SRCC brokers, occurs through the vehicle of ‘tradition’. The emphasis on tradition is, from what I gathered, motivated by three main concerns: (1) the desire to demonstrate ‘actual practices’ that mark Carib difference and Carib history; (2) the need to promote the inventory of Carib contributions to the national cultural...
foundation; and, (3) the need to define their personal ties to Amerindian ancestry, other than through 'race' since the questions of 'being mixed' and 'not appearing like Caribs' is a problematic issue for some SRCC brokers.

SRCC brokers have openly listed and defined their main concepts and goals where tradition is concerned. The first, to use their words, involves the maintenance of certain retained traditions (which they identify as the Santa Rosa Festival, weaving, cassava processing, herbal knowledge, hunting, and house construction). The second involves the revival or retrieval of traditions, which explicitly refers to acquiring "lost traditions" that they no longer practice, but that are practiced either by other indigenous groups elsewhere (and can thus be borrowed through a process SRCC leaders describe as "cultural interchange"), or reviving those that are described in historical and ethnographic texts (i.e., the Smoke Ceremony as discussed in the next chapter, 'traditional wear', language, and shamanic practices). The third consists of the reclamation of traditions, which does not always involve practicing certain traditions as much as formally claiming, in the mode of intellectual and cultural property, that certain traditions extant in the wider society are in fact of Amerindian origin. This can also involve claiming as Amerindian many practices that have not been marked as the property of any ethnic group, such as the bathing of dogs with special herbs by a river to enhance their hunting prowess, or the presence of stylised Amerindian figures in Carnival. As Brackette Williams explains in this regard: "why ethnic groups must have 'distinctive cultures', and what inventory of attributes each group will claim as diagnostic of its existence as a descent group, is relative to contents claimed by other groups as proof of their contribution to the nation" (1989:436). The fourth entails a process of translation, whereby current practices of the SRCC that are not obviously Amerindian in origin are depicted as a modern translation of an earlier practice (i.e., the blasting of the cannon each 01 August is formally described by SRCC spokespersons as "the voice of Hyarima calling forth his people"). Examples such as the latter further demonstrate the 'essentialist anti-essentialist' feature of certain SRCC representations—highlighting loss and change, yet projecting origins, survivals, and 'translations'.
The representational challenges faced by SRCC brokers lie in the following areas. First, there is the challenge of articulating an identity that some members of the national audience believe refers to an extinct or assimilated people, as Palacio observed: “there is the question whether there are still any [indigenous peoples] left in the English-speaking Caribbean. All West Indians learn in school that the Indians whom the Europeans met became extinct” (1992:55). Secondly, demonstrating the ‘cultural stuff’ that validates an ethnic identity is another dominant social convention that informs the representational practice of the SRCC, hence their various approaches to tradition and their production of various public-oriented events and rituals. Thirdly, there is the added problem that SRCC members do not ‘look Amerindian’ to many visitors and observers, thus mandating that SRCC brokers find ways of graphically demarcating the difference of the SRCC (see Figure 6.12). Ahee himself manifested one dominant Trinidadian perspective on ethnicity in writing that, “members of...the Santa Rosa Carib Community can hardly describe themselves as pure Caribs”, adding, “for them it is [a] constant struggle first of all to convince society that they are authentic Carib descendants” (1992:30, 1). The response of SRCC brokers such as Cruz and Adonis is not altogether surprising where the current global politics of indigeneity are concerned. Beth Conklin, writing of the Amazonian context, argues that in “contemporary indigenous identity politics, exotic body images carry a...strategic weight in asserting symbolic claims to authenticity” (Conklin 1997:711). A fourth problem is posed by the use of the ‘Carib’ label instead of ‘Arawak’, when academics and some chroniclers (as we read in chapter 2) disputed ‘allegations’ of a Carib presence in Trinidad, added to current SRCC brokers’ statements that the Arima Indian Mission included people of all tribes extant in Trinidad (see Almarales 1994).
Figure 6.12: Demarcating Carib Difference through Costume

TOP: At an SRCC meeting, members gather to review models of proposed costumes to wear on formal occasions, in this case consisting of white cotton garments with the SRCC logo. These were designed by Susan Campo (left). Viewing the items are Valentina Medina (centre, the new Carib Queen from 2000), Beryl Almarales to the right of Medina, and Ricardo Bharath (back to the camera).

BOTTOM LEFT: In a procession for the Santa Rosa Festival, SRCC members always distinguish themselves from the rest of the parish through dress. Ladies wear pink, and men wear black pants, white shirts, and red rosettes.

BOTTOM RIGHT: A determined effort to display indigenous difference through costume.

The emphasis of SRCC brokers such as Bharath is that “most of the Carib traditions have been lost”, most of the members are the product of “racial mixing”, and thus their claims and interests are not based on “racial purity” but on maintaining whichever traditions have survived as well as reviving lost ones (see also Almarales 1994:3). Another researcher also encountered these same emphases in SRCC spokespersons explanations; quoting SRCC Secretary, Jacqueline Khan, Ahee states:
Mrs. Khan admits that there is little left of what can be considered authentic Carib culture. Their food preparation skills, the multi-purpose use of cassava, as well as the traditional craft are all that are really left. There is nothing left of the language....The only remaining dance that was performed by the Caribs...is the ‘Galeron’, but this dance by its very name seems to have some Spanish influence. The Santa Rosa Festival which is held annually, celebrates the conversion of the Amerindians to Christianity and is therefore not widely regarded as a distinctly Amerindian relic.

In trying to overcome some of these problematic perceptions of an alleged lack of ‘authentic relics’, even while reinforcing these perceptions, SRCC brokers have developed working relationships with researchers in order to produce historical verification of the ‘facts’ of their indigeneity and their claims over certain traditions. Another mode by which SRCC brokers endeavoured to articulate Carib indigeneity via certain traditions was through “Amerindian Heritage Week”, usually held in October in past years, added to certain public performances and rituals (the Santa Rosa Festival and the Smoke Ceremony). ‘Amerindian self-knowledge’ is not a given. An array of brokers are themselves engaged in a quest to define what an ‘emic’ Carib perspective might be.

While articulating the Carib heritage for the wider national audience the SRCC faces three main problems of self-reproduction: self-identification as ‘Carib’, religious differences, and generational change. One of the possible reasons that the SRCC has not yet grown into a national movement might lie in what I found amongst my non-Arimian informants who would typically state, “I have Carib blood in me”, but emphasised “I don’t have the features”, thus almost always resolving the tension by affirming their pride in their “heritage” even while identifying themselves personally as something other or “more than” Carib, especially given the widespread belief in Trinidad that ethnicity, in emic terms, is something that must show in one’s face. In addition, some of my non-SRCC Arimian informants who stated that they had Amerindian ancestry, chose not to label themselves as Carib or Amerindian saying that as they were “mixed” they were unable to choose any specific ethnic label. Numerous such individuals also reside on Calvary Hill and have nothing to do with the SRCC, not wishing to
identify themselves as Carib but also not wishing to be associated with the Santa Rosa Festival, thus introducing yet another challenge to the SRCC’s reproduction and expansion. In Bharath’s estimate, half or more of all Arimians who could claim Carib ancestry and be members of the SRCC instead belong to other faiths. Bharath explained that he wished such individuals would see past religion, or “separate religion from culture”, and participate in the Santa Rosa Festival regardless of their faiths. In addition to issues of physical appearance and denominational adherence, there is the generational problem. Many youths that are or could be members of the SRCC, instead show little interest in Carib traditions and prefer to see themselves as “Trinidadians”, like some of the elder members, but without the same regard for SRCC rituals or the family ties that comprise the current SRCC. Two such youths, between 15 and 17 years of age, one a member of the SRCC and the other the child of a member, said that most youths “just like money, clothes and going to parties”. While the Carib may be important to élites constructing narratives of national history, at the ‘ground level’ the identity fails to attract many potential adherents, with Amerindian heritage not seen as ‘modern’ or lucrative enough. As researchers elsewhere have found, there can be a problem with attaching identity too closely to tradition: often the young are forced to choose between a “modern” non-Amerindian world and a “traditional” world perceived as folklore (J. Forte & Melville 1989).

Given these different degrees of actual or potential association or identification with the SRCC, one can see certain levels of association that demarcate indigeneity on a personal level in Trinidad: (1) membership in the SRCC itself; (2) relatives of SRCC members in Arima, not belonging to the SRCC; (3) other Arimians who claim Amerindian ancestry, but without family ties to current SRCC members and lacking any interest in belonging to the SRCC; (4) those who say they know of their specifically Arima Carib descent, but no longer live in Arima, and prefer the designation of ‘Spanish’ or just ‘Trinidadian’; (5) non-Arimians who may proudly proclaim their ‘aboriginal ancestry’ without identifying themselves necessarily as Carib.
What makes someone a Carib? This is a question that SRCC spokespersons have had to answer repeatedly over the years. Strictly speaking, one need not have any Carib ancestry to be accepted as an SRCC member, and there are a few such individuals. Amongst those who explicitly proclaim their indigenous identity, some will simply affirm, “I feel Amerindian”. Others, in a similar vein, explained to me that it was an emotion of “feeling at home” in Trinidad, that it was a state of mind more than a physical appearance or things one does. Some will also emphasise, first and foremost, their genealogical ties to Amerindian ancestors, and argue that certain families in Arima are “known” to be of Amerindian ancestry (citing names such as Lopez, Hernandez, Guerrero, and Calderon). The definitions can indeed be rather fluid, even while circumscribed by social conventions.

The issue of ‘Carib’ as a label is a key one in the present, as we have already seen in preceding sections. Within the SRCC there is some debate and dissensus over the most appropriate label. One elderly member, the daughter of the late Queen Edith Martinez, said they “were always called Caribs”. A middle-aged member rejected the name as an offensive European imposition. Another accepted the stereotypes associated with the early colonial Carib-Arawak dichotomy, saying that Caribs were “invaders who killed Arawaks”. The use of the ‘Carib’ label by the leading SRCC brokers, while fitting adherents within a recognised category, has in the past also caused some to question the identification. In an official document the SRCC claims that, in Trinidad, the “principal tribal groups were the Arawaks”, and those people who were most successful at “resisting the ‘toys and other trinkets’ displayed by Columbus, and in defending themselves against attacks by the newcomers, were renamed Caribales or ‘consumers of human flesh’ by Columbus and other Spanish colonisers”. Elma Reyes (1995) adds that they accepted the “Carib” designation “for the same reason descendants of enslaved Africans accepted (until recently) being called ‘negroes’ and ‘coloureds’”. In the same document, Reyes argues: “it is therefore unrealistic

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41 “The Santa Rosa Carib Community of Arima, Trinidad, West Indies”, given to the author by Elma Reyes.
to assume, as has been done by some supposed experts, after failure to discover evidence that the First Nations were indeed ‘consumers of human flesh’, that the island’s people were ‘only peaceful Arawaks’ . In this instance, Reyes is playing both sides of the debate: they are to be called Caribs simply because it is a conventional generic label, first imposed and later accepted, and, they are to be called Caribs because that is what they really are. This type of dualist statement is in fact typical of most of the explanations offered by SRCC brokers at different times, in different contexts and with different audiences in mind, especially as their own articulations of Carib identity continue to develop and undergo reworking. Indeed, I attended one SRCC meeting where a considerable amount of time was spent by members discussing the name they should use to refer to an event the SRCC was planning, a public dinner for which people would buy tickets, with suggestions ranging from “Carib Indian” to “Carib Amerindian”, “Amerindian”, “Indigenous”, “First Peoples”, and “Native Indian”. In the last seven years SRCC brokers have begun to publicly assert that they ought to be referred to as “First Nations”, claiming that this is a designation accepted by various international bodies (see also Sunday Express 13/07/1995:5; Almarales 1994:55). ‘Carib’ connotes locally specific indigenous history, a label now heavily marked and almost synonymous with a character of being few in number, almost extinct, descendants of proud warriors. This can attract sympathy and interest. “First Nations”, on the other hand, has a global resonance and connotes connections with large and well-organised North American indigenous bodies; while aboriginal, it underlines a global and metropolitan position of importance, as will be explored further in the next chapter.

The fusion of “Spanish” and “Carib” adds a complicating dimension to current articulations of indigenous identity in Trinidad. A membership form produced by the SRCC clearly invites people of “Spanish and Carib ancestry” to join “the Carib tribe”. One of my elder SRCC informants explained that her parents would never have said “I am proud to be a Carib”, and did “not know the difference between a Spanish and a Carib”. Another two, one aged over 65 years and the other aged over 85 years, asserted, “Spanish and Carib makes no
difference”. Yet another surmised that his father must have been a “proud Carib” since “it was only Spanish, and a little [French] Patois he spoke, not English”. Queen Justa Werges also stated that “long ago people only called themselves Spanish…they did not know enough to say they were Carib”. There is a process at work here that I found quite challenging: it appears that ‘Carib’ was preserved as a higher order category, one that was known and referred to by ‘educated’ elements in the wider society, but not used as an individual’s personal self-ascription until the recent post-1973 revitalisation effort led by individuals such as Bharath, Adonis, Cruz and Reyes. Indeed, even during my fieldwork, while I found a majority of SRCC members saying that they would not personally call themselves ‘Carib’, in SRCC meetings I heard the same individuals make the comment “we are the Caribs”, as if ‘Carib’ is a property of groups and institutions and not individuals. An elderly Arima expatriate residing in London, who left Arima in 1957 and has not been back since, stated in an e-mail interview: “I have never met anyone, either in Trinidad or in England, who describes himself as Carib, though they were known as Caribs”, which once again presents this odd tension. One elderly resident of Calvary Hill of Venezuelan parentage, and whose sister became the new Carib Queen in 2000, seemed to resolve this tension for himself in the following manner: “‘Carib’ is a thing of the ancestors…we are just the descendants”. This explanation posits the principle of disjuncture between ancestor and descendant, where the ancestor is the ‘pure’ and ‘original’ substance while the descendant is a somewhat diluted copy. As this informant seems to be

42 “Spanish”, at least in northeastern Trinidad, has distinct qualities in the view of my informants, friends and even my own in-laws who self-identify as Spanish. A “Spanish” need not be unmistakably Iberian in appearance, but is usually expected to be light brown in skin colour or close to white. In addition, a Spanish surname is often expected, and at one time even some knowledge of the Spanish language or at least French patois was expected. In northeast Trinidad self-identified “Spanish” people often are those who can trace their ancestry to Venezuela, indeed many of those that I encountered were only first or second generation Trinidadians and still only in their forties. The defining features of “Spanish” are far less ambiguous than encountered by Aisha Khan (1993) amongst her informants of East Indian descent, in part due to what I suspect are important regional and ethnic variations in the use of this term. In fact, Trinidadians of East Indian descent are viewed by northeastern self-identified “Spanish” people as having a notoriously peculiar notion of “Spanish” that can be as extreme as saying that “any Negro with soft hair is a Spanish”. 
saying, ‘Carib’ denotes something from history, the past, so that using it in the present seems bold and problematic.

The overlap in practice between usages of the Spanish, Cocoa Panyol and Carib labels, adds a further facet of representational complication. While SRCC brokers such as Bharath, and some elder members, say that those Venezuelan descendants referred to as “Cocoa Panyols” are “different people” and that “one should never confuse them with Caribs since they are Spanish people, from elsewhere, who settled here and grew cocoa”, other such as Reyes assert their Venezuelan ancestry precisely as a means of validating her ties to the Arima Caribs, thus conflating “Cocoa Panyol” and “Carib” (see also Almarales 1994:29). Almarales (1994) also referred to dances performed by SRCC members as the dances of “their Venezuelan ancestors”. Indeed, Bharath’s own sensitivity on this issue apparently led him to exclude any mention of cocoa production, knowledge of cocoa planting, or cocoa processing as one of the “retained traditions” of the Arima Caribs, even while Parang music and the Santa Rosa Festival are embraced as retained or reclaimed traditions. Cassava is singled out by Bharath as the trademark or emblematic agricultural heritage of the Caribs, rather than cocoa (albeit also an “indigenous crop”), which thoroughly dominated economic production in Trinidad for lengthy parts of its history. The distinction effected by Bharath is strategically constructed to mark the Arima Caribs as unique and different. On the other hand, the distinction is lost on some SRCC members, as the few who referred to themselves as “Carib Panyols”.

That ‘Carib’ is treated as a special category that is contaminated and made inferior through miscegenation is a perspective that has held sway across the Caribbean for extensive periods of time, in spite of the fact that Caribs have been miscegenated since the late 1500s. In the Dominica Museum, a board with notes from the French chronicler, Labat, says of the Caribs: “they are born with white skin, like us”. Henry Hesketh Bell, colonial governor of Dominica, wrote: “the Carib type, even in the remnant that survives today, shows an unmistakably Mongolian character, and it would be hard to distinguish a Carib infant from a Chinese or Tartar child” (1902:4). F. A. Ober, a travel writer, wrote of the
Dominica Caribs in 1925: “they are more attractive-looking than the black people and more clean. Their colour, if uncontaminated by negro blood, is a golden bronze or copper” (quoted in Eguchi 1997:374). In the 1950s, Patrick Fermor, a British travel writer exclaimed about the Dominica Caribs: “so sharp was the contrast of their complexion and bearing with those of the [black] islanders, that I thought for a moment that they were white men. But they were Caribs” (1950:256). The dissemination of U.S. discourses on ‘race’ and Native American identity has the effect of further reinforcing the tendency to associate culture with certain physical traits. As Arlene Dávila notes with reference to the Taino revival, the notion that “one’s identity is carried in one’s blood and thus in one’s race has been a primary canon for distinguishing Native Americans in the United States since at least the late 19th century” (1999:22). As she explains, this is the consequence of Federal administrative means for “fixing Indianess around degrees and measurements of blood quantum...” (Dávila 1999:22). As we saw in the last chapter, brokers such as Catherine Ramirez directly and personally introduce such U.S. discourses to other SRCC brokers.

History matters to SRCC brokers in defining their identity and traditions. Students of history familiar with Ranke would find that SRCC brokers also maintain the “wie es eigentlich gewesen ist” notion of history (see Wallerstein 1991:19, 98), that is, they largely accept written documents found in the archives as “the facts”. The implicit logic is that they must establish a straight-line connection of descent to the people portrayed in the documents. Proof of their Caribness is derived from those documents. Notions of which traditions are to be revived are based on colonial descriptions of their activities. Knowing ‘real Caribs’, in the SRCC leaders’ views, almost always means knowing them in other places and/or other times. A dominant view in the SRCC is that the Orinoco region of South America is the bastion of ‘true Amerindians’, believing that those Amerindians have changed little. Indeed, when they speak of importing Amerindian traditions from elsewhere in the region, items and practices from
Guyana and Venezuela are treated as ultimately the most authentic, emanating from what they see as a history largely uncontaminated by modernisation or miscegenation.

