# South American Indian Studies

Number 3, October 1993

## Discourses and the Expression of Personhood in South American Inter-Ethnic Relations

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BENNINGTON COLLEGE
BENNINGTON VERMONT
05201

# SOUTH AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES

Kenneth M. Kensinger, Series Editor



**South American Indian Studies** is published at irregular intervals by Bennington College, Bennington, VT 05201.



Published in the United States of America

Publication was made possible by a grant from an anonymous donor.

Cover design by Bertil Ostlinger
Printed by Inkspot Press

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# ANTHROPOLOGICAL DISCOURSES AND THE EXPRESSION OF PERSONHOOD IN SOUTH AMERICAN INTERETHNIC RELATIONS: INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

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The ideas for this session came together about a year ago at the AAA meetings in Philadelphia. At the meetings, I distributed copies of a preliminary call for papers that would focus on the development of new theoretical discourses in the current practicing of South American ethnology. My idea was negatively stimulated by the view that the current process of rethinking and critiquing earlier interpretivist works on South America has led to the emergence of a "new paradigm" (e.g., discourse theory, performance analysis, practice theory, metaphor theory, ethnohistory, neo-Marxism, or whatever; take your pick). Instead, I argued that the current diversity of theoretical discourses employed among South Americanists was a nearly perfect illustration of what Marcus and Fisher (1986) have called the crisis of representation in post-paradigmatic anthropology. Rather than rushing to assert the dominance of a new paradigm (a term which I find of dubious utility for characterizing theories in the social sciences), why not take the current plurality of theoretical discourses as an opportunity to deepen our knowledge about indigenous South American languages, cultures, and societies and to find ways of approaching native epistemologists; taking the latter to be as philosophically complex as the most sophisticated theoretical approaches in anthropology?

In short, my original intention was to organize a session building upon the momentum gained through critical rethinking of myth and history, ritual and politics, and cosmology and values over the past three years while at the same time modulating, to use a musical metaphor, into another key. To borrow a metaphor from Hofstadter's *Godel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid,* I wanted to pop out a level from the activity of rewriting the software of anthropology to the higher level activity of exploring the epistemological premises of current South American ethnology (i.e., the "operating system" of ethnology, or the system of systems for organizing knowledge and for gaining access to and coordinating the relations between various lower level systems).

In discussions after the 1986 session, *Cosmology and Values,* organized by Terence Turner, Alcida Ramos suggested that my idea could be combined with a focus on the empirical topic of the expression of personhood in interethnic relations to serve as a unifying theme for the session. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Ramos for her suggestion and for her excellent job of rewriting my preliminary call for papers into the one which was mailed out to today's participants last Fehruary. We ended up with a well-crafted and concise proposal for a session designed to explore the limits of existing modes of theoretical discourse and (hopefully) to attempt to articulate new ones in addressing the doubly intricate problem of how indigenous peoples of South America have transformed collectively shared concepts of personhood in situations of contact and how individuals have received, interpreted, and expressed such transformations.

"Sprawling." That's the adjective used to describe this session by the program committee organizer for Ethnology at these meetings. "Sprawling" in the sense that it aims to articulate deliberately non-paradigmatic modes of theoretical discourse, and also in the sense that it focuses upon a doubly complex empirical topic. It would have been even more sprawling if the geographical coverage of the papers were to have included indigenous societies of Highland South America, as we had originally intended. Unfortunately, our two Andeanists, Joseph Bastien and Norman Whitten, were forced to withdraw from the session. We will thus have to wait for another opportunity to see how the Andeanists would approach the topic of today's session. I hope that these losses will not deter us from keeping a broadly comparative perspective in mind and that the papers will provide us with enough theoretical depth and richness of ethnographic detail to more than adequately compensate for any loss of comparative perspective.

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# SYMBOLIC COUNTER-HEGEMONY AMONG THE ECUADORIAN SHUAR

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In her article on recent theory in anthropology, Sherry Ortner (1984:142-143) pointed out that one of the problems with the political economy approach in anthropology is the assumption that everything we see in the non-Western societies we study must be understood as having been shaped in response to the capitalist world system. While recognizing the immense impact of capitalist penetration on traditional societies, such a view often fails to acknowledge that societies necessarily interpret that penetration in terms of their own beliefs and practices. The impact of external forces indeed makes it necessary to permit a nation-state or even a world system context into the analysis. However, the articulation between nation-state and indigenous societies forms an interface in which indigenous responses are not merely reactions to external events, but rather are shaped by the internal dynamics of the indigenous culture as well as by the political and economic realities of the contact situation.

The rise of Indian movements as a form of resistance to the expansion of national frontiers is fast becoming the most important mechanism in national-indigenous relations in South America, and as such, highlights the need to analyze those relations from a more balanced perspective. Maybury-Lewis (1984: 132) states that South American nations will have to "revise their relationship with the Indians, who are no longer passive, but must be accepted as actors in the political process." Yet, as these peoples take a more active role in the national political process, they bring with them different cultural meanings through which they make decisions, create political strategies, construct ideologies, and respond to the attitudes and beliefs of the dominant society.

The *Federación de Centros Shuar,* organized in 1964, is one of the oldest and most successful of the resistance organizations in South America, and has become the model on which many recent attempts to organize are based. Historically, the Shuar were an Amazonian society economically based on horticulture and hunting, and politically based on a balance of power among autonomous groups engaged in constant warfare, feuding, shifting alliances and trade. The Shuar Federation, however, has instituted major changes in Shuar political organization and modes of economic production. Most accounts of the Federation emphasize these changes, describing its interest in promoting cattle raising among the Shuar and its modern, Western-style organization, with a hierarchy of elected officials and a system of commissions designed to deal with the various ministries and agencies of the Ecuadorian government (Salazar 1977, 1981). However, resistance movements such as the Federation necessarily produce ideologies which retain elements of the native experience in which the social production of shared meanings is interpretable only from the perspective of native theory and practice. It is with this aspect of the articulation between the Ecuadorian state and the Shuar people that I will be concerned in this paper.

The distinctly Shuar nature of the Federation is revealed in its leaders' critique of Ecuadorian cultural hegemony expressed in terms of a native theory of social agency manifested in metacommunicative speech acts. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in anthropology and other disciplines in the study of agency as a central problem in cultural analysis (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1979, 1984; Thompson 1978; Williams 1977). Among some anthropologists, agency itself is treated as a social product, created by man, and therefore, subject to diverse cultural meanings (Basso 1985; Taussig 1980; Rosaldo 1980; Urton 1985; White and Kirkpatrick 1985). In most cases, authors have focused on native interpretations of events, as in Taussig's (1980) analysis of native interpretations of the colonial encounter and the capitalist economic system. However, the Shuar go further in that they not only interpret the encounter, but set up a counter-ideology aimed at resisting the intrusion of nationalist ideas and practices.

Taking into account the native theory of agency is particularly important in the analysis of discursive social practices such as protests and counter-hegemonic rhetoric, since forms of discourse are culturally and historically situated practices and are subject to the speaker's notions of the causes of the events in the world which constitute much of the subject matter of discourse. In the present example, the Shuar view the actions, including verbal actions, of white men in terms of a particular set of cultural presuppositions about the nature of social agency. To understand his critique, one must understand the

notions of agency on which it is based as well as the nature of the actions and beliefs under attack.

As Ecuador extends its cultural hegemony into the Shuar territory through missionary-supported schools which disseminate concepts of nationhood, citizenship and progress (Vickers 1985:19), it also spreads its ideology of Ecuadorian nationalism and a policy promoting ethnic assimilation which equates progress with whiteness and Christianity as well as economic development. For the Shuar, the values and practices of the national hegemony oppose some of their most fundamental beliefs about cause-and-effect relationships in the universe. Christianity, for example, lacks the essential ecstatic qualities of Shuar beliefs about man's relationship to the supernatural. Without direct contact with spiritual beings, there can be no harnessing of power for man's use in goal-directed actions. Furthermore, Ecuador's notions of economic development are perceived by the Shuar, as well as other indigenous populations (Whitten 1976, 1978, 1985), as destructive of the very spiritual/natural elements (land, water, and air), represented as powerful beings in mythology, which are necessary in an ordered universe.

Thus, Shuar opposition to Ecuador's hegemonic expansion is more than a fear of losing cultural identity and autonomy, though that is an important motivation in the Shuar movement. Rather, it springs in part from a belief that white men have failed to understand the effects of their actions, and therefore, have fallen prey to destruction and greed which has culminated in the system of inequalities among men found in Ecuadorian society.

## Sociopolitical Context of Counter-Hegemonic Rhetoric

The founding of organizations such as the Shuar Federation coincides with increased contact with national societies, placing indigenous populations in danger of progressive social, political, and economic marginalization. Their incorporation into the larger political and economic systems of national societies leads such groups to understand the importance of maintaining their cultural identity if they are to survive as distinct peoples (Clay 1984). At the same time, organizations such as Cultural Survival, International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA), and Survival International have emerged to support the projects of these native peoples and promote their right to a voice in their future. In the Ecuadorian Amazon, as elsewhere, the key problem is land, and the conflict over tribal rights to land and the pressure of the national society to colonize indigenous lands and appropriate their resources.

Concurrent with these developments has been a transformation in the anthropological enterprise. While ethnographers of the past regarded indigenous peoples as objects of research in the scientific sense, more recent researchers view their informants as subjects and their own role as participants in an interaction with these subjects that includes an ongoing dialogue and greater responsibilities and commitments (Sherzer and Urban 1986). The way indigenous populations, or at least their representatives, view themselves has also changed. They are no longer naive exotic peoples with little knowledge of the world outside their own territorial boundaries, but rather see themselves as part of the world community. Many take an active interest in what anthropologists are going to write about them. While seeking knowledge of other cultures has always imposed ethical responsibilities on the researcher, it has only been in recent years that the native peoples themselves have demanded an account of the researcher's motives and plans.

The change in the relationship between the native group and the anthropologist has influenced some of the recent concerns in anthropology. The study of discourse, for example, not only provides the anthropologist with a view of native social relations, belief, language use, and other cultural information, but the texts recorded also give the native group an opportunity to speak to the larger world (Sherzer and Urban 1986). The peoples of Amazonia, such as the Shuar, have elaborate systems of meaning through which they interpret their world and the changes occurring in it. As Whitten tells us, "to understand more about Amazonian systems - ecological, social, ideological - *we must listen to the native peoples of Amazonia*" (1981:152).

Federation leaders make speeches which are broadcasted on *Radio Federación* or delivered in person as they travel to remote *centros,* for the purpose of promoting allegiance to the Federation among the traditionally divided Shuar people. The oratory of these leaders seems ambiguous at times in that it reinforces the hierarchical structure of the Federation while at the same time upholding values of egalitarianism and individualism. However, some of the most basic organizational and conceptual principles in Shuar society foster a flexibility which helps explain this ambiguity.

The Shuar are not unacquainted with forms of domination from within their own society. Differential possession of knowledge allowed some men to acquire enormous power and influence through careers as warriors, traders, shamans, and big men. Traditional Shuar society was egalitarian only in the sense that all men had equal access to the sources of knowledge through which one could obtain power; the acquisition

and manipulation of which is a life-long activity among Shuar men and is central to Shuar culture. Shuar society can also be described as "individual-centered" in the sense that Gregor suggests for the Mehinaku and other small-scale societies in lowland South America which lack cohesive corporate groups, have bilaterally reckoned kinship systems forming person-centered kindreds, and have amorphous societal boundaries (1981:179). Moreover, every major study of the Shuar culture has consistently noted the value placed on personal independence and self-sufficiency (Karsten 1935; Stirling 1938; Harner 1972); values which have not been lost in spite of the social and economic changes accompanying contact with Ecuadorian society (Hendricks 1986).

However, through Federation offices and involvement in the national market economy, an incipient stratification is emerging of which Federation officials are aware, but their anti-development attitude and their degree of acculturation "entrap them in contradictions" (Taylor 1981:657). That is, Federation leaders, themselves at the top of the new hierarchical structure, still hold to the traditional Shuar values which reject domination except on the basis of individually acquired power as articulated in terms of native theory and discourse.

Of course, the domination which the Federation organization opposes is external rather than internal, and there is some historical precedence for resisting external control among the Shuar as a people. Stories of organized rebellion against foreign oppressors have a central place in the teachings of the Federation in its efforts to instill a sense of unity among the Shuar. Much of the ethnic pride of the Shuar today is the result of their view of themselves as a courageous people who have never been conquered militarily, though attempts were made by both the Inca and the Spanish. This view is promoted in the history lessons taught in Shuar schools. However, social change was inevitable among the Shuar, as it is for all small-scale societies faced with increasing dependency on western goods and the physical and cultural encroachments on their homelands.

In a study of the music of the Macuma Shuar, Belzner states that "the Shuar are able to clearly differentiate the values and behaviors appropriate to *blanco* culture from their traditional conceptual and behavioral system," and that they learned how to act out "new sets of roles while never losing their traditional values (1981:743). My argument is similar in that the Shuar have been forced to adopt a western form of political organization and its political roles to ensure their very survival, but Federation leaders challenge external domination symbolically through discourse based on the values embedded in the native theory of agency and speech.

**Knowledge and a Theory of Agency**

To outline a theory of agency based on Shuar notions of practical and visionary knowledge, I draw on Michael Brown's analysis of Aguaruna magic,[1] as well as my own work on language, ideology and power among the Shuar. Investigation of an indigenous theory can reveal a great deal about a society's practices and the reasons behind them because such theories are based on the reality they describe rather than the investigator's arbitrarily defined domains. Rosaldo (1980) argued that folk views of human action are embodied in the common things that people say which give a sense of how and why people act and understand others' action in the way they do. The reality described in everyday speech among the Shuar is grounded in a belief in the equally powerful domains of the natural and supernatural worlds which influence every aspect of Shuar life from birth to death. Goal-directed action is achieved through practices which integrate practical and visionary knowledge, thereby mediating these domains.

Linguistically, the Shuar express the idea of knowledge in several ways. *Unuímiamu* means "that which is learned," and refers to the technical knowledge consisting of all of the skills and facts learned from observation and instruction, including knowledge obtained in school. *Nekámu* refers to knowing, feeling, experiencing and truth, while *wainmat*, derived from the verb, *wainkiatin*, "to see," refers to visionary knowledge. Together the latter forms of knowledge include those things learned from visions and dreams and the inner thoughts and feelings which such visions produce. The Shuar do not use the term *unuímiatin* (to learn) in reference to visionary knowledge, but rather say, *winia enentai nékajai*, "I know in my heart," or, *wainkiajai*, "I have seen."

While an understanding of practical or technical knowledge in human agency is easily accessible, the importance of visionary knowledge in day-to-day activities is somewhat illusive. Any indigenous theory focuses only on particular phenomena, distinguishing between significant and insignificant events in defining its reality (O'Connor 1981). In the western world, science, with its emphasis on observable and testable phenomena, constitutes the defining paradigm according to which we are accustomed to explaining reality. For the Shuar, however, the events which take place in daily life can only be explained by entering the supernatural world where truth about causality is to be found (Harner 1972). It is believed that "events which take place within it underlie and are the basis for many of the surface manifestations and mysteries of daily

life" (Harner 1972:134).

The Shuar use a variety of hallucinogenic drugs, including *natém* (*Banisteriopsis* sp.) and *maikua* (*Datura arborea*), to enter the supernatural world and obtain visionary knowledge. These drugs are used to gain knowledge of the other world, to secure guardian spirits for protection against sorcery, and to seek visions of future events. Without protection from sorcery and knowledge of the supernatural world, an individual cannot expect to live much beyond childhood. Thus, the practice of giving children small amounts of hallucinogens begins at infancy, in the hope that the child will begin to acquire knowledge and some measure of protection from enemy sorcerers who often practice their craft against these less knowledgeable, and therefore, more vulnerable victims. Brown points out the relationship between knowledge and the unseen world:

> The ability of people to see, understand, and communicate with the hidden component of reality is directly proportional to their individual knowledge. Curing shamans (*iwishín*) are generally held to have the most comprehensive knowledge of the unseen world, but to some extent all people attempt to develop their own knowledge throughout their lives. The Aguaruna firmly believe that each person must acquire and understanding of the properties of the hidden world if he or she is to survive and prosper (1985:48).

