
JENNIFER COLE
Harvard University

Imagine colonial Martinique, circa 1925. Universal suffrage (for men) has been declared, and elections are tense times when the powerful planter class will do anything to maintain control. When the people from the municipality of Diamant go to vote, they find the polls closed. Breaking into Le Maire, the mayor's house, they find the ballot box stuffed with votes for the local bigwig, Colonel Coppens. In the ensuing melee, 12 local men are killed along with the colonel. Now imagine Medard Arlot, a colonial-day Robin Hood who remains uninvolved in the political events while dispensing stolen treasures from his hideout cave where he carves magical objects, including a bust that strikingly resembles Colonel Coppens. Sent to the notorious penal colony in French Guiana for stealing—but also, people claim, because he carved the impertinent likeness of the now deceased colonel—Medard returns 25 years later as the convict. He regains his solitary existence while living on the outskirts of town and carving marvelous objects; he has become a touchstone in local fishermen's minds for their experience of colonial oppression.

These two images of the convict and the colonel provide the scaffold around which Price's remarkable tale of memory and forgetting in postcolonial Martinique unfolds. "Time," Price muses, "is like an old-fashioned Martiniquian concertina," and the task he sets for the book is to "expand the instrument, reopen those folds, to play some of those 'old-time' mazouk and bégèmes," Antillean dances that are rife with clarinet riffs (p. 16). The result is an exploration of Medard's memory and its perigeanizations in 1990s Martinique. The important question that Price explores is "how one generation's powerful historical metaphors could so quickly become the next generation's trivial pursuit" (p. 157). In order to answer this question, Price draws on historical archives, oral testimonies, old field notes, personal letters, Carib poetry, and selective entries from a renewed version with Sally Price of a recent Guide Callimard, along with his personal experience of late-20th-century Martinique. The result of Price's careful interweaving of different sources is a story about the contradictions inherent in memory—the collective memory of rural Martinique embodied in objects like Medard's carving of the colonel and the personal memory of the anthropologist.

In part one Price draws on different kinds of memory narratives—memories of the event among local residents; the writings of the celebrated Martiniquian poet and man of letters, Ceasaire; and historical accounts—to create a snapshot of the political and social scene of Martinique at 1925. Price recounts the war at Diamant, following his informants and the colonial archives by portraying the events "etched in bi-partite form, the Left on one side, the Right on the other" (p. 23).

In the second part of the book, Price follows Medard's historical trail. As in his book First Time: The Historical Vision of an Afro-American People (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), an excavation of historical memory of Surinam's maroons, this part of the book is devoted to uncovering the historical memories of people who, according to experts in the case a plethora of well-known Caribbean poets and writers, do not have any. Price's quest for Medard's memory takes him to Medard's carefully carved, but now ramshackle, gingerbread house and leads him to talk to people who knew Medard. The portrait that emerges is of a solitary man living on the outskirts of a respectable, poor society, a man whom people both pity and admire for his suffering at the hands of French colonial authorities. With Medard's exile to French Guiana, oral memory trails off and Price retreats to the archives, where he draws on histories and literary accounts to depict what Medard's life in the penal colony might have been like. In taking the reader through a fascinating search for Medard's memories, the first two parts of the book crystallize a collective memory for colonial Martinique and record it in written form.

It is in the last part of the book, where Price follows the transformations of Medard's memory in 1990s Martinique and sets these changes within the context of Caribbean colonial experience, that readers find the keenest insights into the contradictions of making memories in a colonial setting. Drawing on his field notes and letters written during his first field trip to Martinique in the 1960s, Price creates a snapshot of what Medard's Martinique might have been like and sets Medard's image within a Caribbean theatre of madness. Today, massive French efforts to modernize Martinique counter Medard's memory as a critique of colonial power relations, leading to what Price launtns as the "post-carding of the past" (p. 173)—the sanitization of the past to make it suitable for bourgeois consumption. Price decodes this loss of a heroic history that he identifies as more true to rural Martiniquians' sense of themselves in the world. In contrast, he also documents continuities amid the rush of state-imposed change (the most striking being the Martiniquian joke about the man who returns from France having forgotten Creole, only to abusively remember it when a crab bites his toe, and he cries out "sa ka modé"—"it bites! It bites!"—a joke that was also documented by Frantz Fanon in his scathing chapter on the negro and language in Black Skins, White Masks (Grove Press, Inc., 1952).

Similarly, the story of Medard's memory remains unfinished, and the book ends with the possibility that Medard's memory—and the subterranean history of anticolonial struggle for which it stands—may be redeemed.