The history of the Caribs that SRCC brokers advance is one that they expect will be accepted according to the dominant discourses in the wider society. Historical documents are accepted, they feel, as valid sources of information. In obtaining this information they value the inputs of researchers outside the community, especially professional ones. The SRCC has had at least three researchers scouring documents and publications in an attempt to learn more about Carib ethnohistory. The SRCC has also incorporated into their self-knowledge works by local researchers and foreign archaeologists based at the University of the West Indies in Trinidad, as I have described previously. One local historian close to Bharath asserted in an SRCC meeting that “you need a qualified professional, a trained specialist, to go through the historical sources and gather valid documents, otherwise you will end up appearing to be recreated Amerindians”. One problem however, even before matters of contemporary interpretation and context, is the matter of source criticism, which has been largely absent from SRCC brokers’ adoption of information from historical materials.

The “reclamation” and “maintenance” of particular traditions on the part of SRCC brokers are effected in order to underscore the cultural content of the articulations of Carib identity, whilst providing them with a public platform and a vehicle for requesting recognition and support. Often the traditions identified as having been “retained”, and thus in need of “preservation” and “maintenance”, are those that have been symbolically “reclaimed” from the wider society. They are

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43 In a message to the Carib Community, posted online, an archaeologist wrote: “I [would] like to state that I support your struggle to preserve and revive the old traditions....However, to do this with integrity and as accurate as it can be done, interaction with archaeologists is very much recommended.... Remember: NO story can be told the right way, unless you consult the source!!!!!!!” (10 May 2001: <http://earth.beseen.com/guestbook/p/142197/guestbook.html>)

44 Source criticism is vital insofar as Linda Newson (1976:8; see also Boomert 1986) explained: “First, documentary evidence is only available for Trinidad from the end of the sixteenth century, by which time Indian culture had already been modified by contact with the Spanish. Second, the accounts are highly subjective and were coloured by the experience of observers in Europe. Third, many accounts were purposely biased in order to achieve an appropriate response on behalf of the Crown”.

reclaimed on two accounts: (1) for being of Amerindian origin, even if no longer practiced by people of Amerindian descent alone, or even if not practiced by any people of Amerindian descent;\(^{45}\) and, (2) for being a form of property, a possession of the SRCC, given the labour the SRCC has invested in the particular tradition (whether or not it is perceived as a Creole or Amerindian tradition) and the extent of time it has been associated with a particular ritual or practice. Examples of the latter case include Parang,\(^{46}\) the Sebucán Dance (or the Maypole dance as discussed in chapter 3),\(^{47}\) and the Santa Rosa Festival. It is in this vein that I believe we can speak of one’s indigeneity being discovered and acquired in and through the wider society, the ‘non-indigenous’ society according to the conventional terminology. It is the boundary that is drawn around a body of practice, more than the body itself, which is used to articulate Carib identity and heritage. The production of the ‘cultural material’ intended to signify Carib indigeneity is forged from a ‘multicultural’ milieu reflective of the nation, that is, Carib indigeneity embodies, embeds, and enacts a ‘Creole’ culture that has been symbolically indigenised as Amerindian, and is communicated back to Creole society as being indigenous. We thus run into the duality of national and ethnic indigeneity once more. In this sense, the ‘model’ presented by the SRCC case differs from many of the established and mainstream models for representing and analyzing indigenous histories and resurgences elsewhere, as outlined in my Introduction. In this case, the indigenous largely emerges, or indeed is re-

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\(^{45}\) One example that comes to mind is the manufacture of hammocks in Trinidad. This has come to be an industry dominated by Trinidadians of East Indian descent, which is interesting given that their knowledge of hammock production was acquired entirely in Trinidad.

\(^{46}\) J.D. Elder, a noted ethnomusicologist, concluded: “In Trinidad history, there is no evidence that the [Roman catholic] priesthood...made any effort to preserve Indian music...insofar as the Trinidad folksong repertory stands, Amerindian musical features are practically absent from it” (quoted in Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:68). Having said this, Moodie-Kublalsingh discusses how Amerindians may have acquired the Parang music form: “We know that missionaries paid special attention to music in the catechisation of the native populations of America. So the Capuchin missionaries in Trinidad must have taught sacred songs to the Trinidad aborigines” (1994:68).

\(^{47}\) “It seems that the sebucán was a favourite with the Arima Indians. Today, the Arima area is regarded as a ‘Spanish/Carib’ district *par excellence* with its ‘Queen of the Caribs’ and the festival of the ‘Carib’ patron saint, Santa Rosa....Some of the ‘panyols’ I met in El Calvario claimed to be ‘Carib’ or at least of ‘Carib’ descent: José Peña, Florencia Po, Ramona Mol, Juan Rosales. There has been controversy as to whether they are indeed descendants of the Caribs, but it can hardly be disputed that they are the mixed progeny of native Arawak tribes (Nepoyos or Chaimas) blended with African and Spanish blood” (Moodie-Kublalsingh 1994:95).
engineered out of the Creole socio-cultural setting of which it is firmly a part, and announces itself as being virtually pre-Creole.

The Santa Rosa Festival is a case in point showing the intersection between "maintenance" and "reclamation". In the Introduction and chapters 3 and 4 I have already presented distributed pieces of ethnographic and historical detail concerning the Festival, which are consolidated elsewhere. Here I will only emphasise those facets of the Festival and its representation that directly demonstrate the ways that SRCC brokers articulate ‘the Carib’ through particular traditions. Bharath himself emphasises that this is “a Catholic feast”, but that in many ways it belongs to the Caribs for having putatively originated from the Amerindian Mission of Arima. Myths have been reshaped, such as that of the appearance of St. Rose to three Carib hunters and the magical appearance of her statue by a spring (see Forte 1996b), so that certain SRCC brokers now claim that St. Rose was actually born in Arima (rather than Lima, Peru), an example of what could be called an “invented tradition” in that this interpretation was recently and rapidly instituted, had no precedent, and yet was made to fit into a larger narrative as if it had always belonged there. The success of this representation of an Arima-born St. Rose also lies in the fact that three authors have reproduced it (Williams 1988:9; Ahee 1992:23; Garcia 1991:2). Hosein’s Hyarima and the Saints also mythically links Hyarima to the Carib Queen (his daughter) and St. Rose. The attempt to place a mark of Carib ownership over St. Rose has led to conflicts with the Catholic Church in Arima. Indeed a storyboard featuring the notion that St. Rose was born in Arima was expelled from the Church by a priest who had initially sought to encourage SRCC brokers to explain their traditions to the wider parish. Priests have also criticised the colour of the statue of St. Rose used by the SRCC and held in the Church (pink and black), as opposed to the formal habit of the Dominican Order to which she belonged (white and black). SRCC brokers argue that this unique colour emphasises that the statue is their property.

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48 Ethnographic details and descriptions of the various preparations, events, and conduct of the Santa Rosa Festival are presented elsewhere in considerable depth (Forte 1998b and Forte 1998-2001b, <http://www.angelfire.com/ mu/maxforte/index.html>), and exceed in breadth and volume the present purposes of this chapter.
Moreover, Bharath himself often declared that "our ancestors built that church stone by stone, they carried the stones on their head from the river", and this added to the array of work duties SRCC members performed in cleaning and maintaining the church (especially during the Festival) is cast as an indication of an actual investment of labour, the fruits of which are being ‘reclaimed’ by the SRCC. In a sense, SRCC brokers are affirming a mutual obligation with the local parish. In addition, the SRCC has drafted a formal set of "do’s and don’ts" on how clerics should conduct and observe the Santa Rosa Festival. Bharath stressed to SRCC members: "we need the Church’s recognition—if we don’t first get the Church’s recognition we cannot succeed”. The Festival provides a regular means by which the Caribs can appear in public as a separate body with local roots, through different dress, seating reserved for them as a group at the front of the church on the Festival day, by marching as a group during the seven to nine street processions conducted during the Festival period, and by planting flags atop tall bamboo poles along the route connecting the SRCC headquarters to the Church of Santa Rosa.

In examining the Santa Rosa Festival I turn to the analysis offered by S. F. Moore and Myerhoff (1977:3-4) who explain that “ritual and ceremony are employed to structure and present particular interpretations of social reality in a way that endows them with legitimacy”. Their argument is that ritual can act to reorganise extant social arrangements, or even help to create new ones. Moreover, rituals can be used, as the SRCC does, to show a certain commonality, “or even to create it” (1977:6). They argue that ceremonies propagate “the myth of cultural unity and social continuity, the myth of unchanging common tradition, the myth of shared belief” (1977:7). Collective ritual such as the Festival performs a “tradition-celebrating role”; moreover, “collective ceremony can traditionalise new material as well as perpetuate old traditions” (1977:7). Ritual can also imply

49 This is a comment that is supported by De Verteuil (1858:300), one of a number of historical texts that informs current SRCC reinterpretations.
50 This document—Bharath, Ricardo Hernandez: Khan, Jacqueline; and Reyes, Elma. N.d. The Preserved Historical Traditions of Santa Rosa de Arima as practiced by the Carib Community—is also available at: <http://SRCC1CaribCommunity.tripod.com/santarosa.htm>
permanence and legitimacy. Ritual is a form, Moore and Myerhoff argue, that can
give certain meanings to its contents, thus the medium of the ritual is part of its
message (1977:8). The stylistic rigidities of ritual, the “do’s and don’ts” and the
repetitions of form have a ‘tradition-like’ effect on participants and observers,
even when a ritual only momentarily brings togethers persons and interests that
might normally be disassociated with one another (1977:9). I also agree with
Moore and Myerhoff that ritual reifies, sometimes presenting the man-made as
sacred or divine in origin (1977:22; see also M. Roberts 1985:421). Ritual can be
an effective means of certifying a body or tradition:

Since ritual is a good form for conveying a message as if it were
unquestionable, it often is used to communicate those very things
which are most in doubt. Thus where there is conflict, or danger, or
political opposition, where there is made-upness and cultural
invention, ritual may carry the opposite message in form as well as
in content. [Moore & Myerhoff 1977:24]

As Jean Jackson argues (1989:132), a ritual can become part of the nation’s
folkloric repertoire, and we can speak of a ritual having been folklorised “when it
occurs because the participants’ involvement in the larger society significantly
influences why the ritual is performed and why particular traditional ritual forms
have been maintained”. SRCC brokers propound the view that the Caribs have
been instrumental in maintaining Trinidad’s “oldest and most continuous
Festival”, emphasising the national value of the Santa Rosa Festival in comparison
with other, and more recent, festivals such as Carnival, Hosay, and so forth.
Indigeneity in the form of the precedence principle is thus extended to the festival
arts. With these arguments, SRCC brokers are catering to the nationalist desire for
a long temporal background whilst also engaging in the comparative politics of
organised bodies seeking recognition and funding. The Santa Rosa Festival is thus
inserted into the inventory of the national cultural foundation. On the other hand,
the Festival and its ‘Carib history’, in the words of SRCC brokers, is also
enshrined as a defining element of Arimian history, in a way that is not designed
to undermine nationalist narratives as much as it is intended to supplement them.
Conclusion: Articulating and Valuing the Carib

The appropriation of the Amerindian in nationalist discourse has occurred through a variety of means, each of which has helped to add to the emergent conceptualisation of the ‘Amerindian past’ as the foundational bedrock of the modern nation. This has served to establish a link between the “first nations” and contemporary Trinidadians, via an implicit notion of territorial ancestry, a link that allows Trinidadians to refer to and speak collectively about “our Amerindian heritage”. While the symbolism of Amerindian indigeneity has been increasingly utilised by intellectuals, politicians, and the media as a device for creating a sense of local primordiality and continuity with ancient times, the Carib in particular has also been reinterpreted in an anti-colonialist light. The European attribution of ‘savage’ and ‘war-like’ qualities to the Caribs has been reinterpreted by nationalist élites as a sign that Caribs resisted colonialism, recasting them as primordial heroes in the struggle against slavery and for independence (in a broad sense of the term). On the other hand, the corpus of assumptions and ascribed traits used to characterise the Carib during the colonial era (as outlined in chapters 2 and 3), have also served as the basic parameters by which Carib identity and heritage have been defined and articulated in the present. The outcome of both SRCC and nationalist brokers’ representations—separated here only for analytical purposes, as the two sets of brokers can often be one and the same—has been to fold the Carib into the nationalist canon of Creole culture that, in emic terms, encompasses yet transcends various ethnicities (cf. B. Williams 1989).

The dual articulation of national and Carib indigeneity, the former utilising the trope of the Amerindian and the latter defined and constructed out of the national setting, serves to enforce and add value to the presence of the Carib. Within the post-colonial political economy of tradition, aboriginality has become a national commodity, or at least a commodity of nationalist narratives. As we saw in chapters 2, 3 and this one, indigeneity is not ontologically absolute, permanent or inflexible in content, form, and meaning. Instead, indigeneity is thus elaborated and interpreted within specific political, economic and historical conjunctures. In addition, at ‘ground level’, a number of agents and institutions have vested
interests in the dissemination, promotion and articulation of indigeneity, for various and often divergent reasons: nation-building, ethnic consciousness, tourism, education, local self-reliance, and so forth. The dissemination of images, symbols and references to Caribs and the Amerindian heritage also helps to inseminate the idea of the Carib as a legitimate and recognised category, a category that can be inhabited. ‘Carib’ has become an authoritative label, a loaded category that has had tremendous staying power for half a millennium, despite the many changes in the contexts and ways in which it has been used. Its authority is established and reproduced via repetition, re-enactment and ritual displays, especially when sanctioned or authored by powerful institutions and agents. The contemporary re-engineering of this indigeneity occurs along external and internal boundaries where the SRCC is concerned, the national and the local, the social and the personal. Not only has the SRCC achieved considerable success in obtaining recognition and support, the valuation of the Carib continues to gain momentum. One of the reasons for the latter is the growing recognition, legitimation and support of the SRCC from international bodies, which is partly the subject of the next chapter.
"In a sense, the dominant paradigm in social anthropology still defines all societies as islands—as unique, virtually self-sustaining systems to be understood primarily in their own terms, according to their own, presumably unique cultural logic. This idea should be re-thought both because it was wrong from the beginning, and because the contemporary world very visibly cannot be unambiguously divided into discrete societies".

----- Thomas Hylland Eriksen (1993b)

“We are ending the millennium in which these people were discovered by Europeans, destroyed and decimated by Europeans, and now they are coming out of that, recapturing themselves, their history, their culture and becoming self-sufficient again and moving forward. And they want to start that right here”.

----- Robert Sabga, High Commissioner of Trinidad and Tobago to Canada, speaking on the occasion of the visit of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to Trinidad and its Carib Community (quoted in Beharry 1999).

“We have a right to fight for our Indian culture. We have the right to recover even the things we have lost. Even our language. In our region and all over the Americas, we should seek each other as Indian peoples, just like the Jewish people do, or the Irish or the Italians or the Galicians or the Arabs”.

Introduction: Situating Carib Indigeneity within Processes of Globalisation

In the last chapter I outlined the primary approaches to ‘tradition’ that are enunciated and enacted by SRCC brokers, including ‘maintenance, ‘retrieval’, ‘reclamation’ and ‘translation’. SRCC brokers associate their concept of “cultural interchange” with that of “cultural retrieval”. They define cultural retrieval as the process of rediscovering, re-learning and practicing “the ancient ways”, including language, religious practices, and traditional costume. While most SRCC brokers do not speak in terms of a wholesale ‘continuity of traditions’, this does not mean that they abandon all interest in acquiring or enhancing their ‘authenticity’ as ‘indigenous’ for the wider audience and for prospective patrons whose recognition and funding they seek. Cultural interchange thus involves the process of acquiring indigenous traditions (that they have ‘lost’, as Bharath says) from other Amerindian communities that are seen as still practicing them, and this involves considerable networking on the international front. International exchange relationships thus become a central part of the local “recovery” of Amerindian traditions. The implicit premise here is that there was a homogeneous Carib culture in the Caribbean,1 mainland or island regardless, and what other Caribs practice is a survival from ancient times. As mentioned before, ultimately SRCC brokers see the founts of ‘authentic Amerindian traditions’ as located either in other times or in other places; in the case of the former, researchers and historians are called upon for their archival knowledge, and in the case of the latter other Amerindian groups are called upon. Also, by associating themselves with “resurgent” and “established”2 indigenous groups elsewhere in the Caribbean and the Americas, and in drawing on their symbolic resources, this has helped SRCC members to

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1 Implicitly, the emic concept of ‘culture’ with which SRCC brokers are working involves an agglomeration of practices and rituals, along with language, religious belief, and a whole range of lifeways.

2 By this distinction I mean that “resurgent” can be applied to those groups that (a) had either dissipated or (b) have recently been created; by “established” I mean groups that had been relegated to reservations with established boundaries and political bodies, as in Dominica and Guyana. There is an appreciable qualitative difference between the two, yet it is one that the SRCC case may actually tend to blur, in that part of its resurgence campaign has been to argue that it has been an established body in the local setting.
enhance their own identity and legitimacy as "indigenous" at the local level (see also Mato 2000:352). As one of the SRCC brokers wrote, in telling terms: "While the members of the SRCC are striving for recognition by the nationals of Trinidad and Tobago, they are accepted by all true Amerindians from the Mohawk council of tribal people of Canada and the United States, to the Carib Community of Dominica" (Almarales 1994:34, emphasis added). Beryl Almarales further emphasised: "They [SRCC members] are recognised as true Amerindian descendants outside Trinidad and Tobago" (1994:55). In other words, how their identification as indigenous is developed and defined is, in part, in and through this internationalised network. The adoption of the "first nations" designation is a trademark of this internationally networked sense of indigeneity. The concept of cultural interchange also implies, within reasonable limits, a network where local platforms are more or less interchangeable. The principle at work seems to be that what is "indigenous" over there can be "indigenous" here and maybe "indigenous" everywhere, as I shall demonstrate further on.