When boys are initiated into the *arútam* cult, they undertake a formal vision quest in order to communicate with the spirit of one of their ancestors.[2] After fasting for several days, the initiate goes to a waterfall to take *maikua* and wait for an *arútam* to visit him. During the vision quest, the *arútam* first appears to the man as an animal, often a jaguar or anaconda. Later, the *arútam* appears to him in a dream as an old man. The old man says to him, "I am your ancestor. Just as I have lived a long time, so will you. Just as I have killed many times, so will you" (Harner 1972:138-139). Then he disappears and the soul enters the body of the dreamer. During this visit, the *arútam* communicates important knowledge to the initiate, particularly information about his future. For example, a high official in the Shuar Federation claimed that an *arútam* advised him that he must marry two women and that he must become a shaman to help his people. Having done both of these things he would become very powerful.

Knowledge can also be obtained through ordinary dreams. The Shuar believe that during dreams the person's soul leaves the body and wanders. Everything they see in dreams, as well as in drug-induced trance, is real, since they see what is encountered by their souls. When people are seen in dreams, these are souls who have come to visit and often the visiting souls have messages for the individual. A Shuar woman whose son was very ill dreamed of a man who told her how to cure her son. She was told to break two chicken eggs and spread the egg over pieces of paper which she then plastered over the areas of the son's body which were afflicted. Then she wrapped him in a blanket and blew tobacco smoke under the blanket to trap the smoke. She repeated the ritual for three days, claiming that the dream spirit had returned each night to instruct her and give her the power to cure.

Dreams often give the individual a view of the future. However, the Shuar do not see the future as preordained and the vision merely as a preview of events to come. Rather, visions have a creative power to alter the future, and dreams are actively sought in order to insure the individual's well-being. "The future exists as a set of possibilities that are given shape by the effort to bring them into consciousness within the visionary experience" (Brown 1986:60).

According to the Shuar, the brain is the repository of learned facts such as those taught in school or technical knowledge taught by one's elders. However, ideas, feelings and intentions are held in the heart. The Shuar say that "learning" occurs in the brain, whereas "thinking" occurs in the heart. Thinking and the heart are connected linguistically in that the terms are derived from the same root, *enentai.* By itself, *enentai* means "heart," while *enentáisatin* means "to think." The term *enentai* may also mean "idea" or "thought" as in the expressions *aya enentáimiutish áji,* "we are only making thoughts," or *chíkich enentáish áwai,* "there are other ideas also."

Thinking well is a necessary prerequisite for proper behavior. One cannot know without thinking, and without knowing one cannot behave properly. One says, "Not knowing anything, not thinking, you do thus," and, "What are you thinking if you do thus?" A person is said to think well if he gets along with his neighbors and fulfills his obligations. Someone who lies, fails to carry out his obligations and is constantly arguing with his neighbors is said to think badly and have a bad heart. This occurs because his thoughts are not clear, not based on the truth found only in the hidden world through visions. Brown points out the importance of visionary experience in learning to think well:

> It is not enough simply to know facts; one must learn to think well by bringing together the body, the emotions, and the intellect in

the epiphanous context of the visionary experience (1986:49).

Much attention is given to helping children develop a "strong heart," so that they will think "straight" or correct thoughts. For example, the practice of giving hallucinogenic drugs is intended to increase their knowledge of the world of spirits so that they will acquire a strong heart and the ability to think straight. If a child does not learn to think correctly while he is young, then he will never behave well as an adult. The following excerpt from a speech explicitly states that lying (incorrect speech) comes from a heart which was not taught well in childhood:

> "I will be good now, I will help," you say.
> You are lying, I know you will never help.
> We have always seen what has always been in your heart,
> because you were raised badly as a child,
> truly, in the future you will never behave.

Advice from elders often takes the form of a command to "think well" (*anentáimpratá*). In this context, the meaning is not that one should think clearly or carefully, but that one should have good thoughts, refraining from thoughts of killing or revenge.

> *Urukamtai tíniush anentáimia?*
> Why does he think so badly?
>
> *Yajáuch anentáimia mankártuatniush anentáimia,*
> Thinking evil, only thinking of killing,

Discussing the investigation of folk theories, White and Kirkpatrick suggest that an important question concerns the contexts in which cultures "provide organized bodies of knowledge which are put to recognized use in causal reasoning, whether personal, social, natural, or otherwise" (1985:23). Such questions help identify "areas of experience associated with ordinary explanations in natural discourse" (1985:23). The significance of knowledge of practical and symbolic techniques for mediating the natural and supernatural domains in Shuar explanations of human agency is evident in a number of practices which require both technical and symbolic knowledge for effectively influencing the world. However, although the Shuar distinguish visionary knowledge from practical knowledge, the activities associated with such knowledge are not perceived as discrete categories.[3] Rather, practical and ritual activities are part of a single technology necessary for the successful accomplishment of goals.

Shuar subsistence practices provide clear examples of the nature of causality as the Shuar perceive it and its relationship to notions of practical and symbolic knowledge. For example, in order to be successful, a Shuar hunter must have a great deal of practical knowledge of the jungle and its inhabitants, but he must also possess visionary knowledge which allows him to interpret dreams and sing magical songs. Without the technical knowledge, he would be unable to track and kill game, but without visionary knowledge, game would evade him, never allowing him to find the tracks or aim his weapons with accuracy.

In addition, there is a strong association between the knowledge necessary for hunting and the knowledge linked to warfare. Not only are the skills required for hunting - tracking, shooting, running, stalking - the same skills required for warfare, but ritual knowledge, particularly songs and dream interpretation, are vital to success in warfare. The Shuar speak of warfare in much the same way as they speak of hunting. For example, one says, "I will hunt meat," when referring to going on a raid. Moreover, the warrior's feelings - that is, the knowledge in his heart - contribute to decisions about when to go to war. Describing the events before a war raid, and old man said the following:

> What is it that one feels? He doesn't feel like a woman, he feels like a man. That his true desire is to eat human meat. That he truly wants to take revenge, to kill that one and to bring his head so as to finally eat it, making the feast [the *tsantsa* feast].

Similarly, a woman's control over nature in agriculture involves a technical mastery of gardening along with the symbolic observances such as fasting and singing which affect her relationship with Nunkui, the creator of all plants and animals who is said to remove her products from the gardens of women who do not please her. Mastering such knowledge is recognized as essential to the survival of the household. The garden is filled with power which must be controlled if the garden is to be productive. Nunkui, whom Harner (1972) calls an "earth mother," lives in the soil and dances in the garden at night. She is responsible for crop growth and she is especially attracted to well-weeded gardens. If the garden is full of weeds, she has no place to dance and will have to find a more suitable location for her activities, taking the crops with her (Harner 1972:71). Thus, Shuar women try to please Nunkui and entice her to remain in their gardens, not only by caring for the gardens well, but also through magical practices. For example, magical stones, linked to Nunkui in Shuar myths, are placed in

the garden to encourage plant growth. Women usually acquire such stones through visions, either ordinary or drug-induced, in which Nunkui tells the woman where to find the stone.

In Shuar thought, nothing is produced without being planted; that is, spontaneous growth, either in the garden or in the forest, is impossible. It is Nunkui who plants the seeds in the earth. Therefore, without Nunkui, and without the women's ability to communicate with her, there would be no forest in which the men could hunt. The myths of Nunkui and the rituals associated with them provide the symbolic knowledge which defines the place of women in Shuar society. The strict division of labor in the day-to-day activities of the Shuar is paralleled by a division of symbolic knowledge related to that labor which is equally important to the success of Shuar subsistence activities. This division is made explicit in mythology. In one myth, after the wife learns about cultivated foods from Nunkui, she returns home to serve her husband beer. When he asks her where she got all the new foods, she refuses to answer, telling him to drink it in silence. The myth tells the Shuar that the complementarity of male and female spheres of knowledge ensures the continued well-being of the Shuar household.

**Verbal Images and Speech**

Thus, contact with the supernatural world gives an individual a deeper understanding of the causes of events and the ability to use this knowledge in goal-directed action. Such knowledge is held in the heart and is necessary for thinking well (*pénker anéntaimia*). Language is also important in Shuar notions of agency, since speech is linked with the heart and thinking. One should think good thoughts and speak of good things. As an externalization of his thoughts, the words a speaker utters are said to come from the heart. If the person has an evil heart he will think and speak evil things, but if he has a good heart his words and thoughts will be good.

Visionary knowledge is bound to verbal images of future events, images which tell the seer what he may expect or provide him with a means of directing those events. The Shuar "speak" to the souls of plants and animals when they sing *anent*, magical songs. Magical songs can be sung or spoken, either aloud or silently. The verb, *anéntruatin*, means "to sing," usually referring to singing the songs out loud, while the verb, *mekumátin*, means "to speak or sing with a closed mouth," referring to the silent performance of the songs. For the Shuar, *anent* are essential in producing a harmonious relationship with spiritual beings which enables the individual to effectively carry out the economic activities of hunting and gardening. Magical songs manipulate events by expressing the desired effect verbally. For example, the garden songs sung by Shuar women always include the refrain, "I am a Nunkui woman," indicating the close personal affinity women feel toward the mythological being who represents the ideal woman, while at the same time producing an image of infallibility in gardening, since it is impossible for Nunkui's crops to fail. Referring to *anent* among the Aguaruna, Brown says:

> The densely constructed images of *anen* thus serve as tools by means of which a person intervenes in worldly events. The imagery of *anen* brings meaning to human actions; meaning charges those actions with the power of intention and directed energy (1984:555).

During the songs sung by the shaman in curing ceremonies, members of the patient's family shout encouragement: *kakartá*, "make yourself strong," *atsántratá*, "make yourself courageous," *yawá ajastá*, "make yourself a jaguar." Also, the names of powerful mythological beings are invoked, particularly Tsunki and Panki, both associated with shamanic power in Shuar mythology. Brown states that "there is substantial evidence that the Aguaruna consider words, especially the names of powerful beings, to have the ability to 'wake up' or activate the things to which they refer" (1984:554). Shuar informants also stressed that calling the name of Tsunki gives the power of Tsunki to the shaman attempting the cure.

The power of words is clearly expressed in the myth of Nunkui, in which Nunkui's child has the power to create all manner of plants and animals simply by uttering their names. Cultivated plants and domesticated animals were named and so created, as were all living things of the forest. When the children asked for demons and poisonous snakes, these were also created, indicating that the power of words is neutral and can be used for good or evil, and therefore, must be controlled to be of value to man.

It is not only in myth that speaking has an instrumental effect on nature. Lightning and thunder are signs of war which are attributed to speaking. One informant said, "There is war where there is lightning and thunder. When one is speaking of war, thinking of war, the thunder comes from his house." Furthermore, words have an instrumental effect on society. Words are considered to be the substance of problems, as is suggested by the fact that the idea of problem is often expressed by the same term that is used for words. The Shuar term for "word" is *chichám*, which in various contexts can also be glossed as speech, language, discourse, thought, or idea. *Chichám* also has the wider meaning of "problem" in some contexts. As

the following excerpt from a speech indicates, words are problems because of their instrumental effects. Informants stated that by "naming war," war is so created; by "naming the bullet," the speaker has decreed the death of his enemy.

> Being thus, I cannot tolerate those problems now.
> Those people who want to kill, those who are naming war,
> those who are only naming the bullet,
> that is too much for me to set right.
> So being, the shuar gathered here who speak evil things,
> we here should deal with that.

Speech, like thoughts, must be controlled to produce desired effects. Visions reveal the future in words or images and magical songs describe the desired future in verbal images, but ordinary speech also may have consequences related to future events.

In modern political oratory, the relationship between speech and agency, which is embedded in notions of knowledge, is expressed in statements about what constitutes "good" or correct speech (*pénker chichám*). To say of someone *pénker chichámai,* "he spoke well," signifies more than a display of verbal skill. It also includes the notion of speaking correctly. Correct speech refers to the content and the quality of an utterance, rather than the use of appropriate grammatical forms or other linguistic features. Learning to speak correctly is an important part of learning to behave correctly.

The Shuar notion of correct speech is part of an implicit theory about language and speech, which is most concretely expressed in metacommunicative speech acts; that is, speech about speech. Shuar political oratory is filled with advice on how and when one should speak and what one should and should not say. Federation leaders give audiences advice on how to speak correctly, often stating the advice in terms such as "you should live speaking thus." Correct speech is believed to create harmony and order. A frequent kind of speech about speech refers to ho one must speak in order to "live well"; that is, in harmony with one's neighbors and according to Shuar cultural rules.

> Without bad words, those of fighting,
> without words of killing,
> in order for us to stay here well, to live together well,
> how the children should be taught
> to defend themselves against illness.
> Without bad words, those which made us angry at each other,
> without hidden words,
> it is good if we are speaking words together.
> If we are telling those words together, it is good.
> When we are hiding ourselves in the corner,
> those words spoken without cause,
> even though we are speaking those words among ourselves,
> that is also bad.

For the Shuar, speaking ability and knowledge of appropriate forms of speech play an important role in the achievement of social status. Speaking well is both an indication that the speaker possesses knowledge and power and a means of acquiring power. The man who speaks forcefully and directly is believed to possess supernatural power which will protect him from his enemies. For example, the strength of a man's voice is an indication of his *arútam* power. The encounter with the *arútam* gives the initiate strength for war and other pursuits and increases his intelligence and self-confidence. In addition, it makes it "difficult for the soul possessor to lie or commit other dishonorable acts" (Harner 1972:139). Harner also suggests that the shouting which occurs in conversations between neighbors can be interpreted as "the desire of the individual to advertise his *arútam* power by being forceful in speech and gestures" (1972:224, note 8).

Furthermore, the effective use of language is considered to be a decisive factor in a man's success in social and economic activities. Gnerre notes that

> when a man occupies a position of low prestige, the form used to express the low esteem in which he is held is *chichatsui,* "doesn't talk," which is to say he doesn't know how to use language (*chicham*) (1986:309).

Verbal dueling and the manipulation of facts to achieve one's goals are vital to a man's success and security. Speaking well includes the ability to tell traditional stories and to relate recent events as well as to perform ritual forms of speech such as ceremonial dialogues. When I questioned Shuar men about the most important qualities a man should possess, speaking abilities was always one of the first qualities mentioned.

Bauman and Sherzer point out that "societies differ as to the importance of speaking, both absolutely and relative to particular contexts" (1976:11). Not only does the importance of speaking vary from society to society, but also the characteristics which constitute a good speaker vary. A Shuar big man is said to never joke or lie, but speaks directly and forcefully. Speaking well is associated with respect. An informant

told me that the Shuar are serious people and that a man is respected because one could not make fun of him or joke with him. "He speaks directly and he speaks well. That is the language of respect, to speak thus." He is said to speak with *paan'chicham,* "clear words."

Advice on speaking correctly includes how one should speak as well as what one should say. The speaker in the following example, tells the audience that if they shout like women, they will be treated as women. While weeding is generally a woman's job, weeding the airstrip is a common punishment for unexcused absences from *mingas.*[4] In the second line, the speaker does not say, "we do not speak that way," but rather, "we do not live that way," indicating the close association between how one speaks and how one lives.

You will only say, *charáa charáa* (you will only shout),
we ourselves don't live that way here.
If you all shout *charáa charáa* among the women,
you will all be told, "Go work the weeds with the women."

Correct speech creates harmony and order. Conversely, speaking incorrectly is directly associated with improper behavior and an absence of order, as is indicated in the following passage, in which white authorities are said to punish those who do not speak well. Clearly, the speaker meant that the whites punish improper or illegal behavior, but the word used was *chichástin* ("to speak"), suggesting that in Shuar thought, speaking badly is equivalent to behaving badly.

Among the colonists, the *tenientes* (authorities), those also,
they are ones who beat those who don't speak well,
truly, they give punishment.

Open criticism or declarations of anger are interpreted as hostile actions. In pre-Federation times, criticism interpreted as a threat was often answered by an assassination raid. A speech form called the *atsán-martin,* described as the "negation discourse," was a formal way of speaking, and acting, against another man. This speech form was performed by repeating the same word four times in a loud voice, while moving the feet rhythmically and holding a shotgun or lance (Bolla 1972). However, any criticism can be interpreted as a threat in Shuar society. In relating his life history, an old warrior described the events leading to raids, sometimes claiming only that the victim had "talked badly" of him. The belief in sorcery and the traditional system of violence establish an environment in which no one trusts anyone except his closest kin. Any criticism will be interpreted as an indication of ill will with the result that the person criticized may suspect his assailant of bewitching him. Therefore, audiences are told to avoid reproaching others in their words.

Likewise, if you say, "I want to live well,"
I say, you are speaking thus with him,
"I am angry at you, I reproach you."
We ourselves do not speak thus.
We say, "Let him come, let them come with beauty."

