THE LAND WITHIN

INDIGENOUS TERRITORY AND

PERCEPTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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editors

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- editors -

Copenhagen 2005

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PART III: The Action Ground

INTRODUCTION

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1. *In applying the provisions of this Part of the Convention, governments shall respect the special importance for the cultures and spiritual values of the peoples concerned of their relationship with the lands or territories, or both as applicable, which they occupy or otherwise use, and in particular the collective aspects of this relationship.*

2. *The use of the term 'lands' in Articles 15 and 16 shall include the concept of territories, which covers the total environment of the areas which the peoples concerned occupy or otherwise use.*

ILO Convention 169 concerning Indigenous Peoples
Article 13

After several decades of political activism to legitimise the remnants of their historical territories, indigenous peoples should be asking themselves, "So what happens now?" This question, raised by institutions and individuals alike who have been following this process, assumes that the titling of indigenous lands has generally reached an acceptable point and that this initial stage (the consolidation of the right to territory) has been achieved. The answer seems quite obvious. Ownership of the land implies full enjoyment of a *modus vivendi* the autonomous continuity and evolution of which has been threatened for a long time. But is this assumption realistic? Is it true that, with title in hand, indigenous peoples will automatically be able to apply their territorial visions to reviving their own production models, their latent social networks and the combination of interests on which their concept of territoriality is based?

We must begin by emphasising that the indigenous lands legitimised over the past few years are unacceptable both in terms of quantity and quality because, in many cases, rather than comprising integral territories or habitats, they are merely superficial lands, community archipelagos or marginal spaces. Also worth mentioning is the fact that this legal recognition is not backed up by safety mechanisms capable of controlling the colonial mentality with which national societies

relate to indigenous territories. Furthermore, superimposed on indigenous territorial space are now many other spaces in which alternative identities and symbolic ties have been built, where specific social relationships - regulated by very different mechanisms and interests to those of indigenous peoples - have been woven. In particular, there are the State's administrative districts, with their intangible reserves and areas, their assignation of property, concessions and rights to their allies, or their peculiar distribution of the public services system based on cost-benefit criteria which, in turn, exercises pressure on spatial occupation trends as well as on the configuration of the indigenous territory itself. But there are also a number of territories in the hands of businesses and market forces (local, regional, national and global) which are organised to suit their own ends, reconstructing the space according to the role assigned to local natural resources.

In the midst of this confusion, indigenous peoples run the risk of losing control over their spatial decisions and turning their titled territories into 'object-spaces' ready to be exploited by other agents with whom they interact. It is on this point that many of the post-titling questions converge and complicate the answer to a dilemma as simple as *"so what happens now?"*. A question which, far from based on a comfortable territorial security, is posed from a new historical uncertainty, in the knowledge of an overlap of different spaces and interests, of the conflict between them and of the need to choose between various ways of understanding and managing territoriality. The truth is that, for indigenous peoples, the consequences of giving in to external logics concerning the planning or control of their territories often leads to extreme poverty, to an acceleration of the depredation of their natural resources, to dispossession of their collective heritage and, in many cases, to the break up or even forced abandonment of their territorial space. An unexpected and often accelerated transformation of their status thus takes place, from new landowners to impoverished rural people.

This first question thus gives rise to many others: are national societies sufficiently mature to respect the day-to-day implementation of the different territorial concepts of each of the peoples that form an integral part of them? Is interculturality applicable to the sphere of territoriality? Is it possible for the State to adopt an alternative perspective to that of the prevailing official vision whereby the territorial resources to which indigenous peoples are entitled eventually become market commodities?

In order to attempt to answer these questions we must bear in mind the fact that the legitimisation of indigenous lands has taken place within legal frameworks based on spatial concepts that are frequently opposed to the concepts that result from each people's process of ethnic space construction. Although the legal framework reflects the current correlation of forces on a given issue, little progress has been made in the case of indigenous territories since the first European invasions of American soil. In this and many other issues, the law is a force with an unusual capacity for ethnocide. Although successes that would have been unim-

aginable five decades ago (largely in the discursive field) have now been achieved through the tenacity of the different indigenous movements, the colonial vision implicit in national legislation is hesitant to take the necessary steps to 'decolonise' the judicial perspective and reach intercultural agreements that will give way to alternative relationship models between the different peoples and their environment .

The fact that indigenous peoples have made far more legal concessions during the process than has the State's regulatory apparatus must be recognised. In order to secure a future for themselves, indigenous peoples have gradually integrated and adapted their institutions to the legal system by intuitively, and as far as possible, taking advantage of the offers presented to them during the course of the process. Obviously, their objective was sometimes simply to buy time, in the hope of better times. On rare occasions indigenous organisations have sought to accept, or even understand, the underlying logic behind institutions such as the Roman law on ownership of private property. When they did show the slightest interest for this institution, it was for no reason other than its advantage of 'security above all else' (which highlights the logic of seeking protection from the aggression of the 'masters of legitimacy' rather than it being a tool to isolate a space which, in fact, is built on the basis of social relationships with 'others', whether neighbours, animals, vegetables or other beings in the local environment). However, in their need to adapt to the legal framework of each situation, many of the original meanings of indigenous territorial visions and institutions have gradually become distorted. In fact today's titled lands are the result of a long history of minor and not so minor conflicts, along with agreements, renunciations, resignations and adaptations, all combining to make the situation confusing, even to the inhabitants themselves.

On another level, the need for indigenous organisations to build political strength and strategic alliances created an essentially homogeneous territorial discourse aimed at non-indigenous societies and which defines a consistent goal based on ecological grounds, backed up by a human rights platform founded on historical and cultural arguments. Once the titling processes were concluded, however, in their attempts to apply this discourse to reality, the leaders of the modern movement often encountered difficulties in transferring this common vision to specific local situations. In actual fact, many of these processes of reflection, promoted as 'life programmes', 'territorial reorganisation' initiatives, 'territorial management' planning and so on, have served to raise the awareness of indigenous peoples to the damage that has occurred not only to their territory but to their own territorial vision following the harsh real and conceptual conflicts aimed at achieving ownership of their current lands. For their part, none of the modern natural resource management schemes seem to be of great help in encouraging the concepts on which the territorial decisions of the recent past were based. This is because the emphasis placed on natural resources distorts the

territorial vision. The natural resources – water, hills, waterfalls, animals, including people, spirits of the forest and every single small insect – are primarily integral beings within a relational space that simultaneously identifies them in myth and situates them in history, the environment, the economy as well as in society. This 'relational' space is not a space divided into zones of utility. From this perspective, far from constituting a geometrical area framed by physical landmarks that separate and demarcate it, an indigenous territory is simply the consolidation of a very specific and singular fabric of social ties between the different beings that make up that environment. In this sense, the purely 'indigenous' political discourse, which wisely insists on differentiating the Western vision of an object-nature (in which its appropriation, domination and exploitation are justified) from an indigenous vision (in which nature and man share existential relationships of reciprocity and mutual respect), must now seek the specific visions that doubtless gave shape to this political discourse. Although discursive unity was needed to strengthen political unity during the territorial struggles, in the day-to-day exercise of territoriality it is equally important to focus on specific issues. In applying this discourse to specific realities, we find a wide range of possibilities in terms of peoples' material and symbolic ties with their territories.

In the current process of reforming indigenous peoples' organisational set-ups, effective territorial management plays a fundamental role. Many of the problems facing the different groups must also be seen in the light of the changing cultural guidelines that govern their relationship with their territory. The increasing degradation of the territory's natural resources must therefore be seen as the direct result of the receding cultural boundary and the weakening of a social fabric – (whatever the causes, internal or external) that forms the basis of every community's values and institutions. An analysis of this kind could steer strategies towards visualising the future of the management and use of the territories within the current context. We are referring here to an internal process to encourage the 'surfacing' of obstacles that hinder the adequate management of a territory. To put it another way, between the legal conquest and the global management of a territory's natural resources, a middle ground is needed to help recover control over their point of view.

In our jobs as consultants to the indigenous regional organisation of San Lorenzo in the Peruvian High Amazon, in our different professions and as editors of this book, we have frequently sought to steer legal arguments towards anthropological descriptions. And so faced with the injustice of the allocation of property rights to farmers and livestock breeders for having cleared a few hectares of land or fenced off some grazing fields with hawthorn (thereby becoming 'definite possessors', according to the Civil Code), we analysed the comparative strength of age-old place descriptions or myths that mark the territories of indigenous communities. We considered the legal treatment of leisure hunting concessions from the perspective of so many communities for whom animals and men

are very close relatives. We contemplated the rectangular and defined limits of the Hispanic village in the light of a concentric conception presented by a number of peoples, to name but a few examples.

In addition, from the same perspective, we gradually realised that many indigenous territorial achievements could turn against their beneficiaries if these legal conquests were to distract indigenous peoples away from their main strategic function of achieving simple stages in relation to state legislation that is incapable of comprehending a territorial rationale different to that of real estate property ownership. In Peru, for example, the communal property title does not allow the titling of extensive areas. Many land titling procedures have divided territories into various small areas in order to adapt them to the Ministry of Agriculture's guidelines. Once titled, if the concept that inspired this strategy can be revived, all these families and communities will maintain their efficient use of their common natural resources as well as their social relationships with their relatives, humans or not. But if, for marginal reasons such as social support programmes to individual communities or the allocation of public job vacancies or others of a similar nature, the logic of zoned and exclusive real estate property is imposed, indigenous peoples will soon be faced with very serious social problems and a deep crisis that will affect their quality of life and cultural integrity.

We therefore reached the conclusion that, at this middle stage, anthropology could contribute greatly to indigenous peoples' territorial programmes, provided that it proved effective in suggesting alternative points of view to the predominant environmentalist vision governing natural resource management, and useful to the territorial management of each individual culture. We are obviously not trying to substitute the process of reflection that only indigenous peoples themselves can undertake. We are simply suggesting a number of ways of objectifying elements in these different perceptions of the environment in order to consider territorial management from other viewpoints. It is also about demonstrating that, far beyond a utilitarian vision, all this diversity and complexity in indigenous peoples' relationships with their territory implies that any territorial abuse represents a violation of the people that make up those communities. It is for this reason, among others, that we called this book *The Land Within*. As defined in Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation, legal or *de facto* restrictions, violations or reductions of indigenous peoples' right to territorial integrity constitute a blatant attack on the fundamental rights of these people, given that they force them to renounce a vision that represents the fundamental principle of their dignity, the expression of and setting for their identity and the source of the cultural and material resources that guarantee their reproduction. This is why, when the Convention stipulates that '*governments shall respect the special importance for the cultures and spiritual values of the peoples concerned of their relationship with the lands or territories, or both as applicable, which they occupy or otherwise use, and in particular the collective aspects of this relationship*' it is placing indigenous

peoples' right to the territory above the right to ownership, whilst including this within it. It is placing it at the centre of basic constitutional rights (the dignity and welfare of human beings) and at the heart of fundamental human rights (identity, religion, culture, life, health and freedom.) Respecting individuals and communities equally, with the individual constituting an integral part of a specific society. The articles that follow illustrate this complex relationship between indigenous peoples and their territory and, at the same time, send a cautionary message to states to follow through with the commitments they make.

In selecting the articles published in *The Land Within,* we have had to make some difficult decisions, given that these are but small examples of each author's work, many of whom have published various books on the subject. Above all, we have tried to give preference to a diversity of experiences related to intellectual traditions, in terms of the countries where the participants exercise their professions, and in terms of the indigenous peoples and subjects addressed. The significant space given to studies concerning the Amazon is not merely due to the editors' preference, although they are obviously interested in this area, but rather to the fact that, compared with other regions of the continent, this area of South America undoubtedly takes on a more dramatic dimension through the simple fact that its colonisation process is more recent.

The book comprises three parts. The first, entitled *Cosmos, Person and Society,* addresses a number of key issues in the relationship between indigenous peoples and their environment. The second, *Surroundings,* presents seven case studies on indigenous relationships with their environment, space and territory. The last, *The Action Ground*, addresses South America's indigenous territoriality in the face of the State and other non-indigenous institutions involved in the issue.

The first part thus comprises two works that provide general notions relevant to all Amerindian peoples, and which could prove very useful in understanding the indigenous perception of environment and territory. Philippe Descola suggests a new definition of the classical notion of animism, which has become a fundamental concept in understanding the relationships established by societies with the biosphere's elements. According to this author, animistic cosmologies believe that most animals and plants form a part of the community of 'persons'. The dualism, so characteristic of the Western world, that puts nature and culture in opposition with one another, is unknown to Amazonian indigenous peoples. It is equally unknown to the indigenous peoples of Canada's sub-Arctic. They may live in a completely different environment but these ways of interacting with the environment are not determined by ecosystem. Both these groups attribute animals with characteristics identical to those of human beings (intentionality, self-consciousness, emotions, etc.) One of the conclusions reached by the author is that for both societies, situated in the north and south of the American continent, what 'Western' science calls nature constitutes part of a complex network of social interactions in which man is no more than one actor amongst many

others. Because this complexity cannot be reduced to simple ecological management, a good understanding of the relationship between the indigenous people and their territory has to go beyond environmental rhetoric.

The second text in this first section, by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, has become a benchmark for anthropology in general ever since it was first published (although in a shorter form) in Portuguese in 1996. The author examines an aspect of thought, common to many Amerindian societies, called 'perspectivism' and by which the world is populated with different types of people, human or not, who conceive the reality according to their own relative viewpoints. For example, under normal conditions humans see themselves as humans and animals as animals. However, both depredatory animals and spirits see humans as animals of prey whilst animals of prey see humans as spirits or depredatory animals, although each one of them sees himself as human. To put it another way, a radical subjectification occurs whereby every species, from its own viewpoint, perceives of itself as a human being. The author adds that only the shaman is equipped to transcend his own relative perspective and access other points of view. Whilst modern science seeks to be objective, for it is through objectification that knowledge is obtained, in shamanism everything is subjective and it is through subjectification that knowledge is acquired.

Animism and perspectivism, which are related and complementary ways of describing how the indigenous identify non-humans and their interaction with the environment, are opposed to the ideology according to which nature exists, i.e. that the existence and development of certain entities is based on a principle that is outside the sphere of human will. These entities make up the sphere of what is natural, where nothing occurs without a cause, and it is science's task to unravel the laws of this predetermined order. Because this concept of nature is the guiding principle behind all 'Western' scientific knowledge, other ways of understanding relationships with other species, such as animism or perspectivism, can awaken curiosity but will nevertheless be regarded as erroneous ways of conceiving of the environment. This has the effect of distorting any efforts to achieve truly intercultural communication, especially when this communication refers to relationships between indigenous peoples and their habitat. One way of moving this dialogue forward would be to regard the epistemological instruments and analytical concepts of the environmental, social or legal sciences as heirs of one particular, historical and culturally determined vision and thus just as valid, or as relevant, as indigenous ideas. This could help to build bridges between alternative ways of conceiving of the environment, such as animism and perspectivism which would, in turn, encourage a self-criticism of the limitations of the tools that we employ to address intercultural dialogue.

The second part of the book, which we have called *Surroundings*, comprises seven studies related to specific ways of interacting with the environment, space and territory. The whole of this second part can also be subdivided into three

parts. The first part addresses relationships with elements in the biosphere (plants and particularly animals), the second concepts of space, and the third explains ways in which time is recorded in territory.

Bonnie Chaumeil and Jean-Pierre Chaumeil explain how the Yagua people from the Peruvian Amazon use the notion of kinship as a language to interact not just with humans but with all living species, animal and vegetable. For the Yagua people, human beings do not have a predominant role in relation to other beings in the environment but coexist together in a general symbiosis conceived of as sociability. This is because the comparative descriptions of the morphologies of plants and animals are not fundamental principles in their taxonomical system. This system is rather based on forms of sociability that the different species establish with the Yagua people, the way in which the species organise themselves and the habitats they frequently occupy. In short, the intentional conduct that living beings present. To describe this, the kinship universe becomes an ideal paradigm of reference and it is for this reason that the Yagua people use it.

Laura Rival explains the relationship that an Ecuadorian Amazon group, the Huaorani, establishes between its perception of plant growth and the way in which it organises its social life. The Huaorani people identify two different processes of growth and maturity which serve to classify vegetable species and categorise social principles as well as to explain the reason why their society undergoes cycles of peace and growth followed by periods of war and serious demographic crises. From an ethnographic point of view, the author sustains that social characteristics are derived from experiencing biological processes and that these social features are a direct result of these processes. This is therefore in opposition to the modern Western dualist theory of the relationship between nature and culture whereby 'nature' provides symbolic representations that explain culture or vice-versa but, in any case, nature and culture remain as two separate worlds.

Both these articles specifically illustrate how, for two different groups, sociability forms the reference framework for relationships with the environment in such a way that, far more than a mere area of land for subsistence and social reproduction limited to a local group that exercises control over the space, territory belongs to the social sphere.

This has significant consequences both on the legal front as well as for environmental management. It is no longer a question of protecting spaces susceptible to exploitation of their natural resources but of defending the integrity of a society that extends far beyond humanity to include other beings in the environment who, having become persons through this global sociability, under customary law would no longer be objects but subjects, as in the case of human beings. We are now closer to the revolutionary idea of extending human rights to animals, as proposed by animal protection movements and already exercised by indigenous peoples in their territories. If, as ILO Convention 169 states, custom-

ary law is national law in indigenous territories and, if in these areas both humans and non-humans are persons, it therefore follows that, from a legal point of view, all elements in the environment are persons.

Space and territory form the theme of the following three texts. The work of Oscar Calavia Sáez illustrates the paradox of how the titling of the Brazilian Yaminawa's lands, considered exemplary, has not been backed up by the security needed to guarantee this group's needs, far less its future. The author argues that, in fact, throughout all these decades of land titling, no thought was given to what Yaminawa territoriality might actually imply. For the Yaminawa people, little inclined to a sedentary lifestyle, the territory is not primarily an area within which to establish relationships but rather the opposite. Based on an analysis of the generic social groups names system and of the social relationships established between different social segments, the author believes that, despite the above, the idea of space is not alien to the Yaminawa conception, provided that it reflects the spatial map of how the social relationship network functions - a social body that contorts with history's ups and downs and which should currently include the presence of indigenous people in the city.

In a similar way, Alexandre Surrallés illustrates the plasticity of territory and space for the Candoshi people from the north of the Peruvian Amazon. To do this, Surrallés attempts to describe the principles on which Candoshi space is based, starting off by describing the motivations and internal anatomy of the perceptive subject within this space. From this exercise, a perspective emerges that begins, within the internal spaces of the person, to open up to the world without the objectifying discontinuity characteristic of 'modern epistemology'. The result is a vivid space rather than a conceptualised one, where what is important is not to draw a map of a static area but rather to perceive of a dynamic environment, and to be able to interact with the elements that comprise it, which in turn are endowed with subjectivity.

Montserrat Ventura i Oller analyses the spatial concept of the Tsachila people from Ecuador's western lowlands, concentrating on both the terrestrial landscape and other dimensions of their cosmology. For the Tsachila people, space should enable the establishment of links through intercommunicating passages. This desire to trace routes to alterity is not limited to a social philosophy of openness to other cultures, as has already been described for other Amerindian societies. It is, above all, a space conceived of as a system of connections that extend from the inhabited territory to all known geography in order to establish links with other cultures, throughout the whole ecosystem to connect with non-humans and finally, throughout the entire conceivable cosmos to allow travel between worlds. These three articles, which focus on concepts of space, illustrate the fact that territory is not a physically demarcated space. Territory is a dynamic and versatile area, a reflection of the socially interacting multi-polar networks that give shape to concentric systems originating in the points of intensity created by the subject

inhabiting that space, by his perceptive body as well as by the social network in which he finds himself.

The historical dimension of the territory is addressed in both of the last contributions to this part. The work of Joanne Rappaport is one of the first to concentrate on this subject in South America. In this study based on the Nasa people from Colombia's south-eastern highlands, also referred to as Paéz, the author explains how the history of this illiterate society is recorded in the geography by making the specific places that serve as its boundaries for territorial defence sacred. These sacred places also enable the chronological tracing of a history that is not remembered by the Nasa people in terms of a succession of temporary events. It is, however, a chronology of a movement from east to west and from lower to higher lands, a consequence of the colonial pressure that is duly recorded in the landscape of their sacred places. In short, a spatialised history that gives the past immediacy, tangibility and applicability to current territorial conflicts, in the same way that past difficulties were also territorial.

Like the Nasa people, and as in the case of other illiterate societies, the Yanesha people from the eastern Peruvian montane preserve their historical memory through narrations and representations of myths, traditions, memories, rituals and corporal practices. But, according to the work of Fernando Santos-Granero, in Yanesha society all these mechanisms converge into a greater mnemonic practice: that of 'writing' history in the landscape. To the author, this 'topographic writing' constitutes a proto-writing system based on 'topographs', isolated elements of the landscape inculcated with historical meaning through myths and rituals. Combined in a sequential or non-sequential manner, these elements become lengthier narrative units. Through this mnemonic mechanism, the Yanesha people have preserved not only the memory of the consecration of their traditional territory in mythical times but also the more recent memory of their dispossession and profanation.

Both these articles on recording history in the landscape illustrate, in a categorical way, that the territory is more than a simple space for survival. An indigenous territory preserves the memory of the society that occupies it and it is the source of that society's identity. These memorial sites also illustrate the fact that the territory is not an area shaped by points but rather a winding extension shaped by a proliferation of protuberances and peaks that encompass particularly significant values for the societies that occupy it.

The third part of the book, *The Action Ground,* brings together three reflections on the relationship between indigenous territoriality and the political and administrative context, particularly the State and its environmental management agencies. However, each of these contributions focuses on different aspects and experiences that are far removed from each other. For Bruce Albert, the pressure of the development frontier on Brazilian Amerindian societies not only affects their production system but also creates important mutations in the social and

symbolic coordinates of their territories. The collective identities settled within these coordinates are consequently assailed by great doubts. The territorial enclave, added to an uncertain identity, plunges these groups into 'adaptation resistance' dynamics that slowly take on a crucial dimension for their social and cultural reproduction. Along this path, indigenous societies commit themselves to reconstruction processes that depend on the legitimisation agendas of developmentalist states, support organisations and their own political and symbolic resources. This article analyses this identity and the territorial re-composition dialectic through the indigenous movement established in the Brazilian Amazon, following the many actions for and against the development experienced in the region since the 1970s. The author warns of the risks involved in the State's growing disregard for the indigenous territorial issue, leaving its management in the hands of non-governmental organisations and other development agencies. In this sense, Albert points out that this liberalization of territorial management can significantly weaken control over natural resources at a time when indigenous peoples are finding themselves subject to market pressures without any restrictions or protection from the public authorities. Another equally important risk, with many detrimental consequences, is that in order to obtain resources in a freely competitive environment between indigenous peoples and other cultural communities, indigenous peoples may be faced with the need to prove their identity, adapting it to the cultural and ecological image that is expected of them.

Based on an experience of territorial management in the Colombian Amazon, Juan Álvaro Echeverri follows on to review the notion of territory normally used in the territorial distribution plans as well as in establishing the geographical areas that accompany the plans. This author suggests an alternative definition of territory termed 'non-areolar', where what is important is not each area's attributes but rather the relationships created by the space, i.e., far from a territory being made up of a group of areas, it is the extension of a relational fabric. The effective maintenance of the relational channels enables a territorial management whereby the different agents involved can resolve their differences through an interchange of interests. This notion of territoriality, inspired by the one proposed by indigenous peoples, finds its language in corporality - the vital impulse of bodies (individual and social) that establish channels as they develop, building relationships with other social and natural bodies. The territory is the space in which all appetites converge. Territorial management is the effective management of all these impulses through relationships.

Finally, based on various experiences, particularly the Peruvian one, the work of Pedro García Hierro reviews legal developments in the indigenous concept of territoriality that has been established as a result of the current balance of power between the national State, as single sovereign entity, and indigenous peoples. Until indigenous peoples are recognised their right to self-determination, the

concept of territoriality will be subject to civil law guidelines on colonial inheritance in South America, where private property ownership, destined for an individual's exclusive use – for commercial purposes – constitutes its primary fundamental principle. This concept is implicit in its application, completely distorting the meaning of the integral bond that indigenous peoples establish with their habitat. Whilst waiting for this self-determination and for effective ways in which to use their independent spaces, the first issue that must be addressed in the effort to improve the different legal formulae that currently protect the legitimised indigenous territories in different countries is the State's persistence in continuing to exploit at will the natural resources found in these spaces, in violation of the international treaties that it has, in many cases, ratified. Indigenous territory requires an intercultural consideration from the legal system, a political status that must be constitutional, with all the consequences that this may have for defining the fundamental principles of American states.

These last three chapters highlight the fact that the situation of indigenous territoriality within the current political-administrative context, where the enormous efforts made in obtaining land titles have come to an end and the emphasis is now on managing these spaces, is subject to a triple paradox. Having taken on commitments inherent to the titling of indigenous land within the neo-liberal framework governing most of the continent's current policies, states increasingly neglect their role. However, this neglect does not stretch to its self-imposed right to a range of natural resources, particularly those found in the subsoil, which are precisely those of greatest economic interest. Lastly, in this unregulated climate, indigenous peoples must consider how to manage the most fragile, vulnerable and least profitable elements of their territories, with the help of agencies with whom the dialogue is loaded with misunderstandings and contradictions, in a system of free competition between ethnic groups and other communities in an effort to capture resources.

All the contributions presented in *The Land Within* lead us to conclude with a number of general observations. This volume attempts to widen the vision of indigenous territoriality by illustrating all the complexities of an issue in which different cultural perspectives converge. In this sense, this compilation of articles reveals that a specific anthropology, sometimes accused of being too abstract and remaining on the sidelines of political commitment, can provide the basis for a radical conceptual questioning. This is how anthropology exercises its true humanistic vocation. Taking indigenous discourse seriously and elevating it to the rank of a truly critical philosophy, whose explanation requires all the power of abstract thought, does not imply being oblivious to political circumstances. Indeed, it is a vital commitment to these peoples, who project confidence and hospitality to those of us who show an interest in them and who expect something more from anthropology than the verification of their acculturation, if not of their dissolution (given the interest that the anthropology currently shows in issues

such as emigration, mobility or acquiring 'Western' standards of conduct). There are other ideas shared by these contributions. According to indigenous perception, the territory is not only an environment for providing the necessary means for survival but rather a space for social relationships with each of the ecosystem's elements. Relationships, networks, channels, paths, etc.; the territory is not a finite area shaped by the inherent limits to its existence but a fabric in the process of constant constitution and reconstitution. A subjective more than an objective space, and hence a more lived-in, rather than conceived of territory. Indeed, for indigenous peoples it is not so much a question of conceiving of the place in which they live as a representation of an abstract space but of perceiving it, in practical terms, in the course of their ordinary lives. It is for this reason that the body continually emerges as a notion associated with that of territory, given that the body's natural characteristic is to feel. In this sense, belonging to a territory through signs of the past can be interpreted more as a feeling than a criterion. The recording of history in the landscape is the result of an experience that, in itself, constitutes the 'sacred place' and not of a decision taken for demarcation or remembering purposes. In brief, these essays show us that the person and the environment are part of a continuum. So when indigenous people talk of territorial rights they are, in fact, talking of human rights.

These texts also warn us of new and equal, or even greater, challenges facing indigenous peoples now that they are considered the owners of their territories, even though in real terms they are not. This is where the fallacy of the state lies, given that it still continues to play a decisive role in the future of these spaces. More than a political will inspired by the belief that private control is efficient, the current neo-liberal neglect is a strategy for continuing to intervene, although only on issues of interest to it. The proof lies in the fact that governments do not transfer the usufruct of the subsoil and other profitable resources to indigenous peoples. This private control of the territories which, through luck or misfortune, indigenous peoples are up against, without legislation to protect them, can have very damaging effects on their interests. Without improvement in the difficult dialogue between indigenous organisations and State environmental management agencies or international non-governmental organisations to establish grounds for mutual understanding, the damaging effects of the current situation may cause irreversible damage to indigenous peoples, to their territory as well as to the overall environment inhabited by them.   ❏

Translated from Spanish by Cruz Farina

PART I

COSMOS,
PERSON
AND SOCIETY

ECOLOGY AS COSMOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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More than twenty years ago, the late Colombian anthropologist Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff published a noted article which foreshadowed the current opinion now held by a significant sector of Western public opinion regarding the ecological wisdom of indigenous peoples the world over (1976b). Wishing to extol the environmental expertise of Amazonian Indians, he argued that some of their cosmologies could be considered as a form of ecological knowledge, as a metaphorical model describing the intricate network of interactions between living beings within their habitat. According to him, these beliefs were implemented in such a way, through cultural prescriptions and prohibitions, that they played a crucial role in maintaining local ecosystems in a desired state of homeostasis. In such a perspective, Amazonian cosmologies would be nothing less than symbolic transpositions of the objective properties of a very specific environment; in their internal architecture, at least, they would be both a reflection and a product of a long and successful adaptation to a highly complex milieu characterized by a high rate of biodiversity.[1]

At first sight, such an idea appears quite attractive. For it is true that many Amazonian cosmologies offer a representation of the great web of life which echoes the type of complex intertwining processes of feedback between organisms that ecological scientist studying the rain forest have been discovering progressively over the past thirty years. Indeed, and by contrast with the modern dualist perspective, wherein humans and non humans tend to be distributed in two quite distinct ontological domains, most Amazonian Indians are true to the wildest expectations of New Age zealots by treating the discontinuities between humans, animals and plants as mere differences of degree, not of kind. The Achuar of the Ecuadorian rain forest, for instance, maintain that many plants and animals possess a 'soul' (*wakan*) identical to the one with which humans are endowed. Such a faculty entitles them to be included into the category of 'persons' (*aents*), as it grants them reflexive consciousness and intentionality, renders them capable of emotions and allows them to exchange messages with their conspecifics as well as with members of other species, humans included. This extra-lin-

guistic communication is deemed possible because of the ability of the soul to convey thoughts and desires directly to any person endowed with a similar faculty, without the mediation of sound, thus modifying the state of mind and the behavior of the addressee, often without him or her realizing it. To this effect, humans have at their disposal a vast choice of magical spells, the *anent*, which they sing mentally in all circumstances and thanks to which they can act at a distance upon the soul, whether of other humans or of plants, animals, spirits and certain artifacts (Descola 1994).

The Achuar also stress the fact that technical know-how is inseparable from the capacity to create an intersubjective milieu where normative relations of person to person can flourish: mainly between men, animals and the spirits who protect game animals, and between women, cultivated plants and the mythical being who created the garden species and who continues until now to insure their vitality. Nunkui, the garden spirit, is thought of as the mother of all cultivated plants, and the bond that a woman wishes to establish with her is basically a relation of identification: the plants that she grows are her children and her relationship with them is a duplicate of the maternal relationship Nunkui entertains with her vegetal offspring. This appears clearly in the rhetoric of the garden magical songs, where the singer always refers to the plants as her children and constantly identifies herself with Nunkui. Hunting, on the other hand, implies a triangular relationship between the hunter, the hunted animals and a series of go-betweens; these are the 'Mothers of game', a race of spirits who own and protect the animals of the forest, and the *amana*, the prototype of each hunted species, described as a perfect and larger than life embodiment of his conspecifics. In this relationship, the go-betweens are conceived as cross-generational affines, while the game is called and treated as a brother-in-law. The complex relationship of competition, negotiation and complicity which the hunter entertains with these non human affines closely resembles that which prevails in his dealings with his human in-laws: for affines form the basis of political alliances and faction-building, but they are also the most immediate adversaries in the vendetta wars. The opposition between consanguines and affines, the two mutually exclusive categories which organize Achuar social classification and structure their interpersonal relations, thus apply equally in their prescribed conduct towards non humans. Far from being considered prosaic stores of calories and proteins, the forest and the swiddens are seen as the theater of a subtle sociability wherein, day after day, one has to tame, seduce and coerce a host of leafy, furry or feathery beings, that only differ from humans by the variety of their appearances and by their lack of articulated language. Whether they are treated as consanguines or as affines, natural beings do not appear as mere objects of the food quest but as legitimate social partners.

One wonders, of course, if the expression 'natural beings' that I used as a semantic shortcut is really appropriate in such a case? Is there a place for the realm

of nature as we see it in a cosmology where animals and plants are endowed with most human attributes? Is it even possible to define this seemingly endless jungle almost devoid of human presence as an epitome of wilderness? Not likely. For the Achuar view the forest, with its bewildering diversity of plant, as a sort of gigantic botanical garden meticulously tended by Shakaim, a timid and unprepossessing spirit. This segment of the world which evolves and develops independently from human norms, and that we usually call nature, is not for the Achuar a mere object to be socialized, but the ubiquitous subject of a multiplicity of social relations.

Does that mean that the Achuar do not recognize any natural entity in their environment? Not quite. The great continuum mixing humans and non humans is not completely inclusive and some elements of the environment do not communicate with anyone for want of a proper soul. Most insects and fishes, herbs, the rivers, pebbles, the greater part of non organic matter, the stars and most meteorological phenomena, all these components of the environment remain excluded from the social sphere and from the game of intersubjectivity because of their lack of clear-cut individuality. In their generic and unintentional mode of existence, they might correspond to what we call nature. However, is it really proper to keep on using this notion of nature in order to designate a portion of the world which, for the Achuar, is incomparably more restricted than the domain we usually specify as such? In modern thought, moreover, nature only acquires a meaning by opposition to the results of human ingenuity, be they defined as culture, society, history, art, oecoumene or anthropic landscape. But a cosmology where the majority of plants and animals are included in a community of persons sharing most of the faculties, behaviors and moral codes ordinarily granted to humans hardly meets the criteria of such an opposition.

The Achuar are in no way an exceptional case in the Amazonian world. A few hundred kilometers to the north, for instance, in the forest of Eastern Colombia, the Makuna Indians present an even more radical version of a resolutely non dualist vision of the world (Århem 1996). Like the Achuar, the Makuna categorize humans, and most plants and animals within a single ontological class that they call 'people' (*masa*), and whose attributes are deemed identical: mortality, social and ceremonial life, intentionality and knowledge. Internal distinctions within this vast community of organisms are not predicated on the relative degree of proximity to the Makuna as a paradigm of human achievement, they are based on the idiosyncrasies that each class of being acquired as a result of its mythical origin, its particular diet and its mode of reproduction. Here also, the interactions between animals and men are conceived as a relation of affinity, although slightly different from the Achuar model, in that the hunter treats his game as a potential spouse and not as a brother-in-law. Ontological categorizations are, however, more complex than among the Achuar, as everyone can undergo a metamorphosis in certain circumstances: humans can transform into

animals, animals can transform into humans and the animal of one species can transform into the animal of another species. As a consequence, the taxonomic grip over reality remains relative and contextual, as a permanent swapping of appearances does not allow one to attribute stable identities to the living components of the environment.

The type of sociability ascribed to non humans by the Makuna is also richer and more complex than among the Achuar. Like humans, animals are reputed to live in communities, in subterranean or subaquatic communal long-houses, traditionally located in specific salt-licks, hills or river rapids known to everyone. They have gardens where they gather their food, and ports on the river where they collect water and bathe. For the visible appearance of animals is a disguise. As they enter their houses they discard their animal clothes, don their feather crowns and ritual ornaments and regain ostensibly the outward aspect of the people they had never ceased to be when they were roaming in the forest or swimming in the rivers.

Similar cosmologies are extremely common among native inhabitants of the South American Lowlands (see, for instance, Weiss 1975; Grenand 1980; Jara,1991; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1976a; van der Hammen 1992; Viveiros de Castro 1992). In spite of their internal differences, all have as a common characteristic that they do not operate clear-cut ontological distinctions between humans, on the one hand, and a good many species of animals and plants, on the other. Whether visible or invisible, whether anthropomorphic or theriomorphic, most entities present in the world are linked together in a vast continuum articulated by a single regime of cultural prescriptions and sociability. Furthermore, the specific attributes with which these entities are endowed are not predicated on abstract ontological essences, they derive entirely from the relative positions that each class of being occupies in relation to the others, according to the peculiarities of its metabolism, particularly of its diet. Each category of entity preys on others in an all-encompassing food-chain so that individual and collective identities are construed through day to day cannibalistic interactions. Here it is not only the case that you are defined by what you eat, but also by what eats you. Humans, whether alive or dead, plants, animals or spirits have a relational identity, subject to constant transformations and metamorphoses as every kind of being purportedly perceives the other kinds according to its criteria and needs. For instance, a game animal pursued by a human hunter will see itself as a human, while perceiving its predator under the guise of a jaguar. On the other hand, the jaguar lapping the blood of its victim will believes it is drinking manioc-beer, the oropendola bird chasing a grasshopper will see its prey as a spider-monkey, while the snake biting a human being will think it is attacking a tapir.

Christened 'perspectivism' by E. Viveiros de Castro and T. Lima (Viveiros de Castro 1996; Lima 1996), such an extreme perceptual relativism bears an uncanny resemblance to the theories of knowledge advocated by the Sophists or by Berke-

ley. But Amazonian relativism goes much further than its Western counterparts, as it is decidedly not anthropocentric. True, the social existence and cultural institutions attributed to non humans are mostly modeled on the type of behavior which is deemed proper among the Indians. However, the latter also admit that multiple visions of the world can cohabit without entering into contradiction and that humans are not granted any special privilege in terms of knowledge, morality or preordained mastery over the destiny of other species. The human point of view is only more encompassing as it can account for all the adjustments required by interactions between a multiplicity of organisms that are not themselves aware of the peculiarities of their own perception of the entities with which they relate. In that sense, these cosmologies could indeed be likened to the type of ecological knowledge produced by a team of biologists who would consider themselves as a minor component of the environment they study.

Now, does it follow that this systemic conception of the biosphere common to many native peoples in Amazonia is a consequence of the properties of their environment? For this appears to be a very special environment indeed. Ecologists define the tropical rain forest as a generalized ecosystem, i.e. characterized by the combination of an extremely high diversity of species with a very low density and a high dispersion of the individual members of each species. For instance, among the approximately 50 000 species of vascular plants that are found in Amazonia, no more than two dozens are gregarious and these monospecific groupings are often an unintended result of a long term human occupation of the forest. Immersed as they are in a formidable diversity of life forms seldom observable in homogeneous sets, Amazonian Indians may have been unable to embrace as a totality the heterogeneous conglomerate of interacting animals and plants permanently soliciting their attention. Yielding to the mirage of diversity, they might have been incapable of disentangling themselves from their environment, prevented from discerning the profound unity of nature behind the multiplicity of its particular manifestations. Hence these non dualist cosmologies where humans are not seen as hegemonic masters subordinating other species to their needs but as mere participants in an all-embracing chain of energy exchange and identity-building.

An enigmatic remark by Lévi-Strauss might invite such an interpretation. In *La pensée sauvage*, when discussing the biological concept of species, he suggests that the tropical forest is perhaps the only environment which affords the possibility to grant idiosyncratic characteristics to each member of a species (1962a: 284). Differentiating each individual into a particular type – which he calls 'mono-individual' – is common among humans, he argues, because each member of the species *Homo sapiens* does indeed develop a different personality as a result of social life. Nevertheless, an extreme abundance of different animal and vegetal life forms, such as prevails in tropical forest environments, might also afford a support for this process of reduction to the singular. If we follow this line of argu-

ment, we might surmise that peoples living in the Amazonian rain forest were perhaps inevitably led to perceive individual plants and animals as seemingly all different, and thus endowed with a personality of their own.