In addition, owing to the SRCC’s international connections, their resulting status is heightened especially in an outward-oriented society such as Trinidad’s that values foreign appreciation, global exposure, and international connections as prestigious forms of validation. This international exposure thus feeds back into the local politics of cultural value (Forte 1998b). Thus the dissemination within Trinidad of metropolitan (i.e., European and North American) and wider international valorisations of the indigenous further bolsters the value of indigeneity at the national level. That a range of international organisations, such as the Organisation of American States, the U.N.’s World Intellectual Property

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3 Expressions of international support for the SRCC can come from as far away as Australia—an entry in the guestbook of the Caribbean Amerindian Centrelink at <http://www.centrelink.org> read as follows: "I am of Dhauward Wurrung heritage from country in south west Victoria, Australia. We here at home give our support to you our cousins across nyamat, to achieve your rightful places in today’s society and to hang onto your culture. We all are still creating the Dreaming".

4 I have discussed elements of this phenomenon in previous sections already. Numerous authors, both in the social sciences and humanities, have remarked extensively on this feature of what many see as either a colonial legacy (where real value was located in the metropole—the Mother Country was always superior to the colony) and/or a symptom of Caribbean islands’ small size and peripheral positioning in the world system.
Organisation, UNESCO, and indigenous organisations such as Canada’s Assembly of First Nations, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, have all worked with the SRCC in some capacity at some time, only serves to heighten the profile of the group within the national politics of cultural value, and, the cultural politics of national value. It is difficult to overstate the depth and range of powerful affirmations of the importance of indigenous peoples as promoted in various international media over the decades, added to the growing visual association between celebrities, prominent world leaders and Amerindian images as presented in international news reports that are usually recycled in Trinidadian media or presented directly via cable television, the Internet, and in local televised news.

**Figure 7.1:**
The Power of Association/ Powerful Associations

![Left: Bharath, in the centre, is flanked by representatives of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs during their visit to Trinidad in November 1999. At left is Chief Rod Bushia. The setting is the Cleaver Woods Amerindian museum at the entrance to Arima. CENTRE: From BBC News Online, U.S. President Bill Clinton and an American Indian leader. RIGHT: Prince Charles during his 2000 visit to Guyana’s interior and his meeting with Guyanese Amerindians. The predominance of the feathered headdress as a visible sign of indigeneity, shown throughout these photos, is also a key influence on the mode by which “authentic” indigeneity is popularly perceived in Trinidad.

There are important theoretical and methodological ramifications that stem from the above practices and projects developed by SRCC brokers. One of these inevitably entails our reaffirming that ‘the local’ is not a bounded single site, homogeneous within and disconnected without (Eriksen 1993a). Daniel Mato also criticises the “established scholarly practice of studying ‘local’ cases as if they actually exist...as if they may...be detached from the world orders in which they take part without any significant consequence” (2000:343). Eriksen explains that, until recently, the dominant anthropological approach to the local was as a closed,

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5 This version of Eriksen’s paper is on the Internet and no pagination is indicated.
self-sustaining social system, and, insofar as "the local community described was compelled to have relations with the outside world, these relations would be depicted as extrasystemic links, as not really forming part of the relevant social unit" (1993a). In addition, Eriksen (1993a) argues that a similar approach was taken with ethnic groups—both the local and the ethnic treated as metaphoric islands—and he argues, "the notion of the ethnic group as a relatively fixed unit remains strong". Jean and John Comaroff (1999:279) also stress that the local and the global should be treated more as analytic constructs rather than as explanatory terms or empirical realities (cf. Forte 1998a). I also agree with them that, "there is little to be gained any longer from avoiding the methodological challenge posed by the global movement, a strategy effected, on the part of some anthropologists, by retreating back into the local" (J. & J. Comaroff 1999:294).

The apparent anthropological dichotomy of the global as the space of theory versus the local as the space of empirical ethnography is problematic; indeed, one could just as well reverse the positions. In this regard, Hannerz has pointed to the recurrent problem of "ethnography and system image show[ing] less than a perfect fit", with the result that often there is a "zone of ignorance" between micro and macro and hence there is a need "to expand ethnography at least into that space" (1992:21-22). Mato (1996:66) similarly argues that in typical anthropological research designs, the national and the global become "the context" rather than "the case", and Marcus (1995:99) argues that, "the idea that ethnography might expand from its committed localism to represent a system much better apprehended by abstract models and aggregate statistics seems antithetical to its very nature and thus beyond its limits" such that, within anthropology, "there is no global in the local-global contrast now so frequently invoked". Marcus argues moreover that this applies to the ethnographic study of many of anthropology's traditional subjects, including indigenous peoples (1995:103). The local is not necessarily more concrete and empirically intelligible

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6 Eriksen (1993a) strongly argues: "The interrelationships between social systems, the argument goes—systems which may formerly have been fairly discrete—are nowadays simply so omnipresent and so important in the reproduction of any social system, that they should not be understated in any social study with a claim to intellectual honesty".
than what some regard as ‘the global’ (see H. Moore 2001, Weeratunge 2001). In countering this local-global dichotomy, I agree with Friedman that globalisation can be seen as “a process of local transformation, the packing in of global events, products and frameworks into the local. It is not about de-localising the local but about changing its content, not least in identity terms” (1999:5).\footnote{Peter Beyer (Sociology, University of Ottawa) also argues that ‘globalisation’ is about the “redoing of the local” (personal communication).}\footnote{Peter Beyer (Sociology, University of Ottawa) also argues that ‘globalisation’ is about the “redoing of the local” (personal communication).} Friedman (1994:198) agrees with Robertson that the local is itself a global product: “the particular is an aspect of globalisation rather than its complementary opposite”. Clifford examines globalisation as a situation involving separate places becoming a unified space through world-economic practices (1994:303). Giddens (1990:5, 64) and Robertson (1992:130) both argue that globalisation, beyond observable relations of interdependence, involves local and personal contexts of social experience being transformed through what Giddens highlights as social action at a distance, which is complemented by Robertson’s thesis that contemporary concerns with tradition and indigeneity largely rest on “globally diffused ideas”\footnote{For some related literature see also Beyer (1994), Giddens (1994, 1991), and Waters (1995).}. Moreover, as Hilary Cunningham has recently argued, globalisation can also be seen in individuals’ “appropriation of global imagery and rhetoric” in developing a “senses of themselves as global actors” (1999:584). Cunningham thus sees globalisation as also entailing “the construction of new social identities (i.e., new ways of imagining community) within a specific set of historical circumstances and symbolic resources”, rather than approaching globalisation “simply as a structural reality that occurs to people” (1999:585). In this vein, globalisation can be seen as consisting of individuals developing a particular self-understanding as part of global interconnectedness (Cunningham 1999:595). Amongst ‘Caribbeanists’ it is a widely shared truism that the foundation of the modern Caribbean is the product of global forces (see Robotham 1998:308).\footnote{For some related literature see also Beyer (1994), Giddens (1994, 1991), and Waters (1995).} Olwig (1993:ix) thus speaks of “the global quality of West Indian culture”, finding, “the traditional place-centred orientation of anthropology [to be] inadequate”, since the whole Caribbean cultural outlook is characterised by an
outward orientation manifested in, "a long tradition of seeking self-assertion and external recognition through the appropriation and manipulation of institutions of the dominant Western world" (1993:i-x, 4). My project here is not strictly about showing, or ‘proving’, the myriad ways so-called ‘external’ forces such as colonialism, the inter-state system, the world market, migration, universalising religions and other transnational cultural flows have constituted the field and have been located into what we call locality, though these are implied in each of the chapters thus far.

Instead, my own interest in ‘globalism’ for present purposes involves the question of indigeneity in Trinidad. Indeed, indigeneity and indigenisation make no logical sense without at least implicit reference to a prior notion of ‘the global’, with the active construction and representation of indigeneity implicitly relating, reading, responding, and reacting to processes of globalisation (see Robertson 1992:46). Secondly, the ethnographic facts of the SRCC demand this attention, to the extent that SRCC leaders actively engage a regional Caribbean and international network of indigenous organisations and communities, and the manner in which this interaction heightens their value and legitimacy locally, while also helping to sustain the morale and internal cohesion of the SRCC. Moreover, Yelvington (1995b:142) argues that while some degree of choice of ethnic identification is possible in Trinidad, there are serious sanctions for “pretending to be what you are not”. Indeed, the SRCC’s visible association with an array of international indigenous groups who frequently exercise a presence on the ground in Trinidad, helps to offset these potential sanctions against individuals who locally might otherwise be seen as primarily ‘not pure’ or ‘not real Amerindians’. Most of the SRCC brokers’ statements on ‘race’ almost always implicitly or explicitly acknowledge this racial chink in their representational armour, having to almost apologise for their own miscegenation.¹0 Lastly, the SRCC’s interaction with a variety of international indigenous cultural brokers adds

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⁹ James Clifford (1988:15) also advocates a “Caribbean” notion of culture based in part on these premises.
¹⁰ In one of my earliest conversations with Bharath, in 1995, when he had apparently tired of apologising, he exclaimed: “We are mixed, but we say that it is not our fault!”
further substance to the idea of a ‘globalised aboriginality’ and discussions of the ways in which ‘locality’ and ‘primordia’ have become globalised (Appadurai 1994:332, 333). Robertson (1992) argued that examples such as the formation of the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, the role of the U.N. in drafting the declaration of rights of indigenous peoples, the “new solidarity” among “native peoples” in promoting their rights and identities via strategic alliances across states and continents, are all indicative of a globalisation of aboriginality. Robertson has thus argued that these movements “partake of globality (and, of course, modernity) in that they involve recognition that the promotion of the local is only possible on an increasingly global basis” and thus the “movement for worldwide indigenisation” has been “globally orchestrated” (1992:171, 172). In addition, Friedman (1994:199) discusses the extent to which the “heightened representability of the fourth world peoples” is a “global process in social terms”.

Whether indigeneity has been “globalised” or simply “internationalised” is a problematic question. Friedman (1999:1) argues that since the mid-1970s “there has been a massive increase in the activities of indigenous minorities in the world” and “their struggles have become global news and they have entered numerous global organisations so that they have become an international presence” (emphasis added). Yet, he argues that this “does not mean that they have been globalised” (Friedman 1999:1). Given Friedman’s own reliance on the term “global” when describing this phenomenon, the distinction he then raises between that and “international” seems unclear. At other times, Friedman has argued, “Fourth World movements have become a global phenomenon, institutionalised via United Nations organs such as the World Council of Indigenous Peoples” (Friedman n.d., also Friedman 1994:199). The main question here would seem to be: How internationalised does something have to be in order to be seen as globalised? I tend to use these two terms interchangeably, especially in the discussion that follows, since I see discourses and representations of indigeneity having been sufficiently globalised that they can even penetrate those societies that perceive themselves as lacking an indigenous presence.
CHAPTER SIX  GLOBALISING THE CARIB

The question of 'globalised indigeneity', to the extent that one can meaningfully speak of this, represents an important paradox of indigeneity: seemingly free floating whilst emphasising local rootedness. There are at least three main ways we can outline the globalisation of indigeneity, and at different points I draw on all three. First, we can take a world-systemic perspective of how the category emerged in the context of the foundation of the modern world system. Focused more on the contemporary context, Terence Turner (1999) produces a theoretical argument for the "indigenous renaissance", placing it within what he calls a global culturalist conjuncture. Turner (1999) argues also that indigenous peoples have been "stimulated" by the "windfall of support from the world system" in becoming "more aggressive and successful in using their cultural differences as rhetorical and ideological legitimation for their demands for territorial rights and local autonomy, and as grounds for alliances with non-indigenous groups in support of these demands". Indeed, indigenous peoples achieve these gains at a time when global capitalism seems to be booming.

Second, I suggest that the globalised spread of motifs, practices, products, ideologies, cosmologies, organisations, media and support networks of indigeneity have led to the construction of indigeneity as a macro phenomenon, lifted from the confines of any one location, and seemingly applicable to any other location. At this level, we are then speaking of an indigenous macro-community that is trans-local and constitutes a virtual meta-indigeneity. Only to the extent that this has an empirical grounding can one speak of interchangeable 'local platforms' and adaptable globalised meanings, motifs, and so forth, ultimately leading to a situation where the network is the indigene.\footnote{In this regard, it is important to underscore the extent to which the symbols and discourses of indigenous groups in one part of the world can and do impact the symbols and discourses of indigenous groups in another part of the world. Clifford speaks in roughly similar terms using a "diaspora" metaphor. Noting the second part of the paradox (rootedness) he observes that, "tribal or 'Fourth World' assertions of sovereignty and 'first
nationhood’ do not feature histories of travel and settlement, though these may be part of the indigenous historical experience. They stress continuity of habitation, aboriginality, and often a ‘natural’ connection to the land” (Clifford 1994:308). Noting the first part of the paradox (transnationalism), he states: 

the kinds of transnational alliances currently being forged by Fourth World peoples contain diasporic elements. United by similar claims to ‘firstness’ on the land and by common histories of decimation and marginality, these alliances often deploy diasporist visions of return to an original place—a land commonly articulated in visions of nature, divinity, mother earth, and the ancestors. [Clifford 1994:309]

Thus, “in claiming both autochthony and a specific, transregional worldliness, new tribal forms bypass an opposition between rootedness and displacement” (Clifford 1994:309).

A third way to sketch the globalisation of indigeneity is in terms of the international relations of diverse indigenous bodies and movements (Sanders 1997; Wilmer 1993a, 1993b; van de Fliert, 1994; and Stephen Ryan 1990). These can be witnessed in the popular, though sometimes contradictory, association of indigenous peoples with environmental struggles worldwide; the establishment of regional and international organisations such as the World Council of Indigenous Peoples; the capacity and ability of local indigenous movements to enter international fora and make their cases the subject of world media attention; the development and diffusion of indigenous media; the discussion and debate of issues and concerns of indigenous peoples in the most prominent inter-state bodies such as the United Nations and the Organisation of American States; the incorporation of indigenous perspectives and concerns in important international documents such as the Rio Declaration and the International Labour Organisation’s Convention No. 169; the proclamations of the U.N. International Year (1993), International Day (1994), and International Decade (1995-2004) for the World’s Indigenous People; and, international indigenous conferences and

\[11\] Here I am adapting Sun Microsystems’ motto, which is “the network is the computer” and refers to a vision of computers as basically empty shells, or mere terminals, connected to a network that is the centralised and global source of ‘localised’ computing.
congresses, to name only a few (Friedman 1994, 1999:1; Robertson 1992). As Mato observes, globalising factors such as those just listed, “stimulated and enabled representatives of diverse indigenous peoples to meet each other and begin to develop regular relationships, representations of identity, organisational forms and associated sociopolitical agendas (2000:351).

There is a further paradox to be considered along the lines of structure and agency. Groups such as the SRCC, when viewed primarily in a local context, appear to demonstrate considerable agency in pursuing and affirming their international connections with other indigenous bodies. Yet, Caribbean Amerindian organisations are still largely peripheral to the development of the phenomena outlined above and continue to act as takers of metropolitan trends rather than makers of new global trends. For these organisations, the North American Indian-led international ‘resurgence’ of indigenous politics and motifs acts as both an inspiration, a fund of materials that can be drawn upon, and the standard by which one’s group is to be measured. Indeed, it seems that internationally broadcast news from the United States, Canada and Brazil relating to Native Americans, First Nations and Amazonian tribes may well have acted as a catalyst and as a paradigm for others to follow (see Conklin 1997:712-713; Turner 1991). I would argue that the U.S., Canada, and Brazil are most likely the symbolic core of internationalised paradigms of indigeneity, providing perhaps a disproportionate amount of the motifs of indigeneity, the emblematic struggles, and the trademark representations of ‘indigenous issues’, examples of which have already been presented in previous chapters and are symbolised in Figure 7.1. Strong and Van Winkle (1993:17-18) describe the modernising and corporatising of Native American groups via loans, business development, self-government, landmark judicial rulings confirming their rights to assert economic, political and cultural authority, and, Pan-Indianism, as all developing with especial intensity from the 1960s to the 1980s in the U.S., which is the critical period and the critical

\[\text{12 Within North America, this period of indigenisation and ‘resurgence’ has even had a demographic effect: “The population of North American Indians more than doubled from 1970 to 1980. Most of this was re-identification. Five new tribes appeared during the same period” (Friedman n.d.).}\]
locus for the globalisation of indigeneity. To a great extent, the dominant representations of indigenous issues and perspectives follow the broad contours of the centre-periphery tension in the world system, with those indigenous groups that are active in the ‘core’ countries, groups with financial resources and access to the international mass media, having a disproportionate prominence. Caribbean Amerindian organisations are acutely aware of this unequal structuring of representations of indigeneity at the international level, and have largely accommodated themselves to this reality—not just out of necessity, but also by choice given precisely the influential and (in some quarters) prestigious value of associating with North American indigenous bodies. Moreover, as Bellour and Kinser (1998) have described with respect to Trinidad, the American Indian has long been an object romanticised in terms of seemingly perennial resistance.

In this chapter I will focus on three main areas of inquiry: (1) the situating of the SRCC within wider international currents of indigenous organisation and representation; (2) an overview and analysis of the recent emergence of the regional and international organisation of Caribbean Amerindians, that is, part of the wider setting in which the SRCC is situated; and, (3) with a special focus on the Smoke Ceremony, I will examine the development, ‘on the ground’, of ritual practices defined as ‘tradition’ by SRCC brokers and exemplifying ‘cultural retrieval’ and ‘cultural interchange’, and that also embodying the outcomes of international networks of indigenous organisation and representation.