Speaking correctly also includes ideas about when one must speak. In particular, it is important among close relatives and neighbors that they do speak. Silence leads to suspicion and hostility. The speaker in the following passage states clearly that a people accustomed to settling their problems with violence must make an effort to speak to each other and understand each other if they are to live in peace.

Because of lacking understanding in our hearts,
because of lacking it in our heads,
because there is no respect,
only being angry with each other, only killing each other,
truly if we carry the shotgun, then we must all speak.

To summarize, speech is a powerful form of social agency, which gives people the ability to create situations of hostility or harmony and to create images which influence future events. The Shuar ethnotheory of speech and language includes ideas about the social value of speaking correctly. Therefore, the Shuar are intensely interested in learning to speak well. To do so, however, means acquiring the knowledge which allows one to think clearly, particularly the visionary knowledge which gives the actor insight into the causes of events so that he is better able to control them.

## Shuar Counter-Hegemonic Rhetoric

The critique of Ecuadorian cultural hegemony takes the form of speech about speech in which Shuar egalitarian and individual-centered values are opposed to the national ideology of

domination. Discourse enters into the historical process of inevitable change, allowing speakers to reinforce collective values while demonstrating cultural resistance to subordination within the national power structure.

Every culture contains some socially shared meaning associated with being human or having human capabilities. Among the Kalopalo, for example, the ability to speak illusively separates humans from other beings (Basso 1985). For the Shuar, the determining factor is the ability to speak correctly; that is, with a good heart. Shuar mythology tells us that incorrect speech, particularly lying, can have disastrous consequences. According to the myths, many of the animals of the forest were once able to speak as humans, but because of their deceptions in dealing with Etsa, Ayumpam or other powerful beings they were cursed, leaving them with only the animal calls they make today. Thus, it is not simply speech, but correct speech, which gives one a place in human society.

In discussing the Suya use of body ornaments and song as a mode of comparison with other groups, Seeger suggests:

> One could probably generalize and say that any society uses itself as a measure of others and is interested more in what another society lacks that they themselves have (as in ear disks and painted lip disks), than in what the other society has that they lack (1981:82).

The significance the Shuar place on language as a measure of other groups is indicated by their traditional warfare practices. Speakers of all languages other than Shuar are considered potential enemies. The Shuar say, "we only fight those who speak a different language." Moreover, it is explicitly forbidden to take the head of an enemy whose native language is Shuar.[5] The most frequent enemies of the Shuar were the Achuar, who speak a mutually intelligible Jivaroan language and possess a very similar culture. However, the Shuar insist that the Achuar language is entirely distinct from Shuar, and that the Achuar are animals.

Because Ecuadorians not only speak a foreign language, but are unsocialized in the proper ways of speaking, they are regarded as uncivilized, somewhat less than human, and therefore, dangerous. Even the ability to speak Spanish is looked upon with some skepticism among the less acculturated Shuar, leading some Federation officials to deny their knowledge of Spanish. In the following example from a speech, an official claims that he does not know the white man's language, emphasizing that he is no different than his audience. They know that he has had some formal education, but his denial is intended to tell them that his contact with whites has not affected him, that he still speaks Shuar.

> Being thus, brothers, truly being shuar myself,
> and likewise, not being one who knows the white man's language,
> being with all of you with total confidence,
> I am here with you to collaborate well with you.
> I, like you, do not know the white man's language.

Whitten quotes a lowland Quichua man who, when greeted in Spanish on the street in Puyo, answered, "We shouldn't greet one another in the Spanish language; it is the language of capitalist domination" (1985:217). Similar ideas are frequently expressed in Shuar political oratory. Moreover, the Shuar are accustomed to hearing insults in Spanish from Ecuadorian colonists, particularly insults directed at their language, as in "the Shuar speak the language of dogs." However, most of the insults aimed at the Shuar people are part of a larger national paradigm, consisting of "asymmetric contrasts implying a polarity of human capabilities (Whitten 1985:223-224). These contrasts include oppositions such as white/Indian, national/indigenous, progressive/backward, hierarchical/egalitarian, civilized/savage, educated/ignorant, and adult-like/childlike (Whitten 1985). Progress in Ecuadorian ideology, is the transformation of the above opposites, ultimately from Indian to white.

In the Shuar view of nationalist ideology, however, these contrasts, which place some men above others and deny the rights of some groups primarily on the basis of their race, education or wealth, are false oppositions stemming from the white man's lack of knowledge of causality. The Shuar see the white man as having a one-dimensional view of causation, focused on the use of technical knowledge. This limitation causes him to emphasize the material world, ignoring the spiritual and symbolic aspects of causation. His knowledge is limited to facts learned in school, since he lacks the symbolic knowledge acquired through visions.

The Shuar recognize that some white men must possess visionary knowledge, since without such knowledge it would be impossible for them to achieve their success in manufacturing great quantities of material goods. Taylor reports that the

Achuar believe that white wealth is produced by specialists who have a "privileged relation to the supernatural" which enables them to make western goods (Taylor 1981:671). However, such knowledge is held by only a few white men and denied to most. The great majority struggle to achieve their ends without the advantage of visionary knowledge, which is denied to no one in Shuar society.

This lack of knowledge causes a dehumanizing effect apparent in the speech and actions of Ecuadorians. For example, while the colonist perceive the Shuar as animals because of their intimate relationship with the forest, the Shuar say that the colonists treat each other as animals. The following statement by a Shuar man indicates an awareness of the colonist view of the Shuar and reveals what many Shuar see as the principal reason colonists cannot deal effectively with other people, their failure to seek and accept visionary knowledge.

> "Look at them, the shuar are ones who never work, living there in the *montaña* like wild pigs," that they tell us. But when my child is disobedient, I don't hit him with a stick to punish him, like an animal. I say, "you are not an animal." Then, I send him to the river after fasting, and have him drink *maikui*. After drinking, the spirit will come and speak to him. The next day he will be healthy and well. Those who don't obey should be punished, but not like the colonists, with beatings, but with *maikua*, in order to make them think well.

As noted in the last section, correct speech is linked to visionary knowledge by providing vital information and a good heart with which the speaker is able to control his speech in a manner leading to harmony and order in society. Ecuadorian nationals are frequently criticized for their manner of speaking which reflects their lack of visionary knowledge and results in such undesirable consequences as the national ideology of subordination and dominance.

In pre-Federation Shuar society, dominance over others occurred only through the accumulation of personal power, especially that gained from visionary knowledge. Since such power is evident in the quality of a man's speech and in his behavior, it was not necessary for him to make overt references to his superior position over others through titles or rank. Ecuadorians, however, regularly use language to place themselves above others. This is evident in their terms form powerful individuals, such as president, vice-president, etc., which are arranged hierarchically, and in their tendency to rank people generally, as the series of oppositions noted above demonstrates. While the Shuar Federation have borrowed the terms of the hierarchical political system, the Shuar criticize this tendency in Spanish and implore their people to avoid such uses of speech.

> Well, this white man's language which we
> understand,
> truly only in the white man's language
> do we throw ourselves above others.

Leaders tell their people not to speak "carelessly" or "without cause," like the white man. Ecuadorians are said to say whatever comes into their minds, without thinking, without seeing or knowing. Such speech generates selfishness and is linked to the belief that progress to a more civilized state occurs as wealth increases. In the following excerpt from the speech of a local Shuar leader, the *teniente político*, the local Ecuadorian authority, is criticized because he is selfish and thinks only of his personal gain. The explanation given is his inability to see or know.

> And the *teniente político*, that one,
> that one doesn't hear anything concerning
> the shuar,
> not seeing anything, he only does thus.
> They only say whatever,
> talking only of the fines, only making fines,
> they do thus, only ordering and ordering.
> Only taking money, that is the *teniente*
> now,
> only taking money to smoke tobacco.

The greatest failure of the Ecuadorian system, according to the Shuar, is that each individual works only for his own gain, without thought to the ultimate effects of his actions, not only on other people, but also on the universe. Without the visionary knowledge which gives the world its proper order, a man will speak only in his own interests.

> It is not that, that among the shuar in the
> name of assembly
> he alone walks saying thus,
> that in my opinion, in my own interest,
> mine alone,
> he who is speaking, does not make that
> failing like the white men.

The Shuar perceive the Western form of

education, with its emphasis on knowledge gained from books, as contributing to the belief in white superiority, represented in the national paradigm by the equation, white:Indian::educated:ignorant. In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in shamanism, indigenous art forms, mythology and other sources of indigenous knowledge. The Federation also recognizes the need to give Shuar children a western education and has implemented a bilingual educational system through which it hopes to avoid the pitfalls of the Ecuadorian system. However, the Shuar hope that their children will not use education in the same manner as white men:

"We want them to be respected after studying,
behaving as others do, as good brothers,
let them live thus," one says.
We want to teach the children for that.
The youths, after studying in order to be teachers,
we do not want them to place themselves above everyone.

In the colonized regions, where the quest for knowledge through visionary experience has declined, there is evidence of a growing recognition that an important part of the traditional system of knowledge is disappearing. Today, fewer boys make vision quests, probably due to the influence of formal education and the absence of war. Young men who are attending school have little time for such activities and fear that participation in the traditional rituals will make them appear uncivilized. Also, the principal reason for needing to possess an *arútam* soul, for protection and valor in war, is no longer present. Older men comment that the young leaders have no true power since they have no knowledge of their ancestors and the supernatural world. They fear that this power will ultimately destroy the Shuar. The young leaders, they say, are no longer jaguars or condors, but mere men, with only the knowledge gained from books. However, there are still some fathers who insist that their sons seek power in the traditional way and the young men who have accomplished these goals are proud of their achievement. One young man said that although he did not need power and knowledge for warfare, he needed these resources to lead his people and help them progress in the modern world.

The basic technique of formal education is collective, in contrast to traditional individual teaching, based on observation and example, "and the personal transmission of techniques of symbolic control and supernatural powers" (Taylor 1981:662). Only through the rigors and suffering necessary for obtaining visionary knowledge is a man recognized as more powerful than another, and even such men are not regarded as superior to others. The knowledge of a shaman or big man does not make him better than other men, only capable of influencing the world to a greater degree. The Shuar perceive Ecuadorian nationals as equating education (practical knowledge) with a man's value.

I, like you all, do not know the white man's language,
nor those who are educated, those who don't know,
nor those who are bad.
Everyone who doesn't know being equal,
I being one who doesn't know,
I want us to strengthen ourselves together, equally.
Being thus, I am not one to recognize those who don't know.

The inability to speak well, which is directly related to a lack of visionary knowledge, is marked in Shuar speech by the term *chichatsui* ("doesn't speak"), as mentioned above. The same term is used for Ecuadorian nationals, and in its use among the Shuar, its meaning refers to the inability to speak correctly and clearly. One context for using this term for a white man is in reference to his tendency to joke with or make fun of people. Correct speech among the Shuar is serious and does not show disrespect for others. White men, however, constantly make fun of each and of other peoples. It is said that they don't know how to be serious and that their words are vague. Older Shuar worry about the young men who attend Ecuadorian high schools because they learn to joke with one another and forget the language of respect.

The lack of seriousness in speech is associated with a general lack of care for correct speech. The following excerpt suggests that the white man's words lead to distortions and misunderstandings, while Shuar speech allows clear expression of thoughts, understandings and knowledge.

Being thus, if I speak with the white man's words
I could allow mixing them into distortions.
But being thus, truly, it is better in the shuar language,

what I know, what I understand, what I think,
I am here, brothers, to give to you all.

Thus, the Shuar interpret the values associated with Ecuadorian nationalism as resulting from the white man's ignorance of the nature of causality. This ignorance is exposed in the white man's manner of speaking which demonstrates an inability to use language to create harmony and order. However, the Shuar not only interpret the spread of Ecuadorian national values in terms of their own theory and practice, but they also use that interpretation in constructing an ideology of resistance which is transmitted through the political oratory of Federation leaders at all levels of the organization. The interface between the Ecuadorian state and the Shuar is being formed not solely by the impact of nationalist/capitalist penetration of the indigenous culture, but also by the creative response of that culture in applying its own cultural meanings to the current situation in order to counteract the perceived dangers.

## Notes

1. The Aguaruna are a Jivaroan-speaking people of Peru. Closely related to the Shuar both culturally and linguistically, their beliefs and myths are very similar, exhibiting no more variation than is found regionally among Shuar groups.

2. The word *arútam* is derived from *arut*, meaning "old" and the suffix signifying "made."

3. Even the distinction between visionary and practical knowledge, though expressed linguistically, may be more pronounced in recent years as a result of the recognition that the pursuit of visionary knowledge has declined, at least in the colonized areas.

4. The term, *minga*, is a Quichua word referring to collective work. Shuar centers in the Federation require their members to participate in weekly *mingas* to carry out communal projects such as building schools and clearing airstrips.

5. The Shuar never took heads in the assassination raids associated with feuds between Shuar families, but only when fighting other groups.

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# THE SELF IN A CONTACT SITUATION: KAGWAHIV EXPERIENCES OF DOMINATION

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The life experience of Native North and South Americans today is shaped by the clash of traditional values with the reality of social and economic domination by outliers of national capitalistic systems. Individuals who grow up subjected to constant confrontation with culture shock and conflicting values, as well as to economic exploitation, face special problems in developing and maintaining an integrated sense of self.

In examining the impact of contact on the personal identity or sense of self of members of an indigenous group, two aspects of the process must be considered. On the one hand, one must look at the effects of experiences of culture clash or of being subjected to discrimination, domination and deception on the sense of self of the *adult* subjected to these humiliations. On the other hand, one must also consider the effects of bicultural socialization on the *child's development* of a cohesive sense of self. This latter could theoretically have several different possible directions of outcome, favorable or unfavorable. On the one hand, under ideal circumstances, bicultural upbringing, like growing up bilingual, can well be an enriching experience. Bicultural children may have the advantage of being able to operate in diverse cultural environments, and thus achieve a meta-level cognizing of both cultures - a higher level of mental functioning, in Vygotskian terms. On the other hand, if the culture of primary identification for the child is a disprized one, and the child grows up amid many experiences of seeing the idealized parents mistreated and humiliated without possibility of redress, it will certainly not be beneficial for the child's self-esteem. Specifically, one might expect that such a situation would result in traumatic experiences in the area of self and the development of an idealized sense of values.

Yet general predictions in personality development must always be made cautiously. Psychoanalytically speaking, it is difficult to separate the effect of events from the way in which those events are experienced by a particular individual, that particular experience being a precipitate of past events in the person's life, themselves in turn experienced in terms of the attitudes and personality structure that the person brings to them. The individual's needs and level of development at the time of the events are also crucial in shaping how the person will respond to them, as is also the availability or lack of availability of supportive adults.

Last year I focused my discussion on the *social* problem of interethnic relations for the Kagwahiv on a myth. I can think of no better metaphor for the problem of *personal identity* in interethnic relations than a dream told me almost twenty years ago by a man I will call Francisco.[1] A sensitive and intelligent Kagwahiv man of about my age, Francisco was and is in a position to feel especially keenly the conflict of identity between his active participation in Brazilian society (he was and is one of the few Parintintin who have acquired literacy), his close involvement with the Summer Institute missionaries as a valued linguistic informant, and his deep knowledge of, and sense of embeddedness in, his own culture.

Francisco told me this dream at a moment when he had just been invited by the missionaries, two young women named Helen (Dona Helena) and LaVera (Dona Vera), to go with them to Manaus to participate in a Summer Institute of Linguistics seminar, something he had done before owing to his particularly fine ability to analyze language. He had not yet told me about the request, nor had he reached a decision at the time of the dream whether to accept it.

The dream:

> Rain.[2] Going along in the canoe, wandering. I went along, got further upriver. A motorboat came along, really traveling. It was spewing up water from the bow, white water.
>
> "*Pu!* That really swamped me!" I raced for the bank. When I hit the bank, it sank. "Every time it gets swamped!"
>
> The boat stopped. I boarded it. The owner had clothes for me to change into. It was Manuel de Paula. He goes around on the Madeira. "Your canoe sank by accident [*à tôa*], I'll pay you 20 contos for the axe you lost, and the machete. He would give me an axe in place of the other, and a machete.
>
> "When are you coming?" He was coming the 1st of September. I asked him if he had sugar. He would sell ten kilos of sugar, two of coffee,... kerosene, soap; he would sell anything. I said, "OK."