But it is G. Reichel-Dolmatoff who really stated explicitly the hypothesis that a native Amazonian cosmology, that of the Tukanoan Desana of the Colombian Amazon, might be considered as a kind of descriptive model of adaptive processes formulated in terms that are comparable to modern systemic analysis (1976b). However, such a transposition is not, for Reichel-Dolmatoff, a reflection of a phenomenal adaptation to the perceptual saliency of a highly diversified environment, as it might be in a Levi-Straussian or Gibsonian perspective, but rather the result of a social adaptation to an ecosystem that purportedly imposes severe limits on human occupation. His interpretation derives from the standard cultural ecological tenet that a specific environment generates specific social and cultural adaptive devices, but with a nuance, and not a small one: these adaptive processes are not unconscious responses to the limiting factors of an ecosystem, as orthodox geographical determinism would have it; they are explicitly conceptualized in religious beliefs and rituals.

According to Reichel-Dolmatoff, the Desana view the biosphere as an homeostatic system wherein the output of energy is directly proportional to its input. To compensate the losses due to the human consumption of food obtained in the environment, energy is fed back into the system from two main sources: the sexual vitality of men and women, regularly repressed and channeled by *ad hoc* prohibitions, which returns to the global stock of energy that animates all biotic components of the system; and the general state of well-being and good health of individuals, resulting from a strictly controlled diet, which feeds energy into the abiotic components of the system, thus permitting, for instance, the perennial movement of celestial bodies. Each Desana individual is thus aware of being a component in a tightly woven chain of interactions that spans not only the social sphere, but also the whole universe, conceived as a self-regulated closed system of limited resources. This imposes on everyone ethical responsibilities, notably the obligation not to disturb the general equilibrium of this fragile system of energy flows, and not to consume energy without restoring it as quickly as possible through different types of ritual operations.

But the main actor in this quest for a perfect homeostasis is undoubtedly the shaman, for he intervenes constantly in subsistence activities so as to insure that that they will not endanger the regeneration of non-humans. For instance, shamans will control the quantity and dilution of the vegetal fish poison used in fishing parties; likewise, they will indicate the exact number of peccaries that may be killed when a herd has been spotted. But it is above all in the rituals related to subsistence activities that the shamans reputedly play the most important role in this regulating process; these rituals offer to the shaman an opportunity "for stock-taking, for weighing costs and benefits, and for the eventual redis-

tribution of resources" (Reichel-Doematoff 1976:316); in such circumstances "the balance sheet of the shaman's book-keeping shows the general system inputs and outputs" (ibid.).

Now, can the local shaman really be likened to a chartered accountant expertly safeguarding the assets of the environment? Is it legitimate to treat ritual action and cosmological beliefs as if they were some kind of practical manual for the management of a natural reserve? For, if the implementation by the shaman of a symbolic but nonetheless perfectly orthodox calculus of allocation of scarce means echoes to a certain extent the type of neo-darwinian models currently used in human ecology, or the growing tendency to internalize environmental hazards in economic planning, this type of neo-classical optimization appears distinctly at odds with a cosmology where components of the ecosystem are not objictified as commodities. Not to mention the fact that certain Amazonian cultures are less irenic than the Desana. Far from laying emphasis on equilibrium, reciprocity and complementarity, peoples such as the Jivaros, the Araweté or the Yanomami tend to conceive the life process as a unilateral predatory capture of substances, persons and identities among humans and non humans alike.

We are thus back to our initial question: is the cosmology of Amazonian Indians a form of ecological analysis? I am in no doubt that many Amazonian cosmologies do not operate a clear-cut ontological distinction between the sphere of nature and the sphere of society, but that they offer an image of the world as a continuum where humans and a vast number of non humans are linked within a network structured by an identical set of cultural prescriptions. It is equally true that Amazonian Indians have a remarkable empirical knowledge of the intricate interactions between organisms in their environment and that they operationalize this knowledge in subsistence strategies. I perfectly admit, finally, that Amazonian Indians use prescribed and observed relations and processes among humans – be they issued from kinship ties, patterns of authority or trade obligations – to describe ecological interactions between non human organisms, or between non-humans and humans. However, I very much doubt that these features can be said to derive from a successful adaptation to a particular ecosystem which, owing to its intrinsic properties, would have provided Amazonian societies with an analogical model for conceptualizing the organization of the world.

The main argument against this type of interpretation is that very similar cosmologies have been elaborated by peoples who live in a very different ecological setting. Such is the case, for instance, with the native cultures of SubArctic Canada who, by contrast with Amazonian Indians, exploit a remarkably uniform environment. In fact, the characteristics of the boreal forest are symmetrically inverse to those of the tropical rain forest: very few species cohabit in this 'specialized' ecosystem, and each is represented by a great number of individuals. However, in spite of this major ecological difference, and also in spite of the internal cultural diversity within the main linguistic stocks, the Northern Athapaskan

and the Northern Algonquian, SubArctic hunters are very similar to Amazonian peoples in their attitudes towards non humans, particularly towards animals. As in the South American Lowlands, most animals are seen as persons endowed with a soul, and thus with human-like attributes such as intentionality, an emotive life and moral codes. The Cree and Montagnais-Naskapi are particularly explicit in that domain (Brightman 1993; Feit 1973; Lips 1947; Speck 1935; Tanner 1979). According to them, the sociability of animals is similar to that of humans and is based on the same kind of values: solidarity, friendship and deference for the elders, in this case the invisible spirits who lead the migrations of animals, manage their territorial dispersion and are in charge of their regeneration. If animals differ from humans, it is thus exclusively by their outward aspect, a mere illusion of the senses, as their distinctive corporeal envelopes are nothing more than disguises that they don to trick the Indians. When they visit the latter in their dreams, animals reveal themselves as they are really, i.e. in human guise; likewise they speak in native languages when their spirit expresses itself in the public ritual known throughout the area as the 'shaking lodge'.

One would be quite wrong to see this humanization of animals as a simple *jeu d'esprit*, the product of a metaphorical language which would only be relevant during the circumstances pertaining to the execution of rituals or the narration of myths. For all the ethnographers who have worked with the Cree, the Montagnais-Naskapi or the Ojibwa, from the early studies of Speck (1935), Lips (1947) and Hallowell (1981 [1960]) to the more recent ones of Tanner (1979), Feit (1973) or Brightman (1993), all these observers, whatever their theoretical persuasion, insist in almost the same wording on the fact that even when the Indians talk in mundane terms of stalking, trapping, killing or eating animals, they also express unambiguously the idea that hunting is a social intercourse with a set of entities that are perfectly conscious of the conventions of the interactions into which they enter.

Here, as among most hunting societies, connivance with game animals is gained by showing them respect: the hunter must avoid wasting animal lives, he must kill swiftly and without inflicting unnecessary suffering, he must treat with dignity the carcass and the bones of the slain animal, he must not brag about his hunting skills nor even state too clearly his intentions of going to hunt. Beyond these marks of consideration, however, relationships with animals can be expressed in more definite ways: seduction, for instance, where the game is figured as a lover; or the magical coercion which will annihilate a prey's will and will force it to come within range of the hunter. But the most common of theses relationships, and one which emphasizes quite neatly the parity between humans and animals, is the link of friendship that a hunter progressively establishes with an individual member of an animal species. This animal friend is conceived rather like a pet and it will act as a sort of intermediary with its own conspecifics so a to entice them to come within firing distance of the hunter. What may appear as a treachery is in fact an act of compassion, for the game animals, moved by the

suffering of the starving hunter, willingly offer him their corporeal envelope. Their momentary fate is of no consequence to them as they will then reincarnate into an animal of the same species provided their carcass is given the prescribed ritual treatment.

Much like Amazonian Indians, then, the peoples of SubArctic Canada tend to conceptualize their environment as a dense network of interactions structured by patterns of practice that do not really discriminate between nature and society. Like Amazonian Indians, also, they characterize these patterns by reference both to norms of conduct that we would associate exclusively with the social domain and to models of behavior borrowed from the ethology of non human organisms. It is true that, owing to the specificity of their ecosystem, notably the reduced number of animal and plant species, the web of relationships of which their cosmologies offer an image is not as rich and complex as what is usually found in Amazonian conceptions of the world. Nevertheless, when considered at a certain level of abstraction, the basic patterns are analogous in both cases. For that matter, the same applies to the cosmologies of the native peoples of Siberia (Hamayon 1990) whose environment bears a close resemblance to that of SubArctic Canada. Such striking similarities thus appear to invalidate the hypothesis that cosmologies such as that of the Colombian Desana are the mere product of an intellectual adaptation to an environment with a high rate of biodiversity.

Far from being ecologically specific, Amazonian conceptualizations of the biosphere belong to a wider family of non dualist cosmologies that are widely distributed in the Americas, in Asia, in Oceania and, to a lesser extent, in Africa. Cosmologies of this kind cannot be said to be direct transpositions of particular ecological processes that are observable in the local environment. Rather they provide an adequate template through which ecological processes that are locally salient can be objectified, processed and integrated as meaningful components within an all-encompassing framework describing webs of relationships between non humans and humans alike. Such cosmologies are undoubtedly ecological, but only in the broadest sense of the term, in that instead of being predicated upon a substantive framing of the individual, the social body or the elementary components of the physical world, they lay emphasis on dialectical relatedness and on the circulation of flows, identities, substances and components of the person between entities defined by their relative positions and not by a preexisting ontological essence.

An anthropological label immediately comes to mind when one wants to define this type of cosmology, a label which has fallen into disuse because it is associated with antique and discredited debates on the origin of religions or on the purported differences between the primitive mind and scientific rationality. This label is, of course, animism. At its highest level of generality, animism refers to the belief that some non humans are endowed with a spiritual faculty akin to the one humans possess, allowing the latter to establish with these entities some sort

of personal relations, whether of protection, of seduction, of friendship, of hostility, of alliance or of reciprocity. Contemporary anthropology generally observes a prudent silence on this disreputable notion and on the cultural phenomena it qualifies, probably in part because of the shift of perspective introduced in the analysis of totemism by Lévi-Strauss (1962b). In order to debunk the totemic illusion, Lévi-Strauss argued that totemic classifications were nothing more than a logical device using the perceptually salient discontinuities between natural species so as to conceptually organize a segmentary order demarcating social units. Such an interpretation neatly inverted the sociocentric hypothesis formerly put forth by Durkheim and Mauss (1903) in their celebrated essay on primitive classification: it is not the clan system which provides the intellectual prototype for the categorization of natural kinds; rather it is the set of differential contrasts in morphology or ethology between living kinds which provides a method of thought for conceptualizing the discontinuities between social segments. However, this brilliant demonstration has contributed to pushing into oblivion the fact that the objectifying of non humans by humans might not be conceived exclusively as a classificatory procedure. For animism is also a form of objectification of these entities we call natural, as it refers to a process whereby these entities are not only granted anthropomorphic attributes – intentionality, emotions, the ability to appear in human guise under certain circumstances, etc. – but whereby they are also vested with social properties: a hierarchy of positions, behaviors based on kinship, obedience to ethical codes, etc. These social properties are drawn from the repertoire of each culture, which will thus tend to characterize its relationship with such or such component of its environment according to the locally dominant forms of sociability: be they attitudes derived from kinship positions, the authority of a chief or of an elder brother, ritual friendship, the code of conduct in trade and barter, codified hostility, etc. The result is not a grid for classifying natural kinds but a template for categorizing the types of relations that humans maintain with non humans. In other words, totemic classifications in the Lévi-Straussian sense treat non humans as signs, while animic systems treat them as one of the terms in a relation between persons (Descola 1996).

I do not mean to imply that animic systems or totemic systems exist in a pure form, perfectly realized in single societies. If we expand the scope of totemic classifications and rephrase their definition as the use of differential sets of properties exhibited by non humans so as to conceptualize differential relations and attributes among humans, then many Amazonian cosmologies have a totemic dimension in that respect, since they commonly specify contrasted sets of relations and identities among humans by reference to forms of behavior and interaction observable among animals and plants. For instance, the Secoya of the Peruvian Amazon use the ethological contrast between two species of birds, the oropendola and the green parrot, as a metaphorical scheme for specifying gender differences and identities (Belaunde 1994). Although they lack a formal totemic system

with descent groups, the Secoya nevertheless grant a totemic function to some non humans, that of providing a support for characterizing the distinctive properties of two social categories within the human domain. In that sense, the relation between animic objectification and totemic objectification is more one of encompassment than mutual exclusion. Many Amazonian cosmologies are decidedly animic in the way they predicate ontological distinctions, although they may use totemic indexes to define particular sets of relations. Conversely, some Amazonian cosmologies are predominantly totemic, notably those of the Gê groups, in that their ostentatious use of certain plants and animals as a repertoire of icons to specify social distinctions seems to override or push into the background the daily practical and personal engagement with other sets of non humans.

I am quite aware that stating that Amazonian cosmologies are not direct transpositions of particular ecological processes observable in the local environment may appear unfashionable: for it may seem to imply that Amazonian Indians are not the pristine ecological scientists that environmental activists and the media like to celebrate. Having spent a great part of my anthropological career studying the ecology of a particular Amazonian society, I would be the last to deny that Amazonian Indians have a sophisticated knowledge of their environment and a remarkable expertise in dealing with its resources. However, such knowledge and expertise cannot be couched easily in the Procrustean bed of modern environmentalist discourse which presents nature as a common capital to be preserved and wisely managed. In fact, for peoples who treat plants and animals as social persons and not as components of an abstract and separate natural domain, there is no more sense in the idea that these non human entities should be protected and preserved than there would be in the idea that their distant Indian enemies should be protected and preserved for the sake of the future welfare of humanity. It is precisely because animals are treated as persons that the same tricks, treacheries and false promises that are common in intertribal conflicts can be used against them in order to get their flesh.

True, alliances have been passed between groups of Amerindians and environmental activists, but these tactical compromises are often based on a working misunderstanding, as Terence Turner has shown in the case of the Kayapó (Turner, in press) or Bruce Albert in that of the Yanomami (Albert 1993). The Indian leaders may willingly play the part of 'Wardens of the Jungle' that is expected from them, they may voice forcefully the New Age slogans on Mother Earth and the sacred nurturing forest which they have quickly learned to mimic, but what they mainly expect from these alliances with environmentalist NGOs is a recognition of secure rights to their lands, that is, the insurance that they will be able to support themselves within the confine of a territory protected from encroachment by outsiders and preserved from major ecological damages endangering, not the forest as a natural asset, but the mode of subsistence they derive from it.

Hence their preoccupation with excessive deforestation, with the contamination of rivers and lakes by oil-spills or mercury, with game depletion due to professional hunting or with the massive tapping of useful plant material. An abstract concern for the maintenance of biodiversity, for the preservation of a fragile ecological equilibrium, or for the ultimate fate of the so-called green lung of the planet is entirely foreign to traditional Amerindian discourse on their environment and it appears only in those contexts where it may help to foster legitimate claims for land rights.

Nor can Amerindian expertise about their environment be equated with the type of knowledge produced by ecological scientists, although, thanks to millennia of careful observations, the former certainly has proved to be more refined in certain domains. For if it were the case that Amazonian Indians had an all-embracing view of the intricate network of ecological interactions in their environment, then one wonders why they seem to be so short-sighted about the consequences for the equilibrium of their ecosystems brought about by some of the new technologies they have lately adopted.

In the mid-seventies, for instance, I had the opportunity to give several lectures to the leaders of the Shuar Federation, a large indigenous organization in the Lowlands of Ecuador. My aim was to warn them of the potentially disastrous ecological effects of a massive program of cattle-ranching which they had launched a few years before. They listened to me very politely, they agreed that raising cattle might prove hazardous in the long term, and proceeded with their program as before. Only recently, when the Shuar leaders were finally able to experience by themselves the irreversible damage to the soils and the progressive disappearance of the forest as a hunting ground – for although they led an urban life in the frontier towns, they still enjoyed hunting –, did they cut back on their program of extensive cattle farming. True, this policy was triggered, among other things, by the fact that the Shuar had entered willy-nilly into a market economy and were hard-pressed to find cash both for maintaining the costly running of their organization and for the manufactured goods for which they had acquired a need.[2] However, if they had really been aware of the delicate balance of their ecosystem, would they not have chosen other, less damaging, ways to enter into commodity production, as indeed they are doing now? Their traditional expertise in slash-and-burn cultivation, their knowledge of fallow cycles, of the differential fertility of the soils, of the various stages of forest regeneration, all this technical know-how built up generation after generation by careful observation and experimentation was to no avail in their initial decision to embark on cattle-ranching. For this knowledge was mainly practical, non reflexive, non objectifiable, and thus non applicable to new contexts where it might have proven useful. More important, perhaps, cattle ranching did not disturb their traditional cosmology of relatedness as long as there were animals to be hunted and plants to be cultivated in the gardens. When the forest and its denizens began to disappear

for good, when the Shuar started eating rice bought in the frontier towns because there was no more forest to be cleared for new swiddens, then the material basis of their cosmology began to crumble and it dawned on them that something had gone terribly wrong.

The moral epilogue of this sad venture into the petty commodity production of non-humans is that viewing Amazonian Indians as primitive environmentalists and their cosmologies as practical manuals of ecological management does not do justice to the originality of their ecological knowledge nor to the resilience of their cosmologies. Although well-meaning on the whole, the view shared by most ethnoscientists and many eco-liberals is that certain domains of indigenous practice and discourse can be isolated and reified so as to make them compatible with modern science, resulting in a multiplication of subfields, labeled ethno-something (whether ethnobotany, ethnozoology, or ethnoecology) where the boundaries of the domain are always established a priori according to the corresponding subfields as they have been conventionally carved out from reality in the Western history of science. As a result, little attention is being paid to how Amazonian Indians conceptualize non-humans and their relation to them, except to evaluate possible convergences or discrepancies between supposedly proto-scientific emic ideas and the etic orthodoxy embodied in the laws of nature and the current division of science. Such a perspective also ignores the capacity of native cosmologies and of the systems of practice they reflect to adapt to changing socioeconomic conditions, to learn from failures or to exhibit contradictions. Fortunately, there are signs that Amazonian Indians are beginning to emancipate themselves from the swarms of compassionate Euro-American salvation-seekers who have descended upon them to help the Noble Savages formulate their plights in terms that are comprehensible by readers of the National Geographic and contributors to the World Wildlife Fund. "Protect me from my friends, I'll take care of my foes" is, after all, a piece of advice that the warring societies of Amazonia did not need to learn from us.   ❏

Notes

1   This paper was originally prepared for the George Lurcy Lecture which I was invited to give at the University of Chicago in April 1998; it was subsequently revised for a lecture at the Carl Friedrich von Siemens Stiftung in Munich, in November of the same year.
2   It was also a by-product of the Ecuadorian law which only grants titles to plots of land if it can be shown after a while that these have been partly cleared for cultivation (or pasture).

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PERSPECTIVISM AND MULTINATURALISM
IN INDIGENOUS AMERICA [*][1]

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The relativity of space and time has been construed as though it were dependent on the choice of the observer. It is perfectly legitimate to bring in the observer, if he facilitates explanations. But it is the observer's body that we want, and not his mind.

A.N. Whitehead

Ainsi, la réciprocité de perspectives où j'ai vu le caractère propre de la pensée mythique peut-elle revendiquer un domaine d'application beaucoup plus vaste.

C. Lévi-Strauss

The subject of this essay is that aspect of Amerindian thought which reveals its "perspectival quality" (Århem 1993) or "perspectival relativity" (Gray 1996): the conception, common to many peoples of the continent, according to which the world is inhabited by different sorts of subjects or persons, human and non-human, which apprehend reality from distinct points of view. The presuppositions and consequences of this idea are irreducible (as Lima 1995:425-38 has shown) to our current notion of relativism, which at first it seems to call to mind. In fact, they lie athwart, so to speak, the opposition between relativism and universalism. The resistance of Amerindian perspectivism to the terms of our epistemological debate casts suspicion on the robustness and transportability of the ontological partitions which feed it. In particular, as many anthropologists have already concluded (albeit for different reasons), the classic distinction between Nature and Culture cannot be used to describe domains internal to non-Western cosmologies, without first undergoing a rigorous ethnographic critique.

In the present case, such a critique requires the disassociation and redistribution of the predicates subsumed within the two paradigmatic sets that traditionally oppose one another under the headings of Nature and Culture: universal and particular, objective and subjective, physical and moral, fact and value, the

given and the constructed, necessity and spontaneity, immanence and transcendence, body and spirit, animality and humanity, among many more. This reshuffling of our conceptual cards leads me to suggest the term *multinaturalism* to designate one of the contrasting features of Amerindian thought in relation to modern 'multiculturalist' cosmologies. The latter notion rests on the mutual implication of the unity of nature and the multiplicity of cultures – the former guaranteed by the objective universality of bodies and substance, the latter generated by the subjective particularity of spirit and meaning.[2] Contrary to this, the Amerindian concept would suppose the unity of spirit and the diversity of bodies. Culture or the subject would here take the form of the universal; nature or the object the form of the particular.

This inversion, perhaps too symmetrical to be more than speculative, must be developed into a phenomenologically rich interpretation of Amerindian cosmological notions, capable of determining the constitutive conditions of the contexts which might be called 'nature' and 'culture'. Thus we must reconstitute these notions only to then desubstantiate them, since in Amerindian thought the categories of Nature and Culture are not only different in content but also do not possess the same status as their Western analogues; they do not indicate domains of being but rather relational configurations, mobile perspectives, in sum – points of view.

Clearly then, I think that the nature/culture distinction needs to be criticised, but not in order to conclude that such a thing does not exist (there are already too many things that do not exist). The "above all methodological value" that Lévi-Strauss (1962b:327) came to attribute to them is here understood as above all comparative. The flourishing industry of criticisms of the Westernizing character of all dualism has called for the abandonment of our dichotomising intellectual heritage. The problem is very real, but the ethnologically motivated post-binary counter-proposals have so far been more a case of wishful unthinking than anything else, being more verbal than properly conceptual. While we wait for the real thing, I prefer to put our contrasts into perspective and compare them to the distinctions which are actually operating in Amerindian cosmologies.

Perspectivism

The initial stimulus for the present reflections were the numerous references in Amazonian ethnography to an indigenous theory according to which the way humans perceive animals and other subjectivities that inhabit the world – gods, spirits, the dead, inhabitants of other cosmic levels, plants, meteorological phenomena, geographic accidents, objects and artefacts – differs profoundly from the way in which these beings see humans and see themselves.

Typically, in normal conditions, humans see humans as humans and animals as animals. With regard to spirits, seeing these usually invisible beings is a sure sign that 'conditions' are not normal. Predator animals and spirits, meanwhile, see humans as animals of prey to the same extent that animals of prey see humans as spirits or predator animals. Baer (1994:224), writing about the Machiguenga, notes: "a human being sees him- or herself as such. However, the moon, the snake, the jaguar and the mother of smallpox, see him or her as a tapir or a peccary that they kill". Seeing us as non-human beings, animals and spirits see *themselves* as humans. They perceive themselves to be or become anthropomorphic when they are in their own houses or villages and experience their own habits and characteristics in the form of culture. Thus they see their food as human food (jaguars see blood as manioc beer, the dead see crickets as fish, vultures see the maggots in rotting flesh as grilled meat, etc.). They see bodily attributes (fur, feathers, claws, beaks, etc.) as adornments or cultural instruments, and they see their social system as organised in just the same way as human institutions (with chiefs, shamans, rituals, marriage rules etc.). Here "to see as" refers literally to percepts, and not analogically to concepts, although in some cases, the emphasis is more on the categorical rather than sensory aspect of the phenomenon. In any case, shamans, the masters of cosmic schematism (Taussig 1987:462-63), dedicated to communicating and administering opposed perspectives are always there to make concepts sensible and render intuitions intelligible.

In sum, animals are people, or see themselves as persons. Such a notion is virtually always associated with the idea that the visible form of every species is an envelope (a 'clothing'), concealing an internal human form which is normally only visible to the eyes of the particular species, or to certain trans-specific beings, such as shamans.[3] This internal form is the spirit of the animal: an intentionality or subjectivity which is formally identical with human consciousness, materialisable, let us say, in a human bodily schema concealed behind an animal mask. At first sight, then, we would have a distinction between an anthropomorphic essence of a spiritual kind, common to animate beings, and a variable bodily appearance, characteristic of each species. However this latter is not a fixed attribute but rather changeable and removable clothing. This notion of 'clothing' is, in fact, one of the privileged expressions of universal metamorphosis – spirits, the dead and shamans who assume animal form, animals that turn into other animals, humans who are inadvertently changed into animals – an omnipresent process in the "highly transformational world" (Rivière 1994) proposed by Amazonian cultures.[4]

These concepts are recorded in various South American ethnographies but generally they have been objects of short commentary, and they appear to be very unevenly elaborated by the cosmologies in question.[5] These ideas can also be found, and perhaps with even greater significance, among the cultures of the northern regions of North America and of Asia, and more rarely, among some

tropical hunter-gatherer peoples of other continents.[6] In South America, the societies of north-western Amazonia show the highest degree of elaboration of these ideas (see Århem 1993 and 1996 who largely inspired the preceding characterisation; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1985; S. Hugh-Jones 1996a). However, it is Vilaça's (1992) ethnography on Wari' cannibalism and Lima's (1995) work on Juruna epistemology which make the most directly related contributions to the present work, as they link the question of non-human points of view and of the relational nature of cosmological categories to the broader picture of a general economy of alterity (Viveiros de Castro 1993a, 1996a).[7]

Some initial clarifications are necessary. Firstly, perspectivism is rarely applicable to all animals (as well as encompassing other beings); it appears most frequently to be salient for species such as the great predators or carnivores, like the jaguar, the anaconda, vultures or the harpy eagle, as well as for typical human prey, such as the peccary, monkeys, fish, deer and the tapir. Therefore, one of the basic dimensions, possibly even the central dimension refers to the relative and relational status of predator and prey.[8] The Amazonian ontology of predation provides a pragmatic and theoretical context which is highly favourable to perspectivism.

Secondly, personhood and 'perspectivity' – the ability to occupy a point of view – are questions of degree and situation, rather than fixed diacritical properties of this or that species. Some non-humans avail themselves of these potentialities in more complete ways than others; indeed some of them display them with an intensity that is superior to our own species and in this sense they are 'more persons' than humans are (Hallowell 1960:69). Aside from this, the question has an *a posteriori* essential quality to it. The possibility that a hitherto insignificant being reveals itself (in dreams, in shamanic discourse) as a prosopomorphic agent capable of affecting human affairs is always present. In this regard, personal experience, one's own or that of others, is more decisive than any substantive cosmological dogma.

Beyond this, it is not always the case that spirits or subjectivities are attributed to individual representatives of living species; there are examples of cosmologies which deny consciousness or any other spiritual predicate to all post-mythical animals.[9] Nonetheless, as we know, the notion of spirit 'owners' of animals ('Mothers of game', 'Masters of peccaries' etc.) is widespread on the continent. These spirit masters, invariably endowed with intentionality analogous to that of humans, function as hypostases of the animal species with which they are associated, thereby creating an inter-subjective field for human-animal relations even where empirical animals are not spiritualised. It should be added that the distinction between animals seen in their spirit-aspect and the spirit masters of species is not always clear nor pertinent (Alexiades 1999:194). Besides, it is always possible that what we encounter in the forest which appeared to be just an animal reveals itself as the disguise of a spirit of a completely different nature.

Let us finally and above all remember, that if there is one virtually universal notion in Amerindian thought it is that of an original state of non-differentiation between humans and animals described in mythology:

[What is a myth?] – *If you were to ask an American Indian, it is very likely that he would answer: it is a story about the time when humans and animals did not yet distinguish themselves from one another. This definition seems to me to be very profound.* (Lévi-Strauss & Eribon 1988: 193)

Mythic narratives are filled with beings whose shape, name and behaviour inextricably mix human and non-human attributes in a common context of intercommunicability which is identical to the one that defines the current intra-human world. Thus Amerindian perspectivism finds in myth a, so to speak, virtual focus where the differences between points of view are simultaneously annulled and exacerbated. In the absolute discourse of myth, each species of being appears to others as it appears to itself – as human – and yet acts as though it was already displaying its distinctive and definitive nature as animal, plant or spirit. In a certain manner all characters appearing in mythology are shamans, which, incidentally, is directly claimed by some Amazonian cultures (Guss 1989:52). Discourse without subject, Lévi-Strauss said of myth (1964:19); discourse 'only of subjects' we could equally say, this time talking not about the enunciation of the discourse but rather of the enunciated. Myth, as the universal vanishing point of perspectivism, speaks of a state of being where bodies and names, souls and actions, self and others intermingle, floating in the same pre-subjective and pre-objective milieu. A milieu whose demise mythology precisely sets out to narrate, since any origin is also an end.

This end – also in the sense of finality – is as we know the differentiation between culture and nature analysed in the monumental quartet by Lévi-Strauss (1964, 1966, 1967, 1971). This process however, and the point has been relatively little noted, does not talk of the differentiation of humans out of animals as is the case in our modern evolutionist mythology. *The original condition common to humans and animals is not animality but rather humanity.* The great mythic division does not so much show culture distinguishing itself from nature but rather nature distancing itself from culture. Thus myths describe how animals lost the attributes inherited or maintained by humans (Lévi-Strauss 1985:14, 190; Brightman 1993:40, 160). Humans are those who continued the same as before: animals are ex-humans and humans are not ex-animals.[10]

In some Amazonian ethnographies we find the clearly formulated idea that humanity is the matter of the primordial *plenum*, or the original form of just about everything, not just of animals:

> *Campa mythology is largely the history of how, one by one, the primal Campa be-*
> *came irreversibly transformed into the first representatives of various species of*
> *animals and plants, as well as astronomical bodies or features of the terrain.* […]
> *The development of the universe then, has been primarily a process of diversifica-*
> *tion, with mankind as the primal substance out of which many if not all of the*
> *categories of beings and things in the universe arose, the Campa of today being the*
> *descendants of those ancestral Campa who escaped being transformed.* (Weiss
> 1972:169-70)

Thus our popular anthropology sees humanity as built from animal foundations
which are normally hidden by culture – having once been 'completely' animals,
we 'deep down' remain animals. By contrast, indigenous thought concludes the
contrary, that having once been humans, animals and other beings of the cosmos
continue to be humans, albeit in a non-evident way.

In sum, the "common predicate as nature's beings is not man as species but
humankind as condition" (Descola 1986:120). This distinction between the hu-
man species and the human condition should be emphasised.[11] The distinction
has an evident connection with the idea of animal clothing concealing a common
human-spiritual 'essence' as well as with the problem of the general meaning of
perspectivism.

Shamanism

Amerindian perspectivism is associated with two recurring characteristics in
Amazonia: the symbolic valorisation of hunting and the importance of shaman-
ism.[12] With regard to hunting it is to be emphasised that this is a matter of sym-
bolic centrality and not ecological necessity. Avid horticulturists such as the Tu-
kano or Juruna – who aside from gardening live mainly by fishing – do not differ
greatly from the great hunters of Canada and Alaska when it comes to the cosmo-
logical weight placed on animal predation (be it hunting or fishing), or with re-
gard to the spiritual subjectivisation of animals and the theory that the universe
is populated with extra-human intentionalities endowed with their own perspec-
tives.[13] In this sense the spiritualization of plants, meteorological phenomena
and artefacts could perhaps be seen as secondary or derivative in view of the
spiritualization of animals. The animal appears to be the prototypical extra-hu-
man Other with a special relationship to other prototypical figures of alterity
such as affines.[14]

This widespread hunter's ideology is also and above all an ideology of sha-
mans. The notion that present-day non-humans have an invisible prosopomor-
phic side is a fundamental presupposition of various dimensions of indigenous

practice but this idea is fore-grounded in one particular context, which is sha-manism. Amazonian shamanism may be defined as the manifest aptitude of cer-tain individuals to deliberately cross bodily boundaries and adopt the perspec-tive of alo-specific subjectivities so as to manage the relations between these be-ings and humans. Seeing non-human beings as these see themselves (as humans), shamans are capable of playing the role of active interlocutors in transspecific dialogues. But above all they are capable of returning to tell the tale, which is something that laymen are hardly able to do. The encounter with or exchange of perspectives is a dangerous process, it is a political art – a diplomacy. If western 'multiculturalism' is relativism as public policy, then Amerindian shamanic per-spectivism is multinaturalism as cosmic politics.

Shamanism is a way of doing things which implies a way of knowing them, or rather, a certain ideal of knowledge. In various regards, this ideal is the polar opposite of objectivist epistemologies favoured by western modernity. In the lat-ter, the category of object provides the *telos*: to know is to objectify; it is to be able to distinguish in the object what is intrinsic to it from what pertains to the know-ing subject and which as such was unwittingly and/or inevitably projected onto the object. Thus to know is to desubjectify, to render explicit the part of the sub-ject present in the object in order to reduce it to an ideal minimum. Just like ob-jects, subjects are seen as resulting from processes of objectification: the subject is constituted by or recognises itself in the objects it produces and knows itself ob-jectively when it succeeds in seeing itself 'from the outside', as a 'that'. The name of our epistemological game is objectification. What is not objectified remains unreal and abstract. The Other takes the form of a thing.

Amerindian shamanism appears to be guided by the inverse principle. To know is to personify, to take the point of view of that which is to be known – of what or rather of who; for shamanic knowledge envisages 'something' which is 'someone', another subject or agent. The Other takes the form of a person.[15]

To use fashionable vocabulary, I would say that shamanic personification or subjectification reflects a propensity for universalising the "intentional stance" highlighted by Dennett (1978) and other modern philosophers of mind (or phi-losophers of the modern mind). More precisely – given that Indians are perfectly capable of adopting the "physical" and "functional" stances (op. cit) in their dai-ly lives - , I would say that we have before us an epistemological ideal, which far from trying to reduce 'surrounding intentionality' to zero in order to attain an absolutely objective representation of the world, has taken the opposite decision: true knowledge aims at the revelation of a maximum of intentionality, by way of a process of systematic and deliberate "abduction of agency" (Gell 1998). I said above that shamanism was a *political* art. What I am now saying is that it is a po-litical *art*.[16] A good shamanic interpretation succeeds in seeing each *event* as being in reality an *action*, an expression of internal states or intentional predicates of some agent (ibid.:16-18). The success of the interpretation is directly proportional

to the order of intentionality which can be attributed to the object.[17] An entity or a state of things which does not lend itself to subjectification, or to the determination of its social relation with that which it knows is shamanically insignificant – it is an epistemic residue, an 'impersonal factor' resistant to precise knowledge. Needless to say our objectivist epistemology takes the opposite direction: it considers the intentional stance of common sense as merely convenient fiction, something we adopt when the behaviour of the target-object is too complicated to be disassembled into elementary physical processes. An exhaustive scientific explanation of the world must be able to reduce all actions to a chain of causal events and these must be reducible to materially dense interactions (there is no such thing as 'action' at a distance).

In sum, if in the naturalist world of modernity, a subject is an insufficiently analysed object, then the Amerindian interpretative convention follows the inverse principle: an object is an incompletely analysed subject. Here it is necessary to know how to personify because it is necessary to personify in order to know. The object of interpretation is the counter-interpretation of the object.[18] For it must be either expanded until it reaches its full intentional form – as spirit, as animal in its human shape – or at least, have its relation with a subject demonstrated, that is be determined as something that exists "in the vicinity" of an agent (Gell op. cit). With regard to this second option, the idea that non-human agents perceive themselves and their behaviour in the guise of human culture plays a crucial role. The translation of 'culture' into the worlds of extra-human subjectivities has as its corollary the redefinition of various 'natural' events and objects as indices for the abduction of social agency. The most common case is the transformation of something which for humans is a mere brute fact, into an artefact or highly civilised form of behaviour from the point of view of another species: what we call 'blood' is the 'beer' of the jaguar, what we take for a muddy waterhole, tapirs take as a large ceremonial house, and so forth. Artefacts possess this interestingly ambiguous ontology: they are objects but of necessity they point to a subject since they are like solidified actions, material incarnations of a non-material intentionality (Gell 1998:16-18, 67). And so it is that what some call 'nature' can well be the 'culture' of others. This is then a lesson from which anthropologists might well learn.[19]

Animism

The reader will have noticed that my 'perspectivism' is reminiscent of the notion of 'animism' recently recuperated by Descola (1992, 1996) to describe a way of articulating the natural and social series which would be symmetrical and inverse to totemism. Stating that all conceptualisations of non-humans always refer to the social domain, Descola distinguishes three modes of "objectifying nature":

totemism, where the differences between natural species are used to logically organise the order internal to society, that is, where the relationship between nature and culture is metaphorical and marked by discontinuity both within and between series; animism, where the "elementary categories of social life" organise the relations *between* humans and natural species, thus defining a social continuity of a socio-morphic kind, between nature and culture, founded on the attribution of "human dispositions and social attributes" to "natural beings" (id. 1996:87); and naturalism, typical of western cosmologies, which supposes an ontological duality between nature, the domain of necessity, and culture, the domain of spontaneity, areas separated by metonymic discontinuity. The 'animic mode' is characteristic of societies in which animals are the "strategic focus of the objectification of nature … and of its socialisation" (id. 1992: 115) as is the case in indigenous America, reigning supreme in those social morphologies lacking in elaborate internal segmentations. But this mode can also be found co-existing or combined with totemism, wherein such segmentations exist, as in the case of the Bororo and their *aroe/bope* dualism (Crocker 1985).

Descola's theory is yet another example of the general dissatisfaction with the unilateral emphasis on metaphor in totemism and classificatory logic which characterises the Lévi-Straussian image of the savage mind. This dissatisfaction gave rise to various recent attempts at exploring the dark side of the structuralist moon. These attempts tried to recover the radical sense of concepts such as "participation" or "animism", which had been distanced by Lévi-Strauss' intellectualism.[20] Nonetheless it is clear that many of Descola's propositions (and he would be the first to admit this) are already present in the works of that author. Thus the "elementary categories structuring social life" that organise the relations between humans and non-humans are, in the Amazonian cases discussed by Descola, essentially categories of kinship, particularly the categories of consanguinity and affinity. Meanwhile, in *The Savage Mind* the following observation may be found:

> *[M]arriage exchanges can furnish a model directly applicable to the mediation between nature and culture among peoples where totemic classifications and functional specialization, if present at all, have only a very limited yield.* (Lévi-Strauss 1962b:128)

This very concisely prefigures what many ethnographers came to write later about the role of affinity as cosmological operator in Amazonia. Moreover, in suggesting the complementary distribution of this model of exchange between nature and culture and of totemic systems, Lévi-Strauss appears to be envisaging something very similar to the animic model discussed here. Further convergence: Descola mentions the Bororo as an example of the coexistence of animism and totemism; but he could also have cited the Ojibwa case where the coexistence of

the systems of *totem* and *manido* (Lévi-Strauss 1962a:25-33) served as a matrix for the general opposition between totemism and sacrifice (id. 1962b:295-302) and which can be directly interpreted within the framework of a distinction between totemism and animism.[21]

I shall concentrate my comments on the contrast between animism and naturalism since this is a good point of departure for appreciating the characteristic difference of Amerindian perspectivism. I analyse the contrast in a slightly different sense to the original, since I believe that Descola's description of modern naturalism purely in terms of "ontological dualism" is somewhat incomplete. As far as totemism is concerned this seems to me to be a heterogeneous phenomenon, primarily classificatory rather than cosmological: totemism is not a system of *relations* between nature and culture as is the case in the other two modes, but rather of purely logical and differential *correlations.* For now, let us therefore stay with animism and naturalism.