From Carib to First Nations: The SRCC and International Networks of Indigenous Revival

Why do leaders of the SRCC and its affiliated brokers see the need for inserting the SRCC within a globalised network of indigenous bodies? Why is it necessary or desirable? I believe the answers go straight to the heart of the process of the reconstruction of indigeneity in Trinidad. From interviews I conducted with my key informants and specialists in the SRCC, I have gathered a mass of important statements that explain why leaders/brokers in the SRCC desire these contacts, relations and exchange visits. To start with, I shall summarise these here.
As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the SRCC’s principle of cultural interchange has been a leading force motivating SRCC brokers toward engagement with the wider network of indigenous revivals and political organisation. Beyond that, the reason of “greater strength”, as my informants have put it, is another major consideration. By this they mean that locally, in Trinidad, they cannot be easily dismissed by the authorities or by commentators when they appear wrapped in the validating presence of visiting Amerindians (see Figure 7.2). Moreover, their wish is to put potentially hostile agents in the wider society “on alert” by showing that they have friends abroad and interested foreign observers concerned for the welfare and progress of Trinidad’s Caribs. It is no wonder then that the leaders of the SRCC strive to get indigenous visitors from abroad during key events, such as the Santa Rosa Festival where there are clerics and parishioners who dispute whether it is proper to have a ‘universal’ Catholic festival appear with a separate ethnic component within it. International recognition is another critical reason that my informants outlined. The active presence and collaboration of outside Amerindian representatives serves to demonstrate that they, the Arima Caribs, are in fact being supported and recognised as Caribs by other recognised Caribs and Amerindians. “Inspiration”: some of my informants have testified that relations with indigenous groups abroad have been a real source of encouragement and moral support. Lastly, there is the issue of future promise: always at work amongst my key informants are visions of possible futures that involve a broader merger between themselves and their Amerindian friends in neighbouring territories, such as promoting intermarriage between groups. In addition, there are more mundane reasons that attract SRCC members to the fruits of international association developed by SRCC brokers. As one of my survey respondents indicated: “I like all these Amerindian visitors who come just to visit us, and stay with us, and all the events that happen around them. It does cheer we up!”
Figure 7.2:  
**International Indigenous Bodies in Trinidad**  

![Image](image_url)  

**LEFT:** Norma Stephens of the SRCC is wrapped in a blanket that a visiting delegation of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs presented as one of their gifts on Wednesday, 24 November 1999, at the SRCC Centre in Arima. **RIGHT:** An Amerindian delegation from Suriname, inside the Santa Rosa RC Church, attends the Santa Rosa Festival as the SRCC’s special guests and as part of the larger “Third Gathering of Indigenous Peoples” held in Arima at the same time in August 2000. (Photo source: Catholic News Online, Sunday, 03 September 2000 <http://www.trinidad.net/catholicnews/Sept3/>). Also important to note, as exemplified by the mere fact of the photographs’ existence, is that while the events shown pertain to the wider context of global indigenous organisation, that globality is ethnographically accessible in an immediate form.

What I have also noticed, relating to Trinidadian society in general, is the growing tendency on the part of cultural groups and ethnic associations to engage in global networking, to form part of ‘globalised homelands’ that transcend Trinidad’s boundaries, to become members of ‘global tribes’, active in vast diaspora-like configurations. Transnational associations can also provide a sense of internal stability to local groups, knowing that respect and recognition can be derived from extra-local sources, and perhaps boost their visibility and legitimacy locally at the same time.

There are several modes, stages and partnerships by which the SRCC has inserted itself within larger networks of international indigeneity. During 10-14
November 1991 Bharath and Campo were invited to represent Trinidad at the congress of the hemisphere’s indigenous peoples hosted by the Assembly of First Nations in Ottawa, titled “Strengthening the Spirit, Beyond 500 Years” (AFN 1991a, 1991b, 1991c). As Bharath explained, he is often tempted to “give up”, but events such as these help to renew his resolve “to continue developing and strengthening the Carib Community”. The knowledge of being part of a global network of friends in the “indigenous struggle”, as he put it, is a key source of “inspiration and motivation”.

In some respects Bharath also found that he could place the SRCC within a wider perspective, noting that “many indigenous peoples around the Americas face many of the same problems that we do: the loss of language and religion, the passing of traditions, the lack of interest of youths, and the lack of lands”. In establishing these linkages, SRCC brokers also introduce a certain degree of transference, that is, the substitutability or even the interchangeability of indigenous histories and experiences across locales. Fitting the SRCC within this wider framework also served to diminish Bharath’s anxiety over ‘proving’ Amerindian-ness, lessening his personal desire to dress up to rigid expectations of continuity and notions of authenticity as frozen culture, while also spurring him to analytically reframe indigeneity not so much as a static sense of being but rather as a problem. Hence Bharath’s repeated statements to the press, and researchers like myself, focusing on themes of extinction, cultural loss, and disinterest in traditions, that is, on the maintenance and representation of indigeneity as problematic due to generalised loss and decline. On the other hand, these statements also help to evoke sympathy and support, deriving from a “last of the Mohicans” effect. Moreover, Bharath would be diminishing his own role as a leader seeking to raise

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13 In addition to the SRCC, the other six organisations representing indigenous peoples of the Caribbean that attended this conference included: “Black Carib Community” (St. Vincent), Carib Indian Cultural Group (Dominica), Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous Peoples (COIP), Council for the Development of the Carib Community (St. Vincent), Dominica Carib Council, and the National Garifuna Council (Belize). Dominica Carib Chief Irving Auguste was also one of the keynote speakers opening the conference. See also Indigenous 500 Committee (1991a, 1991b, 1991c, 1991d), World Council of Indigenous Peoples (1991), and Ovide Mercredi (National Chief, Assembly of First Nations), Speech for the Opening Ceremony of the “Strengthening the Spirit” Conference, 10 November 1991.
the Caribs from oblivion if he did not see the situation he faces as one of potential “extinction”.

Another critical venue has been the Caribbean Festival of the Arts (Carifesta), a regional inter-state platform for the performing arts, that the government of Trinidad hosted in 1992 and 1995, the former occasion combining with celebrations of the Columbian Quincentenary and with a strong focus on the region’s Amerindian peoples. The year 1992 came to be known as the First Gathering of the region’s Indigenous Peoples, held in Arima, and hosted by the Carib Community. In that same period the SRCC joined the Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous People (COIP). I shall discuss COIP in further detail in a following section.

The year 1992, in which both Carifesta V (22-28 August) and the Columbian Quincentenary occurred, was in many ways a watershed for Caribbean Amerindian revivalism, combined with a number of complementary currents. Officials in the states of the Commonwealth Caribbean had certainly decided that Carifesta V would “focus on indigenous art and culture”, with Arima acting as the locus of what was intended to be a newly created permanent site, “a village of indigenous peoples” (Caricom Perspective 1992:26). Planners for CARICOM’s Caribbean Events Committee stressed the ‘global’ value of its chosen themes for 1992:

The world will only watch, listen and take us seriously, if we lock into international themes which are of interest and value almost everywhere to almost everyone in the global village.... Moreover we will only be able to make an impact on the power centres of the world if we can link our thrust to dominant international concerns....[hence] the strategy to use 1992 as a platform for making a meaningful and lasting impact on the world community. [Caricom Perspective 1991b:48]

As a means of achieving these goals, the CARICOM planners highlighted, amongst others, the “Encounter between Worlds Programme” and Carifesta V itself. The Trinidadian government had also committed itself to showcasing the Arima Caribs, as indicated in its 1990 instrument of recognition of the SRCC (see chapter 4), where it was explicitly stated that support for the SRCC came “into
higher relief and sharper focus as the country prepares to celebrate Columbus' Quincentennial in October 1992. Activists in various Caribbean Amerindian bodies and territories also were conscious of how "renewed interest in the fate of the Carib people had coincided with the quincentennial of Christopher Columbus'...voyage to the Caribbean" providing an "opportune moment in modern Carib history to reiterate decisively the collective commitment to preserve their cultural traditions" (Gregoire et al. 1996:108). Barreiro (1992:350) quotes then Chief Irvince Auguiste of the Dominica Caribs about the usefulness of 1992 in promoting their history and culture. With reference to the new Taino movement in the U.S., Jiménez Román (1999:75) also observed the emergence of "a revivalist movement, ostensibly inspired by the commemorative activities surrounding the quincentennial of the first voyage of Christopher Columbus to the 'New World'". Hulme thus argued that the Columbian "quincentenary and its associated events may well have raised their [the Caribs'] own consciousness of their place in history" (1993:214). Columbus, 1992, and history in broad terms thus continue to be the key grounding for Caribbean Amerindian identities, and the above can be seen as rounding out discussions of national commemorations and re-enactments of the arrival of Columbus as described in the previous chapter.

In 1993, for the U.N.'s International Year of the World's Indigenous People, the Trinidadian government's newly formed Amerindian Project Committee helped the Carib Community to host the so-called Second Gathering in Arima. The third was recently held in 2000, still with the sponsorship of the Trinidad government. As I indicated in the last chapter, by 1995 SRCC leaders began to publicly state that the proper way to refer to them was as "First Nations", saying that this was "the correct international designation, endorsed by the United Nations". Moreover, the expectation within the SRCC is that such visits would strengthen the group internally. Thus Queen Justa Werges stated at the Second Gathering that Amerindian visitors from across the Caribbean should establish "a strong and lasting bond" to help the younger generations to be "proud of their ancestors whom Columbus met here" (Almarales 1994:21).
In June 1997, the Arima Caribs hosted a visiting delegation from Dominica’s Carib Territory, arriving as a result of the landmark “Gli-Gli Carib Canoe Project” that involved the building of a large Carib canoe that was then sailed down the Caribbean islands and into the Orinoco River in an attempt to symbolically re-link the region’s Amerindian communities by a replication of traditional Carib means. This voyage was the subject of a recent BBC documentary that also featured Arima’s Caribs, and was featured in reports in the international media (Neggers 1997, Freeman 1999). In the film the leader of the Dominican Carib crew, Jacob Frederick, said of his encounter with the SRCC: “we are meeting our own flesh and blood…meeting lost family…this trip shows that blood is thicker than water…blood is calling”. When I met Jacob Frederick in Dominica he told me that the SRCC members impressed him as “they are just like us”. Former Chief Faustilus Frederick, who traveled to Trinidad in 1995 for Carifesta VI, also told me, “they’re just like us—they look like us”. Jacob Frederick’s constant emphasis during the Gli-Gli visit was on “reviving the culture”, “reviving the language”, renewing connections, and “going back to the source”, which ultimately meant the Orinoco region of Guyana and Venezuela. In the documentary the SRCC was featured as a proud, large, thriving community; the leaders appeared forceful in how they spoke on camera; the Dominicans were greeted under the statue of Hyarima, with Cristo Adonis appearing in his feather headdress with maracas, bead necklaces, and loincloth. Considering the film was subsequently shown on public television in the U.K. and the U.S. within the following year, the SRCC would not fail to impress viewers. I attended two screenings of the film in Arima, one held in my apartment in late July 1999, and another held under Cristo Adonis’ ajoupa shortly thereafter. On the latter occasion I filmed the members of the SRCC watching themselves as they appeared on screen. They seemed engrossed as if studying themselves seriously. Afterwards, as

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the film ended, one of the ladies exclaimed: “When people come we have nothing to show. You see like in Guyana, they does have dances and dresses and music. But when people come to see us, we just look like everyone else”. It was at that point that Adonis asserted: “Don’t worry—by this time next year we will have traditional clothing”, which is itself a telling statement about creating something in the future and yet classing it as traditional.

The media response to the Gli-Gli in Trinidad was very instructive in terms of underlining some of the prevailing discourses on indigeneity in the region. An editorial in the Trinidad Guardian (10/06/1997), began with the old depictions of wild and untamed Caribs: “They will not be here to seize our land and capture our women—they have long outlived those belligerent tendencies—but rather to relive a fascinating aspect of the history of their ancestors by retracing the journey of the Caribs down the island chain from Dominica down to Guyana”. What is also of significance is the endorsement of Carib cultural revitalisation offered in the above editorial, inspired by what it called a journey designed to reconnect island communities with their “ancestral homeland” (Venezuela and Guyana):

Hopefully, also, the journey will spark a resurgence of interest in Carib culture, now forgotten, such as the food, language, dance, games and traditional medicine. We expect that during the next five days, the visiting Caribs of Dominica, where a 3,000-strong community exists, will spend some time with members of the local Carib community at Arima where the aboriginal culture survives but their numbers have dwindled to a few dozen persons with ‘some Carib blood in their veins’. The visit, too, may well stimulate the local Carib community to renew their appeal to the Government for a parcel of land on the Blanchisseuse Road where they would like to establish a permanent settlement. [Trinidad Guardian 10/06/1997]

The editorial fuses various facets of concern for this project: (1) the vesting of interests by non-SRCC brokers in the ‘revival’ of Carib culture (seen as consisting of particular practices); (2) the spotlighting of Arima as the place where the ‘aboriginal culture survives’; and, (3) the formula of rewards and recognition for a special group. The media presence was critical in publicising if not creating the

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16 As the e-mail intermediary for some of my informants, I read enthusiastic messages from
significance of the event. Rostant (1997) says that the Gli-Gli was in fact met mostly by members of the local Trinidadian media.

**Figure 7.3:**
*From Islands to Homeland—The Gli-Gli Carib Canoe*


The Venezuela-Guyana region of the Orinoco, for reasons already outlined, is a key source of interest on the part of SRCC brokers. As an example, in a proposal submitted to the Embassy of Venezuela in Trinidad in 1990, the SRCC’s researchers proposed, “renewing our Amerindian links with Venezuela”, with a visit to a Cariña community to “strengthen...traditional skills in food and drink preparation and handicraft” and to “restart the custom” of having Warao Indians visit south Trinidad for trade and to renew rituals they practiced in Trinidad. The idea was that the Warao “may be interested in establishing a sales outlet for their traditional hammocks and basketry in south Trinidad.... In this way persons of partial Warao descent, and the Trinidad public at large, could build a living relationship with Warao culture”. Hence, the “need for cultural interchange with South American Indian communities”, in their words, as a major part of their revival efforts.

Delegations of Amerindians from Guyana have stayed at the SRCC headquarters on several occasions (in 1988, 1992, 1993 and 1995), sometimes for weeks at a time, to teach traditional weaving skills and to produce handicraft items.
that have since been incorporated into the SRCC's own repertoire of items for public display of their traditions. Among the Guyanese delegations to visit the SRCC, a team of weaving specialists spent eight weeks in the Carib Centre teaching 'traditional weaving techniques' (see Figure 7.5). Also, in November 1993, a weeklong workshop and exhibition of Guyanese handicraft was held at the SRCC Centre, featuring a team of Arawaks and Caribs from Guyana whose trip had been funded by the Guyana Tourist Board (Almarales 1994:50). Although Guyana represents an important source of "original Amerindian culture" to some people in the Arima Carib Community, as part of the Orinoco-Amazon area, not many seem to focus on this relationship in their discussions concerning ties with other Caribbean Amerindians. Bharath is an important exception however, having personally made a voyage to the Carib settlements of the Pomeroon River area of northwestern Guyana. Bharath is the main specialist in relations with the Guyanese Amerindians, which may also limit the latter's impact on the SRCC membership. Bharath is kept abreast of indigenous issues in Guyana via regular receipt of the newsletter of the Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous Peoples. It is also important to note the apparent division of labour between Bharath and Adonis where external relations are concerned, with Bharath focusing on Guyana and Adonis focusing on the U.S.-based Tainos.

My research in Dominica, focusing on Dominica Carib connections with Trinidad, revealed that overall no less than 37 Dominica Caribs visited Trinidad, on no less than 10 separate visits. More Dominica Caribs visited than there are people in the active core of the Santa Rosa Carib Community. Apart from the Gli-Gli project, in October 1997 a five-member team of Dominica Caribs, funded by the British Development Division and the Caribbean Association of Local Government Authorities, spent two weeks in Arima. The interests of this group included canoe making, weaving, women, and politics. In November 1997, a private organisation in Trinidad, Harmony in Diversity,17 sponsored a much publicised international gathering of indigenous representatives in the SRCC Centre in Arima, with delegates from as far away as Australia, and with

17 Harmony in Diversity—Trinidad and Tobago: <http://www.trinidad.net/hdiversity/index.html>
representatives of newly established self-described “restorationist” Puerto Rican Taino groups based in New York.

In November 1999, a delegation from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC),18 led by Grand Chief Rod Bushie,19 spent a week in Trinidad, proposing a wide array of economic investments, as well as developing working ties with the SRCC under the rubric of establishing a proposed World Indigenous Assembly in Trinidad (Jarette 1999, Milne 1999, Beharry 1999, Gooding 1999).20 This delegation had a tremendous impact in the local media and the delegation ended up visiting with almost every prominent businessman and politician in Trinidad (Beharry 1999). Grand Chief Rod Bushie indicated that Trinidad was chosen as a destination given the historic links between Canada and Trinidad, his own exposure to Trinidadian teachers in Catholic mission schools, and not specifically because of the presence of the SRCC in Trinidad. Indeed, the primary aims of the Manitoba Chiefs’ visit to Trinidad during 19-26 November 1999, seem to have been political and economic, i.e.: establishing ties with “Third World” states, and seeking investment opportunities. The Trinidadian press reported that the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs was interested in investing in steel mills, petrochemicals, the oil industry, soft drinks, hotels, and casinos. The ties established with the SRCC appeared to be lateral interests. However, once again, the meetings between the Manitoba chiefs and the Arima Caribs served to provide some excitement within the community and a further impetus for organisation and promotion of Carib traditions in Trinidad, heightening local attention to and respect for the SRCC, and encouraging if not galvanising leaders of the SRCC in their revival efforts. Indeed, the year following the visit ushered in an intense series of activities and projects in the SRCC such as hosting the Third Gathering of Indigenous Peoples and the successful dialogue with the Prime Minister on the question of lands, funds, and a national commemorative day.

18 Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs: <http://www.mbchiefs.mb.ca/>
19 Biography of Former Grand Chief Rod Bushie of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs: <http://www.mbchiefs.mb.ca/rodbushie.html>
20 Further information was available from the report of Anne-Marie Ganase, aired on Panorama, the evening news of Trinidad and Tobago Television on Monday, 22 November 1999.
In addition to the visit by the AMC, November 1999 was itself a month of multiple convergences of interests and events, including: (1) the accidental discovery of Amerindian artefacts outside of Mayaro (southeastern Trinidad), the televised news coverage it received over a period of three days, and the interest it subsequently generated in the issue of voluntarily handing some of these finds over to Arima’s SRCC as well as renewed interest in the role of archaeological resources in bolstering consciousness of national history; (2) the launch of a month-long series of events, covered by the press, to commemorate the 300th anniversary of the Amerindian uprising at the San Francisco de los Arenales Mission south of Arima, near today’s San Rafael (see Agostini 1999, Trinidad Guardian 1999a); (3) the public emergence of a new offshoot organisation of the SRCC, Kairi Tukuieny Karinya (KTK), led by two environmentalists (John Stollmeyer and Jamaludin Khan) and by the young shaman of the SRCC, Ricardo Kapaupana Cruz; and, (4) the appearance of leaders of the SRCC and KTK on national television on at least three occasions. The arrival of the AMC delegation
only seemed to maximise the importance of each of these events. It also had implications for the representational positions of the diverse SRCC brokers.