And, then I dreamed that I came back here with him to the log by the beach. I went to tell Dad, "Manuel swamped me." Papa said, "You could see that the motorboat was coming roaring along! I said for you not to go out!"

I didn't lose anything. I lost an axe, a machete, but he gave me an axe in place of the other, a machete he gave me too. And he left me on the bank.

Papa was watching from the bank. "*Puxa!* It really travels, that's why it swamped my canoe." Papa scolded me.

Jovenil asked, climbing up the steps to Mohã'gi's house, "how did the canoe sink?" "I went out to meet him, the motorboat passed, the barge it was towing, then the turbulence of the wake swamped the canoe." I was talking along, and woke up - it was the others talking on the bank. Sabasiu who arrived at night. In the end, it was him talking.

It hardly requires any deep psychoanalytic understanding to see in the opening images of the dream a pithy and clear symbolic statement of the problem of identity of a people now economically dependent on their conquerors. But the next dream Francisco told, and Francisco's associations to both of them, clarify what inner personal conflicts Francisco felt with regard to the impending dislocation to urban society.

The second dream that he had told, in fact, referred more directly to the missionaries' invitation: He was invited to a party at the chief's settlement downriver. The missionary, a woman, told him not to go, because "the others will fight with you," but Homero, the chief, urged him to go and he went. A neighboring Brazilian, José T., came with a radio. In the end, Homero's wife served coffee and *beijus* to the missionary, and she was won over: "she thought it was pretty." Francisco laughed at her. "Why are you laughing?" she asked. "Don't you like *beijus?*" "It's because it's the first time I've seen you take coffee and *beijus,*" he said.

The next day (continuing the dream), José T. came back to get the radio, and started kicking a soccer ball. But now he was drunk, and staggered around, tripped and fell, making a spectacle of himself. The women laughed. Francisco and his son tried to help him up, but he didn't want to get up, and fell back down as soon as they let go of him.

In a final scene of the dream, a girl (Homero's granddaughter) is handing Francisco a glass of water to drink, and he drops it. He woke up, he said, to the sound of Mohã'gi's wife kicking a tin cup she had dropped on the ground.

In almost his first associations to the dream, he recalled the missionary, Dona Vera, warning him *in fact* against parties because people fight. He refers to her as "giving advice" (*dà conselho*), a phrase conventionally applied to a father's admonishments. Picking up on this phrase, and on the similar role his father had taken in the first dream, I commented on the paternal nature of her "giving advice." Agreeing with my suggestion, and emphasizing the succorant nature of her advice ("She has compassion for one"), he now recalls in exact words her admonishments on the occasion of his getting into a scrape "there" (Manaus) - words which echo his father's reprimand in the first dream: "What did I tell you?" he quotes her as reproving him; "I told you not to go to the party!"

Then, after a long disquisition about how one's father's admonitions help one to learn to work, and about how his father had "scolded me for me not to play with the others," he came back to a fuller description of the city, its temptations and the protective, restraining role the missionaries took in curbing his desire to go out on the town with the other Indians lodged in SIL quarters.

But a discordant note slips into this rosy view of paternal/missionary authority, when later in the interview he talks of the restraining hand of another "father," the chief Homero. He expresses indignation at this classificatory father's authoritarian control: "The first time he scolded me, I left!"

From the second dream, and especially from the associations expanding on Dona Vera's protective restraint over him while he is in the city, guarding him from being tempted into trouble, it would seem that the danger he fears being swamped by in the first dream is the temptations of the city - the danger of giving into impulsiveness, unbridled expression of impulses that makes a spectacle of oneself.[3] Indeed, at the moment when he actually did leave for Manaus a week or two later, he *enacted* some of the threatening situations portrayed in his dreams and warned against in the interview: in his farewells while the missionary plane waited to take him, he consumed a good part of a bottle of *cachaça*, got into a fight, and boarded the plane with his best, clean city clothes grubbied and torn.

Where do these impulses come from? Francisco manifestly praises his father, the missionaries, and others for exerting protecting controls over him; yet a caution against taking this at face value may be taken from his excoriation of Homero for exerting control of a not altogether different sort. Francisco is sensitive to any external control that threatens his autonomy.

These thoughts suggest a more complicated

mix of feelings behind the first dream. Let us return for a moment to the images of this dream: after having been swamped in his frail craft, he appropriates the instruments of the powerful adversary who swamped him; but he must accept these instruments as *gifts*, part of a continuing dependency on this now beneficent but still ominous presence. The solution is at first presented as advantageous - "I didn't lose anything... he gave me an axe in place of the other" - but his very insistence on this point betrays nagging doubts that something *was* lost. It is himself he is trying to convince. What is it, in fine, that has been lost? I think it is just that against which his bacchanalian departure was a protest: the loss of *being the locus of his own self-regulation*. In any culture, such a lack is a threat to self-esteem and self-cohesion. In a culture that values autonomy, it is an especially serious loss.

Francisco is in a special position with regard to the situation of contact. He could not be called an indigenous leader in a political sense; but, as the only literate person in his community, he is something of a cultural broker, both for his fellow Kagwahiv (who, though they are all quite comfortable in Portuguese, do not read it) and for the missionaries, who used him as a selected informant and as an aide in their teaching of literacy. Thus he is exposed to the pressures of culture conflict somewhat more relentlessly than are others.

Francisco acquired his literacy in a kind of apprenticeship to a Brazilian teacher: as a child, he lived with the family of a Brazilian teacher on the Madeira River for some time. Thus along with literacy in Portuguese, he learned other aspects of Brazilian culture. For him, though, the bicultural identity this gave him is, I believe, a source of deep inner conflict. At the time his mother died, he was away working with another Brazilian family. This complicated his mourning of her, intensifying, I think, a feeling of isolation from her which may have begun, or at least been exacerbated by, his period of separation for education. He was again away later, when his father died in 1970, and expressed deep feelings of regret about this in my interviews with him in 1973, which were pervaded by a sense of depression. It was after his father's death that his problem with alcohol became acute.

Francisco's situation, while more exposed than that of other Parintintin, is not unique. A number of Parintintin children have spent time living in neighboring Brazilians' households to learn skills of Brazilian culture. In particular, early on, a number of Parintintin girls lived in the household of the first *encarregado*,[4] learning to sew and knit, serve a proper coffee, and other feminine graces of a *civilizada*. One of these was Gabriela, the wife of the self-styled chief Homero. From this experience, she has retained a strong identity as a proper, genteel Brazilian housewife. This, combined with her identity as the chief's wife and daughter of one of the most prominent pre-pacification chiefs, gives her something of the air of a European aristocrat fallen on hard times. She is beset by a dual set of constraints, impelled to strain her resources to provide a proper *cafezinho* for visitors, while at the same time she is offended by the idea of eating pork or beef, even canned, because it is the meat of pets. A lifelong insomnia which was the focus of the series of interviews I had with her in 1973 has other sources in her childhood, but the tensions in her self-image must certainly contribute to it.

Gabriela, though, has been more successful than Francisco in reconciling her two childhood worlds in her adult self-image. Others have been less successful than either. Francisco's father let himself die around 1970, after I had left at the end of my doctoral fieldwork, by refusing to continue taking his medication for tuberculosis. His children agreed in their accounts that he simply decided he did not want any more of life in this changing world. And he was, if my surmise is right about the deaths of some others, not the only Parintintin to come to this decision.

The dilemma faced by Francisco, Gabriela and other Kagwahiv may be further understood from a cultural standpoint. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (1986) has proposed that Tupí cultures tend to share certain pervasive social characteristics, one of which is a tendency toward centrifugality in their social organization, along with a cardinal disposition to base their ritual order on identification with the enemy (as in the pivotal Tupinambá ritual of incorporation of the captive).

The Parintintin share in the general centrifugal tendencies in Tupí social organization, and in the widespread Tupí tendency to base cultural identity on incorporation of the enemy - both psychologically and literally. The central Parintintin ceremony before contact, the now defunct *akangwéra toryva* celebrating the taking of an enemy head, included as a central ritual act the consumption of parts of the body of the slain enemy, through which the consumers incorporated physical virtues of the deceased warrior. Given this tendency, clearly there is a strong inclination to assimilate regional Brazilian models - of social organization, of personal comportment, even of economic values. This has led to relative economic success in some cases of individuals able to integrate competitive war ideals into personal economic action, but on the whole leads to a rapid diffusion of Parintintin identity and a fragmentation of any efforts toward coordinated resistance against infringement of their rights and invasion of their lands by neighboring big landowners and entrepreneurs.

In individual psychological development, this configuration takes the form of a proclivity to identification with the dominating society and its members. Such a personal solution fit well with the SPI's policy of encouraging rapid assimilation and provided an expeditious personal adaptation to changed situations, but was not without personal costs. For Francisco, it has left him subject to depression and vulnerable to overuse of alcohol.

## Notes

1. Since this discussion of a man's life touches on some very personal issues, I have maintained the use of pseudonym in writing this paper. For anyone who knows the Kagwahiv, it is a thin disguise, and if there is anyone here who does have any contact with them, I would request that you maintain the strictest confidentiality.

2. "Rain" is the *meaning* of the dream, not part of its manifest content: A dream of a motorboat predicts rain; the roar of the motor is thunder.

3. The image of the drunken José T. in the second dream may indeed have been a premonition of dangers which are a serious problem for him now.

4. Indian agent in charge of a post.

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# ON THE TRANSFORMING NATURE OF TOBA SUBJECTIVITY

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In a paper at the AAA meetings in 1980 (*Contexts that Confer Individual Identity: an Example from the Gran Chaco Toba*), I argued for a dynamic approach to Toba personhood by calling attention to the juxtaposition of categories of kinship, ethnicity, class, the animal world, shamanism and cosmographic mapping. The focus was on the phenomenal world of lived experience in which socially constructed categories provide a contextual framework for analysis. I also called attention to the impact of Pentecostal symbolism and suggested ways in which Toba notions of personhood are in process of fundamental transformation.

My original intention here was to focus on the theoretical assumptions and sometimes conflicting conceptual models underlying that paper. Upon closer examination, however, it became apparent that it would be preferable to let sleeping papers lie and to develop, rather, some linguistic referents for personhood that were left unattended or underdeveloped in my previous writings. In particular, I will examine Toba pronominal categories, kin terminology and personal names with a view to the dynamic processes currently at work.

Until mid-20th Century, the Toba child was born into a named band, such as *l'añaxashic*, "southwestern plains people," or *tacshic*, "northeastern riverine people." In addition to this band identity, the child was given a single personal name that associated him/her with a deceased ancestor who had been dead for an extended period of time (no one cared to speculate on a specific number of years but all agreed that ten would be a minimum). A strict taboo against uttering the name of the deceased was practiced until the band leader, a shaman, named the child publicly.

Thus, a kind of rebirth was implied as the name was revived and the continuity of the group reassured.[1] As I indicated in 1980, however, this name was a highly private concern and it was not used freely, even within the extended family unit. It might be thought of more as a kind of ceremonial name such as that conferred at a Catholic Confirmation.

How, then, you might ask, was a person addressed? The answer is by a set of generational kin terms. All kin, male and female, of Ego's generation were, and continue to be in the rural Chaco setting, referred to and addressed as *ỹaqaỹa* (my brother, sister, cousin). This term was extended to include any person one wished to address, including a stranger. When encountering another person anywhere, one simply announced, "*la', ỹaqaỹa*" ("hello, brother"). A hunter upon entering the forest alone would often utter a cry to the spirits with the same term ("*la', ỹaqaỹa, aỹim 'antel'a,*" "hello, spirit brother, protect me"). In the Pentecostal *culto* the term has come to carry the additional semantic load of Christian brother. Within the closer family unit, and when personal relationships were established beyond the family, additional distinctions were made on a generational basis. If the difference was considered one generation, the reciprocal terms of address would be *ñitesqo'* ("my uncle")/*ỹasodo* ("my aunt") - *ỹasoshic* ("my nephew")/*ỹasoshi* ("my niece"). When two or more generational differences were involved, the reciprocal terms were *ỹape* ("my grandfather")/*icote* ("my grandmother") - *iual* ("my grandchild"). It will be noted that these were highly generalized terms and that the individual was not differentiated in normal interactions. Further specificity within the family included more specialized terms for parents and children: *ita'a* ("my father")/*ỹate'e* ("my mother") - *ỹalec* ("my son")/*ỹale* ("my daughter). Additional terms of distinct address for lineal kin and terminological distinctions between older and younger siblings were also known (see Miller 1966), although these were largely in disuse when I arrived in Chaco in 1959. It should be noted that, despite the changes to be described below, these kin terms continue to serve a significant role in personal identity until the present time.

The point to be stressed here is that individual differentiation in daily interaction was not marked in any sense comparable to that taken for granted in our own society. The obvious result was a much greater sense of community and identification with siblings and others of one's generation than that known to us. This terminological system was associated, of course, with a lack of role differentiation in any sense comparable to that found in industrialized societies. Men hunted and fished, fought and served as the primary curers (sbamans). Women, in addition to domestic duties of childrearing and food preparation, collected wild tubers and fruits that served as the basic staples of subsistence on a daily basis. Beyond the role differentiation of shamans and sorcerers (see Miller 1975), few unique expectations were placed upon the Toba individual. The result was a sense of participation in

and identity with the larger group that came to be fundamentally undermined and transformed in the latter 20th Century.

Perhaps more fundamental to an understanding of Toba selfhood, however, are the pronominal categories that signify a deeper level of self-recognition or misrecognition. The following terms constitute the set:

**TOBA PRONOUNS**

| *Person* | *Singular* | *Plural* |
|---|---|---|
| first | *aÿim* I | *qomi* we |
| second | *'am* you sg. | *qami* you pl. |
| third | *-mayi* he | *-mayipi* they masc. |
| | *a-mayi* she | *a-mayipi* they fem. |

The third person is a bound form that has six variants identified with a prefix particle that identifies space and movement as follows:

*na* - moving toward, present, near
*namayi* (he) *namayipi* (they masc.)
*anamayi* (she) *anamayipi* (they fem.)
*ñi* - seated, fixed, not present but known
*ñimayi* (he) etc.
*da* - standing, distant
*damayi* (he) etc.
*yi*-lying down, stretched out in space and time
*yimayi* (he) etc.
*ca* - absent, unknown or not specified
*camayi* (he) etc.
*so* - moving away, in the past, unfixed
*somayi* (he) etc.

An additional form signifies several, a known recognized number, as distinct from an unknown plural number. This form consists in lengthening the vowel in the particle as follows:

*naamayi* they masculine and feminine present, etc..
*ñiimayi* they masculine and feminine seated, etc.
*daamayi* they masculine and feminine standing, etc.
*yiimayi* they masculine and feminine lying, etc.
*caamayi* they masculine and feminine absent, etc.
*soomayi* they masculine and feminine past, etc.

The semantic load associated with the third person in contrast to the more simple discrete form associated with I and you is a subject that merits attention but would distract from the focus here. Consequently, I direct attention primarily to the *aÿim/'am* formation as rooted in Toba social relations.

My own notions of self-recognition have been strongly influenced by G.H. Mead (1934) as elaborated by Peter Berger (1963:99), who asserts that "identity is not something 'given,' but is bestowed in acts of social recognition. We become that as which we are addressed." As a student of Berger, however, I learned also that not only is identity socially bestowed, it is also socially sustained. A whole series of introjected images and expectations contribute to the ongoing formation of "self" that comes to completion only at death. Thus, we learn to be professors, administrators, retirees (yes, I've already begun to think of that topic!). Mead's distinction between the contributions of "significant others" (mother, father, siblings, teachers, playmates, colleagues) and "generalized other" (societal expectations) has been widely acknowledged as useful in conceptualizing this process.

More recently, Lacan (1977) has elaborated on this subject with his distinction between the "imaginary" order of self-recognition (the "mirror stage") and the "symbolic" order (the "naming stage").[2] The first order (from 6 to 18 months) is constituted by a fundamentally dyadic relationship between mother and child in which the child yearns to fuse with what is perceived as other, even while at the same time developing an awareness of self as whole, even statuesque, contradicting an inner sense of uncoordinated, uncontrolled pieces. In this process the introjection/projection of a statuary self gets intertwined with the infant's first desire to be a part of the mother, even more importantly, to be what she most desires. The "symbolic stage" involves a naming process in which the father's name, consonant with the father's "no," contributes to a developing awareness of a world of symbols in which self-awareness is mediated by anguage so that the expectations and perceived identities become internalized. As Turkle (1981:57) argues, "Symbolic signification, of which the "father's name" metaphor is an example, is mediated rather than fusional. It is social, not narcissistic."