Animism could be defined as an ontology which postulates the social character of relations between humans and non-humans: the space between nature and society is itself social. Naturalism is founded on the inverted axiom: relations between society and nature are themselves natural. Indeed, if in the animic mode the distinction nature/culture is internal to the social world, humans and animals being immersed in the same socio-cosmic medium (and in this sense, human society is one natural phenomenon among others), then in naturalist ontology, the distinction 'nature/culture' is internal to nature (and in this sense, human society is one natural phenomenon amongst others). Animism has society as the unmarked pole, naturalism has nature: these poles function, respectively and contrastively as the universal dimension of each mode. Thus animism and naturalism are asymmetric and metonymic structures (which distinguishes them from totemism, a metaphoric and equipollent structure).[22]

In our naturalist ontology the nature/society interface is natural: humans are organisms like others, body-objects in 'ecological' interaction with other bodies and forces, all of them ruled by the necessary laws of biology and physics; 'productive forces' harness natural forces. Social relations, that is, contractual or instituted relations among subjects, can only exist internal to human society. But this is the problem of naturalism: how 'non -natural' can these relations really be? Given the universality of nature, the status of the human and social world is profoundly unstable and, as our tradition shows, it perpetually oscillates between a naturalistic monism (socio-biology or evolutionary psychology being two of its current avatars) and an ontological dualism of nature/culture (culturalism or symbolic anthropology being some of its contemporary expressions).[23] For all that, the assertion of this latter dualism and its correlates (body/mind, pure reason/practical reason etc), only reinforces the ultimate referential character of the notion of Nature, by revealing itself to be the direct descendant of the theological opposition between said Nature and *Supernature*,which is of transparent etymol-

ogy. For Culture is the modern name of Spirit – let us recall the distinction be-
tween *Naturwissenschaften* and *Geisteswissenschaften* – or at least it is the name of
the uncertain compromise between Nature and Grace. Of animism, we would be
tempted to say that the instability is located in the opposite pole: here the prob-
lem is how to administer the mixture of culture and nature present in animals
and not as among ourselves, the combination of humanity and animality consti-
tuting humans; the issue is to differentiate a nature from universal sociomor-
phism, and, accordingly, a 'particularly' human body from a trans-specific 'pub-
lic' spirit.

Very well. However, is it really possible and above all interesting to define
animism as a projection of differences and qualities internal to the human world
onto the non-human world, that is to define it as a "socio-centric" model where
intra-human categories and relations are used to map the universe (Descola
1996)? This projectionist interpretation is explicit in some glosses on the theory:
"if totemic systems model society after nature, then animic systems model nature
after society" (Århem 1996:185). The problem here, obviously, is to avoid any
undesirable proximity with the traditional sense of 'animism', or with the reduc-
tion of 'primitive classifications' to emanations of social morphology; but equal-
ly the problem is to go beyond other classical characterisations of the relation
between society and nature, notably the one we owe to Radcliffe-Brown in his
first article on totemism.[24]

Ingold (1991; 1996) showed how schemes of analogical projection or social mod-
elling of nature escape naturalist reductionism only to fall into a nature/culture
dualism which by distinguishing 'really natural' nature from 'culturally construct-
ed' nature reveals itself to be a typical cosmological antinomy faced with infinite
regression. The notion of model or analogy supposes a previous distinction be-
tween a domain wherein social relations are constitutive and literal and another
where they are representational and metaphorical. In other words, the idea that
humans and animals are linked by common sociality is contradicted by its depend-
ence on a prior ontological discontinuity. Animism interpreted as human sociality
projected onto the non-human world would be nothing but the metaphor of a me-
tonymy, remaining captive to a 'totemic' or classificatory reading.[25]

Amongst the questions remaining to be resolved, therefore, is that of knowing
whether animism can be described as a figurative use of categories pertaining to
the human social domain to conceptualise the domain of non-humans and their
relations with the former. This leads one to question the point to which perspec-
tivism, which might be seen as a kind of corollary of Descola's 'animism', really
expresses an anthropocentrism. Ultimately, what does it mean to say that animals
are persons?

Different question: if animism depends on the attribution of human cognitive
and sensory faculties to animals, and the same form of subjectivity, i.e. if animals
are 'essentially' humans, then what in the end is the difference between humans

and animals? If animals are people, then why do they not see us as people? Why, to be precise, the perspectivism? It is also necessary to ask whether the notion of contingent bodily forms ('clothing') can in fact be described in terms of an opposition between 'appearance' and 'essence' (Descola 1986:120; Århem 1993:122; Rivière 1994; S. Hugh-Jones 1996a). Finally, if animism is a way of objectifying nature in which the dualism of nature/culture does not hold, then what is to be done with the abundant indications regarding the centrality of this opposition to South American cosmologies? Are we dealing with just another 'totemic illusion', if not with an ingenuous projection of our Western dualism? Is it possible to make more than just synoptic use of the concepts of Nature and Culture or are they just "blanket labels" (Descola 1996:84) used in *Mythologiques* to organise the many semantic contrasts in American myths, contrasts that are irreducible to a single, fundamental dichotomy?

Ethnocentrism

In a well-known essay, Lévi-Strauss observes that for savages humanity ceases at the boundary of the group, a notion which is exemplified by the widespread auto-ethnonym meaning 'real humans', which, in turn, implies a definition of strangers as somehow pertaining to the domain of the extra-human. Therefore, ethnocentrism would not be the sad privilege of the West, but a natural ideological attitude, inherent in human collective life. Lévi-Strauss illustrates the universal reciprocity of this attitude with an anecdote:

> *In the Greater Antilles, some years after the discovery of America, whilst the Spaniards sent out investigating commissions to ascertain whether or not the natives had a soul, the latter were engaged in the drowning of white prisoners in order to verify, through prolonged watching, whether or not their corpses were subject to putrefaction* (Lévi-Strauss 1952:329)

From this parable Lévi-Strauss draws the famous paradoxical conclusion: "The barbarian is first of all the man who believes in barbarism". Some years later he reused the example of the Antilles, but this time underlining the asymmetry of perspectives: in their investigations regarding the humanity of the Other, the Europeans appealed to social science, whereas the Indians looked to the natural sciences; where the former concluded that the Indians were animals, the latter were content to doubt whether Europeans were divinities (id. 1955a:82-83). "*In equal ignorance*" the author concludes, the latter attitude was more worthy of human beings.

As we shall see, the anecdote reveals something else. For now, the general point is simple: the Indians, like the European invaders, considered that only the

group to which they belonged incarnated humanity; strangers were on the other side of the border which separates humans from animals and spirits, culture from nature and supernature. As matrix and condition for the existence of ethnocentrism, the nature/culture opposition appears to be a universal of social apperception. In sum, the answer to the question of the Spanish investigators was positive: the savages really did have souls.[26]

At the time when Lévi-Strauss was writing these lines, the strategy for vindicating the full humanity of savages was to demonstrate that they made the same distinctions as we do: the proof that they were true humans was that they considered that they alone were true humans. Like us, they distinguished culture from nature and they too believed that *Naturvölker* are always the others. The universality of the cultural distinction between nature and culture bore witness to the universality of Culture as human Nature.

Now however, everything has changed. The savages are no longer ethnocentric but rather cosmocentric; instead of having to prove that they are humans because they distinguish themselves from animals, we now have to recognise how *in*human *we* are for opposing humans to non-humans in a way they never did: for them nature and culture are part of the same socio-cosmic field. Not only would Amerindians leave a wide berth between themselves and the Great Cartesian Divide which separated humanity from animality, but their views anticipate the fundamental lessons of ecology which we are only now in a position to assimilate (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1976; Wagner 1977). Before, the Indians' refusal to concede predicates of humanity to other men was a matter for ironic commentary; now we stress that they extend such predicates far beyond the frontiers of their own species in a demonstration of "ecosophic" knowledge (Århem 1993) which we should emulate in as far as the limits of our objectivism permit.[27] Formerly, it had been necessary to combat the assimilation of the savage mind to narcissistic animism, the infantile stage of naturalism, showing that totemism affirmed the cognitive distinction between culture and nature. Today animism is again attributed to savages, but this time it is largely proclaimed (not by Descola, I hasten to underline) to be the true or at least 'valid' recognition of the universal mixing of subjects and objects, humans and non-humans, to which we modern people have always been blind due to our foolish, not to say sinful, habit of thinking in dichotomies. Thus are we to be saved from modern hubris by primitive and post-modern hybrids.

Two antinomies then, which are in fact only one: either Amerindians are ethnocentrically 'stingy' in the extension of their concept of humanity and they totemically oppose nature and culture; or they are cosmocentric and animic and do not profess to such a distinction, being models of relativist tolerance in postulating a multiplicity of points of view on the world. In sum: a fierce self-closure, or, very much to the contrary, a radical "opening to the Other" (Lévi-Strauss 1991: xvii)?

I believe that the solution to these antinomies lies not in favouring one branch over the other, sustaining, for example, the argument that the most recent characterisation of American attitudes is the correct one and relegating the other to the outer darkness of pre-post-modernity. Rather the point is to show that the thesis as well as the antithesis are true (both correspond to solid ethnographic intuitions), but that they apprehend the same phenomena from different angles; and also it is to show that both are imprecise in that they refer to a substantivist understanding of the categories of nature and culture (whether it be to affirm or negate them) which is not applicable to Amerindian cosmologies.

The first point to be considered is that the Amerindian words which are usually translated as 'human being' and which figure in those supposedly ethnocentric self-designations do not denote humanity as a natural species. They refer rather to the social condition of personhood, and, especially when modified by intensifiers such as 'true', 'real', 'genuine' they function, pragmatically if not syntactically, less as *nouns* then as *pronouns*. They indicate the position of the subject; they are enunciative markers, not names. Far from manifesting a semantic shrinking of a common name to a proper name (taking 'people' to be the name of the tribe), these words move in the opposite direction, going from substantive to perspective (using 'people' as a collective pronoun 'we people/us'). For this very reason, indigenous categories of collective identity have that enormous variability of scope that characterises pronouns, contrastively marking Ego's immediate kin, his/her local group, all humans, or even all beings endowed with subjectivity: their coagulation as 'ethnonyms' seems largely to be an artefact of ethnographic description. Nor is it by chance that the majority of Amerindian ethnonyms which enter the literature are not self-designations, but rather names (frequently pejorative) conferred by other groups: ethnonymic objectivation is primordially applied to others, not to the ones in the position of subject (see Urban 1996:32-44). Ethnonyms are names of third parties; they belong to the category of '*they*' rather than to the category of '*we*'.[28] This, by the way, is consistent with a widespread avoidance of self-reference on the level of personal onomastics: names are neither spoken by their bearers nor in their presence: to name is to externalise, to separate (from) the subject.

Thus self-references such as 'people' mean 'person', not 'member of the human species', and they are personal pronouns registering the point of view of the subject talking, not proper names. To say, then, that animals and spirits are people is to say that they are persons, and to attribute to non-humans the capacities of conscious intentionality and agency which define the enunciative position of the subject. Such capacities are objectified as the soul or spirit with which these non-humans are endowed. Whatever possesses a soul is a subject and whoever has a soul is capable of having a point of view. Amerindian souls or subjectivities, be they human or non-human are thus perspectival categories, cosmological

deictics, whose analysis calls not so much for substantialist psychology as for a pragmatic of signs (Viveiros de Castro 1992b; Taylor 1993b, 1996).[29]

Thus every being to whom a point of view is attributed would be a subject; or better, wherever there is a point of view there is a subject position. Whilst our constructionist epistemology can be summed up in the Saussurean formula: *"the point of view creates the object"* – the subject being the original, fixed condition whence the point of view emanates – Amerindian perspectivism proceeds along the lines that the *point of view creates the subject*; whatever is activated or 'agented' by the point of view will be a subject.[30] This is why terms such as *wari'* (Vilaça 1992), *dene* (McDonnell 1984) or *masa* (Århem 1993) mean 'people', but they can be used for – and therefore used by – very different classes of beings: used by humans they denote human beings; but used by peccaries, howler monkeys or beavers they self-refer to peccaries, howler monkeys or beavers.

As it happens, however, these non-humans placed in the subject perspective do not merely 'call' themselves 'people'; they see themselves morphologically and culturally as *humans*, as the shamans explain, and more generally lay people profess.[31] The symbolic spiritualisation of animals would imply their imaginary hominisation and culturalisation; thus the anthropocentric character of indigenous thought would seem to be unquestionable. However, I believe that something completely different is at issue. Any being which vicariously occupies the point of view of reference, standing in the position of subject, sees itself as a member of the human species. The human bodily form and human culture – the schemata of perception and action 'embodied' in specific dispositions – are pronominal attributes of the same type as the self-designations discussed above. They are reflexive or apperceptive schematisms ("reifications" *sensu* Strathern 1988), by which all subjects apprehend themselves, and not literal and constitutive human predicates projected metaphorically, i.e. improperly onto non-humans. These attributes are immanent in the viewpoint and move with it. A human being – naturally – enjoys the same prerogative and therefore, as Baer's misleading tautology tells us (see *supra*) "sees him- or herself as such".

Let us be clear: it is not that animals are subjects because they are humans in disguise, but rather that they are human because they are potential subjects. This is to say *Culture is the Subject's nature*; it is the form in which every subject experiences its own nature. Animism is not a projection of substantive human qualities cast onto non-humans; what animism expresses is a real equivalence of the relations that humans and non-humans have with themselves: wolves see wolves as humans see humans – as humans. "Man" can certainly be a "wolf unto man"; but in another sense, a wolf is a man unto wolves. For, as I suggested, the common condition of humans and animals is humanity, not animality, because *humanity* is the name for the general form taken by the Subject.

The attribution of human-type consciousness and intentionality (not to speak of bodily form and cultural habits) to non-human beings is usually indiscrimi-

nately referred to as 'anthropocentrism' or 'anthropomorphism'. I, however, think that these two labels should be taken to designate opposing cosmological attitudes. For example, Western popular evolutionism is fiercely anthropocentric but does not seem to me to be particularly anthropomorphic. In turn, indigenous animism can be characterised as anthropomorphic but certainly not as anthropocentric. For, if sundry other beings besides humans are 'human' – then we humans are not that special. 'Primitive narcissism' is a red herring. In order to find a real case of narcissism it is necessary to look to modernity. To the young Marx for example, who wrote the following about our species):

> *In creating an* objective world *by his practical activity, in* working-up *inorganic nature, man proves himself a conscious species being. …Admittedly animals also produce. … But an animal only produces what it immediately needs for itself or its young. It produces one-sidedly, while man produces universally. … An animal produces only itself, whilst man reproduces the whole of nature. … An animal forms things in accordance with the standard and the need of the species to which it belongs, whilst man knows hot to produce in accordance with the standards of other species* (Marx 1961 [1844]:75-76, in Sahlins 1996).

Whatever Marx intended to say with this proposition that man "produces universally", I read it as an affirmation that man is the universal animal: an interesting idea. (If man is the universal animal, then are other animal species each particular humanities?). While it appears to be in agreement with the Amerindian notion that humanity is the universal form of agency, Marx's judgement is in fact its absolute inversion. He is saying that humans can be any kind of animal, that we have more Being than any other species; Indians, on the contrary, say that any animal can be human, that there is more Being in an animal than meets the eye. Man is the universal animal in two entirely different senses: universality is anthropocentric in Marx's case and anthropomorphic in the indigenous case.

Above I argued that animism needs to be understood as expressing the logical equivalence of the reflexive relations that each species, including humans, entertains with itself. Let us, in fact, consider this paragraph by Marie-Françoise Guédon on Tsimshian cosmology from the northwest coast:

> *[…] If one is to follow the main myths, for the human being, the world looks like a human community surrounded by an spiritual realm, including an animal kingdom with all beings coming and going according to their kinds and interfering with each others' lives; however, if one were to go and become an animal, a salmon for instance, one would discover that salmon people are to themselves as human beings are to us, and that to them, we human beings, would look like naxnoq, or perhaps bears feeding on their salmon. Such translation goes through several levels. For instance, the leaves of the cotton tree falling in the Skeena River are the*

salmon of the salmon people. I do not know what the salmon would be for the leaf,
but I guess they appear what we look like to the salmon — unless they looked like
bears. (Guédon 1984:141-42).

Therefore, if salmon appears to salmon as humans appear to humans – this is
animism - salmon do *not* appear human to humans, *nor* humans to salmon – this
is perspectivism.

Maybe animism and perspectivism have a more profound relationship to to-
temism than foreseen in Descola's model. Why do animals (or others) see them-
selves as humans? Precisely, I suggest, because humans see them as animals, see-
ing themselves as humans. Peccaries cannot see themselves as peccaries (and
then speculate to the effect that perhaps humans and other beings are peccaries
underneath their specific clothing) because this is the form in which they are seen
by humans. If humans see themselves as humans and are seen as non-humans –
as animals or spirits – by non-humans, then animals must necessarily see them-
selves as humans. This asymmetric skewing of perspectivist animism contrasts
interestingly with the symmetry exhibited by totemism. In the first case, a corre-
lation of reflexive identities (a human is to itself as a specific animal is to itself)
provides the substrate to the relation between the human series and the animal
series; in the second case, a correlation of the differences articulates the two se-
ries. A correlation of differences produces a symmetrical and reversible structure,
whilst a correlation of identities produces the asymmetrical and seemingly 'pro-
jective'   structure of animism. This occurs, I believe, because what animism
claims, ultimately, is not so much that animals are similar to humans but rather
that they – like we – are different from themselves: the difference is internal or
intensive, not external or extensive. If we all have souls, nobody is identical. If
anything can be human, then nobody is unequivocally human. Humanity taken
as the general ground of Being renders humanity taken as a distintictive, species-
specific figure very problematic.

Multinaturalism

The idea of a world that contains a multiplicity of subjective positions quickly
brings to mind the notion of relativism. Indeed, direct or indirect mention of rela-
tivism is frequent in the description of Amerindian cosmologies. Consider this
judgment put forth by Kaj Århem, the ethnographer of the Makuna. After de-
scribing the perspectival universe of these people from northwest Amazonia in
minute detail, Århem concludes: the notion of multiple points of view on reality,
implies, in so far as the Makuna are concerned, that "*any perspective is equally
valid and true*" and that "*a true and correct representation of the world does not exist*"
(1993: 124; my emphasis).

To be sure, Århem is right; but only in a certain sense. For it is very likely that, as far as *humans* are concerned, Makuna people would say, quite to the contrary, that there is indeed only *one* true and right representation of the world. If we, for example, began to see the worms that infest a corpse as grilled fish, like vultures do, then we could conclude that there was something very wrong with us. For this would signify that we were turning into vultures, which normally is not part of anybody's plan: it is the sign of illness or worse. Perspectives must be kept separate. Only shamans, who are so to speak species-androgynous, are able to make these distinct perspectives communicate with one another, and only under special and controlled conditions.[32]

But there is a far more important question here. Is Amerindian perspectivist theory really, as Århem argues, supposing a multiplicity of *representations* of the same world? It is enough to consider what ethnographies are saying, in order to perceive that it is the exact opposite that is happening: all beings see ('represent') the world in the *same* manner – what changes is the *world* that they see. Animals use the same categories and values as humans: their worlds, like ours, revolve around hunting and fishing, cooking and fermented drinks, around cross-cousins and war, around initiation rites, shamans, chiefs, spirits etc. (Guédon op.cit.: 142). If the moon, snakes and jaguars see humans as tapirs or wild pigs, this is because, like us, they eat tapirs and wild pigs, food appropriate for people. It could only be like this, for, being people in their own department, non-humans see things *like* 'we' see them. But the things *that* they see are other: what for us is blood, for jaguars is manioc beer; what for the souls of the dead is a rotting corpse, for us is fermenting manioc; what we see as a muddy waterhole, tapirs see as a large ceremonial house, and so on.

At first sight, the idea seems slightly counter-intuitive, because when we start thinking about it, it appears to transform itself into its opposite, just like those visual illusions known as figure-ground reversals. For example, Gerald Weiss describes the world of the Campa as "a world of relative appearances, where different types of beings see the same things differently" (1972:170). Once again, in a certain sense this is true. But what Weiss is not able to 'see', is that the fact that different types of beings see the same things differently is simply a consequence of the fact that different types of beings see different things in the same way. For what counts as "the same things"? Same in relation to whom, to what species? The spectre of the thing-in-itself haunts Weiss' formulation.

Perspectivism is not relativism but multinaturalism. Cultural relativism, a type of multiculturalism, supposes a diversity of subjective and partial representations, each striving to grasp an external and unified nature, which remains perfectly indifferent to those representations. Amerindians propose the opposite: a representational or phenomenological unity which is purely pronominal, indifferently applied to real diversity. One single 'culture', multiple 'natures'; constant episte-

mology, variable ontology – perspectivism is multinaturalist, for a perspective is not a representation.

A perspective is not a representation because representations are a property of the mind or spirit, whereas the point of view is located in the body.[33] The ability to adopt a point of view is undoubtedly a power of the soul, and non-humans are subjects in so far as they have (or are) a spirit; but the differences between viewpoints – and a viewpoint is nothing if not a difference – lies not in the soul. Since the soul is formally identical in all species, it can only see the same things everywhere – the difference is given in the specificity of bodies. This permits answers to be found to the questions posed above: if non-humans are persons and have souls, then what distinguishes them from humans? And why, being people, do they not see us as people?

Animals see in the *same* way as we do *different* things because their bodies are different from ours. I am not referring to physiological differences – as far as that is concerned, Amerindians recognise a basic uniformity of bodies – but rather to affects, dispositions or capacities, which render the body of every species unique: what it eats, how it communicates, where it lives, whether it is gregarious or solitary and so forth. The morphology of the body is a powerful sign of these differences in affect, although it can be deceptive since a human appearance could, for example, be concealing a jaguar-affect. Thus what I call *body* is not a synonym for distinctive substance or characteristic anatomy; it is an assemblage of affects or ways of being that constitute a *habitus*. Between the formal subjectivity of souls and the substantial materiality of organisms there is this central plane which is occupied by the body as a bundle of affects and capacities and which is the origin of perspectives. Far from the spiritual essentialism of relativism, perspectivism is a bodily *mannerism*.

The difference between bodies, however, is only apprehendable from an exterior viewpoint, by an other, since, for itself, every type of being has the same form (the generic form of a human being): bodies are the way in which alterity is apprehended as such. In normal conditions we do not see animals as people, and vice-versa, because our respective bodies (and the perspectives which they allow) are different. Thus if Culture is a reflexive perspective of the subject, objectified through the concept of soul, it can be said that Nature is the viewpoint which the subject takes of other body-affects; in other words, if Culture is the Subject's nature, then *Nature is the form of the other as body*, that is, as the something for a somebody. Culture takes the self-referential form of the pronoun '*I*'; nature is the form *par excellence* of 'non-person' or object, indicated by the impersonal pronoun '*it*' (Benveniste 1966a:256).

If, in the eyes of Amerindians, the body makes the difference, then it is easily understood why, in the anecdote told by Lévi-Strauss, the methods of investigation into the humanity of the other, employed by the Spanish and the inhabitants of the Antilles, showed such asymmetry. For the Europeans, the issue was to de-

cide whether the others possessed a soul; for the Indians, the aim was to find out what kind of body the others had. For the Europeans the great diacritic, the marker of difference in perspective, is the soul (are Indians humans or animals?); for the Indians it is the body (are Europeans humans or spirits?). The Europeans never doubted that the Indians had bodies – animals have them too; the Indians never doubted that the Europeans had souls - animals have them too. What the Indians wanted to know was whether the bodies of those 'souls' were capable of the same affects as their own – whether they had the bodies of humans or the bodies of spirits, non-putrescible and protean. In sum: European ethnocentrism consisted in denying that other bodies have the same souls as they themselves; Amerindian ethnocentrism in doubting whether other souls had the same bodies.

As Ingold has stressed (1994; 1996), the status of humans in Western thought is essentially ambiguous: on the one hand, humankind is an animal species amongst others, and animality is a domain that includes humans; on the other hand, humanity is a moral condition which excludes animals. These two statuses co-exist in the problematic and disjunctive notion of 'human nature'.[34] In other words, our cosmology postulates a physical continuity and a metaphysical discontinuity between humans and animals, the former making of 'Man' an object for the natural sciences, the latter an object for the humanities. Spirit is our great differentiator: it raises us above animals and matter in general, it makes each person unique before his or her fellow beings, it distinguishes cultures or historical periods in terms of their collective consciousness or spirit of the era. The body, by contrast, is the major integrator, the vehicle for 'modern participation': it connects us to the rest of the living, united by a universal substrate (DNA, carbon chemistry) which, in turn, links up with the ultimate nature of all material 'bodies'.[35] In contrast to this, Amerindians postulate a metaphysical continuity and a physical discontinuity between the beings of the cosmos, the former resulting in animism – i.e. in 'primitive participation' –, the latter in perspectivism. The spirit or soul – here not an immaterial substance but rather a reflexive form – integrates, while the body – not a material organism but a system of active affects – differentiates.

Perspectivism is not relativism but relationalism. Let us look at another discussion of the alleged Amazonian relativism: this time by Renard-Casevitz (1991) in her book on Machiguenga mythology. She discusses a myth in which the human protagonists visit various villages inhabited by strange people who call the snakes, bats and fireballs that they eat, "fish", "agouti" and "macaw" (human food). The author notes that indigenous perspectivism is not exactly cultural relativism:

The myth states that there are transcultural and transnational norms *in opera-
tion everywhere. These norms determine the same tastes and distastes, the dietary
values and the prohibitions or avoidances. (…) The mythic misunderstandings
stem from* visions that are out of phase with one another, *not from barbaric
tastes or from improper use of language* (op.cit.:25-26; my emphases)

But this does not prevent the author from seeing something perfectly banal:

This putting into perspective [mise en perspective] *is merely the application and
transposition of universal social practices, such as the fact that X's mother and
father are Y's parents-in-law…The variability of the denomination as a function
of the place occupied explains how A can at once be fish for X and snake for Y* (op.
cit.:29)

The problem is that generalising the positional relativity proper to life in society,
with its application to the interspecific or intergeneric differences, paradoxically
results in making human (i.e. Machiguenga) culture natural, that is absolute: eve-
rybody eats 'fish', nobody eats 'snake'.

Renard-Casevitz' analogy, between kinship positions and what passes as fish
or snake for various types of being is, however, very interesting. Let us make a
mental experiment. Kinship terms are open relaters or logical operators; they
pertain to that class of names that define something in terms of its relations to
another thing (linguists will surely have a name for such words, maybe 'two-
place predicates' or something like that). Whereas concepts such as 'fish' or 'tree',
on the other hand, are 'proper' nouns, closed or well circumscribed, ascribed to
an object by virtue of its self-sustaining and autonomous properties. Now, what
seems to happen in Amerindian perspectivism is that substances known by
nouns such as 'fish', 'snake', 'hammock' or 'canoe' are used as though they were
relators, something between noun and pronoun, the substantive and the deictic.
(Supposedly, there is a difference between names of natural kinds such as 'fish'
and names of artefacts such as 'hammock' – see below.) Somebody is a father
only because there is somebody else of whom he is the father: paternity is a rela-
tion, while 'fishness' or 'snakeness' are intrinsic properties of fish and snakes.
What happens in perspectivism, however, is that something is *also* only a fish
because there exists somebody of whom this thing is the fish.

But if to say that crickets are the fish of the dead or that mud holes are the
hammocks of tapirs is really like saying that Nina, the daughter of my sister Isa-
bel, is my niece – Renard-Casevitz' argument – then, there is indeed no relativism
involved. Isabel is not a mother *for* Nina, from Nina's point of view, in the usual,
subjectivist, sense of the expression. She is *Nina's mother*, she is really and objec-
tively her mother and I am in fact her uncle. The relation is internal and genitive
– my sister is somebody's mother, and I am that person's uncle, exactly like the

crickets of the living are the fish of the dead – and not an external, representational connection, of the type "X is the fish for somebody", which implies that it is merely *represented* as fish, whatever it may be 'in itself'. It would be absurd to say that, since Nina is Isabel's daughter but not mine, she therefore is not a 'daughter' *for me* – because in fact she is, a daughter *of my sister* to be precise. In *Process & Reality*, Whitehead observes: "It must be remembered that the phrase 'actual world' is like 'yesterday' or 'tomorrow', in that it alters its meaning according to standpoint" (Whitehead 1929:65, in Latour 1994:197). Thus a point of view is not a subjective opinion; there is nothing subjective in the concepts of 'yesterday' or 'tomorrow', just as there is not in notions of 'my mother' or 'your brother'. The real world of varying species depends on their points of view because the 'world' is made up of the different species; it is the abstract space of divergence between them in terms of point of view: there are no points of view *on* things – things and beings *are points of view* (Deleuze 1988:203). The question here, therefore, is not "how monkeys see the world" (Cheney & Seyfarth 1990) but what sort of a world is described through monkeys, what is the world of which they *are* the point of view.

Let us imagine that all 'substances' that inhabit Amerindian worlds are of this type. Let us suppose that just as two individuals are siblings because they have the same parents, they would be conspecifics because they have the same fish, the same snake, the same canoe and so forth. It can now be understood, then, why animals are so frequently thought of as linked by affinal relations to humans in Amazonian cosmologies. Human blood is jaguars' manioc beer exactly as my sister is my brother-in-law's wife – and for the same reasons. The many Amerindian myths which tell of interspecific marriages, elaborating on the difficult relations of human children- or siblings-in-law with their animal siblings or parents-in-law are doing nothing else other than combining the two analogies into a single one. Thus we can see how perspectivism has a close relation to exchange. It may not only be understood as a modality of exchange (the "reciprocity of perspectives" in our epigraph) but exchange itself needs to be defined in these terms – as an exchange of perspectives (Strathern 1988, 1992a, b).

With this we would then have an entirely relational ontology, in which individual substances or substantial forms are not the ultimate reality. Here there would be no distinction between primary and secondary qualities – to evoke a traditional philosophical contrast – or between 'brute facts' and 'institutional facts' – to evoke the duality advocated in a recent book by Searle (1995).

Let us talk a little about this book by Searle. In it, the author opposes what he calls brute facts or objects, whose reality is independent of consciousness – such as gravity, mountains, trees or animals (all natural kinds belong to this class) -, to facts and objects said to be institutional – whose existence, identity and purpose derive from specific cultural meanings attributed to them by humans – things such as marriage, money, axes or computers. Note that the book in question is

called *The construction of social reality* and not *The social construction of reality* which is a book by Berger and Luckmann. Brute facts are *not* constructed whereas institutional ones are (including statements about brute facts). In this overhauled version of the old nature/culture dualism, cultural relativism would be valid for cultural objects in the same way that natural universalism would be applicable to natural objects.

If by chance he came across my discussion of Amerindian perspectivism, Searle would probably say that what I am saying is that for Indians *all* facts are of the mental or institutional type and that all objects, even trees and fish, are like money or canoes in the sense that their only reality (as money or canoes, not as pieces of paper or wood) is due to the meanings and uses that humans attribute to them. This would be nothing other than relativism – an extreme, absolute form of relativism.

One of the implications of Amerindian animic-perspectival ontology is, indeed, that there are no autonomous, natural facts since the 'nature' of some is the 'culture' of others (see above). If the formula for a constitutive rule or for an institutional fact is "X counts as Y in context C" (Searle 1969:51-52) then the indigenous facts that interest us are really of this type: "Blood counts as manioc beer in the jaguar context". But here these institutional facts (the 'Y' in Searle's formula) are *universal*, something which escapes Searle's alternative where brute facts are universal and institutional ones are particular. It is impossible to reduce perspectivism to a kind of constructionist relativism (which would define all facts as institutional and would conclude that they are culturally variable). What we have here is a case of *cultural universalism*, whose counterpart is *natural relativism* (I take the expression from Latour 1991:144), or, as I prefer to call it, multinaturalism.

Everyone can remember Wittgenstein's saying: "if a lion could talk, we would not be able to understand him". This is a relativist declaration. While for Indians, I would say, lions – in this case jaguars – are not only able to talk but we are perfectly capable of understanding what they are *saying*; what they *mean by what they say*, however, is another story. Same representations, different objects; single meaning, multiple references. The Indians' problem is not a Fregean problem.

The savage body

The idea that the body appears to be the great differentiator in Amazonian cosmologies – that is, that which only unites beings of the same type, to the extent that it differentiates them from others – allows us to reconsider some of the classic questions of the ethnology of the region in a new light.

Thus the now already old theme of the importance of corporeality in Amazonian societies (Seeger, DaMatta & Viveiros de Castro 1979) gains a cosmological

basis. For example, it is possible to better understand why the categories of identity – be they individual, collective, ethnic or cosmological – are so frequently expressed using bodily idioms, in particular food practices and bodily decoration. The universal symbolic significance of alimentary and culinary regimes – from the mythic and Lévi-Straussian "raw and the cooked" to the Piro idea that their "real food" is what *makes* them, literally, different from white people (Gow 1991a); from the food avoidances that define "groups of substance" in central Brazil (Seeger 1980) to the basic classification of beings in terms of their eating habits (Baer 1994:88); from the conceptual productivity of commensality, similarity of diet and relative condition of prey-object and predator-subject (Vilaça 1992) to the omnipresence of cannibalism as the 'predicative' horizon of all relations with the other, be they matrimonial, alimentary or bellicose (Viveiros de Castro 1993). This universality demonstrates that the set of habits and processes that constitute bodies is precisely the location from which identity and difference emerge.

The same can be said of the intense semiotic use of the body in the definition of personal identity and in the circulation of social values (Turner 1995). The connection between this over-determination of the body (particularly its visible surface) and the restricted recourse in the Amazonian *socius* to objects capable of supporting relations – that is, a situation wherein social exchange is not mediated by material objectifications such as those characteristic of gift and commodity economies – has been shrewdly pinpointed by Turner, who has shown how the human body therefore must appear as the prototypical object. However, the Amerindian emphasis on the social construction of the body cannot be taken as the culturalisation of a natural substrate but rather as the production of a distinctly human body, meaning *naturally* human. Such a process seems to be expressing not so much a wish to 'de-animalise' the body through its cultural marking, but rather to *particularise a body that is still too generic*, differentiating it from the bodies of other human collectivities as well as from those of other species. The body, as the site of differentiating perspective, must be differentiated to the highest degree in order to completely express it.

The human body can be seen as the locus of the confrontation between humanity and animality, but not because it is essentially animal by nature and needs to be veiled and controlled by culture (Rivière 1994). The body is the subject's fundamental expressive instrument and at the same time the object *par excellence*, that which is presented to the sight of the other. This is why the maximal social objectification of bodies, their maximal particularisation expressed in decoration and ritual exhibition is at the same time the moment of maximal animalisation (Goldman 1975:178; S. Hugh-Jones 1979:141-142; Seeger 1987:chap.1 and 2; Turner 1991; 1995), when bodies are covered by feathers, colours, designs, masks and other animal prostheses. Man ritually clothed as an animal is the counterpart to the animal supernaturally naked. The former, transformed into an animal, re-

veals to himself the 'natural' distinctiveness of his body; the latter, free of its exterior form and revealing itself as human, shows the 'supernatural' similarity of spirit. The model of spirit is the human spirit, but the model of body is the body of animals; and if from the point of view of the subject culture takes the generic form of '*I*' and nature of '*it*', then the objectification of the subject to itself demands a singularisation of bodies – which naturalises culture, i.e. embodies it – whilst the subjectification of the object implies communication at the level of spirit – which culturalises nature, i.e. supernaturalises it. Put in these terms, the Amerindian distinction of nature/culture, before it is dissolved in the name of a common animic human-animal sociality, must be re-read in the light of somatic perspectivism.

An important argument in favour of the idea that the model for the body is the animal body is the recognition that there is virtually no example in Amazonian ethnography or mythology of animals 'dressing themselves' as humans, that is, donning a human body as though it were clothing. All bodies, including the human body, are conceived of as clothing or envelopes; but we never see animals putting on the human costume. What we find are humans putting on animal clothing and turning into animals, or animals removing their animal clothing and revealing themselves to be humans. The human form is like a body inside a body, the primordial naked body – the 'soul' of the body.[36]

It is important to note that these Amerindian bodies are not thought of as *given* but rather as *made*. Therefore, an emphasis on the methods of continuous fabrication of the body (Viveiros de Castro 1979); a notion of kinship as a process of active assimilation of individuals (Gow 1989; 1991) through the sharing of bodily substances, sexual and alimentary – and not as a passive inheritance of some substantial essence; the theory of memory which inscribes it in the "flesh" (Viveiros de Castro 1992a:201-7), and more generally the theory which situates knowledge in the body (McCallum 1996). The Amerindian *Bildung* happens to the body more than in the spirit: there is no spiritual change which is not bodily transformation, a redefinition of its affects and capacities.

The performative rather than given character of the body, a conception that requires it to differentiate itself 'culturally' in order for it to be 'naturally' different has an obvious connection with inter-specific metamorphosis, a possibility always suggested by Amerindian cosmologies. We need not be surprised by a way of thinking which posits bodies as the great differentiators yet at the same time states their transformability. Our cosmology supposes a singular distinctiveness of minds, but not even for this reason does it declare communication (albeit solipsism is a constant problem) to be impossible, or deny the mental/ spiritual transformations induced by processes such as education and religious conversion; in truth, it is precisely because the spiritual is the locus of difference that conversion becomes necessary (the Europeans wanted to know whether In-

dians had souls in order to modify them). Bodily metamorphosis is the Amerindian counterpart to the European theme of spiritual conversion.

The relative rarity of unequivocal examples of spirit possession in the complex of Amerindian shamanism may, therefore, derive from the prevalence of the opposite theme of bodily metamorphosis. The problem of the religious conversion of indigenous people might also be illuminated from this angle. The indigenous experience of 'acculturation' seems to focus more on the incorporation and embodiment of western bodily practices – food, clothing, interethnic sex and language as a somatic capacity – rather than on an idea of spiritual assimilation.[37] Anthropological theories of socio-cultural change tend to reject western ethnogenetic ideas that mixing and racial assimilation lead to a loss of ethnic-cultural distinctiveness. Needless to say they do this with reason. Processes of acculturation are defined, on the contrary, in terms of ideological changes, that is as essentially mental processes that above all affect native 'beliefs'; acculturation is thought of through the imagery of religious conversion just as 'culture' is thought of through the imagery of religion. Consequently and despite concepts such as *habitus* introducing finer nuances to this tendency, the bodily changes involved in acculturation are conceived as effects of changes at the level of 'collective representations', rather than as their cause. I think Indians think differently if only because their 'thought' is differently associated with their 'body'.