Given the sometimes divided leadership of the SRCC, its multiple goals (maintenance, retrieval and reclamation of traditions), and its multiple public facets (from ‘New Age’ indigene, to pan-Carib revivalism, to the maintenance of local Spanish-Amerindian Catholic religious and domestic traditions), added to the variety of brokers who are not formal members of the SRCC but who still work closely with select allies within it, the result often is that the varying fields of specialisation and interest of different sides of the SRCC become more or less relevant at different times. The positions of the brokers concerned change with respect to one another at these different points in time. One set of brokers will become more influential, and garner the public spotlight, when events occur that bring attention to a particular meaning or representation of the SRCC. For example, the shamanic and revivalist side of the SRCC is subdued during the Santa Rosa Festival. For the visit of the Manitoba Chiefs, when the presentation of maximum numbers and the papering over of internal differences was paramount, one could see an unusual melange of the various sides of the SRCC in one place at the same time: the President (Bharath) in his crisp white shirt and black pants; the shaman (Adonis) in street clothes and wearing a straw hat with a feather; elderly ladies dressed in the pink dresses they wear for the Santa Rosa Festival; men wearing Amerindian-styled decorative items; the singing of Parang; the performance of a Smoke Ceremony; the momentary resurrection of the figure of “Youth Representative” in the body of Susan Campo; a long-standing rival of the Carib Queen acting as her representative; the presence of local PNM stalwarts at a time when the SRCC was already courting/courted by the ruling UNC, as evidenced by the High Commissioner’s comment that “good things are coming” to the SRCC; the various local speakers’ applause for the “reuniting” of Canadian First Nations and Carib “First Peoples”; and, the pride expressed by some local speakers and artists in listing “Carib” in their inventory of ‘mixed ancestry’.

21 Campo effectively ceased to perform that role for the past several years, according to all of my SRCC informants.
Events such as these tend, if anything, to heighten the public value and legitimacy of the SRCC which is itself wrapped in the validating blanket of internationalised indigeneity as embodied by some of its most prominent representatives: North American Indians. The way the SRCC manifests these connections on the walls of its Community Centre tells a similar story.

Upon entering the SRCC Centre one is faced with walls and a small stage adorned with various Amerindian artifacts (Figure 7.5). Some of these pertain to Trinidad’s Caribs. Others, however, serve as traces of encounters and exchanges between the Arima Caribs and their counterparts in the Carib Territory of Dominica. The impetus toward greater and more formal contact got underway in November 1991, when Caribs from across the Caribbean met, along with hundreds of Amerindian organisations from across the Americas, in Ottawa, Canada, for a congress hosted by the Assembly of First Nations of Canada, and sponsored in part by the World Council of Indigenous Peoples, which Bharath and Campo attended (as mentioned above) and where they met with their Dominica Carib counterparts, Chief Irvin切 Auguiste and Sylvanie Burton. Campo spent a year in Saskatchewan, Canada, at the Federated Indian College along with other Caribbean Amerindian scholarship recipients, among whom were students from Dominica. Campo also visited the Dominica Carib Territory. What I discovered in Dominica during my research trip in September of 1998 is that those who had visited Trinidad still had very strong memories of all those they met there in the Carib Community. Despite the passage of six years, in some cases, they could easily recall names of all the people I had been working with in Trinidad, their children’s names, and even Bharath’s non-SRCC driver. Moreover, they seemed to have strong emotional attachments to the people they met in Trinidad. Some claimed to have uncontrolled urges to pick up the telephone, regardless of long distance costs, just to hear the voices of their friends in Trinidad. It was, in fact, in Dominica that I first encountered the strong view that the two communities should merge, that intermarriage should be promoted, and that population exchange should occur. There were also differing perceptions among those who had been to Trinidad of who had the most to gain from cultural exchange, with those feeling that
Trinidad’s Caribs had more to learn from the Dominica Caribs outnumbering those who felt that either the reverse was true or that they had an equal amount to learn from each other.

Back in the Carib Centre, one sees photographs of Chief Irvine Vincent Auguiste visiting in Arima; engraved calabashes from Dominica; baskets from Dominica, and their local replicas made as a result of classes held by one of the Dominica Carib visitors in Arima; small replicas of canoes, and a number of other items. These photos and objects are graphic traces of a network of SRCC associations and are of interest in seeing how they have become incorporated either into religious ceremonies or serving as a symbolic and artifactual reservoir surrounding members whenever they meet in the Carib Centre, encasing them quite literally in a regionalised Amerindian identity.

**Figure 7.5:**
**Traces of Pan-Indigenous Networks in the SRCC Centre**

1. These photographs show woven items produced during "cultural interchange" visits by Caribs from Dominica and Amerindians from the Pomeroon River in Guyana, shown in the second row while visiting the SRCC. The final photograph, at right in the second row, shows how these items, incorporated from Dominica and Guyana, have become part of the SRCC’s repertoire of items for public display of Carib traditions in Trinidad. These items were on display in a bank in Arima.
(2) A maracas from Suriname, a feathered headdress from Suriname (shown close up), and a miniature canoe from Dominica form part of an altar-like arrangement in the SRCC Centre above. A Guyanese porokrîma (to hold men's hair) adorns the end of a Maypole in the SRCC Centre. A carved calabash from a Dominica Carib delegation is also on display. In the second row above, a canoe brought by a Guyanese delegation, along with a hammock and mat, and an aged cassava grater labeled for SRCC displays as an "Original Amerindian" item.
The relationship between the SRCC and Taino revivalist organisations based in the U.S. is still a relatively novel one, having emerged only in the latter half of the 1990s, with the staging of a November 1997 “Harmony in Diversity” conference in Arima focusing on inter-ethnic knowledge and respect that received a certain amount of media coverage. The private foundation, Harmony in Diversity, was responsible for bringing two Taino representatives to Trinidad in what turned out to be a mini intercontinental indigenous gathering that included an Australian Aboriginal representative. The two U.S.-based representatives were Daniel Waconax Rivera and Kacique René Çibánakan, of the Taino Nation of the Antilles (see Kearns 1999-2000a, 1999-2000b). Çibánakan has immersed himself in learning ‘shamanic knowledge’ and ‘traditions’ and shared these with his like-minded Arima counterpart, Cristo Adonis. This relationship developed into a close one that continued well after the event terminated, with frequent correspondence and telephone calls. The second Taino delegation to Arima, visiting on a more informal basis, came in the form of two young men from New York City, Içahuéy and Waha, in June of 1998, as the guests of Ricardo Kapaupana Cruz, the second shaman of the SRCC and founder of Kairi Tukuiyenyo Karinya.

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22 This is a local Baha’i foundation headed by Pat McLeod and oriented toward emphasising multiculturalism, tolerance, and inter-ethnic unity in Trinidad and Tobago, as stated in its promotional literature and on its Website at <http://www.trinidad.net/hdiversity/index.html>.
There were two platforms for the interchange of cultural ideas and the forging of personal ties between the revivalist side of the SRCC and neo-Taino groups. One was the performance of the Smoke Ceremony. This is something that René Cibánakan was apparently keen about. In the process both Cibánakan and Adonis adopted some of each other’s practices. For example, the cigar and tobacco leaves have now become a central feature of Adonis’ Smoke Ceremony, and he attributes this to Cibánakan’s influence (more details of this ceremony later). Also, Adonis has incorporated Taino zemis in his personal repertoire of shamanic items. Moreover, both men have an interest in promoting the revival of Amerindian ceremonial aesthetics, such as ‘traditional wear’ and body adornments, and in reclaiming Amerindian names. The second platform was more abstract and concerned the issue of the ‘race of indigeneity’. Both Cibánakan and Adonis have felt some of the suspicion that comes from feeling and claiming an indigenous heritage and identity while appearing in the eyes of others as ‘black’. Both have rejected the ‘racial purity’ approach to indigeneity, noting how “many of the racially pure actually care little for their culture”, in Adonis’ words. Adonis

23 Even the altering and elaboration of the spelling of these names and titles is an attempt to graphically indigenise them, almost like the written equivalent of a tattoo.
maintains regular contact with a number of New York-based Taino activists, receiving materials on Taino language, traditions, costume, shamanic practices, as well as various downloads from the Internet sent to him via ‘snail mail’ from his Taino friends in New York.

Subsequent to the meeting with the four members of La Nación Taina (the Taino Nation), mentioned above, members of the SRCC also developed contacts with the United Confederation of Taino People (UCTP). In March 2000, two representatives of the UCTP visited Arima and members of the SRCC (see Ali 2000). In August 2000, during the Santa Rosa Festival, members of the UCTP attended Arima’s Third Indigenous Gathering of delegates from Amerindian groups from across the Caribbean and North America. In December 2000, contact with the UCTP was renewed when Adonis traveled to New York and visited with Robert Mucaro Borrero, the head of the UCTP. The SRCC is currently listed as a “chapter” of the UCTP and the UCTP also claims to have the authority to negotiate on the SRCC’s behalf in ‘international affairs’.24

The Regional and International Articulation of the New Caribbean Indigeneity

The foundation of the Caribbean Organisation of Indigenous People (COIP) weaves together Caribbean-wide and North American indigenous activism in important ways. COIP was formed in 1988 and included the indigenous communities of Belize, Dominica, St. Vincent and Guyana (Palacio 1989:49, Caricom Perspective 1991a:11, Wilk & Chapin 1989:44). It was led by a Belizean Garifuna anthropologist, Dr. Joseph Palacio. In fact, internationally trained academics have played key roles in the regionalised revival, including Dr. José Barreiro at Cornell University and his work with Tainos in Cuba, and Dr. George Norton in Guyana who also headed COIP. COIP itself was formed within wider processes of international indigenous reassertions. In 1984 two leaders of Canada’s

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24 United Confederation of Taino People (UCTP)—Trinidad and Tobago Chapter of Taino Tribal Organizations: Liaisons with the Santa Rosa Carib Community: <http://www.indigenouspeople.org/natlit/uctp/trinidad.htm>
Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) traveled to the Eastern Caribbean and Belize to "initiate dialogue with indigenous peoples" and on their return to Canada they encouraged the Canadian University Services Overseas (CUSO)—which Palacio says then acted as "the prime mover"—and Oxfam Canada, USA and U.K. to sponsor a conference held 13-17 August 1987, titled, "Caribbean Indigenous Revival: Towards Greater Recognition and Development", which led to the founding of COIP (Palacio 1992:68, 69). Endorsement of the conference by various international organisations was seen by the participants as part of "the overall emphasis that the world community has given to the struggle of the indigenous peoples throughout the Americas within the past few years", according to Palacio (1992:68). Palacio also notes that the success of the experience occurred as a result of the "increasing emphasis on internationalising the plight of the indigenous peoples throughout the Americas" (Palacio 1992:71). These statements seem to reflect a 'local' awareness of the globalised valorisation of indigenous struggles.

One of COIP's objectives was to "seek out" all Caribbean Amerindian communities and to have each of them recognize each other (Barreiro 1990:352). Amongst COIP's proposals was the plan for "exchange visits during which indigenous peoples would learn skills from each other that would broaden their own self-discovery" (Palacio 1992:70, emphasis added)—this is another way of stating the 'cultural interchange' concept. COIP's role also involved producing an "inventory of information on cultural aspects of indigenous groups of the region" whilst also seeking to "mobilise groups at the local level through projects, preferably income-generating activities" and to "establish a communication network among the various indigenous groups, as well as nonindigenous solidarity groups" (Wilk & Chapin 1989:44). COIP was the first international indigenous body with which the SRCC became actively involved, along the lines just outlined.

Where the Arima Caribs are concerned, the work of the FSIN also had a direct impact as the Carib Community's Youth Representative was awarded a one-year scholarship to study Administration and Management of Amerindian
Communities at the Indian Federated College (SIFC) in Regina, Saskatchewan. Susan Campo was one of several Caribbean Amerindian students to study there for the Columbian Quincentenary, the 1992-1993 academic year. According to Campo, this scholarship was a rare opportunity for foreign Amerindian students insofar as the SIFC faces financial constraints. It seems that the increased funding was made available due to the fact that 1992 was the Quincentenary year, followed by 1993, which was declared the United Nations’ International Year for the World’s Indigenous People. The program of Amerindian studies, a one-year diploma course, focused on the “Administration and Management of Amerindian Communities”, with courses in computer science, marketing, and history among other subjects. Campo recalled that courses in marketing dealt not only with cases of aboriginal communities but also with how large transnational corporations such as Coca-Cola organise their marketing efforts.

Academics have played a leading role in connecting and promoting Amerindian communities at the regional level. In addition, academics have played a role in fostering identification with an indigenous heritage, and, in identifying certain heritages as ‘indigenous’. Unsurprisingly, conferences have been one of the primary vehicles chosen by academics in organising regional connections. Barreiro (1989:5) describes his own attempts at encouraging families in eastern Cuba to gather in a conference of people with Indian backgrounds in order to exchange knowledge. He also states that with the Columbian Quincentenary approaching in 1992, “the idea seemed pertinent” (Barreiro 1989:5). As we saw in the case of Carifesta V as well as the growth of the Taino revival, 1992 proved to be a critical

25 The Management Program at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College:
<http://142.3.161.11/icid/overman.htm>
26 Saskatchewan Indian Federated College: <http://www.sifc.edu/>
28 “Acting upon the recommendation of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, the SIFC opened an Office of International Affairs in June of 1983. It began the process of facilitating ties in the Third World and co-ordinating FSIN’s role in international Indigenous political front....The office’s early efforts focused on working with the Indigenous peoples in Central America, South America and the Caribbean”. The Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, International Indigenous Connections, and the Caribbean—A History of the Early Years of the SIFC: <http://142.3.161.11/icid/overearly.htm>
year. Representations of Caribbean indigeneity remain history-bound, and even today they are still not ‘Columbus-free’ representations.

In the case of the regionalised revival of the Tainos, an important conference was held in Baracoa, Cuba, 16-23 November 1997, entitled, “Indigenous Legacies of the Caribbean”, one of several such annual conferences organised by Dr. Barreiro. Regarding this particular conference, he explained:

[it] comes at a time when Caribbean indigenous people are experiencing a revitalisation and groups of families and small communities are reasserting their native identity. For the first time this conference will publicly gather Taino and other indigenous peoples to discuss the question of their survival and to share music, food, and cultural teachings. [Barreiro 1997b]

Taino groups have been particularly active in internationalising the revival of Caribbean indigeneity, both on the Internet and on the ground. As Dávila (1999:25) explains, Taino groups and associations “have tended to conceptualise themselves not so much in nationalist as in diasporic terms”, which calls to mind Clifford’s (1994) argument of the quasi-diasporic nature of internationalised indigenous organisation. In addition, Dávila found that most of the Taino revivalists were either born or raised in the U.S., with most residing there, and it was in the U.S. that “most of the Tainos recouped their indigenous identity...in some cases directly instilled by experiences in the United States” (1999:19). The Native American movement played a key role, in ways that parallel the Canadian First Nations presence in the Caribbean. Many of today’s U.S.-based Tainos had experiences such as working on Native American publications, serving as translators to Central and South American indigenous delegations to the United Nations, participating in Native American pow-wows and other activities (Dávila 1999:19). Moreover, some Taino groups have successfully used the Internet to promote themselves as “Native Indians” with American Indian organisations and directories on the Internet, where they are routinely included in lists of U.S.

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29 Campo currently owns and runs her own beauty salon in Port of Spain.
The Jatibonicu Taino Tribal Nation also testifies to having received the recognition of the State of New Jersey, as well as producing certificates conferred by the U.S. Census Bureau (see JTTN 2001a). Taino organisations have also received the backing of Canada’s Assembly of First Nations in seeking to have decrees promulgated by the Spanish Crown to protect the indigenes of Hispaniola accepted as valid treaties by the United Nations (see Barreiro & Laraque 1998).

Exposure to U.S. influences has also been important in the Dominican case. Chief Hilary Frederick, who was educated in a U.S. secondary school and had been exposed to indigenous people from Canada and Central and South America, established close contacts with Native American bodies. As some have observed, this prior exposure “helped him understand...the need for the Caribs to strengthen solidarity links with other native peoples.... That continental outlook played a major role in his articulation of a Carib political perspective that came to be called ‘Caribism’” (Gregoire et al. 1996:154-155).