Part of what makes this book so compelling are the tensions between Price's own desire to find a certain kind of memory and his keen insights into the fact that memories do not necessarily work the way one might wish. As Price clearly shows, this fact does not mean that the possibilities of a reductive memory are foreclosed. So, like all good books, this one leaves the reader wanting more and thinking about how the dialectic of remembering

MARK ROGERS
University of Rochester

In this ambitious and wide-ranging volume, Thomas Abercrombie couples reflexive ethnography and reflexive history to explain the historical genesis and ongoing vitality of what the author calls an Andean "interculture" that binds together Bolivia's ethnically and culturally (not to mention politically and economically) divided society. While he admits the reality of cultural difference and social stratification, Abercrombie successfully debunksthe existence of separable indigenous and Hispanic cultural streams, a notion found in post-colonial bourgeois nationalism, militant ethnic identity politics, and romantic anthropological theories of resistance. Through a close analysis of ritual practices among the K'ultas of highland Bolivia, he demonstrates that K'ultas strive "not so much to keep incompatible 'Andean' and 'Western' orders apart as to bring two kinds of powers within a single cosmic order into controlled contact with one another" (p. 113, emphasis in original). Abercrombie brings theoretical sophistication and solid ethnographic description to an ongoing critique of previous approaches to hybrid Andean cultural formations. As a further bonus, the case for this inter-cultural understanding of what it means to be K'ulta is strengthened by historical research demonstrating the antiquity and malleability of such processes of hybridization.

Although the replacement of a simplistic "idols behind alters' resistance paradigm" (p. 25) with a more productive focus on the dynamic complementarity of Spanish and Indian cultures is perhaps Abercrombie's most important contribution to Andean studies (and to postcolonial studies), it is only one of many arguments woven through the text. Another concerns the relationship between modes of historical consciousness, social memory, colonial and postcolonial situations. Abercrombie recounts a historical narrative of the formation of the colonial interculture and demonstrates the role in that process of contexts over the form and content of historical memory. That is, he shows how the Spaniards attempted to suppress certain (principally nonlinear) kinds of memorialization, such as ritual activity or the knotted cord texts known as quipus, in favor of more recognizable modes of remembering like oral narratives or the Spanish system of writing. This imposition of historical consciousness, which Abercrombie calls the "colonial reprogramming of Andean social memory" (p. 213), was creatively appropriated and actively contested by native Andeans. Their alternative memories and modes of remembering appear refracted in archival accounts of social movements such as the Taqui Ongoc (song-dance of sickness or the Pleiadiess) and religious innovations such as native Eucharists using home-brewed corn beer in place of wine.

The focus on this struggle over what is remembered and the way in which it is remembered together the book's disparate parts. In order to bring together ethnography and history, as well as to produce both objective and reflexive forms of each, Abercrombie divides the text into three parts, each of which could be a book unto itself. He calls the first part an "ethnographic pastoral" (p. 26), including two chapters that detail his experience of fieldwork in K'ulta and a third chapter that gives ethnographic substance to the notion of an intercultural matrix. These chapters are engagingly written and could be used to introduce students to the nature of ethnographic fieldwork. The reflexive tone of these chapters demonstrates the positionality of fieldworkers and the partiality of the knowledge they generate with a minimum of posturing and jargon. The narrative is structured by the trope of discovery; the ethnographer seeks the authentic, private heart of the native culture, while his interlocutors work to immerse him in the public margins of their society. Yet rather than simply under-scoring the authority of the anthropologist, this narrative is critical in intent. The expectation of arrival at the essence of native society is foiled by the realization that both public and private, town and hamlet are integral parts of the local social system. To recognize the Christian, urban, Spanish-influenced dimensions of life in K'ulta, Abercrombie argues, is to seriously distort its meaning.

In part 2, the author shifts from ethnography to history. Although Abercrombie suggests that K'ultas' own ways of remembering constitute an "authentic 'ethnohistory'" (p. 123), he reviews several centuries of documentary evidence to reconstruct a history of K'ulta that, he admits, differs radically from that of its people. In addition to presenting K'ulta history in an accessible form, Abercrombie accomplishes several aims through the historical chapters. First, he salvages hidden forms of Andean social memory; the Spaniards' myopic Nativity. Despite the colonizers from their oft-approached to the past heterodox forms of native accounts of ritual praxis, abercrombie as novel adaptations form of social memory consciousness" (p. 17) of course, Abercrombie's exploration of the Andean culture history into an account of the author's decision to express in indigenous forms of religious practice. Third, this conventional history highlights the role of Christianity in the powers of remembering. In the third part of the book, the author uses the argument in a variety of ways: remembering and ritual practices, formalizing the early efforts of the Church, whose right, authoritative, and legitimating language contains the complex of rituals in the pre-Hispanic narrative about a solar-Cultural Earth's prehuman, uncivilized beginnings of the K'ultas' "space" goes on to show that K'ulta cosmology is based through the reconstituted and practical forms. This is the principle of the space, and the limitations and sacrifices that are imposed as well as the concretized discussions in the form of native Eucharistic plores in the earth. K'ulta life, and the search for indigenous cultural and historical identity.

While this magisterial information and ideas, the weaknesses of the interweave with the text, as difficult to maintain the book are never fully countered by the counterhegemonic use of the narratives for speaking. The elements of the sophisticated combining of historical research renders significance to scholars of their indispensable, of colonial, and of the juncture between.