Amerindian metamorphosis, let us be warned, is not a joyful or peaceful process, and much less a socially valued goal in the abstract If solipsism is the phantom that continuously threatens our cosmology – raising the fear of not recognising ourselves in our 'own kind', because in truth they are not like us, given the potentially absolute singularity of minds – then the possibility of metamorphosis expresses the opposite fear, of no longer being able to differentiate between the human and the animal, and, in particular, the fear of seeing the human who lurks within the body of the animal one eats (Goldman 1975:183; Brightman 1993:206ff; Erikson 1997:223).[38] This translates into one of the most important ethnographic recurrences of perspectivism: the past humanity of animals is added to their current spirituality concealed by their visible form to produce a widespread complex of food restrictions or precautions which sometimes declares certain animals that were mythically consubstantial with humans to be inedible, and sometimes demands the shamanic desubjectification of an animal before it is eaten, thus neutralising its spirit, transubstantiating its flesh into vegetal form or reducing it semantically to other animals that are less close to humans – all this under threat of retaliation in the form of illness, conceived as cannibal counterpredation, carried out by the spirit of the prey, who turns predator in a mortal inversion of perspectives that transforms the human into an animal.[39] The phantom of cannibalism is the Amerindian equivalent to the problem of solipsism: if the latter derives from the uncertainty as to whether the natural similarity of bodies guarantees a real community of spirit, then the former suspects that the similarity of

souls might prevail over the real differences of body and that all animals that are eaten might, despite the shamanistic efforts to de-subjectivise them, remain human. This, of course, does not prevent us having amongst ourselves more or less radical solipsists, nor that various Amerindian societies be purposefully and more or less literally cannibalistic.

In Amazonian cannibalism, what is intended is precisely the incorporation of the subject-aspect of the enemy, who to this end is hyper-subjectivised, not its desubjectivisation as is the case with animal bodies (see Viveiros de Castro 1992a and Fausto 2001). As I have said, a good part of a shaman's work consists of transforming dead animals into purely natural corpses, de-spiritualised and thus available to be eaten without risks. By contrast, spirits are defined, among other things, by the fact that they are supremely inedible; this turns them into eaters par excellence, or in other words, into anthropophagi a. This is why it is common that the big predators are the preferred form in which spirits manifest themselves. It can further be understood why game animals see humans as spirits, why predators see us as game animals, and why animals considered inedible are frequently likened to spirits.

The notion of metamorphosis is directly linked to the doctrine of animal clothing to which I have variously referred. How are we to reconcile the idea that the body is the site of differentiating perspectives with the theme of the *appearance* and *essence* which is always evoked to interpret animism and perspectivism? Here seems to me to lie an important mistake, which is that of taking bodily 'appearance' as inert and false, whereas spiritual 'essence' would be active and real (see the definitive observations by Goldman 1975:63, 124-25, 200). I argue that nothing could be further from the Indians' minds when they speak of bodies in terms of 'clothing'. *It is not so much that the body is a kind of clothing but rather that clothing is a kind of body.* Let us not forget that we are dealing with societies which inscribe efficacious meanings onto the skin, and which use animal masks (or at least know their principle) endowed with the power metaphysically to transform the identities of those who wear them, if used in the appropriate ritual context. To put on mask-clothing is not so much to conceal a human essence beneath an animal appearance, but rather to activate the powers of a different body.[40] The animal clothes that shamans use to travel the cosmos are not fantasies but instruments: they are akin to diving equipment, or space suits, and not to carnival masks. The intention when donning a wet suit is to be able to function like a fish, to breathe underwater, not to conceal oneself under a strange covering. In the same way, the clothing which, amongst animals, covers an internal 'essence' of a human type, is not a mere disguise but their distinctive equipment, endowed with the affects and capacities which define each animal.[41] It is true that "appearances can be deceptive" (Hallowell 1960; Rivière 1994); but my impression is that in Amerindian narratives which take as a theme animal clothing, the interest is as much or more in what these clothes do than what they hide.[42] Besides this, be-

tween a being and its appearance is its body, which is more than just that – and the very same narratives relate how appearances are always 'unmasked' by bodily behaviour which is inconsistent with them.[43] In short: there is no doubt that bodies are discardable and exchangeable and that 'behind' them lie subjectivities which are formally identical to humans. But this idea is not similar to our opposition between appearance and essence; it merely manifests the objective permeability of bodies which is based in the subjective equivalence of minds.

Another classic theme in South American ethnology which could be interpreted within this framework is that of the sociological discontinuity between the living and the dead (Carneiro da Cunha 1978). The fundamental distinction between the living and the dead is made by the body and precisely not by the spirit; death is a bodily catastrophe which prevails as differentiator over the common 'animation' of the living and the dead. Amerindian cosmologies dedicate equal or greater interest to the way in which the dead see the world as they do to the vision of animals and as is the case for the latter, they underline the radical differences *vis-à-vis* the world of the living. To be precise, being definitively separated from their bodies, the dead are not human. As spirits defined by their disjunction from a human body, the dead are logically attracted to the bodies of animals; this is why to die is to transform into an animal,[44] as it is to transform into other figures of bodily alterity such as affines and enemies. In this manner, if animism affirms a subjective and social continuity between humans and animals, its somatic complement, perspectivism, establishes an objective discontinuity, equally social, between live humans and dead humans. (Religions based on the cult of the ancestors postulate the inverse: spiritual identity goes beyond the bodily barrier of death, the living and the dead are similar in so far as they manifest the same spirit – we would thus have superhuman ancestrality and spiritual possession on one side, animalisation of the dead and bodily metamorphosis on the other.)

Having examined the differentiating component of Amerindian perspectivism, it remains for me to attribute a cosmological 'function' to the trans-specific unity of the spirit. This is the point at which, I believe, a relational definition could be given of a category, Supernature, which nowadays has fallen into disrepute but whose pertinence seems to me to be unquestionable.[45] Apart from its use in labelling the cosmographic domains of a 'hyper-uranian' type, or in defining a third type of intentional beings occurring in indigenous cosmologies, which are neither human nor animal (I am referring to 'spirits'), the notion of supernature may serve to designate a specific relational context and particular phenomenological quality, which is as distinct from the intersubjective relations that define the social world as from the 'inter-objective' relations with the bodies of animals.

Following the analogy with the pronominal set (Benveniste 1966a, b) we can see that between the reflexive *I* of culture (the generator of the concepts of soul or

spirit) and the impersonal *it* of nature (definer of the relation with corporeal alterity), there is a position missing, the *you*, the *second person*, or the other taken as other subject, whose point of view is the latent echo of that of the *I*. I believe that this concept can aid in determining the supernatural context. An abnormal context wherein a subject is captured by another cosmologically dominant point of view, wherein he is the *you* of a non-human perspective, *Supernature is the form of the Other as Subject*, implying an objectification of the human I as a *you* for this Other.

The typical supernatural situation in an Amerindian world is the meeting in the forest between a man – always on his own – and a being which is seen at first merely as an animal or a person, then reveals itself as a spirit or a dead person and speaks to the man (the dynamics of this communication are excellently analysed by Taylor [1993b]).[46] These encounters tend to be lethal for the interlocutor who, overpowered by the non-human subjectivity, passes over to its side, transforming himself into a being of the same species as the speaker: dead, spirit or animal. He who responds to a *you* spoken by a non-human accepts the condition of being its 'second person', and when assuming in his turn the position of *I* does so already as a non-human. (Only shamans, multinatural beings by definition and office, are capable of shifting between various perspectives, calling and being called 'you' by the animal subjectivities and spirits without losing their own condition as subjects.) The canonical form of these supernatural encounters, then, consists in suddenly finding out that the other is 'human', that is, that *it* is the human, which automatically dehumanises and alienates the interlocutor and transforms him into a prey object, that is, an animal. And this finally may be the true meaning of the Amerindian concern with what is hidden behind appearances. Appearances can be misleading because you can never be certain which is the dominant point of view, that is, which world is in operation when you interact with someone else. Everything is dangerous; above all when all may be people, and we might not be.

Final note

It is important to draw attention to the fact that the two cosmological points of view that have been contrasted with one another here – what I called 'western' and what I called 'Amerindian' – are from *our* point of view, incompatible. A compass needs to have one leg fixed so that the other may revolve around it. We have chosen the leg corresponding to nature as our support, leaving the other to describe the circle of cultural diversity. The Indians appear to have chosen that leg of the cosmic compass that corresponds to what we call 'culture', thus submitting our 'nature' to continuous inflexion and variation. The idea of a compass

capable of moving both legs at the same time – a finalised relativism – would thus be geometrically contradictory, or philosophically unstable.

But we must not forget, above all, that if the points of the compass are separated, the shafts meet at the apex: the distinction between nature and culture revolves around a point where this distinction does not yet exist. This point, as Latour (1991) argued so well, tends to manifest itself in our modernity only as extra-theoretical practice, given that Theory is the work of purification and separation of the "middle world" of practice into opposing domains, substances or principles: into Nature and Culture, for example. Amerindian thought – perhaps all mythopœic thought – takes the opposite path. For the object of mythology is situated precisely at the apex, where the separation of Nature and Culture is still a pure virtuality. At this virtual origin of all perspectives, absolute movement and infinite multiplicity are indistinguishable from congealed immobility and unnameable unity.

Secondly and finally: if the Indians are right, then the difference between two points of view is *not* a cultural question, and much less one of 'mentality'. If the contrasts between relativism and perspectivism or between multiculturalism and multinaturalism are read in the light not of our multicultural relativism but of indigenous doctrine, it is necessary to conclude that the reciprocity of perspectives applies to itself and that the difference lies in worlds, not in thinking:

> *We may be able to show that the same logical processes operate in myth as in science, and that man has always been thinking equally well. Progress – if this term is then applicable – would however not have consciousness as its theatre but the world, where humanity, endowed with constant faculties would encounter new objects, throughout its long history* (Lévi-Strauss 1955b:255)*.*

* This article was originally published in E. Viveiros de Castro *A Inconstância da Alma Selvagem e outros ensaios de antropologia*. São Paulo: Cosac & Naify, pp. 345-400, 2002. The English version was translated from Portuguese by Elizabeth Ewart.

Notes

1 The following pages were born out of a dialogue with Tânia Stolze Lima. A first version of the main article upon which this present piece is based (Viveiros de Castro 1996c; see Viveiros de Castro 1998 for the English version) was written and published at the same time as Stolze Lima's study on Juruna perspectivism to which I refer the reader (Lima 1996). Latour's essay (1991) on the notion of modernity was an indirect but decisive source of inspiration for that first version. Some months after seeing the 1996 article in print, I read an old text by Fritz Krause (1931; cited in Boelscher 1989:212 n.10) where I found some ideas that are curiously similar to the ones developed here; they are to be discussed on another occasion. The real convergence which I ignored in the article of 1996, though, is with the theory developed by Roy Wagner in *The invention of culture*, a book I had read some 15 years previously (in 1981, when the 2nd edition was published) but had completely erased from my memory undoubtedly because it was beyond my comprehension

at the time. Upon re-reading the book in 1998 I noticed that I had after all taken in something given that I had re-invented certain crucial passages from Wagner's argument. As always, Peter Gow, Aparecida Vilaça, Philippe Descola and Michael Houseman contributed with suggestions and comments at various stages in the writing of this piece. Finally, the ongoing development of the arguments aired here (2005) owe much more to the insights of Bruno Latour and Marilyn Strathern than I can at present express.

2   "This is the logic of a discourse, commonly known as 'Western', whose ontological foundation is a separation between subjective and objective domains, the first an inner world of mind and meaning, the second an outer world of matter and substance" (Ingold 1991:356)

3   When they are together in their villages in the forest, for example, the animals dispense with their clothes and assume their human shape. In other cases, the clothing appears transparent to the eyes of the particular species and to human shamans.

4   The notion of bodily 'clothing' has been recorded among others, for the Makuna (Århem 1993), the Yagua (Chaumeil 1983:125-27), the Piro (Gow pers. comm.), the Trio (Rivière 1994), or the peoples of the Upper Xingú (Gregor 1977; Viveiros de Castro 1977:182). The idea is probably pan-American, being of great significance, for example, in Kwakiutl cosmology (Goldman 1975:62-63, 124-25; 182-86, 227-28).

5   For some examples see Baer 1994:102, 119-224 (Machiguenga); Grenand 1980: 42 (Wayãpi); Jara 1996: 68-73 (Akuriyó); Osborn 1990:151 (U'wa); Viveiros de Castro 1992a: 68 (Araweté); Weiss 1969: 158 (Campa).

6   For examples see Saladin d'Anglure 1990, Fienup-Riordan 1994 (Eskimo); Nelson 1983, McDonnell 1984 (Koyukon, Kaska); Tanner 1979, Scott 1989, Brightman 1993 (Cree); Hallowell 1960 (Ojibwa); Goldman 1975 (Kwakiutl); Guédon 1984 (Tsimshian); Boelscher 1989 (Haida). For Siberia, see Hamayon 1990. Finally, see Howell 1984, 1996 and Karim 1981 for the Chewon and Ma'Betisék of Malaysia. The study by Howell 1984 was one of the first to devote significant attention to the issue. Similar ideas have also been recorded in relation to one Melanesian cosmology, namely the Kaluli (Schiefflin 1976: chap. 5).

7   The notions of perspective and point of view play a decisive role in articles I have written previously, but the focus there was principally on the intra-human dynamic, particularly Tupi cannibalism and the concept was almost always of analytical and abstract value (Viveiros de Castro 1992a:248-51, 256-59; 1996a. The studies by Vilaça and especially by Lima showed me that it was possible to generalise these notions.

8   See Renard-Casevitz 1991:10-11, 29-31; Vilaça 1992:49-51; Århem 1993:11-12; Howell 1996:113.

9   Overing 1985:249f; 1986:245-46; Viveiros de Castro 1992a:73-74; Baer 1994:89.

10   The notion that the distinguishing subject is the historically stable term of the distinction between 'self' (humans, Indians, my group) and 'other' (animals, white people, other Indians) appears both in the case of inter-species differentiation as well as in intra-specific separations, as can be seen in the various Amerindian origin myths about white people (see e.g. DaMatta 1970, 1973; S. Hugh-Jones 1988; Lévi-Strauss 1991; see also Viveiros de Castro 2000). Others once were what we are now, and they are not, as is the case for us, what we once were. It is here that we may perceive just how pertinent the notion of "cold societies" is: history does exist, but it is something that only happens to others or because of others.

11   The distinction is analogous to Wagner's (1981:133) or Ingold's (1994), between humanity as a species (or *humankind*) and as a moral ideal (or *humanity*).

12   The relationship between shamanism and hunting is a classic question. See Chaumeil 1983:231-32 and Crocker 1985:17-25.

13   The importance of the hunter-shaman relationship with the animal world in societies whose economies are based more on horticulture and fishing rather than hunting, raises interesting questions for the cultural history of Amazonia (Viveiros de Castro 1996b).

14   See Erikson 1984:110-12; Descola 1986:317-30; Århem 1996. However, we note that in western Amazonian cultures, particularly those that make use of hallucinogens, the personification of plants appears to be at least as significant as the personification of animals. Also in some areas, such as the upper Xingu, the spiritualization of artefacts plays an important cosmological role.

15 I note that this way of expressing the contrast is not merely similar to the famous opposition between 'gift' and 'commodity'. I understand it to be the same contrast formulated here in non-economist terms: "if in a commodity economy things and persons assume the social form of things, then in a gift economy they assume the social form of persons (Strathern 1988:134; cf. Gregory 1982:41).

16 The anthropological and theoretical definition of 'art' involving the process of abduction of agency is masterfully described by Alfred Gell in *Art and agency* (1998).

17 Here I am referring to Dennett's concept of the *n*-ordinality of intentional systems. An intentional system of the second order is one where the observer does not attribute beliefs, desires and other intentions merely to the object (first order) but also beliefs etc. *about* other beliefs etc. The most widely accepted cognitivist view maintains that it is only *Homo sapiens* who exhibits intentionality of the second order or more. It may be noted that my shamanic principle of 'abducing a maximum of agency' clearly goes against the dogmas of physicalist psychology: "Psychologists have often appealed to a principle known as Lloyd Morgan's Canon of Parsimony, which can be viewed as a special case of Occam's Razor; it is the principle that one should attribute to an organism as little intelligence or consciousness or rationality or mind as will suffice to account for its behaviour" (Dennett 1978:274). In effect, the shaman's rattle is an instrument which differs entirely from Occam's Razor; the latter may be useful for writing articles on logic but it is not very good, for example, for retrieving lost souls.

18 As Marilyn Strathern observes with regard to an epistemological regime similar to the Amerindian one: "[This] convention requires that the objects of interpretation – human or not – become understood as other persons; indeed, the very act of interpretation presupposes the personhood of what is being interpreted. […] What one thus encounters in making interpretations are always counter-interpretations…" (1999:239).

19 Wagner (1981) was one of the few who did.

20 Staying within the Americanist orbit, one might among other works call to mind, Overing's (1985) rejection of the privilege of metaphor in favour of a relativist literalism which appears to rely on a notion of belief. Also the theory of dialectical synecdoche as prior and superior to metaphoric analogy proposed by Turner (1991b), an author who like other specialists (Seeger 1981; Crocker 1985) has sought to contest interpretations of the nature/culture dualism of Gê and Bororo people in terms of a static, privative and discrete opposition; the concept of "dual triadic dualism" or "dynamic dualism" of Peter Roe (1990) which the author holds to be a distinctive feature of Amazonian art and thought and which was undoubtedly inspired by Lévi-Strauss; and my re-analysis (Viveiros de Castro 1992a) of the contrast between totemism and sacrifice in light of the Deleuzian concept of becoming which tries to take account of the centrality of processes of ontological predation in Tupi cosmologies as well as the directly social (and not merely reflective classificatory) nature of the interaction of human and extra-human orders.

21 For a joint discussion of the pairings of totemism/sacrifice and *aroe/bope*, see Viveiros de Castro 1991:88, 91 n.11.

22 I say these structures are asymmetrical because, in the case of naturalism, for example, the notion of nature does not require the notion of culture in order to be defined, but this is not true vice-versa. In other words, in our ontology the nature/society interface is natural because the distinction itself is seen as 'cultural', i.e. *constructed* and thus *subordinated* (see Searle 1995:227: "There cannot be an opposition between culture and biology, because if there were, biology would always win"). By contrast, in Amerindian cosmologies said interface is social because the distinction is seen to be 'natural', i.e. *given*. Here it is the category of nature which requires a prior definition of culture. (For a contrast between the 'given' and the 'innate', see Wagner 1981.

23 See Strathern 1980 and Latour 1991 for this instability; a good popular discussion of the tension between monism and dualism in modern consciousness can be found in Malik 2000.

24 See Radcliffe-Brown 1929:130-31 where among other noteworthy arguments, he distinguishes *processes of personification* of species and natural phenomena (which "permit nature to be thought of as if it were a society of persons, and so makes of it a social or moral order"), such as can be found among Eskimo and Andaman Islanders, and *systems of classification* of natural species like

those to be found in Australia, which configure a "system of social solidarities" between man and nature. This is strongly evocative of Descola's animism/totemism distinction as well as the *manido/totem* contrast explored by Lévi-Strauss.

25 I think that Ingold's argument exposes cogently the weaknesses of the constructionist approach, but is ultimately unsatisfactory in its propositive side, which I do not discuss here (see Viveiros de Castro 2005).

26 Note that the 16th Century question is the theological version of the so-called "problem of other minds", which has pre-occupied philosophers since the very beginnings of modernity.

27 The same Lévi-Strauss illustrates this about-turn in a splendid paragraph in his homage to Rousseau: "We started by cutting man off from nature and establishing him in an absolute reign. We believed ourselves to have thus erased his most unassailable characteristic: that he is first a living being. Remaining blind to this common property, we gave free rein to all excesses. Never better than after the last four centuries of his history could a Western man understand that, while assuming the right to impose a radical separation of humanity and animality, while granting to one all that he denied the other, he initiated a vicious circle. The one boundary, constantly pushed back, would be used to separate men from other men and to claim – to the profit of ever smaller minorities – the privilege of a humanism, corrupted at birth by taking self-interest as its principle and its notion" (1962c:41).

28 A variation on this refusal to onomastically self-objectify can be found in those cases or moments where, a collective entity in the position of subject taking itself to be part of a plurality of analogous collectives, the self-referential term means '*the others*', being used primarily to identify those collectives from which the subject excludes itself. The alternative to pronominal subjectivation is an equally relational self-objectification , where 'I' can only mean 'the other's other': see the *achuar* of the Achuar, or the *nawa* of the Pano (Taylor 1985:168; Erikson 1990:80-84). The logic of Amerindian auto-ethnonyms calls for a specific study. For other illustrative cases see: Vilaça 1992: 49-51; Price 1987; Viveiros de Castro 1992a:64-65. For an illuminating analysis of a North American case that is similar to the Amazonian ones, see McDonnell 1984:41-43.

29 Thus, Taylor writes about the Jivaroan concept of *wakan*, 'soul': "Essentially *wakan* is self-consciousness […] a representation of reflexivity […]. *Wakan* is thus common to many entities, and is by no means an exclusively human attribute: there are as many *wakan* as there are things that may, contextually, be endowed with reflexivity" (1993b:660).

30 "Such is the foundation of perspectivism. It does not express a dependency on a predefined subject; on the contrary, whatever accedes to the point of view will be subject…" (Deleuze 1988:27). Saussure's formula (from the purest Kantian lineage), can be found right at the beginning of *Cours* (1916:23).

31 See e.g. Brown, on the Aguaruna concepts of *wakan*, human soul and *aents*, 'person' or soul of non-human entities. The author considers these to be fundamentally similar, defining both as *"an enduring, hidden essence that when made visible has the form and characteristics of a human being"* (1986: 4-55).

32 In the same spirit as Århem, Signe Howell argues that "the Chewong are relativists; for them each species is different, but equal" (1996:133). This is also true; but it would probably be more true if we inverted the emphasis: each species is equal (in the sense that there is no absolute point of view, independent of all 'specificity'), but different (for such equality does not mean that a given type of being can indiscriminately assume the point of view of other species).

33 "The point of view is located in the body, says Leibniz…" (Deleuze 1988:16).

34 For us, the human species and the human condition necessarily coincide, but the former holds ontological primacy; this is why, to deny the human condition to somebody else, sooner or later results in a denial of their co-specificity. In the indigenous case it is the condition which takes primacy over the species and the latter is attributed to any being which claims to partake of the former.

35 The proof *au contraire* of the singularity of the spirit in our cosmologies lies in the fact that when we try to universalise it, there is no other option – now that the supernatural is out of bounds –

than to identify it with the structure and function of the brain. The spirit can only be universal (natural) if it is (in) the body.

36 Also note that when the famous double masks of the northwest coast of North America have one human and one animal face, they invariably have the former as the interior hidden face.

37 See recent developments of this argument in Vilaça 1999.

38 "The greatest danger in life lies in the fact that the food of man consists virtually entirely of souls" (Birket-Smith quoting an Eskimo shaman, in Bodenhorn 1988: 1).

39 See Viveiros de Castro 1978; Crocker 1985; Overing 1985;1986; Vilaça 1992; Århem 1993; S. Hugh-Jones 1996, among many others.

40 Peter Gow (pers. comm.) tells me that the Piro conceive of the act of putting on clothing as an animating of clothing. The emphasis is less, as among ourselves, on the fact of covering the body, but rather on the gesture of filling the clothing, of activating it. In other words, donning clothing modifies the clothing more than the body of the person wearing it. Goldman (op. cit.:183) observes that Kwakiutl masks "get excited" during the great Winter festival; and Kensinger (1995:255) remembers that for the Cashinahua, bird feathers (used as bodily adornments) pertain to the category of 'remedies'.

41 '"Clothing" in this sense does not mean merely a body covering but also refers to the skill and ability to carry out certain tasks' (Rivière in Koelewijn 1987:306).

42 Rivière discusses an interesting myth in which it is clear that the clothing is not so much form as it is function. A father-in-law jaguar offers his human son-in-law jaguar clothes. The myth goes: "Jaguar had different sizes of clothes. Clothes to catch tapir, clothing to catch peccary […] clothing to get agouti. All these clothes were more or less different and they all had claws." Now, jaguars do not change size to hunt prey of varying sizes, they merely modify their behaviour. These clothes in the myth are adapted to their specific functions and of the jaguar-form all that remains are the claws, instruments of its function, because the claws are all that matter.

43 As Fienup-Riordan (1994: 50) notes regarding Eskimo myths of animal transformation: "The hosts invariably betray their animal identity by some peculiar trait during the visit…"

44 Examples: Schwartzman 1988: 268 (Panará); Vilaça 1992:247-55 (Wari'); Turner 1995:152 (Kayapó); Pollock 1985b:95 (Kulina); Gray 1996:157-78 (Arakmbut); Alexiades 1999:134, 178 (Ese Eja); Weiss 1972:169 (Campa).

45 The notion has been discredited at least since Durkheim. The argument against it goes more or less like this: since 'primitives' do not possess a concept of natural necessity, i.e. of Nature as a domain ruled by the laws of physics, there is no sense in talking of Supernature since there is no super-physical domain of causality. Maybe so. But many who object to this concept continue to use the notion of nature to designate one domain of indigenous cosmologies and do not see any problems with the Nature/Culture opposition, be it as a supposedly 'emic' distinction or be it as an 'etic' ontological divider. As I pointed out earlier, many of the traditional functions of theological Supernature have been absorbed by the modern concept of Culture. Finally, if the Nature/Culture opposition can be seen as being of "above all methodological value", why would the notion of Supernature not also have the right to the same *habeas corpus*?

46 Consider what the Achuar studied by Taylor recommend as a method of protection in the event of encountering an *iwianch*, a phantom or spirit in the forest. You must tell the *iwianch*: "I am a person too!..." That is, one must affirm one's own point of view; when the human says that he is a person too, what he is saying is that he is the *I*, not the other: the real person here is me.

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PART II

SURROUNDINGS

UNCLES AND NEPHEWS:
YAGUA CONCEPTS OF KINSHIP AMONG LIVING THINGS

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This article explores forms of interaction and sociability posited between humans and their social and natural environment. It draws on materials collected among the Yagua, an indigenous society of the Peruvian and Colombian Amazon of around 4000 people. Examining the taxonomic universe of the Yagua brings to light the notion of "kinship" as a general idiom for relations within and among categories of living things: humans and nonhumans (animals and plants). Understanding modes of interaction and sociability at the intra- and interspecies levels is fundamental for grasping the manner in which such cultures perceive their relations with others and their territory. Their perspective entails the idea that human beings, conceived as simply one entity among many, is integrated into the environment rather than acting upon it in an independent fashion (Ingold 2000). We should thus not be surprised over the efficacy of applying the notion of kinship to the nonhuman in socio-cosmological systems like that of the Yagua, which link the different members of the class of living things into the same general schema. Such a schema is constructed on the basis of organizational principles (social behaviors, food habits, ecological characteristics, and morphological associations) rather than purely descriptive ones (Jara 2002). The analysis presented here joins a number of recent studies that privilege taxonomic dynamics (at the intra- and interspecies levels) as a foundation for reflecting on questions of identity and territory in these societies. It also represents an extension of the work we have been pursuing for many years among the Yagua.

An earlier work, entitled *Du végétal à l'humain* (Chaumeil 1989), presented the general lines of the Yagua theory of living things based largely on a doctrine of essences. This study demonstrated the existence of a classificatory system of the cosmological dimension, according to which species are ordered along a continuum moving from plants to humans by way of animals. In this gradual movement from the "simple" to the "complex" is expressed a developmental dynamic among living organisms spread out along the nature–culture axis. This concep-

tion is echoed elsewhere in Yagua myths, shamanism, and their ideology of gestation and procreation.

We now propose to make a new contribution to the above theory, this time exploring another aspect of the Yagua taxonomic system, that concerning kinship among living organisms. The Yagua postulate, in effect, that living beings maintain relations as kin, friends, or enemies, following the image of humans. In a pioneering article, Haudricourt (1962) demonstrated a correspondence between the manner in which certain Melanesian societies deal with yams and their clones, on the one hand, and the ways in which members of these societies behave toward one another and other peoples. Various propositions about human–nature relations put forth in Haudricourt's article resonate with those in Lowland South America and elsewhere. For present purposes, however, we offer only as much data on Yagua taxonomies as are necessary for making our argument.

The Taxonomic Universe

In general terms, the Yagua believe that all matter (mineral, plant, animal, and human) is endowed with life, animated by the same vital principle *hamwo*, which, as soon as it departs, renders matter inanimate. According to the indigenous conception, the main criterion of differentiation among the major domains of living things is found precisely in the manner in which such vital energy is distributed: generalized and undifferentiated in the case of minerals, differentiated by species in plants and lesser fauna, and individualized (with the emergence of "souls") in higher fauna (notably predatory animals) and humans. There is thus a passage from an abstract concept of vital energy as a generalized principle to that of a soul as the most individualized entity (Chaumeil 1989). We focus here on botanical and zoological classifications.

Animal classification

The Yagua use a term with a unique origin, *towichi*, to refer to the entire set of animals. This term sometimes corresponds to the category *awanu*, "game," even though not all animals serve as game for humans. Etymologically, *towichi* denotes animals of the forest (*toho* = "primary forest"), but, in its common usage, it encompasses wild species, *tohase*, "herds of the forest," as well as *ñihamwohase*, "herds belonging to people," a term covering the category of tamed animals (offspring of animals killed during hunts) and that of domesticated species (recently introduced). The Yagua class further animals into broad classes or life forms, such as land mammals (*towichi*, a taxon with a unique origin), birds (*rëpátí*), monkeys (*hasatí*), fish (*kiwá*), snakes (*kóndi*), and insects (*nekaní*).

At the next lower taxonomic level, the classes ramify into "species," which take the term *áte* as an equivalent to the name designating Yagua clans, *riria* (discussed below). For example, *átenacha* means tapir-species; *átenimbi*, jaguar-species; and *átekoche*, parrot-species. However, in contrast to humans, who practice clan exogamy, animals are said to reproduce within their *áte*. From the Yagua point of view, clan categories and natural species are thus opposed on the issue of exogamy. Finally, certain *áte* are subdivided into subspecies, in which case the root of the species name is preceded by a suffix identifying the subspecies. For instance, within the category of jaguars, *átenimbi*, are subspecies denoted by the terms *amonimbi*, "great jaguar" (jaguar); *ánarinimbi*, "deer-jaguar" (puma); nachanimbi, "tapir-jaguar" (jaguarundi); *pësinimbi*, "small jaguar" (ocelot); *hanimbi*, "water jaguar" (giant river otter); *aponimbi*, "medium jaguar" (wild dog, *Speothos*); or even simply *nimbi*, for the domesticated dog. The same classificatory principle is found among the Achuar of Ecuador (Descola 1986:108).

To this first type of classification, others are added, often more pertinent in terms of indigenous practices, according to which species are distinguished by criteria of morphology, ecology (animals of salt beds, those of palm groves, gardens, river banks, etc.), ethology (solitary animals, those that move in pairs or bands, walk on land, perch on tree branches, fly near or far, live in the water or on land, underground or on the surface), modes of reproduction, or food habits. As we will see, these cross-cutting classifications serve to organize relations of kinship or rivalry among species.

Plant classification

In contrast to animals, there is no term, as far as we know, with a unique origin to designate plants in general. At the highest level of the plant taxonomy, the Yagua distinguish two categories: towachara, wild plants (*matádiwaria*, "those that grow on their own"), and *hátasara*, cultivated plants. In the botanical classification, trees, *ninu*, are enumerated first, followed by vines, *réjú*, and then grasses, wichu. Both wild and cultivated plants are divided at the intermediate taxonomic level into species, *áte*, and subspecies, along the same principle as that applied to animals. Cultigens are further differentiated as "men's plants," *wanu ntara*, and "women's plants," *watoró ntara*, while wild plants are *tohamwo ntara*, "plants belonging to masters of the forest." Men's plants encompass, by and large, plants growing above the ground (bananas, maize, sugar cane, pineapples, etc.), while women's plants essentially comprise underground tubercules (manioc, yams, sweet potatoes, gourds). Plants with a penetrating odor and bitter taste, *hiwera*, constitute a separate class, that of harie wachara, "power plants" (considered masculine), among which figure hallucinogens, *súño*, medicines, *páta*, and poisons, *awatia*. Other cross-cutting classifications reorder the plant universe according to the criteria of height, appearance, the presence of thorns or resin, leaf shape,

habitat, qualities such as being woody, etc. According to the Yagua, certain plants are capable of a certain degree of mobility, such as *tohótu*, plants that climb using tendrils.

Relations among species

The Yagua believe that, like humans, animals and plants (excluding minerals) maintain relations of consanguinity, friendship, or cannibalistic hostility, as the case may be. Through an examination of these each of these types of relationships, we will discuss the relevant parameters and taxonomic levels.

For a male ego, kinship relations among species are expressed according to the following consanguineous terminology (note that the Yagua have a "Dravidian system" of kinship terminology): *hatieri* = brother (B); hatieriwuchi = parallel cousin (FBS); hahechó = parallel uncle (FB); handianuwuchi = nephew (BS); *hahépa* = grandfather (FF); and *rásí*, grandson (SS). The only relationship missing from this list is that of direct filiation between father and son, *hahe / handianu*, which is precisely the one considered to be the strongest consanguineous bond.

Relations of friendship among species are designated by the term *sanikietambwë*, "allies, friends, those with whom one speaks." Relations marked by hostility are designated *ne nikietambwë*, "enemies, those with whom one does not speak." In the Yagua social field, the former indicates a political alliance among groups (including affines), while the second implies rivalry and warfare. Recall that, until the 1930s, the Yagua practiced intra- and interethnic warfare, which, at least in the case of "close" enemies, involved the capture of human trophies (Chaumeil 1994). They categorize degrees of social alterity (along the axis kin–friends–enemies, in other words, the axis consanguines–affines–strangers) using the same principles that they apply to natural species. Rather than viewing this taxonomic concordance as the expression of sociocentrism, in the manner of Durkheim and Mauss (1968:224-230), we should speak of a "global taxonomy," following Lévi-Strauss (1963:183-185), which integrates the biological and social levels into the same classificatory schema.

How can these relations be expressed concretely? What classes and elements do they put into play? For the sake of clarity, we will first deal with animals and then plants. This will allow us next to address the clan system, which links humans to the two preceding domains through a series of particular attributes and terms.

Kinship among animals

Among the large mammals, the tapir has no land-dwelling kin, but it is the cousin, hatieriwuchi, of the manatee, since, due to their size, both dominate their

realms (forest and river, respectively). The tapir is also the friend, *sanikietambwë*, of all animals that frequent salt beds, because they "drink together." The two most common species of deer, the gray and the red, friends of the tapir, are considered cousins, due to the different colors of their fur.

In the arena of enemies, *ne nikietambwë*, are found the two species of peccaries, the collared and the white-lipped, which "detest" each other and "fight to the death" because of their incompatible odor (that of the white-lipped is penetrating and annoys the collared peccary). The cannibalistic reputation of the jaguar (*Felis onca*) makes it the enemy of all other animals, which it looks for on the edges of salt beds in order to devour them. Sometimes it even practices "endocannibalism" upon the jaguarundi, its relative of the same *áte* and practically its equal in strength.

Due to its powerful body mass, the jaguar is the grandfather, *hahépa*, of the ocelot, and the uncle, hahechó, of the puma (generational distance being proportional to the difference in size among the species). The same comparison occurs in the case of rodents: the paca is the uncle of the agouti, which in turn is the uncle of the acouchy, which therefore calls the paca "grandfather." Similarly, among anteaters, the great anteater is the uncle of the little anteater tamandua, which is smaller. The former, being a land dweller, earns the friendship of the peccary, since it extracts *Myrmica* ants with its long, narrow tongue and bestows them as gifts to the peccary. The little anteater, a tree dweller, makes friends with the coatimundi so they can get along well in the trees. Although found in the midst of the monkeys, the coatimundi has no relative in their class, only a few friends and a particular enemy, the tayra (also included with the monkeys), which pursues it readily. In its "cannibalistic" aspect, the tayra (a type of Mustelidae) resembles the felines, so it is not surprising that it is the cousin of the wild dog, *aponimbi*, "medium jaguar," which is the same size. As for the howler monkey, it is the leader (grandfather) of all monkeys and the friend of animals that frequent salt beds, with which it celebrates the new season. It has woven strong bonds of friendship with the spider monkey and the woolly monkey, to the point that they form an inseparable trio (exchanges between their bands being frequent). The squirrel monkey addresses the capuchin monkey as nephew, since both sport a tuft of white fur on their chests. The two species of tamarin monkey (the white-lipped and mottle-faced), call each other brother, since they are almost identical. Both are friends of the saki and uakari monkeys, with which they "stroll and play together." Because of its minuscule size, the marmoset is the grandson of the large monkeys, but it resembles the tamarin, its uncle, in the sound of its cry. As nocturnal hunters, the kinkajou and the night monkey (*Aotus*) are cousins, although they are also considered uncle and nephew due to their size difference. Notably, all monkeys except the tayra (a mustelid) are linked through kinship or friendship. Among the turtles (*Cheloniidae*), the ancient appearance of the

matamata turtle accords it the rank of leader of all the other water tortoises, which are cousins to each other.

Birds have chosen the hoopoes (*Upupidae*), with its enchanting calls and long flights, as their leader. The condor and the vulture more prosaically organize themselves around the rotten, which makes them kin (uncle and nephew) and friends of the sparrowhawk. All three are enemies of other birds and certain land animals. The sparrowhawk, in particular, is accused of treachery for taking the side of hunters by alerting them through song to the presence of nearby game. Certain birds – wigeons (*Penelope*), tinamous (*Tinamus*), and curassows (*Mitua*) – are friends because of their similar size and feather colors. All birds that live near lakes and feed on small fish are kin or friends (egrets, rails, herons). The different species of toucans are cousins to each other, due to the shape and size of their beaks, and friends of parrot species, which, likewise, are cousins to each other because of their hooked beaks. Meanwhile, the parrot is considered the nephew of the macaw, given the difference in their size. In contrast to the sparrow-hawk, the widgeon and the trumpeter bird (*Psophia*) are generally friends of animals hunted by day, given their habits and complicity of warning them of the approach of hunters.

Among fish, the cannibalistic relation is dominant in the case of the piranha, giant river otter ("water jaguar"), cayman, and dolphin (in myths, a messenger of the anaconda), all of which are enemies of other aquatic representatives. In mythology, the piranha is associated with the Witoto and Bora Indians, whom the Yagua class with "eaters of raw food" and against whom they say they used to unleash total warfare. Many species of fish are also cousins or friends among themselves, either because of the shape of their scales, morphology, size, color, or teeth (the last feature giving the piranha, as one might imagine, the supreme advantage). As we mentioned above, the land tapir and its aquatic parallel, the manatee, are considered cousins.