For groups such as the SRCC, the regional and international dimensions of the valorisation of indigenous issues have provided a significant basis for attaining legitimacy, respect and attention within the nation-state. In a manner that is symbolic of this drawing on international sources for legitimacy, I found an SRCC document, Campo’s Survey Questionnaire Form, which had the SRCC logo at the top and underneath it the caption “Year of the World’s Indigenous Peoples”. Almarales even spoke of the SRCC’s expectation that plans for a reconstructed Carib Village, to be funded by the government, “will materialise because of the government’s new attitude towards them [the SRCC] due to the worldwide focus on I.P. [indigenous peoples]” (1994:16), a clear indication of the influence of international recognition in Trinidadian cultural politics. The SRCC’s involvement with international indigenous issues has also won it formal acclaim from the Trinidadian government: by the end of the Second Gathering, in August 1993, the

31 For example, see “Letter from the Jatibonicu Taino Tribe to United Native America” at <http://www.unitednativeamerica.com/ahla.html>, then see the results of such online networking by the Jatibonicu Taino Tribal Nation at: Indian Nations <http://pechanga.net/indian_nations.htm>, NSCIA USA Tribal Governments <http://www.spinalcord.org/chapters/native_american_governments.htm>, Native American Timeline <http://www.channel-e-philadelphia.com/natresources.html>,
SRCC was officially praised and rewarded for “its demonstrated commitment to the struggles of Indigenous People worldwide”, as worded by the Director of Culture, Lester Efebo Wilkinson, in a plaque now on display in the SRCC Centre. In a manner similar to the SRCC, Taino organisations in the U.S. regularly refer to their ‘ties’ to the United Nations, such as the Consejo General de Tainos Borincanos which in 1995 was invited to participate in the first commemoration of the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples by the United Nations” (Dávila 1999:26, fn. 1). The founder of COIP, speaking at the SRCC Centre in Arima, on the occasion of the United Nation’s International Year of the World’s Indigenous People in 1993, explained:

We have friends and sympathisers in the United Nations system and OAS. We have support from the World Council of Indigenous peoples (WCIP) of which we are members. We have established lasting bonds with international NGOs like Cultural Survival based in Cambridge, Massachusetts and IAF in Washington DC. We have strong fellowship with aboriginal brothers and sisters throughout Canada, United States of America, Latin America, Australia, New Guinea, and New Zealand. We can receive a great deal of international support through the powerful environmental movement, which has recognised the wisdom of peoples who have lived in harmony with their ecology for centuries. [Palacio 1993]

The United Nations has also played a central role in the global dissemination and valorisation of indigenous issues and causes, and the 1990s witnessed a proliferation of indigenous-related public events mounted by the U.N. internationally. The United Nations’ International Year of the World’s Indigenous People (1993) was promoted by the U.N. as a “landmark event” for indigenous peoples’ struggles and was designed as a “major public awareness campaign” on an international level. “Perhaps most important”, U.N. announcements stated, “indigenous peoples themselves will be given a platform to convey their message and to promote an understanding of their cultures and way of life”. The Year was officially cited as the beginning of a “new partnership”, encouraging the

32 In this connection, see “The Taino Forum #29: 5th Annual Commemoration of the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples” at <http://members.aol.com/BIaraku/forum_29.htm#un>
development of new relationships between states, indigenous peoples and the international community—indeed, the ‘partnership’ concept resembles the outline of multiple interests and institutions involved in the ‘Carib revival’ as set out in this project. The U.N. declared its intention to “establish networks of indigenous organisations and communities for the sharing of information and experience” (again, resembling the SRCC’s and COIP’s view of ‘cultural interchange’) as well as stating that it would promote “an international trade fair for indigenous products”. In the Trinidadian case, the government’s Amerindian Projects Committee was formed, in part, as part of a response to the U.N. urging member states to establish such committees to commemorate the International Year, encouraging even states without a defined indigenous population to do so (see U.N. 1992). U.N. agencies have thus sought to play a role in the process of cultural preservation: “strengthening cultural identity” of indigenous peoples is an established goal; setting up networks of indigenous communities and organisations is another established goal; and, the “right to be different”, the “right to development”, and the “right to revitalise” of indigenous people were made into matters of international concern and responsibility. The U.N.’s declarations of the International Year and Decade, as Mato observes, were not only important “symbolic advancements”, but they also provided “further opportunities for representatives of these [indigenous] peoples to meet and develop their representations of a shared identity and to organise and promote their agendas at national and transnational levels” (2000:351).

These trends at the wider regional and international levels have a generative cultural impact ‘on the ground’. One prominent Guyanese scholar/activist, Desrey Fox, went so far as to connect Guyanese Amerindians’ new found awareness of themselves as a people with their newly “formulated links with other indigenous groups throughout the Caribbean, North America and other

34 For further details on this, see Principle 22 of UNCED’s “Rio Declaration”; Article 8j of the Convention on Biological Diversity, which stresses the need to respect, preserve and strengthen indigenous knowledge; see also the ILO Convention 169; and, the U.N. Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.
South American countries”, and out of their involvement with COIP, the Guyanese Organisation of Indigenous Peoples (GOIP) emerged (Fox 1996:88). This in turn feeds back into the wider Caribbean arena, with GOIP developing its own connections beyond COIP. Another example of the locally transformative and even creative impact of the regionally organised Amerindian revival is provided by St. Vincent. S. Roberts (1996:17) explains that there has been an increase in pride in Amerindian heritage since the visits by Belizean Garifunas began in the 1980s. The Council for the Development of the Carib Community (CDCC) also emerged from the August 1987 conference in St. Vincent that led to the founding of COIP, and was itself created in 1988 (S. Roberts 1996:18). Collaboration with indigenous groups abroad became one of the CDCC’s primary goals (S. Roberts 1996:19). Visiting delegations found St. Vincent wanting in terms of Carib cultural distinctiveness. Sebastian Cayetano, a Garifuna who visited in the 1980s, spoke of the “cultural drought” in St. Vincent: “here were my people of the same kin, blood and ancestry. Biologically, they were true Garinagu, but culturally they had lost everything. It was a sad, mournful experience...that such a situation could have befallen our people” (quoted in S. Roberts 1996:31). A Dominican Carib Chief who visited in July 1995 said that he was “disappointed by the lack of any cultural tradition among the St. Vincent Caribs” (S. Roberts 1996:27). While visits helped to revitalise identification amongst the so-called “Yellow Caribs” of northern St. Vincent, delegations of Belizeans also helped to revive “Black Carib” identification in places such as Greggs in southern St. Vincent. As S. Roberts (1996:34) affirmed: “until about a decade ago most Vincentians did not regard residents of Greggs as Caribs. It was not until...the 1980s when the Garifuna from Belize visited St. Vincent that many Vincentians became aware of the Black Caribs living in Greggs”.

These wider processes of international networking, regionally organised revivals of indigenous identification, and their impacts on the ground in each territory, are still subject to certain limitations. Amongst these limitations the two

35 SRCC President Bharath, for one, is in regular contact with GOIP and receives its newsletter.
primary ones appear to be: (1) metropolitan orientations, and (2) ‘race’. In terms of the first, there are some tendencies to favour alliances with North American Indians more than with Caribbean Amerindian groups. Chief Hilary Frederick of Dominica’s Carib Reserve told me in an interview that he was more interested in cultivating ties, exchange and even trade relations with wealthy American Indian groups in the U.S. (mentioning specifically the Mashantucket Pequots, owners of the Foxwoods Casino), and seeking recognition from states such as New Jersey. Indeed, Chief Frederick wondered aloud as to what could be gained, financially and in terms of economic development, from deepening ties with Trinidad’s SRCC compared to deepening ties with U.S. Indian organisations.

‘Race’ has emerged as another critical barrier in regional Amerindian organisation. In the Gli-Gli documentary mentioned previously, we see Jacob Frederick arriving in Guyana and declaring: “We meet as Caribs...to share our one-ness”. The Gli-Gli’s Guyanese hosts insist on calling the Dominican Caribs “Black Caribs”. Frederick, in an aside with the camera states: “It’s true, we are a mixed race, a mixed breed of people”. In a short space of time (in the film), Frederick is thus forced to go from saying, “we’re exactly the same” to privately wondering: “they might or might not accept us as Carib”. One member of the international news media also unfavourably compared the Dominican Caribs to their Guyanese hosts: “unlike the Dominican Caribs, the Caribs in Guyana have retained their native language, dress and traditional medicine” (Neggers 1997). There is no gainsaying the fact that many Amerindians involved in both national and regional organisations harbour decidedly racialised notions of identity and culture. There is an enduring legacy of defining a ‘true’ or ‘pure’ Amerindian in racial terms, that is, in terms of phenotype. One of my SRCC informants still recalls with considerable anger when a member of a Guyanese delegation asked Bharath, believing my informant to be out of earshot: “Why you have that nigger in here?” On the other hand, U.S. Tainos and many Dominican, Vincentian, and especially Belizean Caribs are visibly the product of unions with Africans, which

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36 These limitations, of course, are added to the expectable ones such as funding and communication.
makes some SRCC individuals, such as the informant just mentioned, feel far more sympathetic towards them. While Guyana may occupy a privileged position amongst SRCC brokers, as the source or even the modern locus of ‘authentic’ and ‘traditional Amerindian culture’, I cannot recall a single statement from anyone in the SRCC that recalled Guyanese delegations, as a whole or as individual members, with any kind of fondness, which is a striking observation. I found even the memories of such visits to be fairly obscured, especially in comparison with memories of visitors from Dominica where actual names, happenings and individual conversations were recalled. Nonetheless, SRCC brokers such as Bharath are careful to maintain all possible relationships, having personally travelled to Guyana, Belize, the U.S. and Canada.

Racial dividing lines that characterise internal relationships within some of these Carib communities intersect with chosen modes of regional organisation. During my research in Dominica I encountered a racialist perspective adopted by some Caribs toward not only their African descended neighbours but also toward those who were most visibly ‘mixed’ with Africans within the Carib Territory itself. Indeed, I also encountered a continuing debate among leading members of the Carib Territory over the sensitive topic of “what is a real Carib”. In Dominica’s case, some worry that there will be those within the Territory who are “basically black” but who will say they are “Carib” in order to receive land within the Territory. As Chief Hilary Frederick stated in an interview, some people “claim to be Carib” in order “to get a piece of the economic pie”, especially as the Carib Territory is quickly becoming a major cornerstone attraction in Dominica’s tourist promotion efforts. Chief Frederick agreed with the statement that ‘Carib’ must “show in one’s face”. What is feared by leaders such as Frederick is the possibility that wider regional interconnections may also validate and strengthen the position of the ‘blacker’ members of the Carib Territory. The result of these stances is that regional organisation can become fractured along racial lines as well.

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37 What this means is that, amongst the Dominica Caribs, there are tensions between those who are most obviously ‘mixed’ with Afro-Dominicans and those who are less visibly the product of the miscegenation, meaning that ultimately both camps are products of such miscegenation.
Indeed, COIP has largely dissipated already, while a new organisation, calling itself the Pan-Tribal Confederacy of Amerindian Tribal Nations, based in Barbados, has introduced a racial thrust to principles of regional Amerindian organisation. The group itself is new (post-1996 at the earliest) and its claims and ambitions seem obscure. This organisation rejects the Garifuna or other “Black Caribs” altogether. In an interview Damon Corrie, the head of the group, who claims to be a descendant of an Arawak Princess in Guyana, stated to me:

I hear a lot of the ‘Black Caribs’, this is a confusing misnomer to peoples who are not of the Amerindian (Mongoloid race); one cannot be a Negroid Mongoloid unless you are precisely half of each race. The people known as the Garifuna are overwhelmingly genetically Negroid—and while they should be recognised as having some Amerindian genes as well as a syncretic Amerindian/African based language and culture, they should not be falsely labelled as Amerindians…. none of us consider the Garifuna to be our fellow Amerindian brothers and sisters.

What is an interesting omission in these assertions is that those who are mixed with ‘white’ (such as Corrie) can still be recognised as Amerindians, but not those mixed with Africans. Corrie’s statement in fact represents convergent processes of globalisation with respect to indigeneity: the continuing reproduction of colonial discourses of ‘racial purity’, especially with regard to Caribbean Amerindians (as was outlined in the last chapter), and, secondly, the increased diffusion of North American emphases on ‘blood quanta’ in the ‘measurement’ of ‘authentic’ indigenous identity (again, as outlined previously). The increasing friction within American Indian bodies, along the lines of ‘race’, and around the question of barring ‘black Indians’ from Federal entitlements (see Sturm 1998; Glaberson

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38 See the organisation’s Website at <http://www.pantribalconfederacy.com/confederacy/>

2001), finds resonance with certain Caribbean Amerindian leaders who are exposed to such discourses and who pay close attention to the North American Indian scene. Indeed, as Sturm (1998) points out, indigeneity runs up against the issue of 'blackness' almost everywhere in the Americas where the plantation economy left its cultural mark.

Figure 7.7:
Pan-Tribal Confederacy of Amerindian Tribal Nations of Amazonia

Localised Rituals of Globalised Aboriginality: The Shaman’s Smoke Ceremony

On the ground, the Smoke Ceremony is just one example of an important ritual being developed by some of Trinidad’s Caribs that plugs them into the world of internationalised indigeneity. The ceremony is performed by Cristo Adonis (see chapter 4). As we have already seen, Adonis has drawn sustenance from what some call a ‘New Age’, generic American Indian culture that is reshaped and presented in Trinidad as ‘indigenous’, yet, as Adonis states, ‘not necessarily Carib’.

The Smoke Ceremony began to be performed following Carifesta V in 1992 when the SRCC hosted various Amerindian delegations from across the
Caribbean and South America. Adonis showed me the photo of the first such ceremony in 1992 which was conducted in a manner visibly different from today: no ‘ceremonial wear’ was donned, just jeans, jerseys and plain hats, and a simple pile of sticks on the ground was burned as SRCC members stood around. Since then, as two of my informants stated (even complained), the ceremony “changes each time it is performed”—the photos in Figure 7.9 show the transition of different practices recorded from one smoke ceremony to the next. At one time Adonis would spray participants with water. Then that practice was replaced by the puffing of a cigar. The pile of sticks was replaced by an incense pot, burning incense and tobacco leaves. Costume became more and more elaborate. Silence was replaced by maracas rattling, whooping cries, and the muttering of various sentences from the mainland Cariban language. At one stage, a few observers began to wonder aloud at how the ceremony either resembled a Hindu puja, with cloth and food being offered as a sacrifice, or an Orisha ceremony in the way water and the four stones of the four directions are utilised. The ceremony itself derives its substance not just from the wider multi-denominational society, but also from broader global currents of indigeneity.

The Smoke Ceremony is designed as a series of offerings and invocations with the intent of praising the earth and protecting its spiritual and physical integrity, remembering the ancestors, blessing the families of the Caribs, and asking for the blessing and guidance of the “Great Spirit”, whom the specialists explain is simply “God”. Special offerings may also be made to St. Rose herself. Incense is burned. Corn is offered to the fire. A feather is used to fan smoke on to the participants (males only are allowed within the ceremonial square). Tobacco is burned and a cigar is smoked by the shaman who then puffs smoke onto the foreheads of the participants. The shaman will also hold the heads of those participating and press his forehead into theirs. Cassava bread and water in a calabash are spatially and symbolically central features as well, in a ceremony that thus embraces the elements of earth, air, fire and water. The Carib participants carry special spears. Feather headpieces are worn, chests are bare, and loincloths are donned. Maracas are periodically rattled during the ceremony. Necklaces made
of seashells and Job’s Tears beads, made by the shaman himself, are also worn by
the Carib participants. Lastly, four stones are placed around the fire, symbolising
the guardians of the Four Corners of the universe, usually seen as taking the form
of different wild animals native to Trinidad.

To the unknowing eye, all of this may seem like a ‘local’ event. In actual
fact, according to the relevant Carib specialists, some of the maracas are from
Suriname and Mexico; the feather headpieces were gifts of visiting delegations of
Amerindians from Suriname and Tainos from New York City. The use of the
cigar, and the subsequent development of a Cigar Ceremony, are acknowledged as
adaptations of what they learned from a visiting delegation of Tainos. (Sometimes,
Christian elements seem to sneak in, such as beginning and ending the ceremony
by making the sign of the cross.) Cristo Adonis’ larger repertoire of Amerindian
and other indigenous cultural items includes zemis from Puerto Rico, dream-
catchers from North America, a bullroarer from Australia, and items of clothing
from New York’s resurgent Caribbean Amerindian groups. Adonis also reads
heavily, especially books by or about modern day American Indians provided by a
close friend, Vincent La Croix, who lived in the U.S. (see chapter 4), as well as
books on medicinal and shamanic traditions and rituals in South America, and
books on gemology, magic and ritual (examples of these include G. Scott [1991],
S. Cunningham [1997], and Schultes & Raffauf [1992]). Those familiar with
“smudging” and other smoke ceremonies in North America will note some
similarities. Recently the centre of the ceremonial square has come to be occupied
by an effigy of a deer’s head, similar to North American Indian ceremonial
practices that have been directly adapted by Adonis via inputs from SRCC-
affiliated brokers who bring books on American Indian cultures and customs and
sometimes even personal experience.
The adaptation of cultural items, emblems and practices from abroad implies networking, brokers and what Jean-Jacques Chalifoux (1999) calls “global neo-shamanic transfers” (see Figure 7.8). A resident specialist, Vincent La Croix, who once lived with the Sun Bear Tribe in the U.S., also makes key inputs into the structure of the ceremony. La Croix has taken a leading role in designing the Smoke Ceremony, advising on its conduct, and adapting North American Indian practices and motifs of a somewhat generic nature, i.e., dream catchers, medicine wheels, and other ideas and practices derived from what some call ‘New Age’ tribes such as the Sun Bear tribe. On one occasion I sat in on a session where La Croix took Adonis through several books on American Indian smudging ceremonies, descriptions of medicine wheels, and the way a smoke ceremony should be ordered (number of ‘gatekeepers’, stones, etc.). On another occasion, for the founding ceremony of Katayana (see chapter 4), La Croix actively directed
each step of the ceremony, instructing participants on where to stand, what to say, and what to do (see Figure 7.9).

Figure 7.9: The Smoke Ceremony

Left: La Croix directs two participants in the smoke ceremony that founded Katayana. Centre: An example of "smudging" as Adonis, under La Croix's guidance, passes smoke onto a participant using a feather, while another writes down the individual steps of the ceremony. Right: Adonis cleanses the ceremonial square with water.

The "altar" (left) showing an incense pot burning cassava, and a stool with a calabash with water surrounded by other calabashes containing corn, tobacco, and a feather. At right, the effigy of a deer head, adapted from a North American Indian ceremony, replacing the "altar" as shown to the left. Vincent La Croix introduced the idea of placing an animal's head at the centre of the ceremonial square.
The processes of globalised aboriginality clearly have a variety of translations on the ground in Trinidad. We see the transnationalisation and subsequent localisation of almost generic symbolic resources of aboriginality, used in the development of a neo-Amerindian aesthetic. Indeed, terms such as ‘shaman’, ‘smoke ceremony’, and ‘Great Spirit’ are not ‘locally distinctive’ or ‘essentially Carib’ signifiers in any sense. One can also detect a certain degree of Americanisation, with an almost unidirectional flow of symbols, ideas and discourses of indigeneity from North America to the Caribbean. Discourses of
"personal power" and ritual, techniques of self-actualisation, and the incessant output of motivational propaganda in the U.S. have also become interwoven with New Age shamanism, and inscribed in the sorts of texts that are circulated on the subject, which, as mentioned above, are also studied by Adonis.

Conclusion: Globalisation and Indigeneity

Processes of globalisation help to lift the discourse of certain local aboriginal issues and struggles to a global plane. Aboriginal global organisation helps in itself to further define aboriginality in specific settings. The influence of internationalised discourses, such as that of classing groups as 'First Nations' and other globalised terms, images, motifs and practices of indigeneity act as a fund of materials which are engaged and sifted through by Caribbean Amerindians in order to further define themselves. International organisations, whether inter-statal or indigenous, assist in the creation of an 'international personality' of indigenous peoples. The Caribs increasingly come to define themselves, in part, within and through the international network of indigenous organisations.