The Oedipal arguments surrounding the distinction between these two stages take us beyond the purposes of understanding the processes of self-constitution that I wish to address. Suffice it to point out that Lacan would be delighted to know that the term *aÿim* ("I") could well be associated with the word *ÿim*, meaning "clearly defined," "clearly recognized." There is even a word, *ÿimchiguiñi*, meaning "well marked." Talk about a statuesque view of the self! I should not push my luck by pointing out that the term for "you," *'am* ("mother, the first you?"), could possibly be associated with *ama* meaning "sweet," or "delicious," but how to resist! The idea is not as farfetched as it may appear at first glance. The glottal stop is a marker in the language that designates several or a known number more than one. Thus the glottal with *ama* might represent a formative stage in separation of identity in which the child identifies the first

you with the mother representing sweet deliciousness, but this is, of course, mere speculation. The traditional extension of the nursing period (up to three years) could well have extended the mirror stage of development that Lacan identifies. Along with other changes in Toba culture, the nursing period has been shortened, together with the period of postpartum sex taboo, so that the Western psychoanalytic view of self-formation may well apply more accurately to the current generation of Toba than it did to preceding ones.

The traditional Toba naming process would seem to have represented a neat example of Lacan's symbolic stage in which the image or projection of one generation gets imposed onto another. The child's character is already pre-defined, held in the imagination without utterance for an entire generation, and then suddenly thrust upon the child at the moment of greatest impact, 18 months to 2 or more years, the precise period when the symbol has begun to make its fundamental impression. Meanwhile, the mirror stage formation continues to play a key role even in the *aÿim*. In the words of Turkle (1981:58) again:]

> The entrance into the symbolic opens the way for symbolic significations, but the imaginary identifications which began during the mirror phase have become paradigmatic for processes of identification. The subject continues to identify himself with people and images in a direct, fusional mode in which self is lost in other. And it is through these identifications that the subject constructs the alienated self which Lacan calls the *ego* or *moi*... The symbolic order always partakes of the imaginary because the primary identification of the self as a misrecognition constrains all further constructions of the self. The self is always like an other.

I would add that the mirror stage for the Toba would seem to have been even stronger than that envisioned by Lacan as the self was lost in other through a language system of kinship terminology and naming that was reinforced throughout life.

Along with changes in subsistence and ideology occurring at an increasingly rapid pace throughout this century (see Miller 1975, 1979, 1980), Spanish surnames and given names have come to replace band names and traditional Toba names. Early in the century Spanish surnames were assigned by administrative personnel with little regard for consanguine relationships so that fraternal brothers were sometimes given totally different Spanish names. Throughout the century, however, Spanish names have taken root, not only as bureaucratic procedures for documenting Toba births became more efficient, but also as the Toba moved from their forest habitat to interact with Spanish speakers on a more routine daily basis in cotton fields and, more recently, cities. The adoption of Spanish names coincided with the disruption of traditional division of labor as men and women worked for wages in cotton and sugar cane fields, and with the ideological changes associated with the adoption of Pentecostal symbolism involving identity with a personal Companion Spirit (Holy Spirit) formerly available only to the shaman. I have referred to this religious personalization (Miller 1982) as "Pentecostalist Contributions to the Proletarianization of the Argentine Toba." To state that the process of individuation in naming has been accompanied by a growing sense of individual alienation is to understate and to oversimplify processes of transformation currently at work among the Toba, processes that are fundamentally undermining to any sense of Toba subjectivity that produced the generation of Toba with whom I lived and worked in the late 1960s.

## NOTES

(1) The basis for choosing a name is not easily determined today, given that these names have been replaced by Spanish names in the post-1950 generation. Almost certainly the name represented a deceased member of the band whose contributions to social life were missed or needed. When I asked elderly shamans how they chose names, they would mention similarities in appearance, ability and character. Anthropologists like to discuss their own naming process among the people they study and I am no exception. The Toba shaman who named me, Agosto Soria (Do'oxoi), was the most widely respected and widely-known shaman in the Chaco in the 1960s and 1970s. He did so only after a number of extended visits to his community during which he observed me very intently. At one point when the community was gathered together drinking mate, he looked at me intently and dramatically announced, "*'am, Toqos*" ("You are Toqos"). Toqos was his partly *criollo* paternal uncle who had the reputation of a courageous warrior, having fought to keep Europeans out of the Chaco. He had been deceased for thirty years. Everyone seemed highly pleased with my name in that community, although a competitive shaman from another community was annoyed that I had been named after a warrior. He would have preferred to name me after his own ancestor, one not associated with warfare. The name stuck and it is still known in Toba communities to this day. My own naming, along with that of my wife's and other missionaries at the time, was a unique phenome-

non in that we used our Toba names much more widely and openly than was normally the case.

(2) I am grateful to Anthony Molino, a psychoanalyst in training and student of anthropology, who called my attention to Lacan in this context and who discussed with me the implications of Lacan for this paper.

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# PERSON AND COMMUNITY IN WESTERN BRAZIL[1]

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Acre, the westernmost state in Brazil, is one of the last areas in Amazonia to have escaped - for the moment - the extensive and destructive processes of large-scale national expansion that have brought industry and thousands of Brazilian settlers into other indigenous areas of the country. Along the Upper Purus River this isolation has allowed a village of Culina Indians to avoid the most intensive contact with non-Indians, but it has left this village open to colonization by the Brazilian Catholic Church's missionary arm, the *Conselho Indigenista Missionário* (CIMI). The representatives of CIMI who work in this region, with a variety of indigenous groups, including Cashinawa, Culina, and Campa, have been singularly unsuccessful in rallying Culina behind either local level economic projects, or the pan-Indian movements promoted by CIMI at a national level. In this paper I examine how CIMI missionaries have failed in one particular village of Culina, the village called Maronaua on the Upper Purus River. I suggest that these Brazilian missionaries have attributed to Culina an "embedded" notion of personhood represented by the concept of *comunidade*, or "community," a conception that rests on a Western articulation of such critical dimensions of personhood as individualism versus communalism, and cooperation versus conflict. I argue that these Brazilian missionaries are struggling with their own ideology of personhood, located on an essential tension between individualism and "collectivism," one that reflects their own sense of "embeddedness" in a repressive social order. This ideology is reproduced in their work with Culina, but now as "embeddedness" within a benign, utopian communalism. I also note, perhaps a bit parenthetically, that various anthropological writings are appealed to by CIMI missionaries to legitimate their fantasies of indigenous life, and I suggest that these works are available to serve this political end because they extinguish individual acting subjects: ironically, just at the time when Culina may be discovering their own subjective agency.

I am not, then, going to talk about a notion of personhood that is in some sort of flux, as Jonathan Hill suggested, or an "interethnic indigenous person"; my frame of reference is too limited temporally to identify a "flux," and in any case, I assume that Culina, if only for their contacts with other indigenous groups, have envisioned the possibility of "interethnic" persons. Rather, I focus on the ways in which Culina notions of personhood have not - perhaps not yet - changed in response to interactions with non-Indians. Indeed, I will suggest that if contact with Brazilians has altered Culina conceptions of persons, it is to locate themselves within Brazilian social structure, if only at its lowest level.

## PERSONS AND PERSONHOOD

The concept of "personhood" has been much confused in anthropology, and deserves a general comment, to situate my own views. Without detailing the long history of the notion, we should note at least a few threads, one running from Mauss, who proposed to recover the history of what we might today call the cultural category of subjective reflexivity, the other from Radcliffe-Brown, who objectified persons as particular bundles of social relations: the "social personality." The first notion informs Geertz's well-known article, and finds recent expression in, say, Schweder's work or that of Geoffrey White; the latter view may have had its last full anthropological expression in Meyer Fortes, though it has been revived recently by Schieffelin in his analysis of depression and anger as forms of social reciprocity. These perspectives are articulated around extreme poles of anthropological discourse: subjectivity and social structure. We might locate these conceptions within two distinct ideologies of social life: one that conceives of social relations as contractual or quasi-legal, and where persons are role-centered (normally associated historically with the British and their social anthropology), the other that conceives of social relations as "negotiable" and "managed" by private "selves," where "meaning" is available only through acts of interpretation. ("Impression management" is a quintessentially American concept.)

A third approach to personhood should be mentioned, particularly as one version of it was closely identified with lowland South America. This view conceived of personhood as those culturally unique complexes of beliefs about bodies, souls, spirits, etc., that constitute various ethnophysiologies, a view Carter criticized in the context of the Indian subcontinent for being no more than that, and less than a genuine concept of "personhood."

In brief, at least part of the difficulty in formulating an adequate conception of "personhood" lies in a general lack of agreement over what it is that we want to be talking about in the first place; an inten-

tional definition seems just as inaccessible as a referential one. A more serious difficulty lies in the complex of interdependence of social formations, practice, and persons; and interdependence illustrated nicely by, for example, Foucault's demonstration of the reciprocal connections between a normalizing individualization and the growth of disciplinary institutions. Consequently, any adequate account of personhood must be attentive to the dialectic of structure and process at times of social and cultural transformation, and of the articulation of social and individual levels of agency.

## CIMI AND THE CULINA

Brazilian CIMI missionaries have promoted several projects among the Culina, all of which have so far failed to stimulate interest or village-wide support. These have included economic schemes such as a rubber tapping cooperative, and the introduction of a cow and bull into the village, as well as efforts to create a wider sense of "Indian" identity by engaging Culina in indigenous movements on a larger, even national scale.

The rubber tapping cooperative is an instructive example. Under this system, all rubber collected by members of the village was aggregated and sold in a single sale; account was kept of each man's contribution, and this represented the portion of the income to which he ultimately had access. Decisions about what goods to purchase with the income from the rubber were made collectively; these goods were available to village men according to the amount of rubber they had contributed. The single time this system was implemented, village members gathered about 200 kilos of rubber, which was taken by CIMI to the town of Sena Madureira for sale. The CIMI missionary couple resident in the village managed the process, purchased goods with the income from the rubber, maintained the account books in the village.

The rubber cooperative was driven primarily by the missionaries' own zeal. They harangued the village almost daily about *communidade*, the beliefs about cooperating within a "community," of providing for the collective welfare through productive labor. The missionaries reported to me the rather antique fantasies of indigenous people, selflessly communal, practicing the virtues of egalitarian pragmatism, harmonious and gentle. The rubber collective was felt simply to operationalize these utopian ideals.

The Culina, however, were slow to participate in the collective, and complained about the system of distribution of the goods that were purchased with the income. One young man, in particular, refused to participate from the outset, and his extraordinary productivity in rubber tapping earned him a personal fortune by local standards, individual control over its disposition, and bitter resentment from other village residents. His example encouraged every other man in the village to quit the collective after the first experiment.

I want to discuss several points that emerge from this simple example.

First, the literature on "development" is full of projects that fail through a lack of sensitivity to local political/economic systems. But the Culina were also uninterested in various Indian identity movements. While the rubber collective and other economic projects may have failed in part because they did not reproduce local economic structures, they also failed because they were insensitive to the Culina notions of agency, responsibility, and morality that comprise their view of persons. Despite the apparent radicalism of the Brazilian missionaries, they were trapped in an ideology of social relations mediated by commodities and of individualism emerging in the bureaucratic rationality of economic production. This entailed that, first, their rubber collective allocated goods purchased according to the individual productivity of each participant, at the time that participant needed the commodity in question. The power to draw from the store of goods was a measure of individual productivity, a structure of individuation that acquired moral dimensions. But Culina, by contrast, were more likely to imbue these goods with social affect, to consider the entire store of goods to constitute a powerful symbol of village sociality to which all village members should have access equally, and which distinguished their village vis-à-vis others; "individuals" did not emerge from traditional forms of structured practice. The set of missionary practices entailed that the production of commodities was the principal measure of sociality. The error was perhaps less in organizing economic activities according to the wrong set of rules, than the initial, hidden assumption that economic productivity is the primary practical arena of agency, responsibility, and morality in which persons are constituted for the Culina.

Second, the missionary fantasies of a primitive utopia are already familiar to us through the writings of the earliest Europeans to reach the coast of Brazil. It is significant that these 16th and 17th Century images of South American Indians were, at that time, a powerful counterpoint to and critique of political/economic orders, some of which would soon collapse under popular revolutions. I suggest that CIMI, likewise, was responding to an implicit appreciation of the contradictions inherent in their own hierarchized social system, in which individual action was enjoined to continually reproduce a repressive social order that individuals were nonetheless powerless to transform.

CIMI missionaries often debated with me the likelihood of a popular revolution in Brazil, to overthrow the repressive military regime in power at that time. However, this focus on the military masked a more fundamentally rigid structure of class relations that would not be transformed by the simple replacement of a military by a civil government; revolution was not a means to establish an order of proletarian rule, but to substitute a more benign rule without fundamental structural change. Brazilians have been noted to possess an ideology of more rigidly bounded social class than, say, American beliefs in class mobility through individual achievement. These missionaries envisaged individuals emerging in the context of individualizing practical activity, but inevitably embedded in social groups, not in the totalizing way Dumont described for caste systems, but more in the way Townsend described for Germany. (Kottak noted a similar conception in Brazilian sports, where individuals and individual team members had attributed to them more or less fixed levels of ability that were not believed to improve through practice or harder "work." While any team possessed its star players, a team's success was due less to the outstanding performance of individual members than to the skillful coordination of predetermined levels of performance among the group.)

CIMI regularly appealed to anthropological writings to legitimate their conception of indigenous society, to imbue it with a kind of supposed objectivity. Undoubtedly the most commonly cited work was Betty Meggers's *Amazonia.* This study combines several conceptions, both explicit and implicit, that reinforced fundamental missionary views. For example, Meggers's paradigm is that of evolutionary biology, and adaptation to ecological constraints is her principal theme. Missionaries interpreted this in the moral discourse of an indigenous balanced, harmonious relationship to an environment, a reflection of the innate and marvelous wisdom possessed by Indians in their "natural" habitat. The subtitle of the Brazilian version of the book seems to certify the CIMI interpretation: *Um Paraiso Perdido*, a "lost paradise," lost through the destructive force of Brazilian expansion. (Meggers was not so certain in her original subtitle: *Man and Culture in a Counterfeit Paradise.*) Moreover, Meggers stresses the theme of cooperative utilization of resources by indigenous peoples, a theme that resonates with missionary exaggerations of the communalism of indigenous people, and misplaced notions of rationality in Western terms. At the same time, such conceptions deny indigenous peoples various forms of agency, such as creativity, by embedding them in structures so deeply that, as in Bourdieu's notion of habitus, there is no place for subjectivity.

Missionary projects within the village were clearly informed and legitimated by such conceptions of relations between persons and the groups in which they are embedded.

## CULINA PERSONS

Sidestepping the problem of what we ought to be referring to or intending by any "analytic" concept of personhood, a few comments on Culina notions of personhood can be made. For the Culina, quite simply, a "person" is a being to whom is attributed the capacity for being an agent of meaningful action. Persons need never produce meaningful action; they are simply capable of doing so, though any individual's claims to personhood are evaluated by standards of agency and morality that apply to structures of meaningful activity. For Culina, in the most general sense, persons need not even be human beings; spirits, for example, the *tokorime,* possess the kind of agency that qualifies them as persons. On the other hand, some human beings are not persons, or are not yet persons: infants, for example.

The Culina have elaborate notions of what it is that constitutes this kind of agency, comprising a kind of ethnophysiology/ethnopsychology - our terms distinguish what the Culina do not. I will not detail such ideas here; I will focus on a few aspects of Culina personhood that have not resonated successfully with the forms of practical activity encouraged by CIMI missionaries.

The closest Culina analogue to the missionary rubber cooperative might be the collective hunting that takes place almost every day during the rainy season. Ideally every man in the village participates in the hunt, and even if men become separated during the hunt, they arrange to meet in order to return to the village in a single group. There they deposit their game in a pile in front of the assembled wives, who distribute the meat among the various households. Moreover, before arriving in the village, the men distribute the meat among themselves, to insure that every man is able to make a contribution to the whole.

It should be obvious that in such a system the products of productive labor never achieve the form of commodities, and that relations of production and consumption are not individualizing. Rather, proper personhood entails the provision of *appropriate* substances within a system of production and consumption ordered by the symbolic properties of such paradigmatic sets as meat and vegetables, male and female, and wild and sociable; where the Culina were concerned with the symbolic qualities of consumable substances, the CIMI missionaries were concerned with the practical quantity of producible substance. Two parentheti-

cal points should be made here. First, the Culina use the Portuguese term *trabalho* for "work"; the normal productive activity of men and women is not "work." Second, various failures to perform as a proper person lead to illness and suspicions of witchcraft; the lack of "individualizing" through productive activity is suggested by the fact that it is rarely the improper person him or herself who contracts the illness or who is accused of witchcraft.