Kinship among plants

Within the category of large trees, those with extremely hard wood occupy front stage, since they are dedicated to a hatred that knows no bounds: they "provoke" each other in fratricidal struggles to see which one will succumb first. The giant kapok tree (*Chorisia sp.*), endowed with large flat buttresses, remains incontestably the strongest, but the strangler fig ("renaco," *Ficus*), extending its adventitious roots, can often defy the former and sometimes win by strangling other trees. The solid manwood ("huacapú," *Minquartia*), used for making supporting posts in houses, succeeds in resisting attacks by sapodilla trees (*Manilkara*) and mulberry trees (*Brosimum*, Brazil wood). The type of combat in which the large trees engage is called *áduyu*, rather than *toti*, a term reserved for battles between animals or humans. Palm trees (which make up a subclass identified by the ter-

minal morpheme -*ase*) maintain the utmost peaceful relations among themselves, and are considered to be uncles / nephews or cousins, depending on the degree of morphological resemblance between the species at issue (regarding their trunks, leaves, fruits, or nuts). Notably, two "species" that are morphologically very close but differentiated in that one is wild and the other cultivated, are described as siblings (sisters or cousins, as the case may be). Moreover, they usually share the same root name: for example, the cultivated peach-palm, *púre* (*Bactris gasipaes*), is the cousin of its wild analogue, *towapúre*; similarly, the ayahuasca vine, *ramanujú* (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) is the brother of its wild counterpart, *toramanujú*, since they are almost identical. Certain trees are considered kin because of the way they are utilized, especially when used in making the same objects. This is the case with the lucuma ("pucuna-caspi," *Pouteria sp.*), the horn palm ("pona madura," *Iriartea sp.*), and the "motelo-caspi" (unidentified species), which are cousins, since the Yagua make blowguns out of their straight stems. Among cultigens, the same associative principles discussed so far prevail, with further attention given to the different modes of reproduction through planting seeds or cuttings. Among the tubercules, bitter manioc is the mortal enemy of sweet manioc, which it "contaminates" and renders poisonous like itself. For this reason, the Yagua take great care to separate the two types in their gardens.

To wrap up this brief overview, it should be noted that, in the case of animals, kinship relations are manifested essentially between species and sub-species within the same *áte,* rarely between classes (for example, manatee / tapir, tayra / wild dog). However, this does occur with animals that have no relative within their own class (such as the coatimundi). Relations of friendship are expressed more broadly among animals that frequent the same place (especially salt beds), help each other (such as the great anteater / peccary), peacefully cohabit (little anteater / coatimundi), or travel and play together (tamarin / saki / uakari monkeys), no matter what their *áte* or class (for example, widgeons and trumpeter birds are friends of animals hunted by day). This relationship transcends the broad animal categories, but it does not apply within the *áte* where the animals are either kin or enemies. Bonds of hostility can be found between classes (vulture / animals) or within the same class (piranha / other fish), but they can even break out between related animals belonging to the same *áte* (such as the endocannibalism between the jaguar / jaguarundi). We can represent the lines of extension of these bonds in the following way:

Animals	"sub-species"	*áte*	class	between classes
Kin				
Friends				
Enemies				

In the case of plants, we find basically the same bonds of kinship and hostility among sub-species and among *áte*, with the exception of the bond of friendship, which does not appear at all. This is not surprising if we recall the weak ability to move attributed to plants. Their struggles consist, for example, in strangling or knocking over their adversaries on the spot (like humans knock over trees), rather than pursuing them, in the manner of animals. But it is precisely upon the criteria of mobility that friendly relations are superimposed; convincing the other to walk or play together is sufficient to create such bonds. With little mobility, plants therefore find themselves deprived of friends.

Generally speaking, species that share kinship belong to an "identical" category along a gradation moving from the closest – without being completely the same (brother, cousin, uncle / nephew) – to the most distant (grandfather / grandson). The greater the distance, the more the generational levels increase. Thus, the sibling relationship implements affinities of behavior, food habits, appearance or customs, while the generational distinction intervenes in broader bonds between related species. In the classificatory system, even though friends are united by links of conviviality, complicity, loyalty, and exchange, they find themselves incontestably more distant. Enemies, often closer, are animated by hatred, the incompatibility of their temperament or odor, treachery, or cannibalism.

Furthermore, certain animals and certain plants are linked by associations of an allegorical type, which are established exclusively during the period of celebrating the major rituals. They do not cover exactly the kinship relations we are considering here, except insofar at they imply analogies of the same order. The armadillo, for instance, is called "pineapple", *níntiu,* because of the resemblance between the animal's shell and the scaly husk of the fruit. Again, the howler monkey is called *ramanuji*, "ayahuasca," by analogy between the piercing cries of the monkey and the "terrifying visions" produced by the *Banisteriopsis caapi*, and so on. The most systematic relations among plants and animals may sometimes exist, especially when it concerns an animal that nourishes itself on fruits of one particular plant species (see more below on the toucan and the blowgun-tree).

What happens nowadays concerning human beings and the Yagua in particular?

Relations among Social Groups: The Clan System

The Yagua call themselves *ñihamwo*, "us," "people," but the term has a more general sense since it also signifies "human being" and thus encompasses the non-Yagua. However, taken in the narrow sense, *ñihamwo* is contrasted with *munuñu* (literally, "those who live far"), designating formal enemies. In this case, *ñihamwo* is correlated with the category *hatiawa*, "kin," from which the name, hispanicized as *yawa*, may be at the origin of their current ethnonym, Yagua (at least this hypothesis is the most plausible). At the intermediate taxonomic level, relations among Yagua groups are expressed through clan categories. Yagua society is divided into patrilinear groups, *riria*, which, apparently, were once clan categories. During our various periods of fieldwork among them, we have discovered fifteen of them, but this list is far from being exhaustive:

Macaw (red), *apwiria*	blowgun tree, *mëtianuria*
"black" macaw, *wanakanañë*	matamata tree, *pranuria*
toucan, *nowaria*	capirona tree, *asanuria*
Cacique, *mowariria*	kapok tree, *micharia*
bat, *richaturia*	Cedar "cedro-macho" tree, *košmarecharia*
Squirrel, *mëkaturia*	vine (generic), *réjúria*
spider monkey, *kuotaria*	ayahuasca vine, *ramanuria*
howler monkey, *kandaria*	

According to the myth of the origin of clans, the mythic twins, while pounding or trampling on a pile of plant debris, created the Yagua people, calling them by the names of different plant or animal species. In other words, the Yagua were born from the very beginning "clanned" as natural species. Although it may not be possible to detect any sign of clan hierarchy nowadays, it seems, nevertheless, that the macaw clan formerly occupied a dominant position (Chaumeil 1994).

At the global level, the clan system functions in the following manner. The clans are regrouped into three natural categories (birds, plants, land animals), forming two exogamous "moieties":

<div>

birds, *rëpátí*   plants, *towachara*
                                          – – – – – – – – – – – – – – – –
                                                     land animals, *towichi*

</div>

Traditionally, interclan alliances could only take place between two classes, birds, on the one hand, and plants and land animals on the other. Even though the moieties are not explicitly named, an analysis of the terms used to designate the three

natural categories suggests a division into the "cooked" moiety and the "raw." The term applied to the bird category, *rëpátí*, is in fact derived from *arëpa*, cooking, burning (also "birth") and, in the myth, it is a bird (specifically the hummingbird) that brought fire to human. At the level of ethnomedical representations, the origin of burns is attributed to a bird with a fire-colored head (Chaumeil 1983:279). Numerous other examples confirmed the associations of sky fauna, fire, and cooking. On the other hand, the two other natural categories are marked with the prefix *to-*, designating the elements forest, the "wild," and, by extension, the "raw."

Certain clans, moreover, that are associated in pairs prohibit any form of intermarriage, whether within the same class (such as ayahuasca / squirrel, <plant / animal>) or between classes (such as toucan / blowgun-tree, <bird / plant>). In the latter case, the Yagua base their explanation on the food habits of the toucan, which eats the fruits of the blowgun-tree (*Pouteria sp.*). The climbing bird is thus perceived as "identical" to the species that nourishes it. On the other hand, the class of birds is differentiated into "subspecies" according to their size or color:

Caciques	large: *tapándieria* small: *mowariria*
bats	large: *richaturia* small: *nawáriria*
toucans	large: *nowaria* small: *siyória*
macaws	red: *apwiria* "black": *wanakanañë/ria*

Nothing suggests that bird subspecies function as subclans, properly speaking: rather, they seem to be the expression of an internal duality that balances, and thereby reproduces, that of the opposite moiety. The encompassing clan model can be represented as follows:

"cooked" moiety   "raw" moiety

birds   plants   land animals
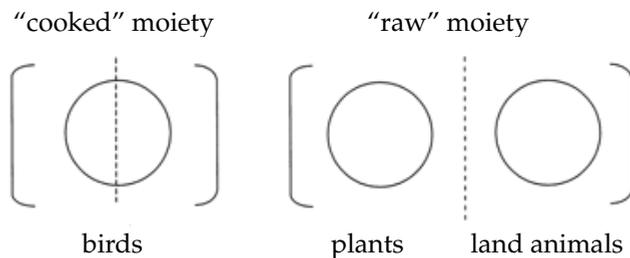
At the local level, we again find, theoretically, the dual clan model with, in its ideal formula, the repetition of marriage alliances between two parallel clan segments belonging to each of the moieties. The local group thus tends to reproduce itself identically, forming an endogamous unity in the very heart of the exogamous model. Unlike the example cited above of the toucan, which takes the fruits of the blowgun-tree without any counterpart, the clan segments mutually "nourish" themselves through repeated alliances.

The Yagua extend their system of clan naming to other non-Yagua groups, who are usually considered to be hostile. However, none of these outsiders belong to the bird class, which the Yagua appear to reserve for themselves. Consider the clans of the bacaba palm, *tóširiria*, and the "twisted liana", *sišpuria*, both located to the north of the Yagua territory; the clan of the macambo cacao tree, *masádiriria* (identified with the Marubo Indians of Brazil); that of the bataua palm, *simësiriria*; that of the leaf-cutting ant, *ntídira* (situated at the source of the Yavari-mirim) and of the stinging sitaracuy ant, *sáhatarasa* (described as a group of wandering pygmies), etc. Whether or not these groups ever really existed (which is doubtful in certain cases), their clan membership places them in a relationship of virtual exchange with the bird class, rendering them potential allies. On the other hand, the groups with which the Yagua say they maintain no type of exchange whatsoever are excluded from the clan register. This is notably the case with the Mayoruna of the Yavari River (on the border of Peru and Brazil), called *kandamunuñu*, "wild howler monkeys," rather than *kandaria*, the howler monkey clan (which is represented among the Yagua).

Relations with eponymous species

We have seen that the clan category *riria* corresponds, in the natural register, to that of *áte* ("species"), the difference being that the former is exogamous while the second is considered endogamous. However, the Yagua also say that they maintain close kinship relations with eponymous species. The relationship is that of parallel uncle / nephew, hahechó / handianuwuchi, which belongs to the category of the "identical," but excludes a direct filiation with the eponym, which, furthermore, occupies the younger genealogical position (nephew). The members of the clan thus occupy the elder position (father's brother) in relation to the paratotemic species. There are at least two reasons for this. In the myth concerning the origin of the world, everything that was considered to be a living entity was confounded in one and the same primordial humanity, without distinctions among species. After committing mistakes or acting with ill-timed excessive zeal, part of these mythic beings were transformed into animals or plants, while the other part retained their original faculties. According to the Yagua conception, this transformation into natural species was a consequence, not an original state. In the second place, various human elements (souls, flesh) return to nature after

the death of an individual (a theme of necrophagous nature) and "nourish" natural species, especially animals, following a cycle of transformation (discussed in an earlier work, Chaumeil 1989). Thus, to a certain extent, animal and, to a lesser degree, plants, depend on humans in order to reproduce themselves.

In this regard, it is interesting to learn that the Yagua do not observe any food restrictions vis-à-vis eponymous species, but they do respect a part of the animal or plant as clan emblems. The members of the squirrel clan, for instance, enjoy adorning their clothing with dried hides of the small rodent, while those of the red macaw clan sport the long, shimmering feathers of this bird on their arms, and those of the toucan clan wear this species' tail feathers on their chests. As Lévi-Strauss (1962:141-142) pointed out in the case of the Tikuna, close neighbors of the Yagua, each paratotemic species is subdivided into an edible part and an emblematic part. Furthermore, each clan entity has specific attributes: individual names, repertoires of songs, dances, and pantomimes, face and body paintings using black genipap (*Genipa americana*) and red annatto (*Bixa orellana*), all intimately linked to the eponymous species or evoking one of its characteristics. The Yagua clan system thus establishes a double homology: on one hand, the natural species and the social group put in a relationship of consanguinity and shared "flesh"; on the other hand, between the differences marked at the level of the natural species and those marked at the level of social groups, further separated by exogamy.

Interclan and Interethnic Bonds

The Yagua associate the notion of *riria* with that of "flesh," *šuwe*, as shared substance. This definition of the clan as substance entails rejecting, at least theoretically, any inclination toward internal warfare (intraclan conflicts are channeled through interpersonal sorcery). Similarly, clans that are engaged in on-going exchanges form a politically united bloc around a dominant clan (theoretically a bird clan). By contrast, clans that did not practice exchange and which were spatially distant could enter into open conflict, although little is known nowadays about the exact modalities of interclan wars. The major migratory movements of the first half of the twentieth century provoked profound upheavals in the social organization of the Yagua, including an intense atomization of the clans.

At the superethnic level, the Yagua maintained (and, to some extent, continue to maintain) exchange relations with various neighboring groups, especially the Tikuna and the Cocama of the Amazon. In contrast, they assert that, in the past, they did not practice any form of exchange with the Mayoruna of the Yavari River or the Witoto of the Putumayo River, whom they always considered to be their enemies, *munuñu*. In their myths, the Yagua associate the Witoto with the "piranha people" (cannibals) and the Mayoruna with the "sieve people" (Chau-

meil 1983:157). If we return to the global clan model, this time ignoring exchange, we can see the division into three classes, with the understanding that the Yagua identify themselves with the bird moiety:

| Yagua | Witoto — — — — — Mayoruna | birds | cannibal fish — — — — — sieve (plant) |
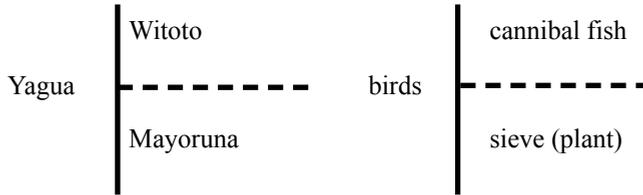
It is possible that the three-class system, which we could apply to other domains (such as the construction of space), serves here as a general model for thinking about relations with others. In this system, the classes are found in a position of potential complementarity or opposition according to the type of relationships that the social groups weave among themselves. We can represent these relations along the axis of exchanges as follows:

Humans	Yagua			Tikuna Cocama	Witoto Mayoruna
	"sub-clan"	clan	between clans		
Kin	more rarely ————————— – – – – –				
Friends		————————————— – – –			
Enemies		– – – – – – – – ———————————			

As we can see, the tables concerning animals, plants, and humans are largely recuperated and integrated in a single global taxonomic model. This projects the universe of the living (if we exclude minerals, perceived as indistinct) onto an axis of several levels (two in the case of plants, three in the cases of animals and humans).

One of the interesting points is that the social classes occupy a "genealogical" ascendance over natural classes, the relationship being that of uncle to nephew. This reveals that the Yagua accord a predominance to the social over the biological in their system of categorization, as in their relations with their surroundings and territory. But this is not done in the name of some scheme prior to any classification of the living (relations among humans presiding over the logical division of things), but, rather, by virtue of a relation of an ontological order among human beings and natural species, which is expressed here through the notion of

"kin." Thus, beyond the tangible diversity of species and the principles that order them, it is the global model of the integration of the living that has generated the analysis presented in these pages. In addition, it demonstrates that any approach to the notions of territory or identity in these cultures must take into account these forms of interaction which closely associate social categories with spatial categories. ❑

Note

A version of this article was originally published in *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* 78 (2) pp. 25-37, 1992. The English version was translated from French by Catherine V. Howard.

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THE GROWTH OF FAMILY TREES: UNDERSTANDING HUAORANI PERCEPTIONS OF THE FOREST

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A growing body of work shows that people's interactions with their natural environment form the bases of their social practices and understandings of the social. Recent studies by Bird-David (1992 a;b), Bloch (1992 *a;b)*, Descola (1992), and Ingold (1993a; 1993b) are distinct but by no means incompatible theoretical efforts to account for animistic beliefs and to imagine social relations with reference to the experience of biological processes. There are marked differences between these authors (who, Bloch excepted, focus on the relationship between people and animals), but sufficient similarities to make a comparison fruitful. Descola, for example, shares with Bird-David an interest in symbols and representations, but, as he tries to develop a structuralist model of (unconscious) cultural invariants, his approach is riot too remote from Bloch's who, as a pioneer in cognitive anthropology, is looking for non-linguistic mental models. Bloch and Ingold share a strong materialist bias against symbolic interpretations, which divorce perception front action and ignore non-mediated forms of knowledge. Finally, both Bird-David and Ingold, while disagreeing over what is the best theoretical model to explain the particular sociality of egalitarian societies, connect this sociality to the perception of natural surroundings as a 'giving environment'.[1] In other words, despite their theoretical differences, these four authors stress that many hunter-gatherer and horticulturist societies view natural objects and human beings as forming a single social field, and that the correspondence between certain properties of social life and the experience of organic life should form a crucial part of anthropological analysis.

I take their consensus as an important point of departure from which to challenge reductionist or dualistic views of the relationship between nature and society and to re-conceptualize nature, so that natural categories are no longer seen solely as metaphors for social categories (Hastrup 1989; Richards 1992). When the relationship of people to nature is re-considered in terms of engagement, practical experience and perceptual knowledge, nature ceases to be a mere reflection of society. The basis on which totemism is thought of as a metaphorical representation and a conceptual objectification of nature might thus be questioned. Since the master work of Lévi-Strauss, the identification of people with plants and ani-

mals has commonly been understood as a symbolic manifestation of a classificatory mode of thought originating in the 'cognitive need for understanding' (Lévi-Strauss 1962; Morris 1987: 270-91). For Lévi-Strauss, there is no doubt that people's interest in plant and animal species (and its ritualized, totemic expression) stems primarily from an intellectual concern with difference and analogy, that is, with the codification of discontinuities. Therefore, people's concrete knowledge of the world they live in is meaningless, unless transposed to an abstract level where it can be used to classify and order the social. In other words, the practical experience of, or communication with, animals and plants is irrelevant for the analysis of totemic beliefs, for these should be seen as a linguistic code to think the world of nature only *in so far as it can be contrasted with the cultural world of human beings*. This is the ontological dualism (humanity *v.* animality; culture *v.* nature; or intellectuality *v.* affectivity) that Ingold has unremittingly opposed in order to look at the concrete and personal interactions through which humans and non-human life forms constitute one single social world. For Ingold (1991; 1992), animals may be 'good to think', but they are, above all, 'good to relate to', so we should focus on perceptual rather than representational knowledge.

Bloch's recent re-analysis of Zafimaniry society (1992b), although using a completely different model from Ingold's, is also an attempt to conceptualize social relations on the basis of material processes and everyday practices. Bloch's 'central mental models' result in a form of non-representational cultural knowledge akin to Ingold's practical knowledge based on perception and engagement. Bloch suggests that natural objects do not function as metaphors for social processes, 'because social relations are experienced as natural' (1992b: 130-2). He identifies the process of growth and maturation, a process that equally affects all living beings, as a particularly forceful illustration of how people derive a practical knowledge of the social from their concrete experience of the world around them.

Following Bloch, I will try to show that the Huaorani's conceptualization of their society is informed by their perceptions of differential growth processes in their forest environment, as well as by certain important symbiotic relations existing between plants, animals and people. I briefly consider the Huaorani's material experience of the forest as a 'giving environment', before examining how the specific qualities of two important tree species, *Bactris gasipaes* (commonly known as peach palm), and *Ochroma lagopus* (balsa) express the cyclical nature of Huaorani society and give meaning to the cycles of destruction and growth through which it is reproduced.

The Huaorani view of growth

For the Huaorani of Ecuador, growth and maturation is a matter of on-going interest. More like hunter-gatherers[2] than horticulturists, they spend much time

'cruising' in the forest, exploring it slowly, collecting what they need for the day, and monitoring its potential resources for later use. Their constant checking of the maturity of fruit trees, and of the number of pregnant monkeys or bird nests, is commented upon at length on return to the longhouse. This interest in plant growth and maturation is more than mere pragmatic resource management: they have a genuine aesthetic delight in observing plant life, particularly the growth of new leaves, and explicitly relate this to certain aspects of human physical growth. Notions of growth and maturation are also applied to the population as a whole. Population growth and the rise and fall of local groups are matters of great concern, and group social dynamics are conceptualized in relation to forest groves, rather than with reference to the life span of individual trees. As we shall see, both social groups and forest groves exhibit two contrastive patterns of growth and regeneration.

The Huaorani[3] number about 1200 and live between the Napo and Curaray rivers in the Ecuadorian Amazon region. Fierce isolationists, they have, until recently, avoided all peaceful and continuous contact with the outside.[4] Their homeland is characteristic of much of the western Amazonian rain forest, except that, given the relatively high rainfall averages (around 3000 mm *per annum)*, seasons are almost non-existent. As with many Amazonian societies, kinship terminology is Dravidian, and the preferred marriage is between bilateral cross-cousins. Traditional longhouses - of approximately 10 to 35 members - are typically composed of an older polygynous couple, their married daughters and unmarried children. These residential units, although autonomous and dispersed over a relatively vast area, maintain close relations with two or three others, with which they form strong alliances. Each of these regional groups, *huaomoni (the* 'we-people'), strives to preserve an optimum degree of endogamy and autarchic stability through sustained and controlled hostility towards all the others, called *huarani* (literally, the 'others', that is, the 'enemies'). Society is at peace when *huaomoni* groups are united around inter-married pairs of brothers and sisters (a special case of cross-cousin marriage), and when endogamous marriages are secured. But when shortage of spouses, internal divisions and disagreements over marriage alliances force *huaomoni* groups into political re-alignments with *huarani,* violence and destruction not only brings population numbers to alarmingly low levels, but may lead to the disappearance of entire groups.

Before examining these social features in more detail, it is necessary to set out Huaorani views on growth processes. These are primarily based on people's experience of how different tree species grow, mature and reproduce. Although people's understanding of the rainforest ecology seems limitless, special attention is given to a few features, all associated with growth and age. These features are the distinctive characteristics of three different kinds of trees, the tallest canopy trees (such as *Ceiba pentranda or Cedrela odorata),* the soft wooded trees (such as

Ochroma lagopus or *Cecropia spp),* and certain palms of the *Arecaceae family (Bactris gasipaes).*

The most respected and talked about are undoubtedly the large emergent canopy trees *(ñëne ahuè).* The fascination which these trees exert is due to the fact that they mature very slowly, but eventually grow to be the tallest trees of the forest. However, their growth depends on specific conditions, and they may remain young, immature trees *(huiñëhuè)* for many years. People often point to these young trees by the trailside, stressing the fact that their juvenile form is strikingly dissimilar to their adult one. Another characteristic of these and other young trees to which people are very sensitive is their new leaves. These look smooth and shiny and their distinctive and delicate colours - slightly pink, purple or red, or when green, of a very pale, almost yellow shade - are contrasted with the deep, uniform green of fully grown leaves. Although never made explicit, what seems to be most significant about the large emergent canopy trees is that they reach maturity, and start flowering, between 40 and 60 years old, and they can live for up to 200 years. That is, they reproduce at the oldest age people can live to, and their life span roughly corresponds to five human generations. In addition to their longevity, these trees are also admired for their solitary character (they do not grow in groves, but are sparsely dispersed throughout the forest), as well as for their profuse entanglement. They are hosts to many plant and animal species, and a mass of lianas and climbers assists their growth, while helping them stand upright in the wind.

The two other important types of tree are two middle-canopy species, *Bactris gasipaes* (peach palm) arid *Ochroma lagopus* (balsa). These two species are well known by forest botanists as pioneer species, i.e., first colonizers in natural forest gaps and clearings. They both flower and fruit at about 20 metres above the forest floor, and attract large concentrations of animals. *O. lagopus* is the first tree species to grow in forest openings, but it matures fast and dies out in one generation, while *B. gasipaes* grows slowly in the shade of soft and fast-growing trees, and reproduces in the same groves for many generations.

Ochroma lagopus [5] grows so fast that it reaches 12 metres in less than three years (Richards 1964: 383). The soft texture and low density of its timber are consequences of its rapid growth. The Huaorani say that balsa trees need much sun, and die in the shade; that they mature very fast, though their groves do not last more than a generation. They flower and fruit heavily, attracting many birds, which disperse the mass of seeds across wide areas. Their seeds, like the seeds of other opportunistic, short-lived trees, remain viable for a few years, and are present in the soil throughout the forest in large numbers, waiting for gaps in the canopy. When large trees fall, the sudden increase in temperature and light levels causes the seeds to germinate, and the young trees grow rapidly (Collins 1990: 64-5). Compared with *B. gasipaes,* the use of *O. lagopus* is very limited. The wood is used only to manufacture two essential objects: the fire kit and the ear orna-

ments[6] both of which combine balsa and palm wood. I will show later that the complementarity of hard and soft wood in cultural objects and myths is of great symbolic significance.

The third tree species of importance for the Huaorani, *Bactris gasipaes*, is a managed, incipiently domesticated plant.[7] It is believed to be a cross between two wild species *(Guilelma microcarpa* and *Guilelma insignis),* and to have originated somewhere in Ecuador or the Ucayali region (Ballick 1979:11-28; Clement 1988). There exist numerous varieties, more or less altered genetically from their wild state, and exhibiting thornier to smoother trunks, and orange-red to yellow-green fruit. This palm reproduces by seed propagation. Each fruit contains a single relatively large and heavy seed. Its flesh, starchy, oily and with a high level of carotine, contains twice as much protein as bananas, and more carbohydrates and proteins than maize (Newman 1990:136). Because of an enzyme, it cannot be eaten except when cooked, or very ripe - almost rotten. The Huaorani have not deliberately cultivated *B. gasipaes,* but their cooking activities have encouraged its germination and propagation.[8] The cooking process heats the seed to the temperature required for germination. Given the low level of light and temperature at ground level, too few seeds could germinate without human intervention for the species to survive. The tree's sexual maturity is reached between its fifth and seventh year. An adult tree bears 13 full fruit clusters, each weighing up to 100 kgs (Duke 1977:60; Ballick 1979). A fully grown tree is about 20 to 25 metres high and typically belongs to the middle canopy. Even in comparison to other palrns, it grows slowly, and its wood is extremely hard. The most common type is called *tewe* in Huaorani, which literally means 'hard wood'.[9]

Individual growth and vital energy

In this section, I want to explore a salient aspect of Huaorani cultural knowledge: their understanding of human growth. Huaorani conceptualization of human growth is informed by sensory perceptions, which assimilate bodily maturation to the vital energy contained in leaves or shoots, and the process of aging to vegetal decay. The high energy of fast-growing plants is used to stimulate the physiological development of toddlers. As they grow older, children are encouraged through a non-authoritarian education to become independent and self-sufficient individuals. But upon adolescence, a ritual intervention is considered necessary to make them old enough to marry.

I have already mentioned the Huaorani's admiration for new leaves. There exists a vast repertoire of songs that endlessly embroider on the colours, textures and aspects of new leaves, and on their beauty. One song, for example, says that 'trees with beautiful leaves grow well', and that 'it feels good to live where such trees are found, for their leaves, sweet enough to be eaten, never touch the forest

floor'. Another talks about a person 'as handsome and weightless as a large young leaf swung by a gentle wind'. These songs illustrate the close association between 'new' and beautiful. This association is found again in a common expression used of babies, *huiñenga huèmongui bapa,* which can be translated as 'it has beauty'.

Babies and young leaves are associated not only because both are beautiful, but also because both are vigorous and full of vitality. However, the vigour of babies and young children must be protected, and their fast growth secured through a series of precautions. Food taboos, meant to accelerate the process of growth and encourage the right bodily composition, are observed by both parents from a few weeks prior to birth, until six months afterwards.[10] In Huaorani thought, babies are intrinsically energetic, but their vigour depends on breast feeding, and young mothers explicitly state their need for nourishing food (such as monkey meat and palm fruit) in order to produce nutritious and abundant milk.

The greatest bodily change and physical development is that from toddler, *tèquè iñaringa* ('in the process of ageing'), to that of 'young person', *piquëna bate opate gocamba* (literally, 'to start being old enough to go on one's own'), a status which lasts until the ear-piercing and wedding ceremonies described below. In other words, walking, talking and eating meat are seen as three simultaneous acquisitions which mark the beginning of personal autonomy, and which can be stimulated by the application of fast-growing plants.[11] Once the fragility of the new human life is overcome, parents are mainly concerned with accelerating the process of growth in their children. It is to this effect that the legs and arms of toddlers, who are gradually expected to walk and participate in subsistence activities, are gently beaten with nettles and the shoots of certain trees. Only when they can walk on their own do toddlers start wearing the distinctive cotton string around the waist. Huaorani children are, by any standard, very independent and self-sufficient, and relations between adults and children are totally devoid of authority. Adults do not have a sense of hierarchical superiority, nor are they over-protective (Rival 1992: chap. 5 & 6). In Huaorani terms, independence is measured by the ability to bring back food to 'give away', that is, to share with co-residents. Children's participation in subsistence activities lies largely outside adult control, as children often go to the forest in bands, with the oldest teaching and supervising the youngest.

The next important maturation stage for both girls and boys is when they are ready to stop 'being on their own', that is, when they are considered mature enough to marry and have children. Two ceremonies mark this important transition, the ear piercing ritual and the wedding ceremony. Sometime during adolescence, boys and girls have their ears prepared for the distinctive Huaorani ethnic marker, the 5 cm wide earplug made of balsa wood. They are suddenly assailed by several men of their house-group (usually older uncles), who pierce their ears

with a long needle made of *B. gasipaes* wood hardened by fire. In subsequent months, increasingly bigger discs of balsa wood are inserted until the holes reach the desired size. Adolescents are expected to overcome their surprise and bear the pain in silence, while listening to the chants of their adult kinsmen and women. The chants exhort them to work hard, hunt and gather diligently, and bring home sufficient surplus to give away. They must remain healthy, be strong and cat sufficient monkey meat to enable them to walk for days without feeling tired. The surprise and the pain is intended to make the initiands feel angry (*pii*),[12] the typical male-adult expression of vigour and force. As the ear lobes swell and hurt, adolescents - particularly boys - must grow agitated and irritable. Peace and tranquillity are not restored until the holes are the light size, although the piercing itself is never forgotten.

Ear piercing is explicitly talked about as a *punishment* for not obeying, though this idea of 'punishment' should not be taken literally. Rather, it is a pronouncement - a command - by which senior male relatives force adulthood on young Huaorani. In this ritual, structured by the violent coercion of maturing young persons (Bloch 1992a), growth takes on a more symbolic meaning. The fact that the needle used to perforate earlobes (the site of obedience, i.e. of acceptance and conformity) is made of hard, slowly grown wood, is as significant as the fact that the holes, once enlarged, are filled with soft, light, beautiful balsa discs painted with white clay.[13] As a fast grower, balsa wood represents the vitality of plants that need bright light and heat, offer shade to palm seedlings, but die after one generation. Balsa earplugs thus signify cultural continuity (they are an essential ethnic market), and, as part of a pre-marital rite, symbolize social continuity. Looked at from this perspective, the ear piercing ritual completes the growth process and maturation of the youth by combining the complementary effects of slow reproductive growth and fast one-generational growth. Conjugal life and the birth of new children cannot occur before the young are made old enough to marry through the fusion of these two growth principles.

The wedding ceremony (the pairing of 'matured' *huaomoni* boys and girls) is the logical outcome of the ear piercing ceremony and also takes the form of an unexpected 'attack'. Marriages are celebrated during drinking ceremonies, when the whole *huaomoni* group is gathered. The oldest members of the regional group (who are the real or classificatory grandparents of the spouses-to-be) seize the girl and boy they want to match, and force them into a hammock where their feet are bound together and where they are made to share a large bowl of ceremonial drink as all their married kin crowd around them to sing the wedding chants.

The last maturation stage, ageing, is like the first one, in the sense that it is an individual process. The skin of old people, like old leaves, loses its smoothness and shine. A Dumber of songs and metaphoric expressions about old people refer to decaying leaves, though the imagery is less elaborated than for young leaves, and no direct parallel is drawn between old people dying and leaves decaying.

As soon as they have one or two married children, people start preparing for death by inserting *B. gasipaes* wood splinters on both sides of their noses. The wood protects them during the voyage across the Napo River (symbolically represented as a giant boa) to reach the land of the dead. Without these splinters, the body would stay behind and rot.

Apart from this one reference to individual death and afterlife, there is very little cultural elaboration on decay and ageing. However, it is worth noting that by the time their children reach the age of two or three, mothers are said to have *aged.* Mothering is thus talked about as a withering process, and women - especially their breasts - are said to 'droop' like leaves when they become old. Old age seems to be a taboo subject. People are considered *too old* to go on living when their grandchildren are married and are about to become parents themselves. In the past, old people, especially widowers, were abandoned and left to die. Today, in sedentarized villages, old widowers live by themselves and are clearly neglected.

Slow growth, continuity and symbiotic relations

I have suggested that the physiological development of persons results from the same vital energy as that found in leaves, shoots and fast-growing plants, but that the social maturation of adolescents requires the application of a different sort of growth -'slow growth'. Before elaborating on the link between the regeneration of *B. gasipaes* palm groves and the social dynamics of *huaomoni groups,* I outline the relationship between slow growth, *B. gasipaes* hard wood and generational continuity.

The location of all the *Bactris gasipaes* groves in the forest is known, for each is associated with specific *huaomoni* groups. These groves are explicitly seen as resulting from the activities of the group's forebears: *monito memeiri qui inani* (they belong to our grandparents). Like many Amazonian groups, sedentary Huaorani plant *B. gasipaes* trees in their gardens and around their houses, though they apparently did not do so in the past. It is noteworthy that when families disagree with their village leaders, and move out to join relatives in other settlements (a rare and dangerous undertaking), they carefully destroy all their *B. gasipaes trees*, but do not go to such lengths for their banana and manioc plantations. Moreover, people differentiate the *B. gasipaes* trees they have planted themselves from the traditional groves which they continue to visit every year, and which mark the settlements of previous generations. Such visits continue not only because the fruit of *Bactris gasipaes* is an important food, but also because it provides a crucial link between past and present generations of 'we-people'. It is this link which makes the forest a 'giving environment', since living people, receiving nourishment from the past (palm fruit are seen to result from the activities and lives of

past generations) ensure the feeding of future generations through their present *consumption* activities.

People talk about the *B. gasipaes* groves with great excitement and pleasure, for they are a source of pride, security and rejoicing, the concrete and material sign of continuity. They last longer than human lives. When passing through them, people recall the deceased, usually a grandparent or great-grandparent of the oldest members of the house-groups who come to collect the fruit. As these groves often spring from seeds deposited around long-abandoned hearths, domestic debris (bits of broken clay pots or stone axes) still lies barely buried, a further confirmation that 'the grandparents' lived there. Although long established groves could well be self-perpetuating,[14] the scattered seeds from human intervention clearly contribute to their reproduction.

The Huaorani calendar is further evidence of the cultural importance of B. *gasipaes,* and of how the link established between different generations of 'we people' - materialized by *B. gasipaes groves* - also plays an essential role in monkey reproduction. The year is divided into three seasons. These do not reflect the changing position of the stars as in many Amazonian cultures, but a series of maturation processes linked with *Bactris gasipaes* fruiting cycles.[15] The first season, the 'peach palm fruit season', runs from January to April. It is followed by the 'season of fat monkeys', which ends in August. People, like monkeys, also fatten with this seasonal diet, and laugh at the idea that their bodies grow softer and bigger. Monkey meat becomes more palatable, with a yellowish colour and a milder taste. It is said that it almost melts in the mouth, and is so delicious to cat 'because the females are now pregnant'- Then comes the 'season of wild cotton', when kapok, an essential part of the hunting gear,[16] becomes available in large quantities.

The months of February to April are usually the months of greatest mobility, as *huaomoni* house-groups converge on the sites where fruits are ripening. Their main concern during these months is to balance their desire for grand drinking ceremonies[17] with the need to leave enough palm fruit for the monkeys to feed on, fatten and reproduce.

It is during the peach palm fruit season that the link between past and present generations is most clearly experienced, as past people provide in abundance for their descendants. Monkeys and other animals feeding on peach palm fruit are said to 'steal' food that legitimately belongs to humans, but, since it allows them to fatten and reproduce, they should be permitted to partake in the grandparental bounty. Monkeys have limited territories and their families reproduce in parallel to the human ones, albeit at a greater speed. If people were to treat them badly, by not leaving them enough fruit to cat, for example, monkeys could *steal the seeds* and this time, the theft would be final. The symbiotic relationship uniting people, animals and palm trees is thus perceived as necessary for securing renewal and growth.

Hunting practices provide further evidence of the symbiotic relationship between people and monkeys. Before the introduction of shotguns in the mid-1970s, only two types of hunting were practised: the blow-gunning of canopy species (monkeys and certain species of birds) and the killing of collared peccaries (wild boars) with long wooden spears.[18] It is significant that although both weapons are made of the same material. *B. gasipaes* wood hardened with fire - the practice of blowgun hunting, as well as its signification, stand in systematic opposition to spear hunting.

Huaorani notions of killing and hunting are clearly separated. People do not 'kill' canopy animals, but hunt them, in contrast to prey animals like jaguars or harpy eagles which do not hunt, but kill. Hunting, *oõinga èenqui põ*, means 'retrieving' (literally, 'to carry dead flesh back home'), and to go hunting, *oõnte go,* to go blowing. Game is relatively plentiful in the Huaorani homeland, birds and monkeys are found throughout the forest, their territories are limited, and their behaviour, largely determined by their feeding habits, predictable. Blowgun hunting, a rather solitary operation often involving tree climbing, is practised by men and sometimes women as part of their frequent trips to the forest, and produces the most regular supply of meat. When talking about monkey hunting, people say that the momentum of unpoisoned darts is insufficient to be fatal; curare is what kills monkeys. It is as though they sought to reduce the causal link between hunting (the action of blowing) and killing (the monkey's death). Furthermore, babies of hunted female monkeys are neither killed nor eaten, but kept as 'pets' and breast-fed.

In fact, Huaorani longhouses, filled (through blowgunning and gathering activities) with adopted animals and collections of forest products, can be seen as prolongations of the symbiotic relationship epitomized by the peach palm groves which develop on old dwelling sites. Longhouses offer clear evidence that spatial oppositions are drawn neither between domesticated and wild spaces, nor between forest animals and longhouse residents. Pets are not domesticated, but *adopted,* and, as such**,** treated like longhouse dependent members. For example, birds and monkeys are fed with bananas and other fruit, and harpy eagles with hunted monkeys; when they die, they receive a proper burial. The fact that older men and women become shamans by adopting 'jaguar sons' provides a further illustration of the widespread phenomenon of adoption, albeit symbolic in this latter case.

As already mentioned, spear hunting, a sporadic, collective, noisy and bloody affair, is opposed to blowgun hunting. In fact, hunting with spears is called 'killing' *(tapaca huenonani).* Although there is no space here to elaborate on the assimilation of spear hunting to warfare (see Rival 1992: chap. 2), it is important to point out that spears are made of *B. gasipaes* wood. From a myth accounting for the twin origin of very hard wood and deadly spears, we learn that, before they were made aware of the existence of *B. gasipaes* Palms by the son of the sun, the

Huaorani used balsa wood to make their spears, but these were too blunt and Soft to kill. Consequently defenceless, the Huaorani were leading a miserable existence at the mercy of powerful 'cannibals' and enemies. This myth clearly presents *B. gasipaes* spears as essential for the maintenance of a separate ethnic identity and the continuity of *huaomoni* groups.