In metaphorical terms I would characterise revivalist Caribbean indigeneity as a 'site under construction', with such construction always ongoing and the resulting site being one with unclear boundaries. In addition I see the Caribs' self-understanding as 'indigenous' as very much a 'work-in-progress'. In theoretical terms, the processes discussed in this chapter show 'the local' to be 'multi-sited' within itself, that is, composed of a series of global currents, in contrast with Marcus' notion of multiple sites as bounded geographic entities that exist ontologically apart from one another (see Marcus 1995, 1986). This chapter also outlined actors, processes and practices that demonstrate the "production of locality" (Appadurai 1996:178) as an inherent feature of the cultural globalisation process. In this case the local is produced, in part, with globalised resources. Another way of seeing this is as a dialectic between global 'flux' and the quest for an orientational 'fix', or, as the tension between global flows and attempts at closure, to reaffirm boundaries and identities (Geschiere & Meyer 1998:602-603).
As Mato (2000) and Clifford (1994) argue, the global networking of indigenous peoples and other transnational actors serves to add legitimacy to indigenous groups whilst shaping their own representations. In the case of the SRCC I see these trends as adding, perhaps paradoxically, to the Caribs’ own authenticity claims—paradoxical because key SRCC brokers emphasise the icons and language of local continuity (despite the various global indigenous elements drafted into the process of recreating the meaning of those elements said to be locally continuous), and yet, in the ‘public eye’ in Trinidad their indigenous qualities may be enforced insofar as they are endorsed by ‘foreign’ trends and institutions, thus rendering them ‘more serious’ or ‘more real’. The product of these processes may be what some might call the construction of a new ‘virtual’ Carib indigeneity, ‘virtual’ as in the sense of “being both related to and increasingly ‘disconnected’ from its formal referent” (Geschiere & Meyer 1998:606). On the other hand, establishing what actors may take the ‘formal referent’ to be is part of the re-engineering process, in other words, it is not clearly established for all time.

With respect to the network of relationships between Caribbean and North American indigenous bodies, we have seen that there is a differential in terms of influence in the shaping of indigenous representations at the global level. While I have witnessed the adaptation of items imported from North American Indian groups into the Caribbean, I cannot say that I have seen the reverse happen. Furthermore, while North American Indian organisations include those that own casinos, or important and internationally prominent political organisations such as Canada’s Assembly of First Nations, and others that have tertiary educational institutions attached to them and with the periodic ability to offer international scholarships, I do not see Caribbean Amerindian groups having anywhere near as prominent a voice or ‘muscle’ as their North American friends have. In other words, the so-called ‘development gap’ and ‘centre-periphery relations’ pertaining to the interstate system are echoed just as much between indigenous people in the North American core and the Caribbean periphery.
SRCC brokers actively seek the legitimation and valorisation of their presence via the adoption of powerful, globalised motifs and discourses of indigeneity. Where one may detect mimesis in certain respects of their ritual practice of self-presentation, it is not a passive, unthinking mimesis; rather, it is one that is active, deliberate and studied. Whilst making use of powerful representations (‘Carib’, ‘First Nations’), SRCC brokers must inevitably also adjust themselves to the representations of the powerful, since that is consonant with both their aims and their capacities.
RE-ENGINEERING INDIGENEITY

"Many contemporary studies of ethnicity or subaltern identity rely heavily on simple domination-resistance models of society. Such models tend to overemphasise the internal homogeneity of subaltern identities, as well as to portray them as historical survivals, external to the colonial logic and primarily sustained by their opposition to it, rather than as historical products of colonialism often directed toward supporting relations of domination or establishing hierarchies of power within dominated groups".

-----Mark Rogers (1996:78).

"The time of becoming the same is also the time of claiming to be different. The time of modernising is also the time of inventing tradition as well as traditionalising innovations; of revaluing old categories and recategorising new values".


Indigeneity in Trinidad and Tobago, as a question that involves both a presence and a problem, has been the focus of this project. The question of indigeneity as a ‘presence’ is one that I endeavoured to treat cautiously, not in terms of strict continuities of an ethnic kind (which would be saying too much, even from Bharath’s perspective as we recall his words at the start of this work), but as part of that “repertory set down by colonial experience” and later refurbished by nationalist historiography, the media, the educational system, the SRCC and a wide variety of other actors and institutions situated in Trinidad and abroad. This repertory consists of a set of discourses, labels, objects and practices that at different points in time, for different reasons, and in the hands of different interests, have been marked as indigenous traditions. The data referred to in this
work underlined the ‘presence’ of the ‘Amerindian’ in both colonialist and nationalist projects. Yet, indigeneity poses a problem in the anthropology of the Caribbean, for even while ‘continuities’ and ‘survivals’ of the transplanted cultures of Africa and Asia have been accepted by some, virtually no one in the social sciences (until very recently) applied the same notions to Caribbean Amerindians. After all, the truism is that the reason for importing vast numbers of African slaves and Asian indentured labourers is due to the fact that Amerindians were either wiped out (thus not present) or so severely diminished as to be a negligible entity. The supposed continuity of the transplanted was thus a function of the discontinuity of the indigenous. The ‘anthropological uniqueness’ of the Caribbean was, in part, a function of this perceived discontinuity of the indigenous, rendering the region markedly different from the ‘classic’ sites of ethnography such as Papua New Guinea, India, China, or Africa. Even amongst anthropologists studying indigenous peoples, only a handful have ever conducted research in Caribbean island territories, possibly reflecting what Les Field observed as “anthropologists’ preference for describing the ‘most Indian’ sociocultural areas” (Field 1994:234).

Indigeneity in Caribbean territories such as Trinidad and Tobago thus poses theoretical problems on top of significant ethnographic and historiographic challenges. Beyond bringing into focus some of the key themes of this project, I will address some of the problems and prospects, the shortcomings and significance, relating to both academic research on these issues and the practical development of the Santa Rosa Carib Community, the people at the focus of this ethnography.

At the outset I asked: why does ‘Carib’ still exist as a category and as a possible identification in Trinidad? I then broke that question down into four key sub-questions: (1) What were, and what are, the conditions that make possible the reproduction of ‘Carib’ as a history and an identity? (2) When, how and why did ‘Carib’ emerge and come to be canonised as a key label in the Caribbean? (3) Who was responsible for the ascription of this label, what were the responses, and how did the results of these interactions (codified as texts, reproduced as doxic
interpretations) shape subsequent interactions? (4) What ‘value’ does Carib hold, to whom, when, why?

In addressing these questions I argued that we could characterise the processes involved as a re-engineering of indigeneity, focusing on the multiple and divergent ideas, interests, institutions and actors involved in establishing, altering and promoting key conceptions of the indigenous ‘presence’ in Trinidad and its value. Of critical importance was the recognition that neither one process (whether reinvention, articulation, reinterpretation, and so forth), nor just one set of actors and institutions, nor one historical characterisation (continuity, discontinuity, survival, revival), would suffice in explaining this phenomenon. Actors within this framework included a wide array of cultural brokers, acting on behalf of diverse material and ideational interests, and engaged in reinterpreting, objectifying and articulating traditions, within a wider social organisation of tradition defined through and shaped by various political economic contexts. I examined indigeneity as a problematic concern at the intersection of colonialism, nationalism, and contemporary globalisation, i.e.: (1) colonialis concepts and ascriptions in relation to native reformulations, and vice versa; (2) constructions of a national sense of indigeneity as being the ‘truly local’ (residence principle), in relation to an ethnic sense of indigeneity as being those who were ‘here first’ (precedence principle), and vice versa; and, (3) the reinvention of the ‘Carib’ as Trinidad’s ‘First Nations’. ‘Tradition’, lying conceptually at the crossroads of culture and history (Field 1994:232), whilst spotlighting identity and ritual as practice (Ortner 1994:398), provided a key conceptual entry point even while posing a problem that needed to be explained. The SRCC was perhaps the most obvious ethnographic entry point, although with the variety of actors and institutions with interests vested in promoting Carib history and heritage, then perhaps the media, schools, the church or state bodies could have served just as well as entry points.

Re-engineering was not advanced as a new theory, rather it was presented as affording us one way (cf. Sissons 1993) of undertaking an overdue consolidation of certain established concepts, whilst emphasising particular facets that were most suitable for bringing to light a challenging ethnographic ‘case’. One
way that I described re-engineering was as comprising multiple processes making a certain identity possible, meaning how an identity is made to seem valid or valuable, and the wider ways in which an identity is communicated (or made communicable) and understood. This is another way of seeing the indigenous, in this case, as not just, or even primarily, self-defining, self-constructing, or self-inventing. Jean Jackson’s research among the Tukanoans of Colombia emphasised a similar perspective: “Tukanoans and non-Tukanoans are locked together in this ongoing act of creation.... Tukanoans’ vision of themselves as Indian is generated out of their fundamental embeddedness in the larger society” (1989:138; see also Conklin 1997). I thus sought to move away from such notions as found in Friedman’s (1996:127) depiction of “indigenous groups that have dared to take their identity into their own hands” (emphasis added). Instead I aligned myself more with what Mark Rogers refers to as the “dialogic coproduction of ‘indigenous’ rhetoric”, involving a selective interaction with national and global contexts (1996:79), although I stressed that this was rarely a “coproduction” between equals. I preferred re-engineering as a term since it suggests structure, design and purpose in response to a ‘problem’, whilst also implying prior action and thus history.

For analytical purposes, I suggested that re-engineering could be seen as comprising three axes: (1) structure-agency—processes of social interaction within a certain social organisation, the impact of these processes on the cultural system, and vice versa, and, the role of brokers in these processes; (2) past-present—cultural processes referring to history and its perceived distillates (texts, rituals, etc.), and shaped by historical processes; and, (3) local-global—the ‘stretch’ of social processes and organisational and representational practice. Of course, there is a great deal of overlap between these analytically contrived axes, even so the utility of setting them out as distinct lies in emphasising certain elements over others, as I have done here. These axes should be seen as constituent elements of re-engineering in order to especially underline the fact that: (1) we must critically think through the relationship between structure and agency when discussing constructions of tradition; (2) history is critical to concepts of tradition...
and identity—I thus turned away from what Field describes as some authors’ emphases on “reading Indian culture here and now” (1994:233); and, (3) we need to situate culture and practice within the global framework that they respond to and from which they emerged.

Starting with the first axis, structure-agency, I outlined how ‘Carib’ achieved and maintains a canonical status that ultimately serves as the wider framework of ideas and symbols with which groups such as the SRCC have had to work—thus forming a part of what Archer (1988) called the Cultural System that was used and produced by material and ideational interests in the process of Socio-Cultural interaction. My emphasis was thus on interests always having been vested in the creation, dissemination, perpetuation, or even elimination of particular representations. Furthermore, I sought to underline the fact that no one group or individual was, or is, capable of ‘inventing the Carib’ in isolation from a wide array of institutions, social interactions, and various interests. I located the development of the multiple meanings and symbolic values of ‘Carib’ within the history of colonial power relations in the Caribbean. What I called the political economy of tradition was used as a means of referring to the way representations are structured and valued. Don Robotham, reflecting on the making of ethnic identities in the Caribbean, put this in another way:

In this part of the world analysis of identity, culture, and ethnicity does not lead in the direction of reflections on primordial attachments, but, rather, to an analysis of the foundations of identity, ethnicity, and culture in the operation of economic and political forces and the hierarchical and conflictual relationships generated by these forces. [Robotham 1998:308]

The point here was to emphasise the way representations are articulated within the specific social contexts that produce them (cf. Rogers 1996:78), contexts that are significantly determined by political economic forces. Also like Rogers (1996:108), I sought to outline the “corpus of raw materials” from which indigenous identity was constructed, that “wide vocabulary of imagery” from which actors choose in order to make different statements in different contexts. In addition, I demonstrated how the institutional context imposed certain values on
particular types and combinations of these images, making certain choices appealing and viable and regularising the patterning of such choices along institutional lines (cf. Rogers 1996:109). This emphasis served to foreground the wider social institutions and social processes enmeshed in the (re)production and valuation of Carib indigeneity, by teaching, mediating, publicising, politicising, rewarding, and funding its representation. As we saw, there is a complex interplay between forces of ascription and choice, involving social power and cultural legitimacy. Taking just two bodies as an example, the state and the SRCC, we can see this interplay at work in the regulation of Carib indigeneity. Agents working at the state level take the SRCC’s embeddedness in Arima, its international legitimisation, and the utility of history in nation-building as parameters for recognising and rewarding the SRCC as the state began to do in earnest from 1990. SRCC leaders regulate Carib indigeneity in similar and different ways, grounding legitimate membership in the group (ideally) in terms of the family ties and residential location of prospective members, and/or in terms of commitment to the Santa Rosa Festival, while representing the group externally by wrapping it within international indigenous recognition, documentary support, and the place of the Caribs within constructions of Arimian identity and history. ‘Tradition’ is also at the focus of SRCC brokers’ representations since dominant conceptions of ‘racial purity’ in place especially since British colonialism cannot be used to validate Carib identity as continuous. The key agents at the centre of this project, the various cultural brokers and patrons, are those especially ‘knowledgeable’ specialists and intermediaries or individuals with material and political power. I argued that it is agency at this level especially that has been responsible for the ‘Carib revival’, rather than this being a ‘grassroots’ phenomenon of ‘resistance’.

The ‘dialogue’ between past and present constitutes the second axis of re-engineering, and is an especially vital one since SRCC brokers ground Carib indigeneity within a concept of tradition that per force refers to and is conditioned by history and the writing of history. The SRCC’s main platforms—maintenance, reclamation, translation, revival/retrieval, and cultural interchange—are all rooted in an historical framework used to talk about the origins and development of
'Carib traditions'. Multiple practices are put forth by SRCC brokers as embodying Carib indigeneity. Each of these operates within a particular perception of history. Bharath's representation of indigeneity goes back not so much to a pre-colonial Arima as much as to the Mission, and is based on what he presents as long-established established rituals and practices (i.e., the Santa Rosa Festival). Adonis is keen to represent an indigeneity that goes back to pre-colonial times, yet via much more novel and recent means (i.e., the Smoke Ceremony). Bharath defines his practice as that of "maintenance"; Adonis defines his practice as that of "revival" or "retrieval". The two involve different historical moves. Maintenance (added to what SRCC brokers call reclamation) consists of a set of practices, rituals, etc., around which a boundary is then drawn or reaffirmed, a boundary that is labelled/labels 'Carib' or another suitable cognate of 'indigenous'. In the case of retrieval and revival, the boundary is first drawn, and then there begins a search for materials to fill in the contents. In both cases, historians and other researchers, such as Peter Harris, Elma Reyes, Patricia Elie, Beryl Almarales and myself, have been called upon to provide the necessary historical data for validating this or that practice of representation of a given practice’s authenticity as 'Amerindian' or 'Carib'. When Bharath refers to revival as "a learning experience", he means this in the most straightforward manner.

'Carib' predates the SRCC, a temporality that should not be sidelined in social theory, as Archer (1988) stressed. Above and prior to the SRCC, we have to recall how colonial élites, in their interactions with Caribbean natives, set about establishing a field of signification that would condition the deployment of the label 'Carib'. 'Carib' thus became an authoritative label, a loaded category that has endured and acquired new meanings, thereby effecting a transition from invention to convention. Its authority is established and reproduced via repetition, re-enactment and ritual displays, especially when sanctioned or authored by powerful institutions and patrons. 'Carib', as we saw, was a European invention that was institutionalised especially during colonialism, and later reinterpreted in the wake of nationalism and current processes of cultural globalisation. Therefore, I agree with Field (1994:231) that when discussing particular 'indigenous groups' we need
to foreground the way groups are named and the way certain markers are historically constituted and deployed. In broader terms, we can argue that "'Indians' did not live in the Americas until Europeans invented the term and its social positioning" (Field 1994:231), and indeed, "the idea of indigeneity took its present form from Europe's colonial project in the New World.... its source is to be found in the pivotal moment of European arrival" (Beckett 1996:5).

Taking a large view of the historical contexts of the political economy of tradition, we can sketch the Carib 'presence' along a particular path as shown in Figure 8.1. The latter is intended only to demonstrate some of the key historical landmarks and political economic processes within which one can locate the ways in which the Carib presence has been interpreted, articulated, disseminated, asserted and organised. At the same time, the sketch does not show a linear continuity, as marked by the intersection of the two trajectories, since I am not equating or conflating Carib military and political power, or the demographic presence of Caribs with subsequent symbolic representations of 'Carib-ness'. The vertical cut-off line is meant to emphasise the fact that from the late 1700s Amerindians in Trinidad became marginalised, by and large, in social, political and economic terms, especially outside of Arima, even while representations of the symbolic centrality of the Amerindian historical presence (especially within Arima) began to take off through the 1800s. In other words, while the numbers and power of Amerindians in Trinidad declined, the power of symbolic references to, and political reinterpretations of, Amerindians as an image underwent an upsurge—the loop shown is thus actually a combination of the socio-political and the symbolic, the latter waxing where the former is waning. In the case of the SRCC, these developments have been of critical significance in providing them with what Rogers (above) called that wide vocabulary of images and the corpus of raw materials from which they select in defining and representing Carib heritage.

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1 This is not to deny that the symbolic can and does have very powerful socio-political effects. What I mean, instead, is that the socio-political power of native societies, understood as a geopolitical and demographic force, began to decline, while symbolic representations of natives and their descendants began to rise.
The third axis of re-engineering consists of the local-global continuum that
has formed the backdrop particularly for chapters 2, 3 and 6. Like those writing in
the world systems school, I also prefer to see ‘globalisation’ as a process that has
been occurring at least for the past five hundred years, hence colonialism can be
subsumed under that term (see Forte 1998a, Wallerstein 1998). As argued already,
it is out of the emergent world system that indigeneity as a concept and concern
has come to life (cf. Geschiere & Meyer 1998:604). The interesting consequence
of this is that ‘Carib’, denoting an indigenous identity presumably located in a
particular place, was first created through early colonial processes and was only
subsequently localised in Trinidad, and later in Arima. Indeed, in the process of the
early European search for the Carib, as Hulme and Whitehead outlined, the Carib
was repeatedly localised and de-localised, as witnessed by the sometimes intense
disagreement in imperial and ecclesiastic circles over whether or not Caribs
really’ were in Trinidad. Subsequently, as we saw, the figure of the Amerindian,
later reinterpreted as Carib, was ‘emplaced’ in Arima in particular, so much so that
the notion of ‘Arima, home of the Caribs’ has achieved doxic status.