For the Culina, verbal performance constitutes a principal expressive dimension of personhood. The acquisition of personhood by infants is gauged by their increasing comprehension of language, and by their ability to produce "proper" speech. As in many other indigenous societies in South America, verbal styles are distinguished, and the ability to produce them constitutes a measure of one's agency; headmen acquire their great degree of agency precisely through their ability to produce their most compelling forms of speech, which other village members "hear and obey." Dialect variations distinguish Culina villages as "kinds of persons," and it is language that is said to comprise the focal difference between Culina and other indigenous groups. Culina thus become distinctly uncomfortable in multi-ethnic or pan-Indian contexts, where they have a sharp sense of their own isolation from levels of meaning being shared by others, both knowledge and verbal facility. For CIMI, the presence of Culina in national level pan-Indian settings is a form of symbolic power, but for the Culina in these settings, an inability to speak and understand either Portuguese or any other indigenous language is a form of impotence, a kind of infantilization that strips them, in their own terms, of personhood. The "community" in which CIMI has tried to enroll Culina is one in which they lack precisely the dimension of agency that would qualify them to engage that community as persons.

While Culina have passively resisted CIMI efforts to generate a pan-Indian consciousness, to develop a sense of identity as "Indian" in opposition to non-Indian Brazilians, Culina have, ironically, appropriated themselves in one sense to the structure of context, Culina refer to themselves as *caboclos*, a telling, if technically inappropriate use of the term that expresses their relative lack of agency within this wider context.

There is, at best, a rather bleak vision of the future for the Culina at Maronaua. CIMI is trying to isolate this village even more completely from Brazilian society, but believes that in order to do so it must impose economic stability on the village. But CIMI is trapped by its own ideologies of agency, responsibility and morality that inevitably reproduce an economic structure so far foreign to Culina. I suppose that ultimately this dilemma will be resolved through the hegemony of national society, in a way that does produce the kind of transformed "interethnic indigenous person" referred to earlier. In the meantime, the Culina example might remind us that while personhood and practice are mutually signifying, their location in structure tends to resist their transformation. It is the simple Culina lack of understanding of the processes that surround and threaten them that constitutes both their legitimacy as persons and their message to us as anthropologists and as fellow persons. It cautions us to examine the sources of our own conceptions of personhood at the same time that we examine theirs.

## NOTES:

(1) This paper reflects the situation of the Culina Indians of the upper Purus River nearly a decade ago. Much of the text has been incorporated, in a modified version, into my article "Conversion and 'Community' in Amazonia" in Robert W. Hefner (ed.) *Conversion to Christianity: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives on a Great Tradition*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, pp. 165-197.

# VAUPÉS INDIGENOUS RIGHTS ORGANIZING AND THE EMERGING ETHNIC SELF

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper[1] examines an emerging indigenous rights organization in the Vaupés region of Southeastern Colombia, using it as a springboard to discuss the changes in identity Tukanoans[2] are experiencing as a consequence of increasing incorporation into the Colombian nation-state. I suggest that the emerging "Indian" consciousness in the Vaupés differs significantly from traditional Tukanoan notions of "Indian" identity. This process is a result in part of Tukanoans being instructed by outsiders on what it means to be an Indian. In this sense, this paper is not so much about *being* Indian as *becoming* Indian. I argue that Tukanoans are in the process of becoming an ethnic group, which I am contrasting with "tribe" or "culture." Ethnic group is here conceived of as a recognizably distinct group of people embedded in a larger society. An ethnic group, then, is in some important respects a subculture rather than a separate culture, and its inventory of culturally distinct traits has been produced to a significant extent through interaction with representatives of the larger society it is a member of (see Barth, ed., 1969). This contrasts with how tribal cultures are usually conceived of: in ideal type terms we can speak of small-scale tribal societies that presumably become distinct as a result of forces such as isolation; a separate, unique history; adaptation to a specific ecological niche; and so on. Extra-tribal interaction is seen as occurring with neighboring groups rather than with representatives of the state or with people from distant places (as can occur with labor migration, for example).[3]

This paper presents very preliminary findings of an ongoing research project. Sources include 22 formal interviews during March, 1987. I also had a number of informal conversations with native leaders, change agents, and residents (both Tukanoan and white) of Mitú, the capital of the Vaupés, and with individuals in Bogotá who are knowledgeable about Colombian indigenous rights organizing and development efforts among Colombian Indian groups. Continuing archival work in the Vaupés and Bogotá, and dissertation fieldwork in 1968-70 have provided other sources of information.

For reasons of space I limit my discussion to the interaction between indigenous rights organizing and missionaries.[4] Formal indigenous rights organizing in lowland South America is the result of Indians attempting to cope with the extensive and stressful intrusions from the dominant society (Smith 1985). In the Vaupés this has taken the form of a secular organization, albeit one greatly influenced by the missionaries in the region: the Regional Council of Vaupés Indians - CRIVA.[5]

## THE VAUPÉS

The Vaupés is in the Colombian sector of the Central Northwest Amazon, a region including both Colombian and Brazilian territory, roughly the size of New England, on the Equator. Tukanoans number about 20,000. Tukanoans have traditionally lived in multi-family longhouses, one per settlement, on or near rivers. Longhouses, as well as the more recent settlement pattern of nucleated villages, are separated from each other by two to ten hours' canoe travel. During this century four to eight nuclear families inhabited a longhouse, and present village size ranges anywhere from 15 to 180 - one or two mission towns are larger. Population density is quite low, at most .3 inhabitants per $k^2$. The men of a settlement hunt, fish, and clear swidden fields in which the women grow bitter manioc and other crops.

The units of traditional Vaupés social structure, in ascending order of inclusion, are the local descent group, the sib or clan, the (ideally) exogamous language group and the poorly understood phratry. The language group is a named patrilineal descent unit composed of from six to more than thirty clans. Distinguishing features are (1) the language and name; (2) separate founding ancestors and distinct roles in the origin myth cycle; (3) the right to ancestral power through the use of certain linguistic property such as sacred chants; (4) the right to manufacture and use certain kinds of ritual property; and (5) a traditional association with certain ceremonial or near-ceremonial objects. Membership is permanent and public; the one fact known about an individual before anything else is his or her language group.

Although varying internally in some traditional customs, ecology, and degree of acculturation, the Vaupés is a single society in many respects. This homogeneity derives from the similarity of observable

phenomena, ecological and social, and from the similarities in Tukanoans' "models for perceiving, relating and interpreting" (Goodenough 1964:36) their world. Furthermore, Tukanoans themselves see themselves as parts of an interacting whole. Many apparent examples of cultural diversity in the Vaupés are actually mechanisms helping unify the settlements of the region. Multilingualism is an example: the various languages, somewhat like different uniforms in a football game, facilitate the interaction by serving as emblems of the participating groups.[6]

## BACKGROUND TO THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE VAUPÉS

Many kinds of change agents have been involved in transforming Tukanoan life; at present there are Catholic and Protestant missionaries and representatives from a variety of governmental agencies. Catholic missionaries are all Colombian nationals; Protestants are represented by various evangelistic nondenominational groups - such as New Tribes Mission - and the North American based Summer Institute of Linguistics/Wycliffe Bible Translators, or SIL. The rubber trade in earlier times, coca paste[7] traffickers, and other whites in the region have also played, and continue to play, a significant part as well.

In the 1970s, the Colombian government instituted wide-ranging legislation affecting Indians that included regularization of Indian land claims to reserves (*reservas*) and reservations (*resguardos*).[8] This led to establishing a *resguardo* in the Vaupés of some 3,000,000 hectares. That so much territory has been ceded to so few Indians, with so very little pressure coming from them, is indeed remarkable, and merits much greater attention than can be paid in this paper. It reflects an extremely unstable national political situation and a policy implemented by a fundamentally weak national government that attempts to win hearts and minds in the countryside and thus prevent leftist guerrilla groups from gaining more converts.[9] Some of the more militant highland Indian groups doubtless played a role in these developments as well, in addition to some well-publicized scandals involving Indian atrocities.[10] During this time Indian organizing, with the participation of international indigenous rights organizations, led to the establishment of the National Colombian Indian Organization (ONIC) in 1982 and a great deal of discussion about Colombian Indian groups, their current status and probable future, in the national press.

## MISSIONARIES AND TUKANOANS

Space does not permit a thorough discussion of the roles missionaries have played in the Vaupés (see Jackson 1984a). Suffice it to say that until recently, apart from the rubber trade, practically all relations between Tukanoans south of the Vaupés river and the non-Indian world have involved Catholic missionaries acting as intermediaries, on both sides of the border. Although today the priests have less clearly coercive means of enforcing their authority than in the past, the Church is still very powerful; it is virtually impossible to ignore or bypass them in the parts controlled by the Prefecture.

Members of SIL or Protestant evangelical organizations such as New Tribes Mission can today point to many Protestant settlements, particularly among the Cubeo. Some earlier estimates assigned as much as a third of the inhabitants of the combined *comisarías* ("commissariats") of the Vaupés and Guainía to Protestant sects (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1971:7). Due to the more than sixteen languages in the area, SIL has had more bases in the Vaupés than anywhere else in Colombia of comparable area and population numbers.

With few exceptions, missionaries are the only non-Indians who are permanent residents in the eastern Vaupés outside of the administrative center of Mitú (2/3 of the Vaupés is *resguardo*). Catholic missionaries have traditionally conducted trade, established shops, bought surplus products (especially food for their boarding schools), and occasionally hired Tukanoans. In some of these activities, despite their religious goals, missionaries have clearly been "agents of secularization" like those among the Toba (Miller 1970). Local non-missionary representatives of the Colombian government have until recently been so few that the missions have had much *de facto* and in some respects *de jure* governmental authority. A current example is the mission's informal regulation of coca paste trade south of the Vaupés River.[11] Powerless to stop the trade, in some areas dealers for a period were apparently prohibited by Catholic clergy from making payments with firearms and alcohol. While one cannot say that missionaries are in the region to promote cultural autonomy and self-sufficiency, at times they *have* served as buffers between Tukanoans and highly exploitative change agents, such as most rubber gatherers.

An especially interesting chapter in the recent history of the Vaupés is the role missionaries have played in the emerging indigenist movement. At times they have seen expressions of "Red Power" as threatening to their own enterprises, but at other times they apparently concluded that encouraging the growth of such movements and forming alliances with leaders was a way of giving discomfort to enemies - i.e., some of the other change agents in the region.

Some of the Catholic priests in the Vaupés, members of the Javerian order, became very radicalized during the mid-to-late 60s; this trend continues today. Many were very much involved in the Golconda movement (Stoll 1982:175) and some continue to write about Liberation theology topics in mission publications. The anti-communist and pro-government stance assumed by foreign Protestant organizations has undoubtedly been an element in the assumption by many Catholic clergy of a left, traditionalist, and nationalist (e.g., anti-*gringo*) stance.

Today some publications by Catholic priests are still quite radical in tone, praising socialism and favorably comparing Indian communities to other sectors of Colombian society. However, when confronting socialism as constructed by other leftists in the country, especially social scientists, the authors can become quite conservative. For example, Monsignor Belarmino Correa Yepes of the Vaupés Prefecture on one occasion writes:

> During the time when we cannot count on living in a socialist state that respects and makes others respect culturally distinct groups with their own traditions, I find it very difficult to do something within the context of the present structures (*Unidad Indígena,* May 1975:8).[12]

Part of this shift in consciousness has involved missionary personnel listening to anthropologists working in the Vaupés and elsewhere[13] and appropriating language and concepts that are convenient to their purposes. The alliances and struggles between Catholic missions and anthropologists (mostly Colombian) are complicated and fascinating. For example, the Church states that studying anthropology without humanistic bases creates an anthropologist who is irreligious and indifferent, a compromised anthropology (*Revista de Misiones,* May, 1983:118). An earlier article in this magazine excoriates Vaupés anthropologists for having helped create the "state of complexity" in which Tukanoan cultures find themselves (*Revista de Misiones,* September, 1974:224). The Church formed its own Missionary Colombian Anthropological Center, began a publication, *Etnia,* in 1965, and opened an Ethnographic Museum in Bogotá in 1973. Clearly the presence of anthropologists in the Vaupés and exposure to activist anthropology (e.g., the Declaration of Barbados) have had an effect on the Church's mission policies - and have also fostered continuing ambivalence and sometimes hostility towards what missionaries perceive as anthropology's message.

The same can be said for indigenism: while most knowledgeable people in Mitú and elsewhere consider CRIVA to be the Prefecture's inspiration and to some extent its creation, at other times indigenism is attacked in Church publications.[14]

Hence, part of this assumption of the indigenist mantle has been the result of the radicalization of some of Colombia's Catholic missionaries, and part has been due to the effects anthropologists, Colombian and foreign, have had simply by their presence in lowland Indian territories. In addition, SIL, which has *not* been involved in indigenism in Colombia, has nonetheless tried to present an image of professionally trained people dedicated to studying indigenous language and culture, and has published various articles on Colombian indigenous culture and linguistics.[15] These events threatened the Prefecture's image of itself and its justifications for its activities. Furthermore, SIL actively promoted bilingual education, various secular development projects, and the creation of a corps of indigenous leaders to take over religious proselytization when the linguist teams left their communities.

Thus, the fact that during the last twenty years some of the Catholic clergy in the Vaupés became aware that several high-status and knowledgeable outsiders saw Tukanoan culture as valuable, worth preserving, and superior to Colombian culture in some respects, led them to rethink their enterprise. Part of their response was to appropriate some of the introduced ideas about the value of Tukanoan culture. The Church began to sponsor "Indian Weeks," in which ceremonies and dances are performed. Such activities were anathema to Catholic missionaries 25 years ago.

When SIL/WBT's contract was up for renewal in 1975-76, young Colombian linguists and anthropologists entered the campaign to have the organization removed (*Micronoticias,* July-August, 1978, M-54). In the Vaupés itself, from 1969 to 1975, six SIL/WBT teams were dislocated, and the conflicts came to national attention in the press (Stoll 1982:175). Here the Church, anthropologists, and national Indian rights leaders discovered that they were temporary (and very strange) bedfellows, an alliance SIL bitterly complained about.

Both SIL/WBT and New Tribes Mission oppose certain traditional practices that Catholics are increasingly willing to overlook, which further takes the Catholics into the relativist anthropological camp. Dancing, drinking manioc beer, and taking the hallucinogen *banisteriopsis* are examples. Goldman noted a Cubeo revival in 1970, encouraged by the Church, that included "the resumption of previously forbidden mourning rites and the reconstruction of the communal *malocas* [longhouses] that earlier missionaries had put

to the torch" (1981:8). In addition, Catholics have altered their educational policies, in 1965 instituting a project whereby Tukanoan catechists would teach religion and the rudiments of Spanish spelling, subsequently coming to speak favorably of bilingual education, later on promoting the hiring of Tukanoan secondary school graduates to teach primary school in outlying communities, and today promoting bicultural education.[16]

In 1987 a poster inside of the Prefecture documented one of the changes in Catholic clergy consciousness: according to Msgr. Belarmino, "Rather than give them fish we should have been teaching them how to fish." (It is ironic and unfortunate that such "enabling" sentiments are so totally out of place in this particular case: Tukanoans are famous for their elaborate traditional fishing technology.) Clearly the rhetoric of enabling, and, in the case of CRIVA, of empowering, has reached the Mitú Prefecture.

The Church *has* made substantial changes over the past fifteen years, but the picture that emerges is confused. Sometimes it seems as though a total about-face has occurred; rather than espousing a "now we civilize them" policy, priests apparently sometimes conclude that today's position should refer to how well-off Tukanoans are in their "element," and that one should try to better their lives, yes, but not if it deprives them of their traditions. One disillusioned priest commented that Tukanoans are "by nature made to live in the longhouse seated on their stools. They had the possibility of changing and didn't do it." He mentioned that whereas the Church is now in favor of bilingual and bicultural education, this upsets the parents who say that since their children already know how to speak their languages, they do not see any reason to learn to write in them, and want their children to learn Spanish.