Manihot esculenta: the fragility of fast growth and social expansion

I suggested at the beginning of this article that the Huaorani have a hunting gathering perspective on the forest, which they experience as a 'giving environment'. My concern, in this section is to show that the continuity of *B. gasipaes* groves, and the symbiotic relations on which it is based, can best explain their confidence in the forest and their disengagement from continuous gardening.[19] Although not primarily horticulturists, they do grow *Manihot esculenta* (sweet manioc), and it is to the specific meanings of this gardening activity that I wish to turn now. I will first detail the particularities of Huaorani resource management, then outline their gardening practices, and finally analyse ritual drinking parties in terms of growth symbolism. It is my contention that resource management, gardening and ceremonial drinking are all organized according to the same cultural logic contrasting slow and fast growth. More explicitly, sweet manioc is identified with *0. lagopus,* for both are characterized by fast, non-reproductive growth. This identification elucidates the Huaorani's reluctance to garden (unusual in Amazonia), as well as their association of horticulture with warfare.

We already know that Huaorani people spend a great part of their time cruising through the forest, sometimes collecting food within a radius of 5 km - or less - from the longhouse, sometimes going as far as 20 km away. Forest trips are considered successful and productive as long as the necessary jungle products are brought back. A trip in the forest often means spending more time in the trees than on the ground. A wide range of fruit species are collected, as well as germinated seeds, a relished food, dug from beneath certain trees. Many semi-cultivated species are 'grown in the wild' so as to always be at hand during expeditions: for example, fish-poison vines along creeks, fruit trees along certain hunting trails and banana and plantain trees in natural clearings, used as hunting bases.

In relation to horticulturist standards, Huaorani gardening requires a minimum input of human labour, very little technological elaboration and no magical knowledge. Despite the fact that gardening techniques are very basic, with no burning and a minimum number of trees felled, gardening, 'doing something tiresome in the bush', is said to require a lot of work, and as much effort and pain as transporting heavy loads. Before the increasing availability of metal tools from the 1930s on, forest patches were cleared with stone axes and gardens cultivated

and weeded with bamboo machetes. Longhouses were built on hilltops, where natural gaps in the forest are more frequent and gardens easier to clear.

Gardens are essentially manioc groves and this is exactly what their name, *quehuencori*, means in Huaorani. Varieties of manioc are primarily differentiated according to the relative sweetness of the roots and rates of growth, and most of the ones Huaorani cultivate produce edible roots in 4-6 months. Although people know of wild varieties of manioc, and claim that their forebears transplanted them to gardens when they had no access to domesticated varieties, it is clear that they have also known sweet manioc for a very long time.[20] Nevertheless, a number of factors suggest that Huaorani horticulture is incipient and undeveloped. Firstly, they know only sweet manioc varieties, apparently the sweetest and juiciest Amazonian varieties. The roots are so sweet that people eat them raw in the garden. Secondly, they do not have the elaborate preparations known among expert horticulturists such as the Shuar and the Quichua, or among those who, like the Tukanos, grow bitter manioc. Even today, manioc is often simply boiled and crushed in water, like boiled bananas - the Huaorani's staple drink. Even when the mash is mixed with saliva, the brew is not allowed to ferment into a true alcoholic drink. Thirdly, gardens have always been cornparatively small (15 in x 18 m) and hardly suffice for the daily consumption of sedentary households today. Even in villages with schools where manioc is most needed, only about one third of the conjugal families cultivate gardens and feed those who do not, according to the typical guest-host demand-sharing relationship (Rival 1992:172-89).

All these indications confirm that the Huaroni's use of cultivated manioc is sporadic and is aimed at providing feast, rather than subsistence food. Huaorani can go for months without manioc, and when they do decide to cultivate it, it is with the explicit objective of organizing a large drinking ceremony in which, in contrast to peach palm drinking parties to which only 'we-people' are invited, distant relatives and allies participate. As a feast food artificially re-creating the seasonal abundance of palm fruit - the gift from previous generations - manioc can be used to challenge the segmentation of Huaorani society into bounded *huaomoni* groups.

Before elaborating this point, it is necessary to consider briefly the relationship between manioc gardening and vegetal growth more generally. The manioc plant is called 'the thing that lives, that is life' and the root 'edible thing'. There is some evidence to suggest that manioc is understood as having propagation habits similar to *Ochroma lagopus*. Manioc, like balsa, takes advantage of the full light in canopy gaps to grow and mature fast. People favour the wide dispersion of manioc, rather than its reproduction *in situ*, just as the feeding habits of birds result in the wide dispersal of balsa seeds. This conceptualization of propagation explains well why people hardly weed their gardens and never use a plot more than once - except today in sedentarized villages. Weeding, and using the same garden for a number of years, implies a system of agricultural production which

is foreign to the Huaorani preference for extractive activities. Another practice illustrates the association between manioc and balsa. When bundles of stalks are ready to be planted, they are beaten with large balsa leaves, a process aimed at vitalizing the stalks by transferring to them the balsa's fast-growth energy, just as we saw earlier it was transferred to young children. Clearly then, manioc belongs to the category of fast-growing, short-lived species. The fact that manioc is preferably planted in the natural gaps left by the fall of old emergent trees provides further evidence of the close association between manioc and balsa, for both need the sudden influx of light and new space in order to develop. By the same token, *Manihot esculenta* is contrasted with *Bactris gasipaes* which can only grow in the shade.

Let us now turn to the ritual preparation of manioc roots and to the symbolism of drinking ceremonies. Much of what is said here also applies to drinking parties in which palm fruit or banana drinks are prepared, with the difference that manioc drinking parties are more formal and more ritualized. The greater the number of guests, the larger the plantation, and the longer the roots are left to grow. The reason for this is quite obvious and pragmatic, but the social and cultural implications of this increase in scale are worth emphasizing. As shown below, sweet manioc, in addition to allowing for greater social integration, gratifies a cultural passion for abundance and plenitude. The decision to hold a manioc drinking ceremony is usually left to a married couple that become the 'owners of the feast' and lead the collective labour entailed in its preparation. The harvested manioc is stored in a feast house built by the couple's house-group. The unpeeled roots are gently barbecued over embers, and, once the skin has been removed, are buried in pits for about ten days, during which the 'owners' must follow a special diet and observe a series of restrictions. They must not leave the feast house, which no one else can enter. They must rest and eat only boiled manioc. Sexual intercourse is expressly forbidden. After ten days, when the manioc smell 'strong and sweet', the pulp is scooped, mashed, chewed and stored in large containers.

The transformation undergone by feast manioc is quite explicitly described as a change from root to fruit. People say that when it is extracted from the pit, manioc is 'as sweet as a fruit'. This is important, given that all other drinking parties make use of fruit. The fact that the couple which organizes the drinking ceremony is sometimes called *ahuene,* an expression which literally means 'of the tree', lends further support to the idea that this lengthy transformation turns manioc roots into fruit. This term, normally used to refer to the big solitary trees that are so admired, also means 'great person', 'leader', or 'chief, and is sometimes used to refer to the heads of house-groups or *huaomoni* groups. The close association between trees, fruit and feasting is further evidenced by the fact that the guests at a drinking ceremony compare themselves to birds gathered on a big tree during the fruit season. They sing all night long that:

We humans are like birds, like them we enjoy feasting to the last drop, and then we leave. Each goes on carrying out their own business. In this way lived our grandfathers, and so do we.

For my purpose here it is important to emphasize the concrete experiences and practices of daily life, rather than the ritual knowledge associated with drinking. For this reason, I focus on people's excitement and pleasure at over-consuming fruit drinks 'like birds on a fruiting tree', rather than elaborate the undeniably rich symbolism and imagery of the birds and fruit themselves. Whatever the meaning of the metaphors they use, and whatever the deeper symbolic interpretation one might offer for such ritual experience, drinking ceremonies are first and foremost the way people partake in the fruiting season. Above all, a feast is about presenting abundance as natural and feast-goers as pure consumers, very much like birds gorging on fruit in season.

Botanists say that two-thirds of the world's flowering plants are found only in the tropics, and out of the extraordinary diversity of the rain forest has developed the complex web of relationships between bird pollinators and flowering plants.[21] ost plants also use birds, bats and monkeys as seed dispersers (Collins 1990:70-2). Huaorani people, with their sophisticated knowledge of their forest environment, and particularly of animal feeding habits, not only understand that plant reproduction is absolutely dependent on animals, but also that pollinators and seed dispersers 'do their job' by gorging themselves and then dispersing in all directions. Therefore, whatever else they do when they feast, they play the part of bird pollinators reproducing the ahuene by consuming, fruit drinks bowl after bowl. If one accepts that ahuene is not only a person or a couple, but a name for the *huaomoni* group as a whole, it is easier to grasp the full significance of the transformation of manioc roots into fruit, and to measure the contrasting social outcomes of palm fruit and manioc drinking ceremonies.

While B. *gasipaes* groves are about the social continuity of endogamous nexi centred around pairs of inter-married brothers and sisters, manioc groves are about social expansion and new marriage alliances beyond the *huaomoni* limits. Gardens are synonymous with increased sociality, growing children and multiplying households. They are associated with times of stability, peace and plenty, when 'enemy' house-groups meet for feasts and marriages, and when there is neither feuding, flight nor death. The term for happiness is 'another serving of manioc drink we laugh happily'. This indicates that manioc is the special basis for rejoicing with potential affines. Such alliances are perilous and need the strict control and guidance of strong leaders. A good illustration of the political nature and dangerous character of manioc drinking ceremonies is the fact that male guests who come to feast with the 'enemy' must jab four or five palm wood spears bearing their personal designs in a banana trunk before entering the feast house. Such alliances cannot be reproduced as easily as those between pairs of

brothers and sisters who marry their children together. When commenting on the difficulty of marrying outside the *huaomoni* group, people occasionally refer to the fact that manioc gardens do not last. As a corollary, they imply that endogamous marriages, like peach palm groves, do last.

Manioc gardens last only for the duration of a drinking ceremony, new clearings must be prepared and stalks continuously replanted. As the clearings are small, often barely larger than natural gaps in the forest, and as they are abandoned immediately following the harvest, old gardens are quickly invaded by *Ochroma lagopus* and other pioneer trees. In less than three years, the metaphorical association between the owners of the feast and a large fruiting tree, between the feast participants and birds, and between the garden produce and fruit, are made physically real by the growth of secondary forest. In one sense, manioc groves facilitate the growth of balsa wood and of the pioneer trees they are designed to imitate. Peach palm groves, on the other hand, continue to yield fruit, feed the descendants of those by whom they exist, and reproduce the families of monkeys. Gardens also attract animals, especially tapirs, deer and large rodents, but these are not traditionally eaten. Therefore, unlike peach palm groves, manioc gardens do not create a symbiotic relationship between people, animals and plants. Moreover, trust in ahuene leaders can be short-lived, and violence can strike them just as thunder strikes the large emergent trees (*ñeñe ahue*) that destroy neighbouring trees in their fall and leave large gaps in the forest canopy. This is why the Huaorani say that times of peace and growth are always followed by times of destruction and near-extinction. The *ahuene* give generously, but their proffered abundance is not as reliable or as secure as the grandparents' seasonal yields of palm fruit.

Conclusion

In this article I have tried to show that growth is central to Huaorani thought. Like all Amazonian Indians, the Huaorani live in autonomous local groups, hunt, fish, gather and garden out to say this is to say very little, for there are many ways in which these activities can be organized and thought about. For example, many native Amazonians dichotomize the world by opposing nature to culture (see, for example, Seeger 1981). They physically and symbolically transform their environment by setting domesticated spaces - gardens and human dwellings against wild spaces. I have already mentioned that among the Shuar (Descola 1986) and the Quichua (Whitten 1985), two Indian groups whose agricultural production has supplied missionaries, traders and travellers for centuries, and who today are in close contact with the Huaorani, gardening, and more particularly manioc cultivation, is a highly sophisticated art, as well as a complex symbolic practice. The Huaorani, in contrast, are reluctant gardeners, and their manioc plantations,

grown for feasting rather than daily consumption, involve very little physical or symbolic transformation of the forest. Their peach palm groves, on the other hand, result from symbiotic relations perpetuated through consumption, and are not planted. From a botanical point of view (Clement 1992:70-1) sweet manioc and peach palm are domesticated species, but neither of them is traditionally cultivated by the Huaorani domestication implies not only control, planned intervention and transformation, which all contradict the Huaorani's ideal of natural abundance and of a 'giving environment', but it also presupposes dependence on plants whose growth is much faster relative to human growth and maturation processes.

In addition to illuminating Huaorani resource management strategies, growth, which is a property of social life as much as a life process, also explains why kinship and social groups undergo short and long development cycles. While growth obviously affects all living forms *alike,* this does not necessarily entail that human processes be conceptualized in terms of plant categories, nor that growth be used as a metaphor to describe social processes. Through active and direct engagement in the world, the Huaorani know (i.e. perceive) that trees grow and mature at different rates, and, on this basis, draw a fundamental distinction between living organisms that grow slowly and perdure as groups, and those that grow fast but die off. On the basis of this distinction, the developmental process of peach palm groves, which grow and endure on a time scale commensurate with the passage of human generations, parallels that of *huaomoni* groups. Embodiments of past human activity, these groves reproduce through the enduring relationships created by endogamy and feasting. As their growth and the growth of local groups form a continuous and interlinked process, Huaorani history and the natural history of *Bactris gasipaes* coalesce. This examination of growth in Huaorani thought and practice brings me back to my opening remarks. Given the wide range of evidence upon which I have drawn, a question might remain about the ontological status of growth: is its meaning conceptual, symbolic or metaphorical? My purpose here is not to debate the symbolic nature of social facts, or the innateness of symbols. More modestly, I simply want to emphasize that growth belongs primarily to the domain of practical knowledge, or, in Atran's words, to common sense 'which is responsible for the phenomenal givens that people ordinarily apprehend' (1990: 252). Perceived, experienced and conceptualized, growth is knowledge about the world. As such, it is a non-mediated perceptual knowledge which orders social relations between people, and between people, and other living organisms. But growth is also symbolized and even ritualized. Once formed conceptually, it is interpreted and imagined, and then recast as, for example, the vital energy communicated sympathetically to children, or the complementarity of hard and soft wood. Evoked metaphorically during drinking ceremonies, it stands for the ripening of fruit and becomes maturation. Transformed into an abstract and vague property that can be extracted from the organic con-

text and applied to the social order, growth becomes more evocative and symbolic than conceptual, as when, for instance, the fast-growing and highly productive manioc gardens are used to foster new political alliances and exogamous marriages. This kind of symbolism would lose all its potency, however, if some families and some trees did not grow more slowly than others.   ❑

Notes

1   This phrase gained popularity with the publication of Bird-David's article (1990) in which she argues that gathering and hunting populations 'view their environment as giving' and that 'their economic system is characterised by modes of distribution and property relations that are constructed in terms of giving, as within the family, rather than in terms of reciprocity, as between kin.' (1990:189).

2   'Food collectors', which conveys well the undifferentiated pattern of obtaining food and materials in the forest, might be a better term. The characterization of people through their subsistence activities has led to difficult terminological problems in Amazonia, although Amazonian specialists usually define the people they work with as hunters and swidden horticulturists. Most of them, however, would be extremely reluctant to consider marginal Amazonian groups such as the Huaorani as 'hunter-gatherers', and would say that the literature on hunting-and-gathering societies has no relevance for Amazonia (Lévi-Strauss 1968; Lathrap 1973; Arcand 1981). I see their position as a reaction to the deterministic and evolutionary biases of the early South American cultural typologies (with, for example, the concept of cultural devolution), and of some hunter-gatherer studies. However, such a position implies too great a cultural uniformity and does not allow for an adequate understanding of cultural variations between great gardeners such as the Shuar, Canelos, Quichuas, Napo Quichuas and Tukanos on the one hand, and much more mobile food collectors such as the Huaorani, Cuiva, Siriono or Maku on the other.

3   Adjectival form derived from the substantive *huao* (person, human being) and –*rani* (plural marker).

4   One, possibly two, sub-groups are still protecting their complete isolation by hiding, continuously moving and killing those who try to force contact upon them. Known as 'Aucas', a Quichua word meaning 'savages', they speak a language related to Ssabela, a single and unclassified language which has wrongly been taken for a Zaparoan dialect (Rival 1992:50-7). In the past, they bordered the Zaparo on the south and southeast, but these were totally decimated through enslavement and disease during the rubber boom (Whitten 1978; Reeves 1988). When Zaparo survivors found refuge with *montaña* Indians (Canelos Quichua and Shuar) at the beginning of the century, the Huaomoni expanded within their abandoned territories. Today, they are surrounded by lowland Quichua and white settlers who have gradually moved eastward, a movement which has dramatically accelerated since the oil boom in the early 1970s.

5   There are a number of Huaorani words to refer to different species belonging to the Ochroma and Cecropia generi. One is called *gopocahué* (the tree that comes and goes); another, *mänimèhuè* (?); (young tender tree).

6 The Huaorani never used balsa wood to make floats. They avoided rivers, and when they had to cross one, even with heavy bundles, they preferred to bend trees on each bank and tie them together as an arch.

7 Clement argues that *B. gasipaes* is the only domesticated American palm. He has identified at least ten land races ('the morphologically distinct races developed by humans in different geographical areas'), some of which show an increased fruit weight of close to 5000%. On the basis of the substantial modifications he has observed in certain varieties, he concludes that *B. gasipaes* has been managed and cultivated for more than 12,000 years (Clement 1992: 75-6).

8 Posey (1985; 1988), who has worked extensively with the Kayapos of Central Brazil, has similar ecological information to report. For him, it is clear that the Kayapos do not just adapt to their natural environment, but *make* it; for example, they create and maintain forest patches in savanna environs. On the basis of such findings, he suggests that human intervention (through conscious planning and/or unintentional resource management) might be held responsible for the bewildering ecological diversity of the Amazon rain forest.

9 This term is a combination of *teï* (hard) and *ahuè*. It is clear from the Huaorani lexicon that the term *ahuè* (wood/tree) is polysemic, and that its core meaning is 'wood'. On the basis of ample semantic and lexical evidence, Witkowski et al. (1981) have argued that the concept of wood has developed prior to the concept of tree, and that it is only recently that 'tree' has become a category in itself. Atran (1990: 278) has criticized their view, and has asserted that size (trees are taller than human adults), not woodiness, is the determinant feature of the life-form 'tree'. It seems to me that Huaorani thought privileges wood, albeit for different reasons from those put forward by Witowsky First, growth is identified as a similar process in trees and humans, which are differentiated on the basis of longevity. Second, the significant features of palm trees - their hard wood and abundant fruit - is attributed to their comparatively slow growth.

10 A man who avoids eating certain meats in connexion with a woman's pregnancy acknowledges his fatherhood and makes it public. Taboos on certain meat are said to protect the foetus or the infant from diarrhoea, that is, from liquefaction, therefore securing the strengthening or 'hardening' of the body.

11 See Chaumeil (1988) for an insightful discussion of shamans' anthropomorphic visualization of vital energy. Chaumeil argues that the notion of power in Amazonia is closely linked to the capacity to control energy.

12 This is a complex emotion, a mixture of rage, hatred and bravery. In men, it is a sign of moral strength and determination.

13 White clay, *dai,* is said to be deposited in shallow creeks by the rainbow, *daime.* It is an essential element. Women make clay pots with it for boiling meat - the staple food - and, in times of war, it is mixed with water and drunk as a substitute for food. The clay coating therefore recalls domesticity (clay pots and cooking) and survival (the runaway's drink).

14 Specialists disagree on this point. Clement thinks that *B. gasipaes* cannot survive long after being abandoned (1992:75).

15 Descola (1986:92) notes that the Achuar, who base their calendar on the position of stars and welcome the peach palm fruiting season as a time of abundance, do not seem to grant this fruit any particular symbolic importance. The Shoat, however, celebrate the return of the peach palm fruiting season every year with elaborate fertility rituals, around which their calendar is structured.

16 A fluff used as wadding and feather, kapok cases the passage of darts along the grooved stave of blowpipes. Interestingly, kapok is produced in large quantities by the largest emergent tree, *Ceiba petranda.*

17 For ceremonies, drinks are prepared by extracting the seeds, pounding the flesh and mixing it with water. They are not allowed to ferment into alcohol.

18 Only these three types of animals were hunted with any regularity, and older people still express a great aversion for game widely hunted by most Amazonian people, such as tapirs, agoutis or capihuaras. Although Huaorani do not seem to resent eating imported food such as rice, sugar or oats, and even drink coffee, they would never touch beef, pork or even tapir meat.

19 The contrast drawn by Ingold (1993a) and Bodenhorn (1989) between trust and confidence does not apply in this context because the Huaorani do not conceptualize natural abundance as the outcome of moral relations among people, or between people and animals. They emphasize both

their skills and knowledge, and the work, skills and knowledge of past generations, rather than a moral contract between hunters and game. Moreover, their emphasis on past generations is devoid of any idea of ancestral sanction (Bird-David 1990).

20　According to Lathrap (1973), manioc was domesticated between 5000 and 7000 BC in the Amazon Basin. It is the most important food plant of the tropics.

21　The rain forests of Ecuador are particularly known for their large numbers of bird-pollinated plants (Professor Prance, Director of the Royal Botanical Gardens, personal communication).

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KIN PATHS IN AN ALIEN WORLD
YAMINAWA TERRITORY AND SOCIETY

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On the subject of Brazilian indigenous territories there is a general tendency to think that there is little more to be said and too much to be done; that concepts and arguments are clear and that these only need putting into practice. On first impression, the Yaminawa case seems to indeed be a, less frequent than one would wish, example of the successful application of the existing laws governing the recognition of indigenous rights as expressed in the 1988 Brazilian constitution.

In the Brazilian state of Acre, the Yaminawa are currently dispersed in thirteen small villages grouped in seven different areas. Two of these areas, T.I. Mamoadate (Mamoadate Indigenous Land) and T.I. Cabeceiras do Acre (Cabeceiras do Acre Indigenous Land), are recognised and guaranteed by official institutions. Very close to these territories, other small and very similar settlements, considered informal occupations, persist by the Rivers Iaco and Purús.

Indigenous Territory	Village	Population
Cabeceira do Rio Acre	Ananaia	70 inhabitants
Cabeceira do Rio Acre	Sao Lourenco	52 inhabitants
Cabeceira do Rio Acre	Igarapé dos Patos	29 inhabitants
Mamoadate (River Iaco)	Betel	70 inhabitants
Mamoadate (River Iaco)	Cujubim	42 inhabitants
River Caeté	Buenos Aires	36 inhabitants
River Caeté	Extrema	30 inhabitants
River Iaco	Guajará	67 inhabitants
River Iaco	Asa Branca	10 inhabitants
River Purus	Sao Paulino	61 inhabitants
River Purus	Caiapucá	45 inhabitants
City – Brasiléia	Samaúma	11 inhabitants
City – Rio Branco	Various	30 inhabitants
Total		**553 inhabitants**

(Source : Coutinho Jr. 2001)

The recognition of both the above mentioned official areas was, to be fair, achieved without large mobilisations or conflicts, taking advance of a favourable social climate created by other indigenous claims, a beneficial political scene and particularly as a consequence of a lack of major interests in the area for the whites. It was obviously also aided by the political drive shown by Yaminawa leaders and the determined support provided by pro-indigenous organisations as well as FUNAI agents (Brazil's Indian affairs agency). The Cabeceiras do Rio Acre indigenous land, from whose inhabitants the bulk of the information outlined in this article was obtained, was significantly expanded in 1992,[1] when the spaces separating it from other officially protected areas were added to it, including the Mamoadate indigenous land, with which it finally went on to make up a continuous indigenous area.

However, the above-mentioned success in the application of the laws has been tarnished by the precarious use that the Yaminawa have made of their territory. For example, in Cabeceiras do Rio Acre, the Yaminawa have exercised very limited control over their area. Before the recent reoccupation of the Igarapé dos Patos village, which is a day's upstream journey from the villages of Sao Lourenco and Ananaia, the Yaminawa were only ever seen occupying the small strip of land bordering 'white' territory which now houses the latter mentioned villages. This is only an extreme example of the general occupation rate of Brazil's indigenous areas which, besides being dwelling and agricultural spaces, they are also meant for hunting, gathering and transit. Although such a low occupation has so far not given rise to major problems, given the region's extremely low density rate, especially on the Peruvian side of the border, there is nothing to guarantee that this lack of land pressure will last indefinitely. Particularly so if the building of the BR 317 road goes ahead and, with it, the secular project for the building of a transoceanic road, which will no doubt attract a large flow of colonists. More worrying is the fact that, even on the previously mentioned strip of land, the presence of Yaminawa is scarce. This can be explained by their regular journeys to the city, which constantly absents a large section of the group and by the constant separations of segments of the group that go on to settle in other areas, in some cases, after troublesome spells in the city (Coutinho Jr. 2001).

This latter process has led to the creation of other settlements listed in the above table. The two villages lying by the Caeté River, which were occupied in the mid Nineties with the backing of FUNAI, currently find themselves in a very complex situation stemming from the fact that, despite not being subject to disputes, their history hardly coincides with the model normally employed to legitimise indigenous possession, i.e., immemorial or traditional occupation. The possible alternatives divide indigenists into those who are either inclined towards applying for recognition of the new lands as 'traditional' occupation via the normal channels, and those who favour the proposal of the state of Acre purchasing the lands. This latter option would entail the novelty of an indigenous

reserve outside Brazil's federal government's sphere of control.[2] As far as the urban settlements are concerned, these expose their inhabitants to serious sustenance, health and safety problems, which we will come to later. In short, the legal success of indigenous territorial claims does not appear to have guaranteed the Yaminawa's future, nor does it seem to have met their immediate needs.

The Yaminawa example proves – as would many other cases throughout the length and breadth of Brazil, also based on other grounds – that indigenous territory continues to be an open issue, even after having repeatedly taken the appropriate steps. To be frank, throughout the close to thirty years that this process has been going on, little or no thought has been given to what we could call the 'Yaminawa notion of territory.'

Unstable sedentary life

The Yaminawa are a good example of what is frequently termed inland or interfluvial peoples. As hunters and slash-and-burn horticulturists – manioc and, to a greater extent, banana growers – the diminishing fauna and fertility of the occupied floor leads the Yaminawa to move on to other nearby areas for short and regular spells. Also worth mentioning is the fact that they regularly return to the same areas, although this does not prevent their 'white' neighbours from erroneously classifying them as 'nomads'. Their tendency to make land clearings in secondary jungle areas, made up of fast growing trees, such as Embaúbas (*Cecropia),* is an additional factor that confirms this short spells tendency. The abandoned vegetable gardens are cultivated once again after a few years and, in the meantime, they are occasionally revisited to collect the fruit from the remaining trees. The same occurs with the housing areas, with the exception that the Yaminawa tend to avoid the ones that have been turned into cemeteries after the death of an inhabitant.

In general, their 'vegetative' trips are short but constant and have probably always been so, except that in the last decades their range has been gradually reduced. There is a marked contrast here with the period prior to the pacification of their relationships with the whites whom, up until the Fifties, forced the Yaminawa to constantly flee as well as to keep well away from any river large enough to allow any form of navigation that could expose them to external threats. There has also been a slight overall shift towards the east - from the Peruvian Purús region, where the Yaminawa were still located in the Fifties, to their current areas. The assistance offered by Brazil's official institutions, interested in settling indigenous communities within its border, when there was no other alternative population, has played a significant role in this tendency.[3]

When reviewing Yaminawa memory, the main objective of the field study that I carried out whilst among them, between 1991 and 1993 (Calavia 1995), one thing that drew my attention was the lack of vernacular place names. With the excep-

tion of insignificant rare occasion, all historical place names are Brazilian, and the same applies to current village names, which have generally been inherited from their white occupants. This takes us back to an ethnology cliché about the Lowlands: the lack of memory range, which is generally apparent in genealogy but, as in this case, can also be extended to toponymy to generate an 'alienated' space that also presents that same *ad infinitum* refraction of the same chorography found in so many other Amazon regions (Renard Casevitz 1993; Carneiro da Cunha 1998): everywhere we go, we find a Javari, a Río Blanco, an Apuí or a Seringal Petrópolis. The Yaminawa land is linked to short term memory, to the biography of the living; it lacks 'monuments', specific landmarks that can serve as permanent and unequivocal points of reference. Testimonies from the past, as well as from neighbouring communities (Calavia 2001:77) speak of territorial marks placed by the Yaminawa on beaches and paths to ward off possible intruders or of wide footpaths in the jungle on which, according to local knowledge, the Yaminawa attacked anyone who was not 'naked', suggesting a subtler boundary. These territorial marks – which, to say the least, were extremely perishable: arrows stuck in the ground, footpaths – contained messages for the enemy, from whom their contents have been passed down to us, although they are in no way marked in the memory of the Yaminawa.

Indeed, this situation is compensated by the wealth of information on the communities with whom the Yaminawa coexisted at the time: the absence of place names is the other side of the coin of an overabundance of ethnonyms. The places in the memory of the Yaminawa are in no way similar to one another: they define themselves as places 'next to the Shipibo or the Piro', 'between the Piro and the Catiana' or close to the 'Mastanawa, the Sharanawa and the Miranawa.' The enormous proliferation of ethnonyms constantly observed amongst Pano groups, and particularly within the set of 'Nawa' groups, is a source of confusion for ethnologists, but for the Yaminawa it is their peculiar way of historical learning. Every settlement and every migration is identified in relation to the capture, escape or war between some group with its own specific name.

But would not this pre-eminence of groups over spatial marks represent a blatant rejection of territoriality?

Extent and scene of the myths

Let us not rush along this path. A superficial glance at mythology – the true path for any research study on the Yaminawa, skilful narrators but not very assiduous theoreticians [4] – does not reveal a combination of random relationships but rather itinerant networks in which social relationships are essentially spatial relationships. The action is always triggered by a departure or an arrival; the heroes kill, die or are transformed but, above all, they walk. The occasionally embarrassing

detail employed in narrating stories about their journeys ("they marched one more hour", "they walked for a whole day", "they went on for one more day", "two, three days, weeks or months went by – walking"), which may at first seem like a simple recourse used to scan narrative time, is also used to describe the actors. Interfamily dramas tend to take place at a camp away from the village, visited for hunting or fishing purposes. Longer journeys put the protagonist in touch with allies whose customs contradict, or nearly contradict, their human condition (such as that brother-in-law who eats little blackbirds mistaking them for a Spider monkey, and who needs to be taught what real food is.) Further away destinations are the target of war expeditions against a specific community, or serve to put the hero in contact with the limits of his world. I will retrieve and summarise three narratives from this vast repertoire of odysseys.

The first (myth no. 22 of my collection)[5] places on the scene a group of men who go out looking for stones for making axes. They venture along a large river; an unusual environment for the Yaminawa, and one of them is left behind by the other hostile brothers-in-law, in a small island in the middle of the current. However, on that very spot and in the form of aquatic serpents, he comes across relatives who share his own family name and hold the secret know-how surrounding the manufacture of metal and textile. He finally returns to his village wealthy and ready to pay vengeance to those who wanted to lead him astray.

The second (myth no. 36) tells the story of a man's pilgrimage who gets lost after a failed attack on the village of the Nawawakawo midgets. Whilst trying to find his way back home, he stops at practically all the main Yaminawa mythological animals' shelters - the anacondas, peccaries, jaguars -, where he is initially welcomed but somehow always ends up as an inopportune guest. He eventually finds a female relative of his who happens to be married to a cannibal monster. They run away together and endure a tragic homeward journey during which his hosts, or the animals whom he asks for directions along the way, assure him that his house is near, pointing to a close-by vegetable garden which he himself has planted, the path which his wife has just waked along.

The third myth (myth no. 43) is the story of a visit to the Iri village. We recognise here the same narrative argument employed in other mythologies to describe visits to heaven. It tells of a group of men who, every afternoon, witness three young women singing the same song. They hear and see the women very clearly, as if they were very close-by. The Yaminawa, like other communities in the region, repeat the same comparison used in shamanistic visions, i.e., they see the women "as if on television," but in reality, as in the case of television personalities, the women are far way. Time and time again, the men venture out in search of the women but, despite walking for days and weeks, never manage to reach them. Finally, two brothers build up the courage to continue the journey to Iri territory. They stock up on provisions and make land clearings on the way and, after months of journeying, eventually arrive at the marvellous women's' village,

which turns out to be an ideal place. However, the heroes stupidly throw away the chance of acquiring an eternal, pleasant and healthy life when they fail to answer the Iri chief's questions correctly. The men eventually return to their village, this time with surprising speed, just in time to warn the villagers of a rainstorm approaching from Iri. In this narrative we can detect how the Yaminawa have brought down and projected on earth a large part of a celestial mythology that could have been more elaborate in the past. Above all, we can see how the notions of space, which in other narratives were formerly presented in a more scattered fashion, are now condensed into a simple formula; extreme distance is nothing less than the other side of immediate proximity, the outward journey is virtually endless but the homeward journey is instantaneous. We have already seen how the other heroes manage to find brothers far beyond the limits of the familiar world or, on the contrary, they exhaust themselves in endless wanderings around their very own rooms.

Imaginary territory, real territory

To cross the boundary between mythical and ordinary space does not require great effort. The imagery and the scenes of the narratives are familiar and quite limited in number. The protagonists of the myths are the habitual predators and preys of the Yaminawa jungle: jaguars, anacondas, peccaries, and so on. During his adventures, the mythical traveller has the opportunity of getting to know them in their shelters, with similar customs to those that he is familiar with. Instead of describing distant places populated by monsters, the journey withdraws the alien to give way to the familiar.

Neither does the geography of the myths provide any novelties: the depths of the jungle, the rivers and the small inter-river lakes, the small villages without a name, identified according to the community occupying them or to the family link established with them. On the outskirts, the large rivers and the city, the latter absent from the myths, but omnipresent in the shamanic visions produced with the aid of Ayahuasca.

This sweeping reference to shamanism is not in vain. It provides a good opportunity to highlight that both mythical and shamanic journeys share a similar script. Both can be good examples of that epistemology adequately described as *perspectivism* (Viveiros de Castro, this volume) which, although normally recognised as a way of understanding the relationship between subject and body, can equally be applied to the relationship between places and the *spirit* of the places. In detriment to its own exoticism, perspectivism is extremely unfavourable to the objectification of exotic differences: what the traveller of the Yaminawa myths does, like the shaman, is to hold relationships with subjects – ultimately homologous to him – who only maintain their strangeness to those who do not leave their

village (or body, in the case of non-shamans.) Subject-places, and not object-places: if our notion of territory is anchored on the objectification – ideally on petrifaction: millenary stones, hills, walls – of space and memory, it is bound to be lost in a geography whose components are alive, mobile and with self-intention. [6] Giving free rein to a certain landscape romanticism, we could say that the very morphology of the region, with the extreme mutation of its components, facilitates this – the fast growth of the vegetation, the variations in the course or margins of the rivers, the lack of rock formations or elevated viewing spots to allow privileged overviews of the space. Let us therefore agree: the above is not just a landscape, but a perception of the landscape which, despite the whole colonial process extended throughout the Amazon, is still dependent on its first inhabitants' perception.

If we reverse this comparison, the Yaminawa daily life (as I learnt much to my expense) also evokes the *perpetuum mobile* of the myths, with the exception that, in general, the river has now turned into the main line of communication, leading to the almost absolute abandonment of the *varaderos* (jungle paths) that used to serve as a communication means between villages or rivers. One only needs to consider the way in which the journeys are described or announced, the tone of the greetings and farewells ("I have arrived"; "we are leaving"…) the long-windedness in which they enumerate the hours and minutes that separate the travellers from such and such settlement, beach or rapid river – so astonishing amongst people otherwise so careless of time. Throughout the length of a journey, which is normally considered a continuous trajectory, constant visits are made to Yaminawa relatives, *seringueiros* (rubber tappers) or to 'Peruvians' – a frequent way of referring to the Arawak speaking Manchineri neighbours-. These stops along the way can be reduced to a greeting. However, on many occasions they are prolonged through an invitation to lunch or to eventually stay the night; and even when an invitation is not forthcoming there is still no shortage of stops for fishing, to pursue an animal discovered or intuited along the shore, and when luck strikes, to prepare it and to eat it. The setting up of small camps can lengthen the outward or inward journey by several days. To the ethnographer's patience, whose aim is to observe the Yaminawa in 'their village', the journeys entail the most extensive element (and also the most intense, given the closer and continuous coexistence experienced throughout the journey) of the Yaminawa' *normal* existence. [7] They, like no other, have understood how to live the poetic principle surrounding the journey, where the journey, and not the final destination, is what truly matters. [8]

Urban jungle

Nowadays, the final destination of these journeys tends to be the city, whose interest for the Yaminawa both torments and intrigues civil servants and militant indigenists.

Although the Yaminawa insist on alleging good practical reasons for justifying these exoduses, – medical attention, the cashing of pensions - these are hard to believe for those without a strong faith in *practical reason.* Whole families set off and expose themselves to malnutrition, infections and regularly get sick just for the sake of accompanying a sole relative or performing a given chore. When in lack of a good reason, there is still no shortage of volunteers willing to embark on a treacherous journey with the excuse of 'going for a stroll' or to 'going to live in the city'. The Yaminawa, with the exception of a few elite indigenous groups linked to Non-Governmental Organisations or to the bureaucracy of the State, do not have a specific life ambition in the city. Their visits, which started or increased when the backing of Non-Governmental Organisations and FUNAI led a few Yaminawa leaders to go to the city, are not proletarianization exercises on the part of deserters of deprived inland areas. The Yaminawa do not seek to become 'urban' but to simply maintain, as much as possible, an urban adaptation of their normal way of life. The occasional earnings from non-professional jobs do not come anywhere near to compensating the enormous increase in the needs arising from living in an environment where to the Yaminawa's astonishment, things have to be bought, even the land on which to build a house. In the city, the Yaminawa find themselves extremely insolvent to meet the expenses that mere subsistence demands of them. After obtaining whatever means available from FUNAI, or from 'leaders' established in the city, they turn to begging, to a suburban version of an extractive economy, fishing in the river or in the barely fertile streams, which on many occasions are dangerously contaminated from the peripheries, or collecting materials, including food, from rubbish containers. Most of the time they just wander around, drink (as they themselves point out "it is unlikely that someone will invite you to eat, but anyone will invite you for a drink") or they simply stop for long periods of time to contemplate the streets. I emphasise these points – which, since the time of my field study, have become topical in the local press and official reports on the subject – so as not to erroneously rationalise this tendency of moving to the city as an alternative to the jungle's shortcomings. The Yaminawa tend to contrast their misery in the city with the abundance of food and natural resources offered by the jungle and they even like to dwell on the greater degree of self-efficiency that they would enjoy if they only acted "according to old ways" using ceramic utensils, cultivating cotton and tobacco, producing fermented drinks from manioc or hunting with bow and arrow. Even without recurring to these native ideals, which are currently unlikely, there is no doubt that the commercial flow of goods and services could be possible at a cheaper rate, as demonstrated by neighbouring communities (Kaxinawá and Ashaninka), or even some Yaminawa families whose relationship with the world of the whites is much more reticent and selective. These Yaminawa journeys, which may at first appear fatal incursions into the world system, are rather like those of their mythical heroes - journeys around their own universe.