This type of ‘interplay’ between locality and globality creates the kind of
tension addressed by Robotham (1998:308) when he argued that identities in the
Caribbean have not successfully taken the form of “autochthonous, primordial
fundamentalisms” as much as they have formulated themselves “in the guise of
some form of transnationalism”. Olwig makes a similar point with reference to
ways of defining Caribbean societies as “Creole”, in the sense that “their culture
cannot be seen to be the product of an indigenous culture which has evolved in situ
without significant external interference or of one culture brought to the area from
the outside” (1993:10-11). Put differently by Rogers (1996:110), the effect of
globalisation is to make ethnicity “not a local, nor even a regional or national, but
a global force”. On the other hand, A. P. Cohen (1989:76) sees the “aggressive
assertion of locality and ethnicity” as occurring “against the homogenising logic of
the national and international political economies”, thus marking the “renaissance
of community” in the 1970s and 1980s. The view that I take differs in varying
degrees from these perspectives. I see locality/ community/ ethnicity as being
forged *in and through* rather than against these global processes, which do not necessarily imply total homogenisation. In addition, while respecting Robotham’s and Olwig’s arguments, what they say does not preclude the quest for indigeneity in the Caribbean. Indeed, globalisation processes have provided many of the ‘raw materials’, conditioning processes and impetus for developing indigeneity in the Caribbean, and for developing it along particular lines, though not necessarily in an over determined manner—as Rogers stated it, “identity is neither a strictly local phenomenon, nor an instance of untrammelled global cultural flows” (1996:110).

SRCC leaders’ work of deliberately engaging and associating with international indigenous bodies helps to maximise the SRCC’s ‘authenticity’ within the Trinidadian context. The revivalist facets of SRCC brokers’ practice especially involve reading and sifting through various globalised ideas, images and symbolic resources in order to define their indigeneity as ‘first nations’, which is itself a North American trope of indigeneity as Beckett (1996) argued. Several authors have also posited the existence of a “transnational constituency” of indigeneity, that some describe as a “worldwide community of indigenous peoples” (Murumbi 1994:52), or what Chief George Manuel called the “Fourth World” (see Corntassel & Primeau 1998:139), and that others describe more broadly as an association of various interests “grounded in the belief that indigenous peoples not only have the right to be different from the rest of the world, but should be assisted to do so”, a constituency that has received the support and legitimacy of various international bodies (see Beckett 1996:2, 9). As Beckett observes, there is also pressure on groups to present themselves “in such a way as to appear ‘indigenous’ to a constituency that, while sympathetic, may have inappropriate expectations of indigenous alterity” (1996:10; see also Conklin 1997). This is one dimension of what Mato recognises as the processes whereby indigenous organisations develop “their practices and discourses in interaction with a significant number of transnational and international agents” (1996:68, 69). However, as I argued in chapter 6, there is nothing to say that the interaction proceeds as a dialogue among equals.
Throughout the course of this project I have maintained certain assumptions about the significance of this study. I found the fact of the ethnographic case itself significant insofar as the notion of an ‘existing Carib Community in Arima’ was unheard of in the anthropological literature on Trinidad—thus my very first research question was: “Who are the Caribs of Arima?” This case necessarily raises issues of how we think of modern Caribbean cultural development, cultural processes of globalisation, the construction of indigeneity, and the impact of mediated representations. How indigeneity is situated has therefore been treated here as a problem, one that is increasingly receiving the attention of scholars, and that necessitates an analysis of the conditions that make discourses of indigeneity possible (see Scott 1991:384). I thus stressed ‘indigeneity’ as not ontologically absolute, permanent or inflexible in content, form, and meaning. The significance of this lies in treating indigeneity as elaborated and interpreted within specific political, economic and historical conjunctures.

The ways in which we may theorise indigeneity is thus one of the important dimensions of this research. One of the problems we encounter is that ‘indigenous’ homogenises, suggesting that varying groups, acting in different contexts and arenas (even if interacting at a transnational level) can all be analysed as members of the same set, and that they are also internally undifferentiated—“identity talk homogenises” caution Handler and Segal (1993:6). Moreover, ‘indigenous’ can act to trigger various assumptions that may evoke an array of standardised expectations, obviating discussion of specifics. The concept of ‘indigenous’ is itself not originally a ‘rooted’ indigenous concept. It emerged as an ascriptive way for Europeans to talk about the others they had colonised, into whose lands they had moved, a concept and a way of categorising people that can only take shape and meaning in the context of the expansion of the modern world system. Another problem that we are forced to grapple with is posed by the fact that when ‘indigenes speak’, what one hears should not be essentialised as ‘the indigenous voice’. This project thus resisted essentialist understandings that
homogenise, assume integrity, durability, and emic isolation, thereby contributing to a debate around the issue of the construction of indigenous identities.

Friedman wrote critically of positions such as the one that I just enunciated: "I am quite astonished at the attitude...that seems to have a rather wide following among anthropologists today and which seems to pit itself against indigenous groups that have dared to take their identity into their own hands" (1996:127). He argues that, "anti-essentialism when applied to... social identities...is an attack on the collectivity itself, a concerted effort to falsify the genuineness of such identities" (Friedman 1996:128). My argument is that we do not need to pose these issues in this manner. First, along with Rogers (1996:77) I agree that the advocacy position "runs the risk of reifying a single, unitary indigenous perspective and in the process downplaying the internal diversity of indigenous populations" (Rogers 1996:77). Secondly, like Linnekin and Rogers (1996:76), I agree that constructionist analyses have been useful for challenging "Western positivism, essentialism, and Orientalism", and that we ought to be careful not to reintroduce these perspectives through the 'back door' so to speak. Thirdly, I note that there are three further problems with the politics of critiques of constructionism, to the extent that: (1) they assume that indigenous groups and advocates are all always essentialists; (2) that indigenous groups are always engaged in oppositional politics and 'resistance'; and, (3) that indigenous spokespersons object to the notion of invention. None of these conditions are fully met by the SRCC case. Indeed, this is one of the reasons that I found the ethnography so significant, for bringing certain theories down to earth and for helping to place a check on the influence of any possible wishful thinking in theorising. The leading SRCC brokers are not as fixated on the politics of authenticity as indigenous groups elsewhere, the SRCC itself not having been locally challenged as much as other groups elsewhere have been—they have not gone through a Mashpee-like experience. For a variety of reasons, there is not as much contestation and conflict over indigenous identification in Trinidad as there is in other areas of the world, thus SRCC brokers tend to be more transparent and less defensive than their 'counterparts' abroad. Moreover, the SRCC is still a
relatively young organisation, one without radical aims, not seeking to be separate, and not challenging the nation-state. Even those brokers who may be sensitive to the charge of ‘invention’ often turn it around—“all cultures are invented everywhere”, said one of my informants in a discussion on this issue—sometimes proudly claiming to be “the inventor” of a particular practice that has now “caught on”, and in other cases speaking about other SRCC brokers’ or other indigenous groups’ invention of traditions. I therefore challenge the impulse to shroud these activities in a hallowed silence, and am aided along the way by some of my own key informants. I do not argue that there are outcomes of construction that are “fake”—all outcomes of construction are equally constructed, and all human representations are constructed. We therefore need to discuss the ways representations are produced and constructed—the strategies of representing—without getting caught up in an unnecessarily overwrought angst over the human fall from the Edenic garden of authenticity. Otherwise, we risk indulging in what Alcida Ramos called the construction of the “hyperreal Indian”:

> a tendency that has been around for a while in the indigenist circuit, namely the fabrication of the perfect Indian whose virtues, sufferings and untiring stoicism have won for him the right to be defended by the professionals of indigenous rights. That Indian is more than the real Indian. He is the hyperreal Indian. [1994:161]

Examples of this type of approach result, in some cases, in the framing of the “ecologically noble savage” (see Buege 1996 and Sackett 1991; cf. IUCN 1997, Durning 1992), assimilating the indigene to the flora and fauna of a particular habitat thereby also effecting what Fabian (1983) referred to as the “denial of coevalness” that results in distancing “the native” from “our” contemporary society. What ought to be at the focus of critiques is the fact that indigenous groups are put under pressure to conform to these images to begin with, or lose out on resources that are desperately needed, and not divert our energies into deciding ‘good’ versus ‘bad’ essentialism. In other words, the focus of critiques ought to be states and other powerful institutions that prescribe and impose notions of ‘cultural authenticity’ as a benchmark for awarding funds and other assistance to indigenous groups, forcing these groups to play an essentialist game in order to claim
'rewards' from state institutions that have defined the legitimacy of particular indigenous bodies largely according to essentialist definitions concerning the 'retention of their character as traditional communities'.

This study sought to bring into focus the observation that the production, valuation, and perpetuation of categories and symbolic power of indigeneity can be the work of powerful élites, embodied in the formation of reservations and missions, the promulgation of laws, the production and distribution of texts, state financial support, and so forth. Elite representations of the indigenous, historically constituting the range of 'authorised' opinions and perspectives, were incorporated into this ethnography since they have structured the reality that was studied in the field. I also emphasised the role of cultural brokers not just as a means of bringing to light the key actors one encounters 'in the field', but also as a means of adjusting some of the structure-agency discussions of the 'knowledgeable agent'. The diverse work of multiple brokers, each oriented toward particular interests and perspectives on indigeneity, creates tensions in the representations of the Caribs in Trinidad, a fact that I addressed in terms of admission of change and 'loss', and attempts by some to overcompensate, engaging in aesthetic hypercorrection by dressing according to expectations of what a "real Indian" should look like. In other words, this study debunked the idea of a single representational strategy adopted by 'the indigenous', especially since control over what constitutes the form and content of indigeneity is not in the hands of one particular group alone. The study of indigeneity should never be just the study of indigenous peoples.

This project also leaves certain questions unresolved and other areas unexplored. Every work must necessarily be limited; moreover, each is shaped by the time and circumstances in which it was conducted. Gender, class, and generational issues remain to be further explored and explained at greater length with respect to the SRCC, given that the majority of members are lower income females over the age of 50, and given the fact that historically the leader of the association was the elder Queen. Indeed, taken from a perspective focused on gender and/or class, we might have arrived at different conclusions, raising different questions, and affording us greater purchase on select aspects of social
organisation and cultural construction than are covered here. It is also possible, however, that we might have simply recapitulated conclusions already arrived at in the wider social science literature on Trinidad. Gender issues are starting to receive the attention of those who entered the field after I had left. Future researchers of the SRCC may wish to produce studies centred on those members ‘not in the limelight’, a project that, by necessity, would involve posing different questions than I have and which could well take research into different directions from those outlined herein. Such projects may also benefit from not having to cover the ground that I have covered here in describing and analysing the “presence” of the “Carib”. In a broader write up of my fieldwork I would also have liked to present much more of the personal interactions amongst members of the SRCC, the play of personalities, the everyday issues of concern to members, what united and divided them, far more than I have here. A parallel study would thus focus on the question of “what is community?” and how it is developed and articulated in this case. The Santa Rosa Festival and the Smoke Ceremony, though ‘thickly’ and graphically described elsewhere (Forte 1998-2001b, 1998-2001d, 1998-2001e, 1998-2001f), merit substantially more attention as key ethnographic events, especially since, from an empirical point of view, there is nothing written about these two rituals in the anthropological literature of Trinidad. Whilst future research on the non-leading and less active SRCC members could well prove fruitful, I would not expect researchers to “find” a “strong, yet private” sense of “being Carib”, especially if it is one that they wish to keep from public view which, by necessity then, would impede their “sense” from being incorporated into description and analysis.

Just as by necessity any research project leaves certain gaps uncovered, so are there a number of fruitful areas for further research. In addition to those gaps that I mentioned above, processes of internationalisation and especially the role of the Internet in developing, promoting, and articulating the ‘Caribbean Amerindian revival’ will deserve more sustained attention. From a literary perspective, there is

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2 I am referring here to the ethnographic research of Genevieve Bicknell, conducted for the M.A. in Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh in 2000.
room for far greater analysis of key colonial texts relating specifically to Trinidad and its Amerindians, perhaps along the lines of the work done by Peter Hulme at the wider regional level and with reference to Dominica and St. Vincent. As the SRCC continues to develop, especially with its much anticipated move to a large estate where a ‘recreated Amerindian village’ is to be established, there will be room for restudies of the organisation and its changing patterns of association and representation. Last but not least, it would be useful for students and advanced researchers alike to have at their disposal a large, comprehensive, empirical and historical overview of the Amerindians of Trinidad, in order to consolidate and hopefully improve on the many disparate sources referred to in the bibliography.

Imagining the future trajectories of the SRCC is a complex affair beyond the usual difficulties encountered with any speculative analysis. On the one hand, we could see the SRCC as having achieved its immediate goals (funds, land, recognition) and thus enabling the group to take-off in developmental terms, attaining a broader membership and greater social prominence. On the other hand, having achieved its immediate goals, the group could just as easily find itself on a plateau, stagnating, without an answer to “what next?” Internal divisions have been problematic and sometimes acute in the recent history of the SRCC, especially in the jockeying for prominence between its main spokespersons. The SRCC that I studied was deeply fragmented, with two offshoot organisations formed while I was there and, at one point, the group appeared to split in half. Internal democratisation and the distribution of limited benefits will remain contentious issues for the body (see Forte 1999e), and I am not singling out any one individual as either the arch villain or victim. Recruitment efforts remain the group’s major handicap with respect to future growth and internal reproduction. I used to joke with Bharath and Adonis that if they wanted youths to join in droves, they could convert the Carib Community Centre into a gym offering body building, courses in jungle survival and martial arts, and the most deliberately exotic types of tattooing and body painting, all in an atmosphere heavy with ‘Dub’
(Jamaican Dancehall music) and incense—with “warriors, not weavers”\(^3\) as the guiding motto—thereby converting ‘Carib’ into an item attractive to Trinidad’s sometimes extreme and martial version of ‘Generation X’. The SRCC is still not a group that orients itself to ‘popular culture’, especially not as much as it is oriented to officialdom. I have said that thus far neither is the SRCC’s presence posed or received as a threat to the nationalist elaboration of a sense of Trinidadian indigeneity that submerges the African-East Indian dichotomy whilst rooting all citizens in that particular territory, nor is it perceived as a threat to the identity politics and claims of key ethnic spokespersons and organisations in Trinidad. Indeed, Afrocentrics like Dr. Selwyn Cudjoe (see chapter 4) and Indocentrics such as Kamal Persad (see chapter 5), both embrace the SRCC. As I mentioned previously, Peter Hulme commented that the indigene may be celebrated more in Caribbean territories where there are no organised descendants embarrassing the state with their awkward claims. One must wonder if it could happen that Carib identification in Trinidad becomes widespread and radical enough to achieve a degree of opposition to the state and the other ‘foreign ethnicities’ that seems to mark the development of Caribism in Dominica. While I personally doubt that this will occur in the foreseeable future, we should be mindful of the fact that, until recent years, we were not even speaking of Caribs in Trinidad, nor were we seeing in the streets the fully veiled women of such new groups as the Jama’at al Muslimeneen (also formed in the same period as the formalised SRCC). On one issue I am more or less certain: the success of processes of re-engineering can be gauged by the fact that, regardless of the presence or absence of an actual group such as the SRCC in Trinidad, for a long time to come ‘Carib’ will remain a central part of Trinidadian reflections on national history and identity.

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\(^3\) This phrase comes from Ricardo Bharath himself: one morning, while playing with his little son Mario, I asked Ricardo if he expected Mario to follow in his footsteps. Ricardo’s reply was, “perhaps, but he will be a warrior and not a weaver like his father.”
Glossary

Ajoupa
This was a common Amerindian architectural style of dwelling, often with four to six hardwood posts, and a slanted roof thatched from either the *timite* or *carat* palm.

Behique
This term is often translated as “shaman” and refers to priestly healers in the Greater Antilles among the Taino especially.

Cacique
This term has been loosely translated to mean “chief”.

Cemi or Zemi
Commonly found in the Greater Antilles in settlements now characterised as dominated by the Taino, this is an object that was sculpted from either stone or bone, or made out of cloth, usually depicting a skeletal figure with exaggerated features, and said to possess spirits. It was an object commonly associated with shamans, in some cases depicting a shamanic figure, and chiefs.

Coulevre
From the French word for snake. See *sebucán* and *matapi* below.

Lime, Liming
To lime in Trinidad refers, in a broad sense, to casually getting together with people and spending time engaged in recreational conversation, or when a group of people engages in a pre-arranged get together for the purpose of some enjoyable activity, or for ‘idle chatter’.

Manare
This is a square-shaped utensil, woven from the *terite* reed, used for sifting grated and strained cassava.

Matapi
An Island Carib term for the *coulevre* above; see *sebucán* below.

Parang
From the Spanish *parranda* (to spree). In Trinidad it refers to a particular type of music, now folkloric, of Hispanic American origins, especially popular on a national level during the Christmas season. Though normally sung in Spanish, Parang songs in English are also becoming common. Parang is no longer the reserve of any one ethnic group, though the dominant theories are that Parang in Trinidad originated with either the immigrants from Venezuela or the Hispanised
Amerindians of the mission villages of Trinidad, or both. The music often consists of religious songs devoted to the birth, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as a variety of non-religious songs about animals, rivers or other themes. Parang bands often consisted of four to six singers accompanied by guitar, cuatro, mandolin, box base, and maracas. They would move from house to house during festive seasons, singing in the homes of families, greeted with drinks and food, and there were specific steps or rituals that accompanied the entry to a home, the dedication of songs to a host, the eating and drinking, and the departure. Today, many bands have been ‘professionalised’, with corporate sponsorship, consisting of sometimes as many as 25 musicians, and often taking part in annual competitions that are televised and/or broadcast on radio.

**Piai, Piache, Piai-Man**
Much like behique above, this term is often translated as “shaman”, and is prevalent amongst Mainland Cariban speaking groups.

**Sebucán**
Like coulevre and matapi above, this is the Mainland Carib word for the long, flexible, cassava strainer woven from the terite reed.

**Tapia**
A mixture of mud, grass, and pebbles, this is packed onto a wood or bamboo frame, left to dry and then possibly coated with plaster in order to make walls for a home.

**Trapicche**
This is the Spanish word for a sugar cane press. It consists of a tree trunk with a hole in its middle, through which a wooden platter is inserted along with a long pole. Sugar cane is placed on the platter, and then squeezed using the long pole, the juice running off the end of the platter and into a container.

**Zemi**
Same as cemi above.
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