In sum, the Church clearly lives out contradictions in its efforts to formulate Indian and indigenist policy. An example is the extremely interesting exchange between Monsignor Belarmino and ONIC's official organ (*Unidad Indígena*), in which he chastises ONIC:

> ... what if we leave the Vaupés (not a difficult thing to do), do you have a half-human solution for this people? Can the Indians defend themselves alone today? Would you be capable of controlling the avalanche of irresponsible people who are interested only in their personal advance? ... You have the word and hopefully in the direction you're going you don't place the Indian in worse conditions than he was formerly (1975:8).

However, lest one conclude that Msgr. Belarmino always displays a rather marked paternalism towards Vaupés Indians, it should be noted that in another context he states:

> Indians of the Vaupés: In congresses and reunions of "Whites" one thinks... that the Whites want to help you leave your marginalized position. But they... won't resolve your problems, you must find the solution. (Statement made in October, 1973, and quoted in *Un Pastor en la Selva*:39.)

## CRIVA

CRIVA began in 1973 with the backing of the Prefecture; its leaders were, and have continued to be, selected from the graduates of the Prefecture's María Reina *Internado* secondary school (which became a government school in 1975). Today approximately 80% of teachers in the Vaupés are Indian and bilingual.

CRIVA claims members from 35 different ethnic groups,[17] although it should be noted that the vast majority of Tukanoans are significantly less politicized than CRIVA leaders, and many Tukanoans are indifferent or hostile to CRIVA. The Tukanoans who live far from Mitú are for the most part not actively involved in this movement, and many apparently do not respect the leaders or the positions its active members espouse.[18] Traditionally, the Vaupés had no federated regional organizations, nor political corporate groups or leaders above the level of the settlement. This is not to say that Tukanoans are not adept at making collective decisions, but that the structure and purpose of a pan-Vaupés organization like CRIVA is foreign to them.

Although perceived pressure from non-missionary whites such as anthropologists doubtlessly played a role, certainly the main reason behind the .cb Prefecture's encouraging the founding of CRIVA was its rivalry with SIL, which dates back to the 1940s. As Stoll aptly notes, "[indigenous rights] organizing... was sometimes difficult to distinguish from patronage battles between rival brokers" (1982:166). Clearly from the beginning the Vaupés Indian rights movement was an endeavor greatly influenced by non-Indians and continually linked to larger disputes occurring in all government agencies concerned with indigenous affairs, the struggle between SIL and Catholic church leaders, and debates occurring within the national anthropology establishment.[19] Truly the Vaupés has been for a long time a battleground in a "War of the Gods," as a film made by Brian Moser characterized

it, and the entry of organizations such as CRIVA into the fray added a new interest group and level of intrigue.

An SIL veteran told David Stoll that organizations like CRIVA would destroy Indian culture faster than anything else, and that mutual "blackmail" between rival outsiders (which permits each to go about its plans, scrutinized by the others) was a superior alternative (personal communication).

Soon after its founding, CRIVA began to change, affected by the coca paste traffic and by outside indigenist organizations such as CRIC (Regional Council of Cauca Indians), and ONIC. CRIC's attempt to reproduce itself elsewhere in Colombia has not met with success in the Vaupés, at least so far.

Difficulties with ONIC, difficulties within itself, difficulties with local state representatives, difficulties with the Church, and difficulties with other Vaupés Indians sum up my impressions about CRIVA in 1987. For example, in a letter from CRIVA to *Unidad Indígena*, CRIVA disputes a reporter's attributing to a CRIVA member a statement that CRIVA encounters problems "because the leadership has not had the sufficient force, but has supported the dependency on Msgr. Belarmino Correa, who does not value indigenous culture" (*Unidad Indígena*, 1984, No. 67: 5). The writers of the letter denounce the article, saying it was not legally authorized by CRIVA, and that they demand the name of the author in order to:

> ... take very drastic measures against this individual, because we know that he is trying to divide the good relations that we have always had with our Prefecture (*Unidad Indígena*, 1984, No. 67:5).

In another letter in *Unidad Indígena*, the "Comrades of the Vaupés" from Santa Rosa strongly criticize the "mediocre" education provided by the Javerian clergy, because it is "given in a capitalist style, and they don't know the reality of our necessities." This letter appears on the same page as a message from CRIVA, but, perhaps significantly, is not directly linked to it (*Unidad Indígena*, August 1975: 5).

One indication of divisiveness in CRIVA's ranks is the number of times CRIVA calls for unity in its own publications, for example:

> [During the third congress]... a great interest was seen for the necessity for UNITY without distinguishing tribes, nor clans, nor religious beliefs, in order to study the most urgent problems... (*Unidad Indígena*, 1976, No. 12: 8).

In the same article, Tukanoans are criticized for their "lack of great interest on the part of the distinct communities and surroundings." Virtually all interviewees, Indians and white, in Mitú and in Bogotá agreed that CRIVA has very little influence. One government functionary stated that "CRIVA's leaders have more fear of whites than they do of their constituency, so they accomplish nothing." The one area in which CRIVA was successful, from the Prefecture's point-of-view, was in its pressuring SIL and New Tribes missionaries to leave the region, especially in 1974.

As we have seen, some of CRIVA's problems - structurally and in image management - definitely stem from its close association with the Prefecture. All non-CRIVA members interviewed agreed that at least in part CRIVA was a white creation. The Church maintains that it facilitated the founding of CRIVA to speed up the death throes of the debt-peonage system from the rubber period. A Mitú priest commented that Father Valencia Cano founded CRIVA because of the rubber exploitation of the Indians, to take the yoke from their necks, to show them they were not subject to anyone. While this surely was a major motivation, the role of the Church vis-à-vis CRIVA is more complicated. One interviewee in Bogotá, very much involved in indigenous grass roots projects and knowledgeable about the Vaupés, commented:

> The priests say, "You have to organize." And they organize, but the priests said that in order to continue managing the people. Thus, although they [CRIVA leaders] are artificial officials, this corresponds to the interests of the mission. And with these Indians taking on state jobs comes individualism [e.g., a tendency to self-interest rather than commitment to one's constituency].

He continued:

> Outside people [i.e., Indians from other parts of Colombia] come in and say "we're going to work with the *gente de base* [the people of the communities]," but they're bureaucrats, they speak Spanish, they manage the white world. Now, it's true the local people may have to learn to manage the white world, but they must do so for their *own* interests.

CRIVA leaders are still in some ways playing the role of students - both in terms of traditional Indian authority, in that all the leaders are young, and in terms of their ability to define and obtain what they want. This position does not foster leadership, accord-

ing to a lawyer involved in Colombian Indian land claims cases:

> They are waiting for those in power to do something - now it's waiting for a response from the government, tomorrow waiting for an investigator to give them money. It's not an *Indian* organization at all. Like most Indian organizations it is conceived and made rational with the rationality of the white.

One priest I interviewed did comment that the Church should change its position regarding CRIVA:

> The Church has to leave CRIVA alone, so that it can mature, not be dependent. When a child falls down, you have to give him a hand up, but sometimes they have to pick themselves up.

It also appears to be the case that CRIVA members who are from distant settlements are becoming alienated from their communities. Several interviewees commented on this. While Mitú has substantial Indian population, politically and culturally Mitú is a white settlement, the only one in the entire Vaupés. Another Indian from outside the Vaupés commented:

> ...very weak...these Indians don't have representation in the communities, they are in the hands of the *mestizos* and don't have direct contact with the communities. They were formed in the mission and have interests unsuited to the communities' interests... they are more interested in their own personal development. When the *resguardo* of the Vaupés was being created, it was all due to pressure from outsiders; there was no Tukanoan pressure.

Part of CRIVA's problems stem from the point made above that the more you become effective in a nontraditional form of leadership, especially if it involves brokering with outsiders, the less accepted you are as a traditional, authentic member of the culture. The one exception to this seems to be messianic leaders, but this is really an instance of the culture itself changing its ideas of leadership and what it means to be "traditional."

CRIVA leaders seem to see a solution in being bicultural. One commented to me that:

> Earlier they thought that to speak Spanish was superior, but it's the opposite. We are Indians. We don't reject the other culture but accept what is useful to us. It's biculturalism: you learn to dance and become a *payé* [shaman], but you also learn how to dress differently when you're with *doctores* [high-status whites]. But when you're with the people, you paint yourself and are with the people.

This interviewee maintained that CRIVA does attempt to find out what the communities want; for example, attempting to enlist older, traditional Tukanoans for teaching history classes in the schools became something CRIVA promoted after finding out that this was what the people in the communities wanted. But other Tukanoans I spoke with stated that there is little communication between most communities and CRIVA (with few exceptions, CRIVA leaders appear to limit their travels south of the Vaupés River to visiting mission villages), and that when CRIVA sends delegations, the delegates do the talking.

In fact, policies about bilingualism and biculturalism similar to the one quoted above can be found in the publications of the Prefecture, in government documents concerned with developing indigenous communities, and in CRIC and ONIC organs. We really do not know what the majority of Tukanoans think in this regard.

The Church undoubtedly sees its promotion of CRIVA as an answer to the many critics who have accused missionaries of creating divisions and exacerbating previously existing factions in Tukanoan society. It is clear to all who know the Vaupés that the Prefecture has employed a range of tactics over the years for winning Tukanoans away from rival enterprises. Indeed, one of the most worrisome features of the strife among missionaries pertains to consequences in Bogotá: the specter of increased legalized repression of Indian civil rights movements justifying itself with claims of being necessary to solve disputes among evangelical, Catholic, indigenist and traditionalist interests.[20]

However, the question of factionalism in the Vaupés is more complicated. Traditional Tukanoan society was hardly a utopia in this regard and what may initially appear as new divisions probably build on already existing fault lines. The split between old and young, pro-acculturation vs. traditionalist, Mitú-oriented vs. backwoods are lines of cleavage which combine with the newer rivalries connected with allegiances to different non-Indian patrons. Furthermore, indigenous institutions of leadership are a complicated matter in the Vaupés, where a general dislike of Tukanoans who assume superior airs is coupled with unmistakable indicators of hierarchy. Certainly the Catholics exacerbated this with their policy of bypass-

ing traditional headmen and appointing as *capitanes* of settlements younger men who looked more favorably on the Church. The Church's catechist program, begun in the early 70s, is another example; the local community's complaints about sullenness were fully merited in the case of one Desana catechist I visited with in a Tuyuka settlement on the Tiquié in 1970. And in the use of Tukanoan school teachers, the priests must contend with gripes from the host communities about arrogance (again, a good deal of the time fully warranted, especially if the teachers are Tukanos in a non-Tukano community). Thus, CRIVA and its problems of representation and leadership are to some extent just another instance of already well-established patterns of conflict.

Indeed, many of the interviewees most knowledgeable about indigenous organizing stressed that indigenist organizations are most successful when they are most threatened. In this sense CRIVA lacks a strong identification with an issue: founded because of the struggle against the remaining traces of rubber debt-patronage and some incursions from *colonos* (homesteaders), its response to a new threat, coca, has hardly been one of a unified stance against a white-introduced plague. One interviewee, for example, described one of CRIVA's branch organizations as little more than a coca-growers' guild, regulating prices and organizing payoffs. Currently there is nothing that is both visibly and urgently menacing to fight. Tukanoans indisputably face many dangers - inroads into Tukanoan cultural forms are correctly perceived as such, and everyone in Mitú can come up with a long list of how Tukanoans could be better off. But it is hard to adopt the militant rhetoric one reads in publications from Indian groups elsewhere in the country (whose members are being assassinated, evicted, imprisoned, etc.), to "fight for" something like higher employment rates or for less of the discrimination Tukanoans experience. As S. Hugh-Jones notes, when discussing threats to Tukanoan identity, CRIVA represents a set of solutions looking for a problem (personal communication). Or as an interviewee put it:

> These groups would have been better *without* help from outsiders; it's another example of paternalism, they don't let them mature... the last thing CRIVA needs is another group of assessors making recommendations.

## DISCUSSION

Despite its unique characteristics, understanding the Tukanoan case helps further our general comprehension with regard to how ethnically diverse and relatively powerless peoples can maintain their cultural and political autonomy within a highly bureaucratized and centralized state, be it capitalist or socialist (see Jackson, 1984b). Tukanoans' traditional culture provides only a few empowering mechanisms when extensive and rapid intrusion of the larger society is occurring. In societies like this one, as yet without a perceived threat to land base and without serious danger to physical survival,[21] how to get to the point of being able to choose which aspects of modernization would be beneficial and which too costly may require traveling far on the road to incorporation and co-optation. Interesting counter-examples (e.g., Maybury-Lewis 1983; Archibold 1983; Bonfil Batalla 1981) can be offered, but for many groups the battles won for cultural authenticity and autonomy have been somewhat Pyrrhic victories, for the cost in terms of factionalization and acceptance of foreign mentalities and increased economic and cultural dependency has been high.

Nonetheless, barring catastrophe, Tukanoan culture *will* continue in the foreseeable future, albeit one evolving into a subculture - an ethnic group - as it increasingly participates in the dominant society. Whether Tukanoans respond to changing conditions by retaining, revamping, or rejecting traditional cultural forms is a matter of empirical observation and analysis, now and in the future. But it is certain that the meaning of any forms retained will be altered. It will increasingly be the case that Tukanoans' casting aside, altering, or preserving various traditions will be in part a matter of strategy in a political struggle with non-Tukanoans - government agents, other Colombian Indians, the Church. In this regard, understanding the history and current position of CRIVA and the Church's position vis-à-vis indigenism is extremely instructive.

What we will increasingly be seeing will not be a black-and-white situation of *either* resistance *or* acceptance of white society, or even of "Indian" society as conceived of and described by non-Tukanoan Indians. Resistance of hegemony at any given time will occur, yes - but the content of such resistance efforts will be transformed in Tukanoans' encounters with non-Tukanoan ideologies, whether they focus on modernization, development, proselytization, indigenism, or whatever.

Tukanoans have not been passive recipients of efforts to change them. Part of this process simply involves experiencing conflict between many of their traditional cultural principles and those of the incoming dominant ideology. It is very true that Tukanoan assumptions about fairly egalitarian social relations, pre-capitalist social formations, the paramount importance of kin ties and much else are being greatly modified or abandoned. In addition, their understand-

ing of the intrusive value system is piecemeal and distorted. But now we also see messages from the incoming dominant ideology that herald the desirability of Tukanoans' remaining the way they are in some important respects. Priests talk about a future in which Tukanoans will stay on their stools inside their long-houses.

CRIVA and an indigenist-leaning Church shed light on how Tukanoans, as they increasingly participate in Colombian culture and society, come to define themselves in terms of the larger society, even though this definition is not the simple one of "how fast are we amalgamating?" When a ritual becomes folkloricized, as happens to Tukanoan rituals to some extent in Catholic "Indian weeks," it no longer is only a group of people communicating about themselves to themselves. They are communicating to themselves about new meanings to the symbolic forms being displayed and communicating to outsiders. The impact of non-Tukanoans affects how the ritual is adapted, which features are retained, which ones discarded, what it means to its participants. We are seeing the beginning of a process of folkloricization of Tukanoan Indian identity among the more acculturated Tukanoans who participate in the local indigenous rights movement. They are finding out what it means to be Tukanoan in a new way, a way different from how Tukanoans revised their self-concepts over the past century or so in their interactions with whites. Young Tukanoans who reside in Mitú and its environs are learning how to be Indian by following Tukanoan tradition. They are also learning to follow the rules laid down by non-Indians with vested interests in Tukanoans' future, such as the Church, the Office of Indian Affairs, activist anthropologists, and so forth. And, finally, they are learning how to define themselves specifically as Tukanoans in the response to the image of Indianness being promulgated by the non-Tukanoans they come into contact with. The pages of "Voice of the Tribe," CRIVA's official newsletter, that describe some Tukanoan traditions in ethnographically incorrect fashion are a harbinger of a transformed Tukanoan identity. While it is extremely interesting that Tukanoans are receiving some of these new forms of Indian culture, in a new descriptive language, from other Indians, this does not mean we cannot apply the term folkloricization to this process.