Social itineraries

The Yaminawa journeys, which appear so 'anomic' – a consequence and factor of their desegregation – in their own way are also structuring journeys, not only because they help to keep relationships with other relatives alive but, above all, because they serve to update the proximities and distances framework that gives meaning to these relationships. The Yaminawa have two main ways of describing themselves as a group. The first, although with some variations, uses the model that other ethnographical studies - primarily on the Kaxinawás, cf. Kensinger 1995, Deshayes and Keifenheim 1982, and also on the Matís cf. Erikson 1996 – have established as reference for the Pano group. In short, it entails two halves joined through interchanges by marriage and polar representatives of a general transcendence dualism. In the case of the Acre River Yaminawa, two ethnonyms, Xixinawa and Yawanawa, play the role of the exogamous halves. The second, also present in a more or less explicit manner in most of the above mentioned literature – cf., for example, Romanoff 1984 or Carid Naveira 1999 – presents the Yaminawa as a potentially endless group of vaguely patrilineal bands (also formed with the suffix –nawa), who mix or aggregate throughout history. Both of these dualist and pluralist models incorporate a certain gender factor. It was the women who explained the dual model to me most clearly; the plurality of Nawa groups holds a preferential place in men's discourse. Although my data is far from the ideal volume required for an ethnographical study and should therefore be interpreted with certain caution, this model structure is consistent with the Yaminawa's other attributes: the definition based on halves highlights the stability, the alliance and the obligations of the husbands towards the wives' families. The pluralist model, which privileges the adscription of each member to the father's group, highlights the cohesion of the local group and prizes the groups of brothers whose solidarity has its moment of glory in the fights that end up producing the division of those same local groups. However, repeating the same paradox found in the myths, it is in these newly converted 'foreign' groups where, sooner or later, the wives or friends are found and a new settlement is established.

In recent years, the constant Yaminawa divisions have been initially interpreted within indigenous circles as an escape from the extortions of the whites. Later, as a result of conflicts with other ethnic groups (Manchineri, in particular.) And more recently, internal misfortunes have been questioned, emphasising the disintegrative potential that could ultimately lead to the complete disintegration of the group. But the other side of the coin is seldom taken into account. The regrouping that tends to follow each division – the exiting segment will live with another segment or will attract other contingents to its new settlement – and,

above all, the value that these desertions have on producing marriage bonds after a certain time. As opposed to what happens, for example, amongst the Kaxinawás, where the prevalent diametrical reasoning favours, or at least gives priority to, marriage policies that repeatedly bond the two halves, the Yaminawa tend to express a complex marriage law, emphasising the common corporality of the co-residents which reduces the possibilities of endogamous marriage. Distance, which helps to forget, corrects this excess of impediments, resulting in men frequently marrying 'foreign' women without moving away from, in genealogical terms, a very reduced environment.

The same panorama is obtained in an even more simplified fashion when we focus, not on the groups, but on the categories that describe them. Hence, we will come across two or three terms: in the forefront, *yura* ('body', a term of pronominal value which designates the social self and connotes the continuous interchange of nutritional or genesic substances that sustain it) and *nawa* ('foreigner' or 'enemy').[9] In principle, *yura* and *nawa*, defined as of mutual contrast, cover the whole human sphere. The reason we mentioned 'two or three' terms is because the third, *yurautsa* ('another body'), as Keifenheim (1992) correctly pointed out, does not quite manage to constitute a category; it is rather a lapse that puts into question the exhaustiveness of the *yura* and *nawa* dichotomy or, to put it another way, that reminds us that that diametrical division can reveal itself, if it is seen from another point of view, as a concentric structure, in the same way that the solecism 'more equal than another' reminds us of the hierarchical assumptions originating in the heart of egalitarian ideologies. *Yura* can strictly designate the group of co-residents, or it can be extended to designate all speakers of the language, or all Indians. *Nawa* can refer to only the whites, or to include other Indians, or anyone else. But these systoles and diastoles are not mechanical or instantaneous, and in the space between them emerges that no man's land, vastly populated by the *yurautsa*, allies of my allies, familiar but unknown or enemies of my enemies who have not yet manifested their friendship to me. This game of a diametrical axle and a concentric axle, so rich in possibilities, as we are well aware of, is common to – not wanting to globalise more than is strictly necessary - the majority of Amazon communities (Viveiros de Castro and Fausto 1993.) But what matters here is the contrast in the attributes that organise the relationships between both these axles. The diametrical axle is capable of compressing the whole universe in a duality of relatives and non-relatives, based on the personal names linked to the halves, or on the names of the halves themselves. In principle, anyone can situate themselves in any village, including amongst strangers, knowing where their place is, as perfectly illustrated in the myths. In terms of the concentric axle, it cannot be established without a tangible extension: i.e., a distant relative is, and should be, a relative in the distance.

In order for the relationship to be recycled and to avoid losing it, it should in fact eventually become, as we have seen in the Yaminawa case, a non-relative, and hence sooner or later, an ally and a close relative.

Hence, an ideal map of the Yaminawa territory should open a space for co-existence and the reproduction of *yura*, the social body, but it should also avoid excessive distance from the Nawas, not only because their goods and services are necessary [10] but above all, because it is in the course towards that exteriority where the social body concludes its cycles. There is no community within a territory, but rather, in a manner of speech, a territory within a system of social ties and boundaries. The size and location of the Yaminawa territory are not currently determined by an ecological threshold (the Yaminawa spatial references and their subsistence sources can be found in practically every area of that vast region) but by a sociological one. For a number of neighbouring communities, peace with the whites, the settling of elite indigenous groups in the city and hence, the long distance shift of the meeting point with the exterior, have produced nothing less than the opening of an embassy; for the Yaminawa these have created a painful distension of their social space, of that subjects-places kinship map - a disproportionate elongation whose gap tries to be filled with scarce demographic and financial resources.

Although not particularly demanding, the requisites of the Yaminawa social space have few possibilities of being met in the current territorial distribution process. With the recognition and demarcation of traditional indigenous territories, Brazilian indigenism – its official and radical versions do not differ here except in minor details – hopes to cater to the wishes of an 'indigenous community' that wishes to remain together, to live according to their own models and to achieve a reasonable degree of isolation from the world of the whites. Brazilian society has accepted (some 'anti-indigenous' sectors, for whom the result is always "a lot of land for few Indians" continue to insist that this is all too excessive) these 'indigenous' criteria that, on the one hand, are 'ecological' – traditional places for hunting and fishing, wandering or gathering zones, sufficient agricultural space for soil regeneration performed according to a felling and burning process – and on the other hand, 'symbolic' – (sacred places, cemeteries, historical emblematic places.) As yet, there is little evidence of the extent to which, based on the above transaction, indigenous societies have accepted a syncretic concept of territory which requires using a specific area as a base from which relationships are established, and not the other way around, as most probably occurred in the past. The Yaminawa sociological space that we have been describing – which differs very little from the space that we would identify if we examined so many other Amerindian societies – is not perceived as a possible territoriality acceptation, but rather as an antithesis, demonstrating that the dichotomy of *ius sanguinis* and *ius solis*, so permeable in western history, is emphasised in a process that foresees the exhaustive appropriation and privatisation of the territory [11]. If

to-date, the Yaminawa case presents itself as insoluble, it is because a definition of that neo-indigenous space, adequate enough for a self-acknowledged pre-Columbian community, with its vital area and its symbolic universe circumscribed in a more or less generous manner, has not been found within it. As opposed to what is often reiterated with excessive lightness, it is the continuity of specific ancient models, and not a cultural loss, that condemns the Yaminawa to their suburban misadventures. However, this problem would not present itself, or at least not in this way, if the Yaminawa were indeed nomads or if they held a non-territorial structure exclusively based on blood kinship. On the other hand, it would acquire a certain degree of normalization if, as per the project presented in a meeting recently celebrated between a large number of Yaminawa (Coutinho 2001:12), the Yaminawa concentrated their efforts on reducing their mobility and "respecting their leaders", i.e. if the political role of their leaders – which traditionally focussed on appeasing disputes and divisions, strengthening co-residence and generally monopolising, as far as possible, relationships with the exterior – reached similar levels of power enjoyed by leaders of other neighbouring indigenous communities. To-date, these goals have not been put into practice.

Yaminawa invariants

The information provided in this article is based on my own data on the Yaminawa of the Cabeceiras do Rio Acre village, which I also consider generally valid for the rest of the Yaminawa groups, given that I limit myself to analysing the territorial aspect of a configuration that is common amongst Amazon communities. If I had to determine the precise scope of the 'Yaminawa' ethnonym I would run the risk of going too far - 'Yaminawa' is a name given to many 'wild' groups in the region that are not necessarily linked by language or genealogy – or of stopping short, given that it would be possible to include within the same category other groups recognised by different names, such as the Sharanahua, the Yawanawa or the Katukina of the Gregorio river. From the point of view of the Yaminawa del Acre, there is certain continuity with a section of the Peruvian Yaminawa – the ones from the Purús – as well as with the Bolivians. There is however, no link with the Jaminawa of the Acrean village of Igarapé Preto on the Juruá river basin. This was made evident in an interesting situation arising in a recent debate about a move to the latter mentioned village by one of the nomadic segments of the Acre group. The sharing of the name was not a valid enough argument for the concerned parties who, whatever their qualms with their relatives, did not want to move to a place so far-removed from them (Coutinho 2001:16.) The considerable difficulty in compiling homogenous and current information on the Yaminawa of three neighbouring, but poorly communicated, countries prevents me from establishing a more general picture. However, with

the help of a brief project generously lent to me by Laura Pérez Gil and Miguel Carid Naveira on their field work in that region (Pérez Gil and Carid 2003), I can emphasise that the situation described here coincides with their findings, i.e., the mobility associated with the constant reconfiguration of the groups is what grants them a certain homogeneity or what constitutes, to put it somehow, the common denominator of the term Yaminawa, regardless of borders. [12]

River	Village	Population
Mapuya	Raya	82 inhabitants
Juruá	San Pablillo	41 inhabitants
Juruá	San Pablo	85 inhabitants
Juruá	Coronel Portillo	41 inhabitants
Juruá	Doradillo	79 inhabitants
Juruá		26 inhabitants
Juruá		53 inhabitants

(Source : Pérez Gil and Carid 2003)

The Yaminawa villages of Peru (the above table only numerates those located on the basin of the Juruá river) are the scene of constant comings and goings by individuals or families as well as of frequent divisions and reencounters which, like in the myths, can occur between subjects without genealogical links (such as in the case of the Yaminawa from the Mapuya and from the Purús) who calculate their relationship through name. The difference between theirs and the Brazilian case is due to the greater degree of intervention from public organisms and Brazilian Non-Governmental Organisations, although we should not exaggerate their scope. In Peru, and no less in Brazil, random motives condition the stable continuity of the movements, journeys pay a high toll and the Yaminawa express the paradox of "not being able to live together or apart", perhaps because in their concept of space both these situations can not be entirely differentiated.   ❑

Notes

Translated from Spanish by Cruz Farina

1   This is the area in which I performed the field work for my doctoral thesis (Calavia 1995) which I defended in the *Universidade de Sâo Paulo* thanks to the backing of the *Núcleo de História Indígena e do Indigenismo* and the financial support of *FAPESP*. The result of the mentioned amplification was a perimeter of 170 kilometres, with a total area of 76.680 hectares, somewhat smaller than the Mamoadate Indigenous Territory.

2   In general, in Brazil the states are administrative bodies that do not tend to favour indigenous claims. Their only hopes of getting resolved lie within the federal sphere. However, as an excep-

tion to this, the state of Acre has, on two consecutives occasions, given clamorous victories to a left-wing coalition in which the so-called 'Aliança dos Povos da Floresta', made up of *seringueiros'* (rubber tappers) trade unions and the indigenous movement, enjoyed a prominent position.

3   The Peruvian militaries have done something similar along the river Breu on the Peruvian border (Pérez Gil and Carid 2003) which, in any case, implies the same type of movement towards the east.

4   Although this characterisation is based on my investigation's objectives and the paths that it took, it nevertheless synthesises a peculiar aspect of Yaminawa society, as I was later able to witness during a brief experience with the Yawanawa of the Gregorio River who, besides this, are very linguistically and culturally close. In this case, the interpretation of history and culture precedes and surpasses narrative, which presents itself in a much more reticent and selective manner: the Yawanawa, for example, speak of the ideal characteristics of their territory or explain their apprehension towards the larger rivers.

5   The numeration of the narratives refers to the appendix in Calavia 1995.

6   Subjectification is extended to what in naturalist terms constitutes the core of objectivity: geology. A Yaminawa myth (myth 38) tells of the kidnapping of a group of women by some *bawayushi* (spirit-gorges) who are not simply, *nota bene*, 'spirits of the gorges': the spirit-gorge is both a space identical to a human one and the form acquired by *another* humanity.

7   Likewise, it must be said that life in the village is also ultimately a continuation, on a reduced scale, of the journeys: an inspection of the state of the village paths joining the different settlements provides a more reliable map of the relationships between members; a path invaded by weeds is equivalent to a prognosis of an approaching division.

8   An analogous description to this one can be found in McCallum 1998.

9   The literature on Pano groups has assiduously explained the *nawa* concept. Cf. Keifenheim (1990) and Calavia (in press).

10 In any case, the reason for the demand of these goods and services lies, not so much in their efficiency (very relative, given the conditions surrounding the demand) but to the simple, but nevertheless important fact that these are of nawa origin: exoticism is a value in itself, similar in kind but superior to the intensity that we ourselves are accustomed.

11 In Brazil, indigenous territories are promoted as over established territories by spatial boundaries, genealogical boundaries (territorial demarcation tends to go together with a clear restriction to cross-breeds) and cultural boundaries (the occupation should adapt itself to 'traditional patterns'), which is far from an indigenous tradition, but it is however justified as the only alternative to universal private appropriation.

12 This data is also coherent with somewhat earlier data from Townsley (1988), as well as with the memoirs compiled by him, which could possibly be backdated to the beginning of the 20th century.

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INTIMATE HORIZONS
PERSON, PERCEPTION AND SPACE AMONG THE CANDOSHI

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Much has been written about the intimate relationships that different indigenous groups establish with their territories within the framework of their respective cosmologies. However, far fewer attempts have been made to describe exactly what these relationships consist of. In these rare attempts, frequent reference has been made to esoteric concepts that have little to do with indigenous culture and a lot to do with clichés. Experts who are supposedly knowledgeable about the indigenous world cite cosmic spirits, mothers of the Earth, pan-universal communions through the taking of hallucinogenic substances as well as other strange concepts and entities based on folkloric stereotypes. Some anthropologists' interpretations are more accurate, but only because they are more cautious, as a consequence of the prudence which, fortunately in this case, surrounds scientific work. These latter interpretations are forced to resort to concepts such as prelogical thought, belief and, more recently, symbolism or metaphor, to describe these cosmologies. However, the use of these concepts only serves to implicitly degrade indigenous thought to the level of deviated thought (it is worth remembering that metaphors contradict logic, that they are semantic anomalies or incongruities, as explained by specialists in this field, cf. Kleiber 1994). The question we could ask here is: could it be our own anthropologists' presumptions, and not indigenous thought, that seem absurd when raised to the level of the explanatory metalanguage of all cosmologies? Would it not be wiser to attempt to explain indigenous cosmologies by questioning our own conceptual apparatus?

One of the most deeply engraved ideas in the 'modern' way of describing reality is the radical division between subject and object. In modern times, the subject possesses a representation of the world as well as the necessary reflective capacity to situate himself in it as an individual person whose limits are established by his body's shape. Alongside this 'person-individual' are his peers with whom, above all, he shares his power of language, which specifically consists of

making this reflective representation of the world intersubjective, as the only escape from solipsism. All of this makes up the characteristic and exclusive faculties of the human condition. Beyond humanity extends nature's world, i.e., a specific ontological field, where everything takes place according to the laws of causality, independent of man's will, which can only be perceived through objectivity. As an objective and infinite space, perhaps governed by a transcendental entity or by the immanence of an ineluctable need, nature can manifest itself under a chaotic guise, but it inevitably hides a system whose intelligibility science needs to decipher. Naturalism, as Descola rightly named it (1996a, b), is consequently an ontology based on epistemology, which considers its own assumptions 'natural', for example, that in every cultural tradition there is a distinction between subject and object, such as the one described above. By simply making an effort to do away with this dichotomy, certain aspects of what we could call Amerindian thought suddenly become easier to understand, because the subject and the world are distributed in a very different way. To address indigenous discourse without previously questioning the concepts that we employ in our attempts to understand it, like the duality in question, can generate intricate artefacts; the so-called 'magical thought', or similar, could be the result of a dialogue falling on deaf ears - a big misunderstanding.

In this article, I will describe elements of a discursive universe whilst attempting, as far as possible, to leave aside this duality. Based on field data compiled among the Candoshi people of the High Amazon, I would like to illustrate how indigenous discourse escapes the subject/object division or, if preferred, the division between society and nature, precisely where this idea is presumably more difficult to conceive, namely in the notion of space, i.e. the field *par excellence* of objectivity.

This exercise cannot be carried out unless we take what indigenous people have to say seriously, no matter how paradoxical their statements may seem. This entails a double effort: describing this discourse but constantly questioning the usual epistemological and analytical tools. At the same time, we should find spaces where the thus forged methodology manages to explain meaningful elements of this discourse in a particularly productive manner. For example, the pre-eminence of perception as an alternative to the subject-object duality, as I will illustrate in the following pages.

Thanks to anthropology's evolution, aspects of this approach are being applied to a specific anthropology that is taking place in the Amazon. This anthropology is the result of the intellectual commotion produced through contacts with indigenous communities, subjects of their history - a quality which, up until then, was veiled by an ancient naturalist tradition lasting various centuries in which the Amazonian and his societies were objects of nature. Likewise, the specific characteristics of this revelation have also paved the way to a flourishing regional ethnology which does not fall into the perspective (being somewhat par-

allel) that presents itself as opposed to naturalism. I am referring here to the so-called contact studies, also post-colonial or globalisation, whose aim is to explain the social dynamics induced by the effects of the national historical and social context on the areas where these societies are located, ignoring the views of these peoples. Thus, parallel to naturalism in sharing the idea by which these societies are the object of the dynamics that surpass them and, consequently, the indigenous discourse are of limited interest.

Given the above, I will begin with a summary of the history of Amazon studies and how these can lead to the primacy of perception as a tool for knowledge. I will then go on to present elements of a Candoshi notion of perception to describe the paradigm whereby perception and action processes are inscribed in order to override ones of subjectification and objectification. This will be the prior step to describing the Candoshi notions of space and territory.

Anthropology and perception in the Amazon

The anthropology of indigenous societies in South America's lowlands has, in the last few years, become one of the most vigorous regional ethnologies. The background to this growing interest dates back three decades. Until the 1970s, the indigenous Amazon had been, on the one hand, the preferential ground of a cultural ecology where the social was determined by nature[1] and, on the other hand, a sociological idealism where society was conceived of as a notion that lacked a specific ethnographical analysis.[2] The image that this anthropology conveyed of the Amazon was that of a cultural area whose dispersed and 'historyless' societies seemed archaic and fossilized in time. In reality, these studies did nothing more than reflect the vestiges of a long tradition of European thought which, in one way or another, regarded Amazon indigenous man as a passive subject of his destiny. The truth is that this apparent incapacity to confront history was corroborated by the state of political lethargy manifested by Amazon peoples, in contrast with the turbulences of the colonial revolts and revolutionary movements that marked the end of decolonisation and the birth of third-worldism throughout the entire planet. All this made the Amazon a marginalised region of the world and, at the same time, a cultural area with very limited influence on anthropological thought in general.

In the last quarter of the century an event of great impact undermined this secular state of affairs: the birth of the first Amazonian indigenous organisations. These organisations claimed, through various means, the right of indigenous peoples to be live actors in their own future. This had a direct impact on anthropological work, which suddenly had to reflect indigenous discourses that had been forged precisely by opposing 'Western' or 'colonial' hegemonic ideas. At the same time, the number of anthropologists initiating field work in the lowlands

increased whilst the resulting articles and monographs piled up. These anthropologists were now better equipped with a higher level of expertise, compared with those of the previous generation. Consequently, field studies are now more extensive and the data better contrasted with the historical and linguistic studies that are gradually taking place. Whereas up until the 1970s, 50 monographs had been written, in the following two decades this figure had increased four-fold, and the number is still rising today.[3]

From an anthropological point of view, putting an end to the Amazon's marginalisation has meant adapting the epistemological tools inherited from alien ethnographical substrates in order to describe the new sociological phenomena and the institutions presented by Amazonian societies. In other words, despite being part of the theoretical arsenal of the overall discipline, concepts such as 'social segment' or 'lineage' were forged from Africanist ethnography in order to explain a number of social structures specific to that part of the world. In the same way, and to cite another example, the notions of 'caste' and 'hierarchy' were established to understand sociological phenomena specific to the Indian subcontinent. Although anthropology assumes these analytical concepts to be universally applicable, given that they have demonstrated their explanatory capacity, it is also true that the problem for an emerging regional anthropology is to redefine these inherited concepts and to create new ones when a specific social reality defies a predetermined epistemological framework. Amazonian studies therefore pose new problems that need original perspectives to solve them, contributions which not only attract attention but exercise an increasingly powerful influence over the ethnology of other regions and continents.[4] A number of scholars even speak of the Amazonian inflection in anthropological theory in the same way that, in the past, scholars spoke of the African or Melanesian inflection.

The main source of critical reflection in Amazonian anthropology emerged from the need to describe societies whose structures do not, at first sight, appear to be organised around institutions that define the nature of the social ties of collective integration, in contrast with institutions such as the caste hierarchy in India or lineage societies in Africa. In 1979, A. Seeger, R. Da Matta and E. Viveiros de Castro proposed addressing Amazonian sociology from indigenous theories on the construction of the person and, more precisely, on ways of treating the body, in an attempt to adapt the theoretical instruments that were available at the time to the nature of these societies, whose morphology defied analysis due to their low level of institutionalisation. They suggested that cultures in South America's lowlands established their cultural representations and social practices on the reproduction of persons more than on the structuring and reproduction of groups. In short, the concepts of the person and the body constituted the basis of Amazonian sociology.

Since these pioneering works (Albert 1985; Carneiro da Cunha 1978; Crocker 1977; C. Hugh-Jones 1979; S. Hugh-Jones 1979; Taylor 1985; Viertler 1979; Vivei-

ros de Castro 1979), a considerable number of articles and monographs adopting this perspective have been published and it appears that it is still valid today. In fact, only in terms of the Western Amazon, where I carried out my field work, do the recent monographs of Ph. Erikson (1996), J.P. Goulard (1988), P. Gow (1991) and D. Karadimas (1997), or the articles on the Jívaro groups by A.C. Taylor (1993a, 1994, 1996, 2000) not only illustrate the farsightedness with which this programme was addressed but also its productivity and current relevance.

Given the complexity that these studies reveal in terms of the relation between corporality and other cultural aspects, a parallel programme centred on the perception phenomenon is taking place. The reason for this growing interest in perception may have a simple explanation: the genuine function of the body is to 'feel' or to 'perceive', as the phenomenology or the psychology of perception demonstrates. We could therefore say that the pre-eminence of corporality in the Amazon calls for the primacy of perception given that, if we could define the body in its most fundamental meaning, we would conclude that it is the action of perceiving.[5]

Within this interest in perception, in the broad meaning of the word, that has emerged in recent years among Amazonists, there are various approaches. On the one hand, there are the recent works of A.C. Taylor (1993b, 1996, 2000), the thesis of G.H. Shepard (1999) and some of the contributions to the volume published by J. Overing and A. Passes (2000) that focus more on the perceptive subject, his sensations and feelings. And, on the other hand, there are other investigations more concerned with the consequences of adopting a perceptive perspective in the analysis of indigenous discourses on the cosmos and the entities that inhabit it (see, for example, Arhem 1993, 1996, Chaumeil 1989; Descola 1986, 1992, 1993, 1996a, 1996b, 2001; Lima 1996; Rival 1993; Viveiros de Castro 1992, 1998).[6] However, the common thread running through all of these works (so different in theoretical inspiration, investigative area and intellectual objective), their minimum common denominator, is the will to situate the perceptive subject at the centre of anthropological thought, as an inevitable step towards understanding the local theories of the person, social elements and the cosmos.

Based on this analysis of the current state of evolution of Amazonian anthropology, I will attempt to summarise these approaches by treating corporality as the focal point of the perception of perspectives. To put it another way, if in understanding Amazonian societies what appears as heuristic includes the notions of corporality and perception, what I suggest is examining the implications of treating the body as the locus of perception.[7] To do this, the first thing to take into account is that, given the analytical tools at anthropology's disposal and the nature of its research subject, anthropology can say little about perception in itself. However, anthropology can describe local notions of perception and how these are inscribed in the body, it can analyse the affectivity deriving from these notions in social interactions, and examine the logic in the variability of all of this,

as expressed by different societies. It can also, as a second step, examine the implications that these discourses have on the conventional theoretical instruments of an anthropology that has traditionally been far removed from such issues. [8]

Feeling, action and perception among the Candoshi

A field study lasting nearly three years in the High Amazon among the Candoshi people has enabled me to put these ideas into practice. The Candoshi people [9] are settled along the tributaries of the Pastaza River, North of the Peruvian Amazon. With a population of nearly 2,000, this indigenous group is closely related to the Shapra group and culturally close to the Jivaro ethnic group.

The central idea of the Candoshi notion of perception is the heart, *magish*. Candoshi people clearly affirm that they see with the heart and even claim to do so in their dreams. *Magish* is also the convergence point of the different elements that make up the person, and this is due to the simple reason that the heart not only precedes the ontogenesis, but it also drives the person's physical and social development process. Indeed, it is believed that the vital pre-embryonic principle is found in the shape of a blood clot. This blood clot gradually develops after being introduced into the woman's womb through the sperm. The first organ created during the embryogenesis is the heart. In fact, it is the heart, through its beat, that is the impulse behind this process. Because the biological and social development of the person is not conceptually distinguished, the embryo will turn into a creature that evolves to become a socially complete adult, always maintaining the heart as the driving nucleus. Hence, the person's two most important components that interact through the heart are *vanotsi*, which could be translated as body but refers to the substance it comprises; and *vani*, a concept translated by the missionaries as 'soul' but which designates the intentionality that animates the person and gives shape to the body.

As the focal point of perception, and like any other sensory system's focal point (a photographic camera or an eye, for example), the heart determines two planes: the exterior plane, which is in contact with the world, and the internal plane contained in the perceptive body. The *states* are how I term the relations that are culturally consolidated in the discourses established between the focal point and the different planes. These three relations are: the focal point with the internal plane (States of Feeling), the focal point with the exterior plane (States of Affairs) and the relation between the previously mentioned states (States of Action).

States of Feeling
The stimuli that the heart receives from the exterior resound inside it, which is why this organ conveys the subjective internal life of both the intellectual apti-

tudes as well as the affective faculties; areas which, in practice, are not distinguished by Candoshi. The states produced by these stimuli in the focal point of sensitivity are what I call States of Feeling. Indeed, Candoshi people consider that these different states and faculties, which we would term psychic, are only located in the heart, including other processes of a more somatic nature. This fundamental fact of the Candoshi ethnopsychology is illustrated by the large number of expressions that they employ concerning the heart, *magish*. These make reference to all aspects of internal activity in such a way that any distinction is conceptually impossible. Under the heading of what we would consider affective activities, we have the following examples of expressions (the literal translation in parenthesis): *magich kama* (sweet heart): the subject does not have a problem; *magich kisa* (joyful heart): the subject had a problem but it is now resolved; *magich mantsatarich* (ugly heart): sadness, for example, worry about the death of a relative; *magich shabatamaama* (cured heart): expresses relief after a problem has been solved; *magich tsiyantámaama* (furious heart): expresses an angry state. As examples of psychosomatic states, the following examples can be quoted: *magich tsipatara* (disappearing heart), to express a state of temporary loss of consciousness or death; *magich tit titi tit,* onomatopoeia of the heart beat; *magich yáaramaama* (repaired heart), to express recuperation after an illness; *magich yootarita* (failing heart) when talking about perceiving a pathology. Intellectual activities also have a place in the heart, as demonstrated by the following examples: *magich mamarpamaama* (flashing heart) to explain that it is making a mistake or *magóanamaama* which means to learn or to understand. The heart is also the centre of personality attributes: *magich kapogo* (big heart). to qualify someone who is capable and intelligent; *magich pakshi* (small heart), an antonym of the latter; *magich doni* (heartless) to describe a subject whose conduct makes no sense.

States of Affairs

The principles that make up the person, '*vanotsi*', '*vani*' and '*magish*' (the heart), are not attributes exclusive to the human being. Animals, but also vegetables and meteorological phenomena, etc., can also possess these principles, a fact that demonstrates that for the Candoshi there is no definition that establishes an ontological limit for the concept of person. In any case, this limit does not correspond with that of the definition of universal humanity, characteristic of Western thought, which only includes members of the human species. In reality, the difference between species, or rather, the morphological difference between bodies, is not a sign of difference in essence but of a different intentional intensity, i.e., a difference in the capacity to perceive and to act. The affective faculties and the aptitude for action lead the body to acquire a specific shape. For Candoshi people, this difference is expressed through the power of assertion and the preponderance shown by a being. The signs can be having teeth or another potentially

aggressive organ (such as horns, nails, stings, etc.), being large or having a penetrating look. The hierarchy of this heteroclite society of humans and non-humans is headed by the jaguar. Among humans, the great warriors are the most gifted. These pre-eminent beings are the ones possessing the biggest heart, which grants them a superior aptitude for interacting in the world, shaping their bodies according to these superior sensory faculties. Having termed the resonances of the world in the heart 'States of Feeling', everything that emerges through the sensitive contact between the heart and the world I will term States of Affairs.

States of Action

The size of the heart or, what amounts to the same, its power to perceive and to act, is decisive in portraying a person's specific importance. There are people, such as the tortoise, who have a small heart and consequently a low level of animational intensity, in the sense of being equipped with a soul. By contrast, other types of beings have a large heart, making them braver and more determined. However, the manner in which we are illustrating these concepts may lead to the assumption that every species has a predetermined size and type of heart. This is not exactly so. A person's life and, in particular, his determination to implicate himself in the matters that concern him, change his heart by strengthening or weakening it. The specific way in which this occurs can be described through the most important rituals performed by the Candoshi people: the *magómaama.* These ritualistic practices are available for all important events: the healing of pathologies, to improve hunting and the fertility of land clearings, to enhance conjugal and family relationships in general, etc. In order to illustrate what these rituals consist of, we will concentrate on the *magómaama* ritual for the search of *arutam* visions. This is considered the most important ritual and I will therefore describe it very briefly.

The first thing to point out is that this ritual is shared by all Jívaro groups and, although there are certain variations between them, these only apply to a few formal aspects. The Candoshi version affirms that there are three specific moments in a person's life for initiating a search for the *arutam* vision: at the end of adolescence, to acquire a first vision; to recuperate one's good spirit after having exposed one's life to wars and vendettas, or after giving birth; always when risking one's life and, in particular, before enrolling in an expedition to war or before giving birth. In any of these circumstances, Candoshi men and women begin a tough period of dietary and sexual abstinence combined with the intake of narcotics, in an area removed from the family settlement, in the case of men, and always in relative isolation, although accompanied by a mentor. The objective is to acquire a vision in which an elderly person, a stereotype of a great warrior or of an exemplary housewife, appears offering a message of longevity to the visionary. The first sign of the vision's imminence are terrifying images that gener-

ally give way to the apparition of an animal. The type of animal and its meaning will depend on the aptitudes attributed to the animal within the sphere of interest of the practising individual: a jaguar if one seeks an aptitude for war; a mouse if one seeks an easy delivery, etc. The practising individual should not be terrorised by these visions, given that this is how the spectrum of the elderly person will suddenly emerge to tell him/her that he/she is going to live for a long time and not to worry about what the future holds. The elderly person will offer him/her a ball of light that the visionary will eat. The ball will install itself in the heart to equip the individual with renewed capacity for perception and action. The practising individual will go back to ordinary life and will not divulge any information regarding his/her experience. However he/she will not manage to hide a livelier attitude and a better disposition with which to readily confront the challenges he/she embarked on the search for the vision for. This new aptitude in itself changes the scene of events; it changes what I have named States of Affairs because the news of his/her new disposition will rapidly be everyone's knowledge, which will affect his/her entire social environment. For example, if the aim is to prepare oneself for a conflict, the news will terrorise the enemy, such as in psychological warfare, even going as far as to manage to dissuade the enemy from initiating any warlike action. I should also add that the structure, sequence and explicit aim of the search for the *arutam* vision ritual is similar to all other *magómaama* rituals practised for other activity areas and that these do not present any mortal risk. As the verbal form used for naming these rituals suggests, which could be translated as action of the heart (we should remember that the root *mag* designates the heart), these rituals aim to acquire enhancement in the perception capacities attributed to this organ in order to confront life's challenges. What these rituals have in common, and they are therefore referred to by the same name, is that they cover all possible interactions with the entities that make up the *States of Affairs*, to invade and recombine the *States of Feeling* through the heart, aiming to acquire power or, in other words, new capacities for action and perception that will give rise to a new *States of Action.* In short, from the capacity to feel, the ritual brings out the capacity to act.

The theoretical considerations that have served as introduction to this article, as well as my own personal ethnographical experience with the Candoshi people, enable me to suggest a number of general hypotheses. An initial idea is that there should be at least one perception focal point in the autochthonous theories of the person. This or these focal point/s should be located in the body or bear some relation to corporality, given that the body's primordial disposition is to perceive. Subsequently, we should explore whether, having preceded the embryo in the ontogenesis process, any of these specific points are conceived as the nucleus of the concept of person. For this same reason, we could examine whether, through the fact of being considered the nucleus of the person, this point is the convergence point of the different components, attributes or principles that, as is

normally considered in anthropology, make up the person. In the event of there being various areas of the anatomy considered focuses of perception, the role of each of these areas should be analysed within the context of this analysis. As focal points of perception, which consequently determine an interiority where the perceived environment resounds (an interoceptivity would be a more appropriate term), these points should constitute the area of those subjective activities. The configuration of these activities will guide us through the ethnopsychological categories and their contents. In a complementary manner, these perceptive points define an exteriority (an exteroceptivity) which, far from an objective space dissociated from the subject (as would be the case of the intellective subject), establishes a continuity between the subject and his environment. In effect, the primacy of perception entails a dissolution of the fracture between the individual and the world, with all the implications for the anthropological analyses of other aspects of the cosmology. As a direct result of the previous proposal, a theory of the meaning of the ritual action seems to be taking shape, at least with regard to the rituals practised for obtaining action capacity, or to put it another way, power. These rituals attempt to change the focal point/s of perception, supplying them with new perception capacities through specific practices that act on the interaction between interiority and exteriority.

From the point of view of these suggestions, the notion of space represents a particularly challenging obstacle, given that it entails the ultimate field of the objective. Two possibilities arise: the first would entail denying, from the point of view of an exercise that attempts to leave aside the subject-object duality, the existence of space as a pertinent analytical concept; space would not exist without objectivity. The second stance consists of accepting this classic anthropological subjet, not merely to prove, by reduction to the absurd, its non-belonging within the framework of my postulates, but rather to take, as far as possible, the description of the imbrication of the subject in his space. I will expand on this stance in the following pages.

The subjectification of space [10]

If there is a central point in the Candoshi perception of territorial space, it is home. The house constitutes the centre of the topographical system from which Candoshi people organise their activities. Far beyond the house and the concentric circles of the yard and gardens, extend the forest, *magina.* The forest is not a wild space opposed to the socialised area of the house. In practice, despite its apparent homogeneity, the forest is also considered as divided into concentric spaces which, as they gradually gain distance from the centre, formed by the house, become less socialised and more inhospitable. The areas of intensive gathering, situated very close to the house, make up the first concentric circle of the forest.

Beyond these are the large extensions dedicated to daily hunting and fishing, which often partially coincide with those of other neighbouring domestic units and, further away, there are more distant and less familiar areas to which hunting expeditions lasting various days are conducted. These expeditions, made up of one to three men, generally brothers or brothers-in-law accompanied by their wives are aimed at accumulating meat or fish for selling or offering to visitors on occasions of group working days. Besides the previously mentioned areas, from the point of view of a Candoshi's general knowledge of the territorial space, we should also add the group of territories where relatives live and the space that they must cross in order to visit them. Indeed, during the regular visits that families pay to their relatives, Candoshi people have the opportunity of identifying the spaces bordering the route. Likewise, upon arrival at their hosts' residence they accompany local hunters, an activity that allows them to discover new territories. Beyond these relatively familiar spaces extends a threatening and hostile terrain, a territory where a hunter generally does not dare to venture.

The limits of this map, centred on the subject, can easily be determined from one's knowledge of the names of the water courses, given that the Candoshi toponymy is practically reduced to the names of the numerous rivers and lakes that cross the country. Each has a specific and exclusive name. There are no two rivers or lakes that share the same name. They are always different, even in the case of the smallest stream. Likewise, the toponymy of the large rivers that cross the ethnic and linguistic borders is maintained and, even though the terms may be translated, these always maintain their meaning. Other natural accidents, such as waterfalls, rapids, hills or an over-projecting tree, receive a name that serves as a descriptive point of reference. Knowledge of these names is normally restricted to family members living close by and cannot be strictly considered part of the toponymy.

Often, the toponymy of the water network is inspired by anecdotes that use the river as the main backdrop, whereby the river adopts the name of the protagonist of the tale. The abundance of an animal or vegetable species on its banks is also a good reason to name the river by the name of that species. Other names, such as Váambara, Shtaro or Ngoori, do not have a specific explanation. When Candoshi people are questioned on the origin of these names, they respond that they are simply the names of rivers. The names of the most important rivers and lakes in Candoshi territory belong to the first group. Hence the name of the Chapuri River stems from a young man who was madly in love with a girl who lived downstream. The story tells that Chapuri used to visit the girl every day although he was not to be seen by her parents. One day he decided to approach the house of his beloved, hiding under the water with a large leaf of the *chorona* tree *(Cecropia sp.)* placed over his head. This camouflage system turned out to be fatal. The love that Chapuri felt forced him to spend whole days in the water, where he finally died from the sting of the *sagírama* eel *(Electrophorus electricus.)*

The other large river that flows into the Rimachi Lake, the Chuinda, also takes its name from a man who died of an illness unheard of in that area. The Rimachi Lake, Karoosha Moosa in Candoshi, receives its name from another character, Karoosha, who was assassinated with a firearm very close to the lake. Moosa, which is the old name of the lake, also corresponds to the name of a person who was drowned during the mythical flood tide that gave rise to the Rimachi. Moosa is also the generic name currently used to designate a 'lake'. On the other hand, the name of the largest river in the region, the Pastazi (Pastaza in Spanish), the longitudinal axis of the territory, is not linked in any way to the onomastic. The meaning of this name is unknown to indigenous people. It is possible that its linguistic origin is unrelated to Candoa dialects, given that the course of the Pastaza River crosses various linguistic borders from its Andean origin to where it joins the Marañón[11]. However, we can speculate that the etymological origin of Pastazi and Pastaza comes from the word *pashato,* the name of a type of mollusc and toponym of the Pastaza tributary that is connected to the waters of the Rimachi Lake.