Much of the Indian-inspired identity transformation comes from extremely politicized Andean groups - and their publications reflect this. It is my impression that for the most part the Tukanoans who are most likely to incorporate into their self-image several notions foreign to their traditional understandings of themselves and their society obtained from non-Tukanoans such as indigenist priests, other Indians, or left-leaning anthropologists, tend to be members of CRIVA. CRIVA faces a dilemma perhaps all the more pronounced because it tries to represent tropical-forest Indians to an outside world while occupying a marginal and relatively powerless status in the Columbian Indian movement. Although at times Tukanoans are spoken of as authentic and closer to real Indian ways, CRIVA and ONIC publications demonstrate how non-Tukanoan Indians instruct Tukanoans about what it is to be Indian, even a tropical-forest Indian. Clearly indigenist organizations must develop political clout and organizational savoir-faire to help them survive within regional and national political structures. When traditional political forms and expectations differ extensively from the new ones, the members of an activist group can experience the conflict and confusion resulting from fence-straddling and "biculturalism." Tukanoans, coming out of relatively fluid, dispersed local communities have little knowledge of centralized political structures with their bureaucracies, or cash-based "growth" economies. Achieving an active role in deciding their own destinies, making collective decisions following the new rules, and learning to negotiate with outside groups must be added to the Tukanoan political repertoire, and CRIVA dramatically illustrates some of the binds that arise.

As one government agent involved in Indian rights noted:

> ...they [Mitú Tukanoans] are molded by Colombian law now, they participate in the national system, *resguardos, cabildos* [municipal councils]... they don't pay taxes, they receive public health. To be an Indian is an advantage in this sense. CRIVA says Indians have been discriminated against and now you must treat them well because they have been so badly treated. But whereas the Koguis [a Colombian Indian society in the north] say "the whites are our younger brothers" [i.e., of lower status], they [Tukanoans] don't think like this in Mitú.

In other words, this individual is describing a process of co-optation that puts CRIVA members in a bind: the more efficient and effective they become at garnering goodies offered by the system, the more suspect and illegitimate they become to their constituencies.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Vaupés is instructive as a case study because it illustrates many of the factors impeding, or at least complicating, the establishment of genuine

self-sufficiency, increased autonomy and empowerment vis-à-vis the state, and maintenance of cultural authenticity. The most significant factors in the Vaupés are: 1) bureaucratization, co-optation, and cultural marginalization of leaders in indigenist organizations; 2) lack of a sense of threat to land or other natural resources; 3) paternalism and divergent interests in institutions promoting change, even if they see themselves as promoting indigenous well-being; and 4) the siren coca, which promised the ultimately false promises bonanzas always offer. A fifth, extremely complex factor is the role of outsiders working with local Tukanoan leaders - anthropologists, representatives of national and international Indian rights organizations, lawyers promoting civil and human rights legislation, etc. This paper has examined the role of one outside group, the Catholic Church, focusing on its influence in the founding and evolution of a native ethnic federation [to use Smith's [1985] classification), CRIVA. CRIVA, allied with non-Tukanoans since its beginning, illustrates the bind that indigenist organizations face when trying to learn enough to interact effectively with outsiders who have power over their members: the more efficient and knowledgeable they become at manipulating the system, the greater is the potential of alienation and loss of legitimacy vis-à-vis their constituent communities.

## NOTES

(1) This paper is part of an ongoing research project concerned with changing identity among Tukanoans of Colombia. I am grateful to the MIT Provost's Fund for funding the trip to Colombia in March, 1987, and for continuing support for archival research. Dissertation fieldwork in 1968-70 was funded by the Danforth Foundation and the Stanford Committee on Overseas Research. My thanks to all in Colombia who so willingly gave of their time and energy, in particular: Javier Saenz, Jaime Arocha, Elizabeth de Reichel, Elsa Gómez-Imbert, Juanita Saenz, Martin von Hildebrand, Elías Sevilla-Casas, Enrique Sánchez, Raúl Arango, Roque Roldán, Clemencia Plazas, Tito Vargas, Francisco Escobar, Samuel Valencia, Juan Baylón, Mario Gonzalez, Milciades Rodriguez, Alberto Betancurt, m.x.y., Dario Cardona, m.x.y., Janet Barnes, Simeón Timoté, Martha Lucía Peña Vázquez, Carlos Morales, Adolfo Triana, Myriam Jimeno, Leonor Herrera, Marianne Cardale de Schrimpff, François Correa. My appreciation also to the Anthropology Department of the National University, the Anthropology Department of the University of Los Andes, the Office of Indian Affairs, and the Colombian Anthropology Institute. Also thanks to the participants at the 1987 Bennington South American Indian Conference who commented on an earlier oral version. Readers of previous drafts who kindly offered suggestions include Darna Dufour, Christian Gros, James Howe, Stephen Hugh-Jones, Theodore Macdonald, David Stoll, and Robin Wright.

(2) "Tukanoan" refers to all riverine indigenous inhabitants of the Vaupés. Makú, forest-dwellers who also differ in other respects, are not included (see Silverwood-Cope, 1975). Although many Tukanoans live on the Brazilian side of the border, this paper considers only those in Colombian territory.

(3) This ideal type in fact does not fit traditional Tukanoan society in a number of crucial respects. I am setting up this dichotomy here as a means of contrasting traditional Tukanoan society with the ethnic group type of situation Tukanoans are at present evolving into.

(4) See Jackson, 1991, for further discussion of other actors and institutions having an effect on Tukanoan Indian identity.

(5) Information on messianic-type movements in the Northwest Amazon can be found in Wright and Hill (1986), Wright (1981), and S. Hugh-Jones (1981).

(6) For more comprehensive treatments of Colombian Tukanoan ethnography, see Goldman 1963; Århem 1981; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1971; C. Hugh-Jones 1979; S. Hugh-Jones 1979; Jackson 1983; Chernela 1982, 1983; Sorensen 1967.

(7) Coca paste is an intermediate stage between coca leaf harvesting and processing and the production of cocaine per se, which, to my knowledge, does not occur in the Vaupés.

(8) A *resguardo*, here translated as "reservation" is land collectively owned by the Indian group. A reserve is land owned by the state with usufruct rights given to the inhabitants.

(9) See *Programa Nacional de Desarrollo de las Poblaciones Indígenas* ("National Program for the Development of Indian Populations"), 1984, Department of National Planification. Also see for president Belisario Betancur's *El Indígena: Raíz de Nuestra Identidad Nacional* ("The Indian: Root of Our National Identity").

(10) See Stoll (1982) on the Planas Affair, a series of tortures and killings in the eastern plains region between homesteaders and Guahibo Indians.

(11) This has been remarked on by so many people knowledgeable about the Vaupés that I have no doubts about its accuracy; for understandable reasons I am not attributing this information to any named persons.

(12) Contrast this with an editorial in missionary publication that claims: "In contrast to the barking of the Marxist anthropologists, our missionaries offer works and reality" (*Revista de Misiones*, April, 1976: 57).

(13) For example, five Vaupés anthropologists, myself included, participated in a constructive-criticism session with Catholic clergy in Bogotá in early 1969.

(14) See, for example, "¿Problema Indígena o Indigenista?" ("Indian Problem or Indigenist Problem?), *Revista de Misiones*, March-April, 1974:57-58.

(15) The publications dealing with Tukanoan non-linguistic culture (for example, a book on material culture) are superficial and not very useful; nonetheless such activities were a prod to the Catholics to engage in similar enterprises.

(16) Not all of the wrinkles have been ironed out of this one: when I asked a priest in Mitú how the Church could reconcile having elder Tukanoan men teach about myths with the mission of the Church to preach the gospel, he replied, "this is what is waiting for us to deal with."

(17) A list of acronyms:

ONIC - *Organización Nacional de Indígenas de Colombia*

CRIVA - *Consejo Regional de Indígenas del Vaupés*

UNIP - *Unión de Indígenas del Papurí*

UDIC - *Unión de Indígenas Cubeos*

UNIZAC - *Unión de Indígenas de la Zona de Acaiuara*

ORIVAM - *Organización de Indígenas del Vaupés Medio*

UNIQ - *Organización de Indígenas del Querarí*

ORIT - *Organización de Indígenas del Tiquié*

ALUBVA - *Alianza y Lucha del Bajo Vaupés*

(18) I am grateful to Darna Dufour for information on this matter.

(19) See Friedemann and Arocha 1982; Arocha and Friedemann 1984; and Friedemann 1984.

(20) *Cultural Survival Newsletter* 1979; Urbina 1979; Martinez 1979; *Unidad Indígena*, October, 1978:10.

(21) In this, the Tukanoan communities of the Colombian Vaupés differ markedly from their Brazilian neighbors.

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# THE OTHER IS DEAD

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## THE DEATH OF A CUIVA

When death occurs in a Cuiva camp,[1] very few people seem to notice and life simply goes on as usual, sometimes only a few meters away from the corpse. Only the person's closest relatives will show grief and often cry openly. All others in the camp carry on the normal daily activities, while in conversation expressing respect and sadness.

The person's close relatives will later take the body away from the camp to an isolated part of the forest and build a large fire which should burn for hours. The body is solidly tied in a hammock, in the position of an embryo, and then incinerated until nothing is left but the teeth and sometimes some chips of bones which are carefully collected and thrown into the river.

Fire destroys the body and it shall never again return to life. But, at death, the soul is separated from the body and escapes with smoke into the sky where it joins many other souls waiting to return into new beings and make women pregnant. The "footpath" of these souls can be seen in the sky, in the Milky Way and in the rays of the sun piercing through the clouds.

A few days later, the soul divides into two. One soul remains in the sky waiting to return and create a new Cuiva, while the other travels to a distant part of the territory where it becomes a *woweil,* that is to say, a Colombian settler, or any other "non-Indian." This reincarnation implies no transformation as one retains one's own sex and age in this afterlife. Yet, this new life is certainly different as one becomes a farmer and cattle herder, with house, motorboat, guns and all other material attributes of the Colombian peasantry; the hammock which is burnt at death with the body is said to become a horse (the color of the hammock determining the color of the horse), headlice turn into cows, and so on.[2]

At the same time, death also brings a dramatic change in one's character. To become a "non-Indian" is to adopt a type of behavior which corresponds quite precisely to what should never be done in society. In the short myth relating the origin of the first "non-Indian," the Cuiva describe a young man who suddenly begins ordering about his own father, telling him to fetch water, to build a fence and a house, and generally abusing him by complaining about his laziness, his unreliability and weak sense of responsibility. The young man, and all "non-Indians" after him, had become overbearing, bossy, rude, aggressive, selfish and stingy. To the Cuiva, these are unacceptable and even feared social qualities and by placing them on the relation of a son to his father they choose perhaps their most inappropriate context.

Thus, it seems understandable that people should view the fate of this half of the soul with some ambivalence. Some will comfort themselves with the thought that their friend is now living an easy life, has plenty of cow-meat and no longer needs to paddle a canoe. At the same time, the friend has become an anti-social and monstrous character.

Although there are two souls, or two "halves" of every soul, which become divided after death and know very different destinies, this division is not very clearly marked before death. The soul is responsible for such things as dreaming, hallucinations generated by drugs, sneezing, and the existence of the shadow and echo, but at this time the soul remains undivided and ethnographic honesty forces me to say that it is yet unclear to me which one of the two souls, which are so neatly distinguished after death, is related to which particular behavior attributed to the soul of the living body. Some people, but only a few, agreed to support my hope of a simple configuration, reminiscent of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, which would link, for example, the nasty half of the soul to nightmares or bad hallucinations. It seems more fair to sum up the Cuiva view as saying that every soul has within itself a capacity for evil, which in life must be controlled and which will be released in its purest unadulterated form after death.[3]

## THE DEATH OF ALL INDIANS

In Québec, schoolchildren learn from textbooks that the Indians who inhabited their land years ago were very different from them. The contrast is created by establishing the considerable distance which separates them from us. First, there is the very simple law of evolution which declares them more primitive, somewhat closer to nature, surely prehistoric, inefficient and backward. Then, there is also the distance between infancy and adulthood (which even schoolchildren recognize as superior) and where Indians appear to be more akin to children: naïve and gullible, often unstable in their humor, and usually

most disorderly. Finally, there is the constant reminder that all this happened in the distant past and that if there are any Indians left today, they must live in very distant parts of the national territory.

In short, the Indian is dead. He is little more than a relic from the past, who disappeared with the birth of a nation and whose way of living could never have survived.

The specific justification and marker of the distance which separates the Indian from us, and which explains his passing away, reads as a very crude summary of the ideology of the bourgeois revolution. From that perspective, it can be said that, unfortunately of course, the Indian was not efficient enough in exploiting the land, but also not respectful enough of social order and not sufficiently disciplined in work as in war. Worse still, the Indian was excessive and enjoyed the superfluous; he was simply too drunk, too sexy, too festive and far too flamboyant. Québec schoolbooks are not amused.

Anyone familiar with ethnic stereotypes and racial prejudice will see how these textbooks show very little originality. They merely repeat in their caricature of the Indian what European colonialists said of Africa, Southeast Asia and most of the Americas; they even repeat what English-Canadians often said of French-Canadians. In this sense, at least, it would appear that Western industrial societies form a single culture. And it is most likely to be the general view of the Indian held by the Colombian settlers who invade Cuiva territory.

## A PARALLEL

These two contrasting views of the "other" are equally based on broad stereotyped categories which offer a series of general attributes without further distinctions amongst members of the category. Also, both exemplify a wider theory of social history which, in the immediate term at least, seems fairly realistic. The Cuiva say that since "non-Indians" profit from a double system of reproduction (their own and the cumulative deaths of Cuiva), their number is ever increasing, and sooner or later these "non-Indians" should dominate the world. Québec schoolbooks state that the Indians have long become a very marginal phenomenon in modern society.

The other rather obvious similarity is that each society, through its construction of the ideal "other," expresses some of its most prominent fears and thus reveals something of itself. The Cuiva use the other to warn against the emergence of the selfish, brutal, authoritarian personality, whereas the schoolbooks explain how anarchic disorder and a lack of respect for work and progress can only lead to historical oblivion.

Of course, this is where the similarity ends. In some respects, the two societies have constructed nearly opposite views where the fear of one becomes a goal for the other.

The first manifest contrast brings us to the cultural construction of the notion of personhood. Whilst every society must regulate a delicate balance between individual identity, the person, and the requirements of the social contract, the two models draw attention to opposite threats to this balance. The society which insists most on the virtues of individual self-fulfillment, entrepreneurship and personal freedom, creates in the other a negative mirror image in which there is not enough order and self-discipline. Cuiva society, perhaps in a way typical for band societies of hunters and gatherers, grants considerable freedom to the individual in the conduct of so many social affairs and worries of an excess of individualism which could rupture the social order. Answering the same question on the nature of the link between personhood and society, the dangers are differently placed on having too little or too much of the same thing.

Much more could no doubt be made of this difference, but I wish to end with another facet of these contrasting notions of personhood. To the Cuiva, the person is clearly a complex arrangement of contradictory if not conflicting tendencies, as can be experienced in many dreams and many nightmares and as confirmed by the reality and the aggressive behavior of "non-Indians." This complexity will dissolve at death with the destruction of the body and the reincarnation of evil. For the schoolbooks, on the contrary, history is a process of rarefication of the person, becoming purer and purer with time and progress, leaving behind all the attributes, attitudes and general behavior which should properly be relegated to primitivism or infancy. This ideal modern civilized person is becoming ever less complex, and indeed in this way ever more similar to the *woweil* half of the Cuiva soul.

The progressive reduction of the complexity of the person, inscribed in a model which in fact says remarkably little about personhood, may seem surprising from a society and culture often characterized as narcissistic and ego-centered. But it expresses well the notion that the person, always as defined by the schoolbooks, is someone essentially threatened by the "other," by these Indian ways and childish behaviors which must be rejected and pushed back as far as one can. By contrast, the Cuiva state clearly that the ultimate danger lies within the person and has the power to ultimately destroy the world outside. The enemy without and the enemy within. As Lévi-Strauss once suggested, history will declare which of the two per-

spectives is more humane, but given that these are the contrasting views now conflicting in the Llanos of Colombia, it would appear that the Cuiva have every right to be pessimistic.

## NOTES

(1) This paper is based on fieldwork, carried out essentially from 1968 to 1970, with three separate groups of then-nomadic- hunters-and-gatherers, totaling in all about 450 persons living in the Colombian Llanos Orientales, along the middle section of the river Meta and the lower parts of the rivers Casanare, Ariporo and Agua Clara. The literature on the area usually refers to these people as "Cuiva."

(2) When, in turn, this "non-Indian" dies, the soul becomes a Jaribu Stork *(Jaribu mycteria)* and the life of the soul ends with the death of this bird.

(3) I had numerous discussions on the subject and came to understand that various people held divergent views and that there was no commonly accepted answer to the problem. A lack of definite solution on cosmological matters is fairly typical for the Cuiva who seem to find great pleasure in sitting with friends and discussing such abstract issues.