Naturally, knowledge of this toponymy goes hand-in-hand with a practical knowledge of the country. A Candoshi person can name all the rivers and small lakes close to his residence but, as he gradually moves away from the heart of this egocentric topography, the number of rivers with familiar names diminishes. Of the furthest geographical areas, a Candoshi only knows the names of large rivers and lakes that are of general knowledge. It is therefore a kind of spider's web centred around the family home.

The familiar and 'potentially' familiar geographical areas constitute *tsaponish* territory, a place destined to be inhabited by current humanity. The land has not always existed as it is today, nor is it the only land in existence. In fact, *tsaponish* appeared at a specific moment in time, emerging from the water and, likewise, it is likely that it will disappear under the water once again, given that the world is considered to be a floating island in permanent danger of shipwreck. The precariousness is such that every land tremor announces one step further towards the inevitable immersion of this old and deteriorated vessel. It could be said that this image of the cosmos reflects the physical and geographical reality of the region. Indeed, it is possible that this representation of the world is not alien to the peculiarities of Candoshi territory, which is made up of vast flooded regions that remind one of a still immature, barely emerged from the water, mythical world.

The Candoshi region is geologically[12] located on a system of deposits that make up an alluvial fan of approximately 60,000 km². Crossed by the Pastaza River, the alluvium is composed of volcanic sediments originating from Ecuador's Andean valleys, which surround the Cotopaxi, Sangay, Tungurahua, Altar, Chimborazo and Carihuairazo volcanoes, drained by the upper waters of this river. When the Pastaza reaches the plain it surrounds this fan to form a valley that stretches 130 km through old sediments. It then follows its course towards

the south to join the Marañón, diametrically crossing the alluvial terrains. Throughout its history, the Pastaza has changed its course on various occasions. Currently, the main branch takes a south/south-westerly direction, preventing effective general drainage of the fan, which is oriented towards the south-east and which, in turn, is obstructed in its distal parts by the sedimentation of the Marañón. The result is a landscape shaped by a series of blocked valleys, those of the secondary rivers that flow into the western bank of the Pastaza giving rise to one hundred lakes and swamps that give the region occupied by the Candoshi people a flooded aspect.

As yet, no studies have been made on this swampy region's vegetation. However, I can confirm that all the physiognomic categories of vegetation found in the Peruvian Amazon's swamps, as proposed by Kalliola et al. (1991), are also found here. In the better-drained areas there are forest swamps (like transitional belts surrounding shrub swamps) as well as *aguajales.* The *aguajales,* i.e., swamps dominated by the palm tree *Mauritia flexuosa*, occupy enormous areas of the territory, particularly in its southern side. There are also herbaceous swamps in permanently inundated areas, close to the rivers. This vegetation covers extensive areas that are possible to navigate, despite the risk of finding oneself completely stuck in the middle of a floating vegetative plain. This aquatic vegetation, mainly made up of gramineae such as *Paspalum repens* and *Echinocloa polystachya,* manage to remain afloat during floods in the areas more distant from the active courses of the rivers. These vegetable communities, which appear to be adrift, are generally fastened to the substrate, even when in deep waters. It is these vegetable islands, drifting gently on the surface of the Rimachi River, which may have inspired the idea of the land moving in the same manner.

Although the big inundation, or flood, is a very common theme in the foundation myths of various Amazon cultures, these cultures generally do not concern themselves with specifying the place in which these events occurred.[13] However, Candoshi people believe that the immersion of the ancient land and the emergence of the present one took place on the Rimachi Lake. Indeed, remnants of human life can be found on the sand beaches, remnants that appear in the lake when the water level falls during the dry season. According to the elderly, ancient pillars of houses that were made from water-resistant woods were found a few decades ago. The fact is that there are still remains of ceramic ware made from a type of ceramic that bears no relation to the ceramic pieces made today, rusted cannons of old rifles and other traces of a long lost culture. All these remains are generally called *tsogi*. The spontaneous stories that refer to this culture's disappearance, identified as the mythical humanity, assert that these people were always drinking *kapooci* (manioc beer) as well as having incestuous relationships, and hence the reason why the land finally sank. In the past, there were many people living in a *yakta*, 'city' in Quechua language, who were transformed into large *shanita* caimans *(Melanosuchus niger)*, large *payatsa* fish *(Arapaima gigas)*,

vakamarilla aquatic mammals *(Manatus americanus)* as well as into other large species that currently inhabit the lake. According to navigators, noises of ordinary life can still be heard when one crosses the lake in the silence of the night. They also talk about ships that disappear in the darkness of the night and it is stated that, at dawn, one can even hear a cock crowing. Candoshi people are afraid that if their behaviour degenerates the land will, once again, react like in the old days. In fact, a few indigenous people, influenced by a millenary wave that spread throughout the entire Amazon, believed that in the year 2000, God would sink the land once again. Had this really happened, current humanity would have been transformed once more into different aquatic species.

This sub-aquatic world is occupied by the *tsogi*, a society that inhabits the depths of the waters, probably descendents of those who were submerged during the inundation. The *tsogi* have a human appearance but their heads and extremities are turned 180 degrees. Their lives are very similar to human ones. They live in their houses, marry and have children. The habits of the *tsogi* are a reproduction of those of the Candoshi people, like a reflection of their image on the water. The different tools and furniture of this astonishing community are made up of a number of aquatic animals: the *charapi* chelonian *(Podocnemis unifilis)* serves as a small bench, the *isáriya* anaconda *(Eunectes murinus)* as a hammock, the *kashava* Ray fish *(Potamotrygon sp.)* a hat and the *toshabimashi* fish *(Astroblepus mancoi)* as foot-wear. Indeed, all these animals serve the spirits of the water in the same way that dog serves man. An epiphenomenon of this sub-aquatic world is the rainbow, which also receives the name *tsogi.*

As well as *tsaponish* and its sub-aquatic reproduction, there is, according to the Candoshi people, another land known as *kaniba* that is located in heaven, in an unspecified place, currently very difficult to access. Mythical tales affirm that long ago one could fly to that world on the back of a powerful bird. According to these stories, the bird can claim a mother's life as compensation for the journey because the probability of getting there are very few, given the tremendous distance. It is said that some birds, such as the condor, have not managed to reach this place. And even if someone managed to get as far as the passage between the two worlds, he would still need to cross an opening similar to that of an enormous pair of scissors opening and closing intermittently and which are fatal to anyone caught between its blades.[14] The hummingbird, which can remain suspended in the air and quickly thrust itself forward, is one of the better equipped for crossing this obstacle. In order to cross this threshold, under no circumstances should the passenger look at it. If he does, he runs the risk of getting trapped and being transformed into a bird.

From *tsaponish* territory, it is possible to see the inhabitants of the celestial world in the shape of small dim distant stars called *tsagachi.* These stars are beautiful and identical young girls who lead normal lives in their world. They live with men so powerful that rays come out of their mouths and thunder from their

voices. In their houses these spirits have large burning jugs, cooking pans and they eat black larvae. The bad smell that reigns there is attributable to the fact that this is where souls remain after they die. In fact, when the prolonged sound of thunder *(yanni* in Candoshi) is heard, it is produced by these spirits putting their cooking pans on to boil jaguar heads - the food they offer to the souls of the sick. If, in their agony, the sick dream of swallowing this food, they will die instantly and their soul will begin the journey to this other land.

Tsaponish, the land of the souls, and *tsogi*, are not the only lands inhabited. There are also the lands of the Whites that are very far away. There, in the same way as in *tsogi* and *kanida*, the natural environment is conceived as being very different from the *tsaponish* one. However, all the mythical characters, animal species, flora and, above all, social relationships, are essentially identical.

The spatialisation of the subject

In order to explain the topography of the universe, Dante's cosmological medieval Christian model of overlapping layers does not faithfully portray the Candoshi representation of the cosmos. [15] When I once mentioned the idea of the souls residing up above, given that they live in the *kanida* vault of heaven, I received a smile of incredulity. The people whom I was talking to explained that the world in which the souls live is not up above. For them, the fact that the world corresponding to the celestial vault is not found above *tsaponish* does not present a paradox because the references used to position themselves on Earth are not the same as the ones used to draw the map of the cosmos. Indeed, *ívari*, which signifies 'up', 'above' and also 'height', is only applied to the part of the atmosphere crossed by airplanes and birds. In fact, *ívari* refers to the top part of the large trees that populate the forest, there where the smoke of the reactors remains suspended after the planes have passed. For a Candoshi, the idea that the blue of the atmosphere or the starry sky could find themselves within a dimensional continuity relationship with the spaces journeyed by the distracted flights of birds does not make sense. And the idea that this continuity could extend to include the land of the souls or that of other mythical worlds, is even more nonsensical. The same occurs with *tsapoosho*, which means 'under' or 'down'. As its root indicates, this term refers to the surface of *tsaponish* territory and not to the existence of a world below. The locatives that indicate right *(bólsanógchi*) and left *(bázinógchi)* have, like the previously mentioned terms, a very specific use limited to the space immediately surrounding the subject.

In addition to these coordinates, which define a strictly egocentric perspective, the territory as a whole is demarcated by a hydrographic network that ultimately determines the global vision of the territorial space. Indeed, this territorial space arranged in fusiform plots of land is shaped by a succession of *kogo*

rivers – or *vániri,* when these are small streams – which flow from the north to-wards the south according to the general orientation of the region's hydrograph-ical network. Thus, upstream *toosho* and downstream *táshtapi* are designated in relation to the water current and obviously correspond to the cardinal points of north and south. The inter-river solid land spaces are called *opospi.* The term *opospi*, which can be translated as 'centre' or 'middle', can be seen as the anchor point between the topographic dimension and the situational and ego-centric dimension referred to above, given that it is used in both contexts. In addition to its topographical meaning, *opospi* also illustrates both the lineal centre and the bidimensional or tridimensional centre of any type of thing, from the observer's point of view.

Besides this local hydrography-based topography, it is the sun's ordinary path that encompasses all other levels of spatial definition. Given the latitude of the Candoshi territory, very close to the equator, throughout the day the sun crosses the sky making a semicircle roughly perpendicular to the floor. Hence, at midday, the sun is positioned in its zenith. This line, which moves from east to west pass-ing the vertical, receives the name *itsínsáro* and, for the Candoshi people, consti-tutes the main axis of their representation of space. This axis begins in *zaari yaako abi* 'there where the sun rises'- 'east', and ends in *zaari pókamcho* 'there were the sun sets', which designates 'west'. However, 'north' and 'south' receive a single common term *zari póváchigáro*, literally 'there where the Sun crosses', which il-lustrates the great importance of *itsínsáro,* i.e. the east-west axis. The qualitative different between the east-west and the north-south axis can therefore be under-stood as the latter being perceived simply as secondary to the former. In fact, the north-south axis cannot be considered an axis, the product of a polarisation, but rather an undefined horizon around *itsínsáro.*

The topographical notions of the Candoshi are not exclusively limited to the topic of representing geographical space. We can assume that, far beyond a sim-ple means of indicating the cosmos, these topographical notions organise a more abstract and general framework that governs the perception of space, encom-passing the entire vision of the world and revealing, in a particularly elegant, profound and synthetic manner, this society's style. It is in this ample and vague sense that I use the term 'Candoshi geometry'. Hence, in relation to Euclidean geometry, Candoshi space is probably continuous and tridimensional, even though its width is included in its length. But, above all, it is neither infinite nor homogeneous and even less isotropous. If we agree that the Candoshi people conceive of space as a continuous medium, its properties nonetheless vary ac-cording to a given orientation. Indeed, this space does not possess, as in the case of Euclidean space, the characteristics common to all straight lines or parallel planes, where a point can be extended towards infinity. In Candoshi geometry, not all points are identical, nor are the lines that pass through the same point. Candoshi space is oriented towards a point where all lines converge. A straight

line is in fact a vector oriented towards the west. While in Euclidean geometry it is assumed that a straight line, and only one, links two points, in Candoshi geometry an infinite number of vectors can pass between two points. When one arrives in Candoshi territory no geometric perspective can be observed, with the exception of local groups that seek to imitate Amazonian Hispanic villages. It even appears that this is purposely avoided, for example, the straight angles of the houses, which are inherent to the structure of the framework, are camouflaged by semicircular parts built on both extremities of the house, thus eliminating any chance of creating a vanishing point. In contrast, the houses in Hispanic villages close to Candoshi territory are built in a perfect parallelepiped shape and arranged at either side of a single rectilinear avenue. Candoshi space is neither static nor orthogonal; on the contrary, it is organic. If Euclidean geometry is represented in the shape of a grid, Candoshi geometry could be imagined as a fusiform figure built on a bipolar axis, with the remaining poles stemming from the tension between both the main poles. In three dimensions, the Candoshi geometry can be illustrated with the image of a muscle, in the same way that the structure of a crystal could represent Euclidean geometry.

Hence, when hunters walk through the forest they always orient themselves in relation to the position of the sun. If one walks facing the sun *(zaari tasásáro)* or with one's back to it *(zaari kóshtáaroch)*, you can tell whether it is morning or afternoon and whether the direction of the walk is westerly or easterly. However, this would be impossible if one were to move along the north-south axis. In this case, one walks with 'the sun over the ear', *zaaria kitsíitáaroch,* but the direction north or south cannot be determined using the solar reference system. This is only possible using the reference of the river stream, which takes in general a north-south direction.

The irrelevance of the north-south axis contrasts with the notion of *itsínsáro*, which illustrates the fusiform nature of Candoshi 'geometry', the importance of which extends far beyond the perception of space. It embodies the rigour so highly valued in this society. When Candoshi people are asked to define this term, they point, with an energetic gesture, to the sun's east-west course, expressing this with a severe attitude that denotes a sense of austerity and discipline. The term connotes moral and intellectual rectitude, the essence of everything that is straight and truthful in expressions such as *itísinsáro tsiyátamaama* ('to tell the truth') or *ítsínsaro kamánimaama* ('to give correct and measured information'). The sun's path places Candoshi people in the world, offering them the basis for their geometry and hence their perception of space. The vanishing point of a universe without perspectives, the ecliptic orients the physical and moral reality of life in *tsaponish* in a way that the boundary between interiority and exteriority becomes a sensitive body, and the boundary between subject and object becomes porous.

Person and space as conclusion

The views illustrated throughout this text are specifically related to the studies of what in anthropology has been termed the concept of person, ever since, in his famous essay, M. Mauss proposed this notion as a new analytical field of our discipline. However, it does not concern – as the reader will understand – the classical concept of the moral person, to take up Mauss's term once again, the collective representation of the individual's social statute, but rather of a person adhered to the world, a person who perceives and acts. As I have already mentioned, this implication of the sensitive person in the world means that he is subjected to changing states, a reflection of the stimuli that he receives from reality, whilst indissociably dissolved in the environment. This person, deduced from my own ethnographical experience, is no other than the one already outlined by authors such as M. Leenhardt (1947) or Hallowel himself (1960) when, persuaded by the discourse of the indigenous people with whom they worked, (whom, incidentally, were located at opposite sides of the globe), they warned that the concept of person in other cultures could include entities other than the human being. Since then, a whole anthropological school of thought has dedicated itself to disintegrating, desubstantiating and re-establishing the existing continuity between person and environment. One of the latest important efforts in this area was carried out by M. Strathern (1988) in questioning the pertinence of the concept of person in Melanesia. For this author, the idea of person, as an individual, i.e. an indivisible entity, integrated and limited in relation to others, is not applicable to the Melanesian concept of person. For M. Strathern, in Melanesia, the person is a combination of relations based on the image of the relations that make up society - a nucleus that objectifies relations and reveals them. If the idea of person forged by modernity is 'individual', then the Melanesian person is 'dividual'. And so there remains a crucial problem to resolve. How does anthropology address the question of the 'dividual' person? As N. Bird-David (1999: s72) points out, when we 'individualise' a human being, we become aware of him as 'himself', as a singular and isolated entity. By contrast, if we 'dividualise' a human being, we can only become aware of the relationship that he has with us - how he talks and listens to us, and how we speak and listen to him, etc. To rephrase this, we can only describe a 'dividual' through our perception of his presence. Lacking a singular and isolated entity, what one can conceive is, in reality, the presence of two perceptive bodies - of two points of view. In the Amazon, perhaps not in exactly the same way as in Melanesia,[16] the idea of individuality does not explain the local concept of the person. When I suggest that it is necessary to examine the body and the person in general as area of perception, my intention is not only to attempt to understand the diversity of indigenous ontologies but also to resolve an epistemological paradox that emerges from the moment in which the person, as individual, disappears.

Space and territorial environment, in a universe where the individualised person does not exist, cannot be understood as a field of objectivity whose extension, as in a map, would be preconceived by a transcendental subject. Space, in this context, can only be seen as a system of guidance by which to explore an environment in constant dynamics. It is for this reason that the Candoshi perception of space differs from Euclidean geometry. Whereas the latter describes a set of rules that govern the unfolding of an abstract space understood as an infinitely extensive area, 'Candoshi geometry' makes do with offering the walker the elements that allow him to initiate the dialectics between perception and action, necessary to advance in this environment, something that is perfectly effective for those who not only live off the forest but, above all, live with the forest in its irreducible complexity and permanent mutation.

In anthropology we talk about the 'worldview' of such and such a group. However, the notion of 'worldview' seems to encompass the idea that the eye of the observer already objectifies the world. The world would find itself irremediably separated from the subject subjected to the passivity of contemplation. This would imply that the internal quality of this subject does not, in the least, affect his perspective of the world. Indeed, anthropology often describes, on the one hand, the components of the person and, on the other, the cosmology but it very seldom attempts to describe both at the same time. The reflections and elements of ethnography exposed in this text attempt to take into account the indissociable tie between the person and the environment, in a way that the eye fully constitutes a part of the observation field. The vision is thus invaded by the world and, suddenly, the subjective vision of the world is no longer described but, as Merleau-Ponty would say, there is a folding back of the visible onto itself.   ❏

Notes

Translated from Spanish by Cruz Farina.

1   See, for example, the classic work of B. Meggers (1971) who develops the theses of cultural ecology outlined by J. Steward (1948), naturalistic determinism perpetuated by the human socio-biology studies in the region (Chagnon 1988).

2   In the works of P. Clastres, for example, where everything is society, although not a society built on the basis of the analysis of the specific peculiarities that ethnography offers but a society as an abstract philosophical notion, as was conceived by the classical philosophers who reflected at the time of the intellectual discovery of the 'New World' and its inhabitants.

3   Various contributions that analyse the history, evolution and impact of the image of Amazonian indigenous man as well as of Amazonian anthropology have been published ever since this regional 'revolution' was confirmed. The contributions that have influenced these pages to a greater degree are the work of A.C. Taylor (1984), the article by P. Descola (1985) in which he addresses the impact of naturalism on the image of indigenous man as passive subject of his natural environment, the introduction of P. Descola and A.C. Taylor (1993) to the double issue of the magazine *L'Homme*, dedicated precisely to presenting these advances as the allegorical title that this volume indicates *(La remontée de l'Amazone)*, and the synopsis of E. Viveiros de Castro (1996) where he

describes and analyses not only anthropology but also the contributions of prehistory, history and human ecology in this region, using as a common thread the dichotomy between nature and society, the background theme of the human sciences' work in the Amazon.

4 One example could be the use of concepts such as animism, reformulated by Descola (1992, 1996b, this volume) after an Amazonian experience, or perspectivism (Viveiros de Castro, this volume) also arising from anthropology in this area, to describe indigenous ontologies from other regions, including outside the American continent, such as northern Asia (Pedersen 2001).

5 In any case, the interest in perception is also generally shared by anthropology (the work of T. Ingold 2000, without doubt, constitutes the most significant exponent) and, as in the Amazon, this can be explained by the relevance that the body has taken in anthropological studies of recent decades.

6 Amazonian animism and perspectivism, which I previously made reference to, would be situated at the centre of this interest.

7 The investigation programme that I present here in a synthesised manner has been developed in a number of articles (Surrallés 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2003b, 2003c) and more in depth, in a book (2003a) from which I also extract the ethnographical analysis performed in this text.

8 Because, as demonstrated by the interest in perception shown by anthropologists, if cultural differences exist at perceptive level or, to put it another way, if cultural differences exist before being conceived by cognition, one of the pillars on which anthropology was constituted in the second half of the last century tumbles, calling for a review of the basic epistemological notions, such as structure, signs, system, social space or relation, frequently used by the anthropologist as ordinary language. This is a subject that goes beyond the framework of this article but which, to a certain extent, I have addressed in another work (Surrallés 2003a).

9 Self-denominated *kandoazi* or *kandoaz* and also known by the term *murato*, this group had been the subject of two anthropological publications before I began my own field work (Amadio 1983, 1985; Amadio and D'Emilio 1983). As in the case of other groups from the region, a rigid labour division, based on sex, governs subsistence activities, relatively independent of the Peruvian national economy. Above all, hunting and harpoon fishing still continue to represent male economic activities, whereas gathering and horticulture, the female ones. The house, normally built a certain distance from neighbouring houses, is the operations centre of these activities, as well as the axis of social life in general. However, this relative isolation is mitigated by inter-domestic networks that link ten to twenty houses, distributed throughout a relatively contained space. These networks are established on the basis of an alliance between two groups of brothers and sisters who have married between them as a means of forging solidarity links beyond consanguinity. These groups are headed by a chief who, to a certain extent, shares his power with another chief. This bicephalous power is a reflection of the dual composition of the local groups. There are currently approximately twenty of these groups in existence, some of which have reduced their residential isolation to concentrate in small community nuclei, encouraged by missions and the need to get closer to the schools that the Peruvian Ministry of Education has in the area. A significant tension, which often turns to plain hostility, frequently dominates relationships between them. Likewise, shamanism is also governed by this logic of opposition between groups. In fact, the Candoshi social philosophy is based, as in the case of other groups of the Jívaro community, on an ideology that considers the assimilation of people, substances and identities from other groups as the condition for the reproduction of the local group (Surrallés 1992, 2000b, 2003a.)

10 Certain elements of my analysis, which have been previously presented in Surrallés (2001), follow the model employed by Descola (1986) in the description of the Achuar's conception of space and the cosmos, an ethnic group neighbouring Candoshi territory and belonging to the same cultural set.

11 The affix *–entza* (transformed into *–azi* or *–aza*) serves to formulate all the names of the rivers in Jívaro-shuar (Ph. Descola: personal communication).

12   In terms of the geomorphology of the Candoshi region, my main source has been Räsänen (1993).

13   See the work of E. Margery Peña (1997:27-43) on the difference between a local conception and a universal conception of the flood in Amerindian mythology. See also the presentation and analysis of a very similar myth taken from the Chayahuita, a southern neighbouring group of the Candoshi, whose language however belongs to a different linguistic family – the Cahuapana (Ochoa Siguas 1992).

14   The subject of the banging doors comes from a mythical paradigm shared and transmitted in the same way in various places in America; its content has been analysed by Lévi-Strauss (1971) in the *Mythologiques*.

15   Although the idea of the cosmos conceived as a series of overlapping layers has been frequently used in Amazonian ethnography to describe indigenous representations, certain authors, such as Viveiros de Castro (1992:59-60) express their doubts about the reliability of this image.

16   In this respect, see the observations of E. Viveiros de Castro (1988) on the idea that for the Amerindians, and in particular the Amazonians, the point of view creates the subject, demonstrating this distinguished perceptive nature of American ontologies. For a comparative study between the Amazon and Melanesia on issues relating to the conception of person, see the book published by T.A. Gregor and D. Tuzin (2001).

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PATHS BETWEEN WORLDS
SPACE AND COSMOS IN TSACHILA TERRITORIALITY [1]

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"Nunchi?" (Which way?)
"Pelechi" (Down.)

The dialogue established by the Tsachila in their chance encounters is strictly rhetorical. The description of the walker's destination – up *(fechi)* or down *(pelechi)* – does not provide any indicative value in a geographical area ploughed by rivers originating in the mountains and ending in the lowlands, on their way to the sea. *Fechi* and *pelechi,* which in the past indicated the course of the rivers and now seem to mark the direction of the paths, are the two axles that define the Tsachila world, a society set in a geographical and cultural crossroads, between the highlands and the lowlands, the mountains and the coast. However, this rhetorical linguistic interchange is not as lacking in content as it may appear. In another study (Ventura 2000a) we describe the peaceful nature of the interethnic relationships established by the Tsachila. The dialogue that opens this chapter is an example of this behaviour, although it does not explain its entire meaning. The fact that the emphasis is placed on indications of direction leads us to another thought, a concept even closer to the heart of a society that has evolved precisely from the movements and interchanges between the Andes, Amazonia and the coast. The following pages describe the place that these paths occupy in the lives of the Tsachila and the vision of the Tsachila universe in an effort to illustrate the undifferentiated concept of their cosmology, as opposed to the cultural barrier that modernisation has erected between nature and culture, the animal world, the human world and the supernatural world.

History's paths

The Tsachila, known by the colonial term 'Colorados' for their custom of painting their hair and bodies red with *annatto*, occupy Ecuador's eastern lowlands. Their

language, Tsafiki, belongs to the South Barbacoan linguistic family, the most southerly of the controversial Macro Chibchan family. The Tsachila number nearly two thousand and are currently divided into eight communities. Their main source of income comes from intensive agriculture and natural healing, which is highly acclaimed among the non-Tsachila population. However, as in the case of other South American indigenous communities, until the first half of the 20th century the Tsachila were scrubland farmers, hunters, gatherers and fishermen. They lived in dispersed and relatively independent settlements, with each set of residential groups governed by a leader or shaman. From 1936 onwards, the colonization spearheaded by the Ecuadorian state gradually transformed the Tsachila's economic, political and social system. This transformation was strikingly felt in the 1960s when the construction of the country's principal road-network came to a head. Santo Domingo de los Colorados was to become the centre-piece of the road-network joining the capital, Quito, situated in the midst of the Ecuadorian Andes, with Guayaquil and Esmeraldas, in the Pacific. This strategic location, halfway between the mountains and the coastline, with two climates, two topographies and two cultural traditions, has marked much of their history.

Some of the references made to the 'Colorado Indians' and the 'Yumbos'[2] from the colonial years are based on encounters along these paths. A group of 'Colorado Indians' was arrested between 1609 and 1627 along one of the paths joining the coast with Amazonia (Navas 1990: 96-97.) In those days the 'Colorados' occupied a large territory and, according to some authors, their numbers might have reached 30,000. The economic and symbolic interchange with other ethnic groups was a frequent occurrence. Their products, such as chilli, were available in the markets located in the mountains as well as on the coast, and their shamanistic knowledge was widely renowned in other communities - as recorded in the colonial documents (cf. Laviana Cuetos 1989; Navas 1990; Salomon 1997; Ventura 1995, 1999, 2000a.) As early as the 18th century, the construction of a path joining Quito to the coast was to become one of the landmarks of the ethnogenesis of today's Tsachila, probably the outcome of new ethnic compositions between various north-western Andean groups. The construction of this path on various occasions triggered off revolts against the representatives of the colonial authorities in charge of the project as well as bloody battles between the different ethnic groups that occupied the region (Salomon 1986 and 1997). Finally, as mentioned earlier, it was the construction of numerous paths stemming from the Santo Domingo de los Colorados' axis, between the 1920s and 1960s of past century, which detonated the transformation of contemporary Tsachilas' habitat, economy and ways of socialization. This tendency to explore indigenous communities using the paths is an indication of the apparent difficulties encountered by the colonial authorities in reaching the heart of the indigenous' territory, as well as of the most common colonial penetration strategy employed by the conquistadores – the opening of paths. However, we should also be aware that, to the Tsachila, the

paths are more than mere straight lines between two spaces that were once want-ed connected, but essentially, transit places between two worlds.

In the Tsachila's mythical-historical accounts, the path to Quito marks the introduction to everything belonging to the world of the *Mestizos*. And it is not surprising that the term *feto* used by the Tsachila to refer to the *Mestizos* should come from the root *fe*, meaning 'up' - the place where the first whites allegedly came from. Nevertheless, regardless of the extent to which the path to Quito had become the gateway to alterity, the unfortunate encounters along this path were not only limited to the evilness attributable to the *Mestizos* but, according to these mythical accounts, they were also blamed on evil spirits which, although belonging to the Tsachila's own cosmology, their actions left quite clear that one should always be wary of the unknown[3] and that the path was an open door to the unknown.

Walking through Tsachila territory

Nevertheless, the Tsachila, a river-side community, did not give the paths the same meaning that mythology and history appear to give them. Besides the commercial trips made to Quito, the journeys most frequently recalled by elderly Tsachila are the hunting trips made by canoe, following the course of the rivers - downstream. Having said this, it is worth bearing in mind that the current traffic-worthy communication routes joining the main roads to the communes, and crossing them, did not exist in those days. The lives of the Tsachila were largely centred on the household unit, the residential groups and the paths that joined them. Although the tropical climate did not favour their permanence, there probably existed small foot-paths along the most transited areas which were used to reach the jungle and move around inside it. Hence, encounters along the paths between members of different residential nuclei were quite rare. Furthermore, the Tsachila tended to avoid, as they still do today, all unexpected encounters, preferring to socialise during prearranged visits to other homes when relationships seemed much less ambiguous. The Tsachila currently avoid large roads and, whenever possible, prefer to use the footpaths that cross the banana plantations and sections of pre-served jungle which provide discreet shortcuts. Their habit of walking along these narrow footpaths in single file can even be observed in their movements around the city. When the Tsachila have to go anywhere at night, they always try to do so in groups, especially women and children who walk with candle or torchlight for fear of being snatched by a spirit, and more recently, attacked by bandits who roam around their territory from time to time, fleeing from the law. Only the men embark on night excursions unaccompanied, either when they are in the process of hunting an animal down or when returning from night celebrations.

In the past, the absence of paths and footpaths did not pose any orientation difficulties for the Tsachila. They employed various methods, still practised to-

day, to avoid getting lost in the jungle, such as making incisions on tree-trunks or branches with a machete to mark the way home. Nevertheless, they still believe that they should not leave any tracks behind that could reveal to undesired beings that someone is walking around in the jungle. In the same way that the Tsachila's hunter's astuteness allows him to recognise the specie ahead of him – a hunted prey, a dangerous animal or an evil spirit -, the interpretation of the tracks found in the jungle or around the dwelling areas is still an important part of the jungle's indigenous population's know-how, accustomed, like the Tsachila, to defend themselves by anticipating danger or occasionally fleeing, rather than attacking. Therefore, human tracks that suddenly disappear a few metres ahead of their starting point, or that appear intermittently, are clear signs of the passing of the *luban oko,* the red spirit, feared for his habit of sucking human and animal blood. Nowadays tracks continue to announce good and bad news to the Tsachila, being that they still preserve a great deal of track interpretation knowledge, enabling them to predict the direction of the author's movements. Hence, it is no coincidence that their track identification precision has naturally extended to shoe and rubber boots' prints, enabling Tsachila returning home to discover whether there were any visitors during their absence, who they were and whether they left immediately or waited for the head of the household to return.

Tsafiki has a very precise vocabulary for expressions to do with space and location and objects to be situated are very often referred to in relation to specific points of reference. The Tsachila's sense of orientation is based on nature's elements and its basic referential axial points, like the rivers and their points of reference – up and down *(fechi and pelechi)*, occasionally east and west – *yo wino* (there where the sun sets) and *yo lano* (there where the sun rises) -, the first two being the most frequently employed. It is also worth noting that, despite their origins, the roads and paths that cross the communes, or that begin in them, have now substituted largely the points of reference provided in the past by the rivers, that the paths currently offering a means of indicating the ultimate spatial levels - up and down – with the same degree of precision.

The paths in mythology

The paths constitute an integral part of the Tsachila's myths as well as of their entire cosmology. They guide nature's elements and their spirits' movements, aid shamanic learning and join the human world with the supernatural world during healing sessions. The paths finally join *tsabo ayan*, the mother of the stars and guardian of disease, to the earth, and the earth to the world of the dead. In Tsachila mythology there are a number of tales concerning the period of darkness and the solution that enabled the shamans to recover the sun. In all the myths related

to this genre *(Neme ika, Yo imin Tsachi, Yo kela)* we come across two paths that have played a crucial role in Tsachila tradition – the silver path used by a boy and a girl to get to heaven and who are subsequently transformed into the sun and the moon respectively, and the path that marks the intricate movements of the sun, under the constant threat of *neme kela*, the jaguar of darkness, who forces the sun to supply him with prey on a daily basis before midday. The moon also has a path which, although less elaborated in mythology, is nonetheless used by shamans for its freshness in healing illnesses related to heat.

One of the fundamental paths in the lives of the Tsachila is the path that leads to *tsabo ayan*, the mother of the stars. Also known as *jelelen wa tsabo*, the biggest star, has a double mission. On the one hand, she has given Tsachila women the ability to weave, and it is the *tsanini naka tsabo*, the small stars that shine in the firmament who, without rest, weave the *mi sili*, the liana vine of knowledge, responsible for giving the shamans the ability to communicate with the spirit world. On the other hand, the mother of the stars is considered the guardian of disease. It is through the path that joins her world with earth that disease strikes humans. When a shaman wishes to cause harm, he extends a path to *tsabo ayan*, enabling the illness to continue its course, and when another shaman tries to cure it, he must, with the help of his aiding spirits, make the path disappear.

The world of the dead

But there is still another path that, sooner or later, every Tsachila must take. This is the *pipowa* path leading to the world of the dead. When an illness is irreversible the shamans say that *piyenko piya minu,* "the path of the dead is in sight". The traditional ritual for sending the dead off to *pipowa, tenka ereka* consisted in concentrating the shamans' energy in the preparation of a pleasing path for the souls of the dead, with the aim of revealing to them the beauty of the world awaiting them, *pipowa*, thus helping them to forget earth and their loved ones. The shamans sent the dead off along this immaterial path by canoe, although it was seldom described as a river and its essence could just as effectively be represented by a gust of wind, a communication route joining two worlds. Besides the *tenka ereka* ritual, which is still occasionally practised, this path is physically represented in burials. In the past, the dead were buried under the deceased's house which was subsequently abandoned. A cotton thread *(tenka sili)* was tied around one of the deceased's finger which was carefully positioned on top of the heart *(tenka)*, and the other end of the thread was tied to the roof. The liana vine of the heart, or liana vine of the soul, guided the deceased's soul, now termed *tenka,* along the *pipowa* path. The decomposition of the thread signalled the parting of the soul. Nowadays, burials are celebrated in purpose-built cemeteries inside the communes but most of Tsachila tombs still depict a small roof, normally made of zinc, which protects the deceased

until his soul has parted. In fact, some people claiming to be catholic affirm that the thread no longer joins the soul of the deceased to *pipowa* but to heaven, *yo kido*, literally meaning the skin of the sun, the place where the souls of the deceased go to. As far as the meaning of *pipowa* and its path are concerned, the shamans interpret the dreams and visions experienced during their shamanic trips and use them as reference points. Hence, when under the effects of the hallucinogenic *nepi (Banisteriopsis caapi)* they envision a downward path *(pelechi)* leading to *pipowa*, they interpret it as a sign of a short life, whereas the opposite occurs when they see something or someone flying upwards *(fechi)*, announcing a long life. Leaving aside the world of the dead, *pelechi* is also the place where all the impurities released during healing sessions are deposited, sent off via the rivers to the sea.

The thread of knowledge

Besides *tenka sili*, the liana vine of the dead, there are other events in the lives of the Tsachila that make them seek guidance from liana vines. Shamanic learning is crowned by the placing of the *pone sili* (the shaman's liana vine or thread), the liana vine that grants the newly initiated shaman the ability to celebrate the shamanistic rituals learnt under his master's care by joining him to the spirit world. This cotton thread *(kuwa sili)* must be *uru sili* (liana vine of purity), i.e. it must have been woven by *uru sonala*, pure women in a state of sexual, social and nutritional abstinence. In the past, on the day of the ceremony one end of the thread was tied to a post located in the centre of the patio, normally in the shape of a cross, and the other end was tied to the house. The post and the house represented both extremes of the course of the sun, east and west, dawn and dusk. The end of the thread joined to the house was tied to a shamanic stone *(pone su)*, symbolising the destination of the energy as well as the communication with beings from the world beyond, made possible by the thread. Consequently, even to this day, when thunder strikes and shortly afterwards the sky turns to red, it is said that the shaman's thread is breaking, an occurrence that forewarns his approaching hour. If a hill has guided a shaman's life and knowledge, the celestial roar signals the explosion of the hill. The thread is also called *ravi sili*, and although still considered the liana vine of knowledge, it is rarely referred to as *mi sili*. This latter expression is used to refer to the cotton crown worn by some Tsachila, together with their ethnic attire, when they visit the city or celebrate a feast - *mi* signifies both 'to know' as well as 'head'.

Meeting paths between two worlds

In short, *sili*, generically translated as 'line' (used to describe all kinds of threads, liana vines, tubes, etc.), is the universal concept of 'path' when, as in the case just

described, serves as a conductor to an event and frequently a guide to a route joining two distinct worlds, earth or the human world with the far beyond. The Tsachila cosmology is not the only one to represent joining routes between two worlds using paths, liana vines, rivers or tree-trunks.[4] The recurrence of paths, as symbols of union between two worlds, is something shared by Amerindian cosmologies which have generally been described as open in various ways. On the one hand, their openness to contacts with other cultures not only serves as a defence mechanism against the colonisation of their imagery, but rather as a constitutional element of their very existence[5] and, on the other hand, they are open to interspecies relationships, given that these societies, *par excellence,* do not establish boundaries between the human, natural and supernatural world.[6] To extend communication routes to alterity is an integral part of their social philosophy, as is faithfully represented in the Tsachila cosmology just described. The Tsachila paths lead to alterity, an alterity in which there are no boundaries, simply paths facilitating communication and interchange. The Tsachila paths are ties between worlds. ❑

Notes

Translated from Spanish by Cruz Farina.

1   An initial version of this text was published in a volume edited by Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Ventura 2002). It is part of an investigation based on three years of field work with the Tsachila indigenous community of Ecuador between 1991 and 1997, which culminated in a doctoral dissertation entitled *À la croisée des chemins. Identité, rapports à autrui et chamanisme chez les Tsachila de l'Equateur* (EHESS, Paris, 2000), now in the process of being published. The investigation was made possible thanks to the financial backing and mentorship, at different stages, of Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona's Social and Cultural Anthropology Department as well as 'The Construction of Identities in Latin America' Investigation Team, Universitat de Barcelona's 'The Communal Organization in Spain and Latin America' Project (AME90-0299), the Comissió Inter-departamental de Recerca i Innovació Tecnològica (Generalitat de Catalunya), the CNRS (Paris), the Institute Français d'Études Andines in Quito, the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (Ecuador), and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (New York); and also, a special thanks to the knowledge, generosity and hospitality of all the Tsachila who took me in.

2   Term of Quichua origin to describe the inhabitants of the lowlands, common in documents referring to the western lowlands.

3   See the myths denominated *Teto minu* (path to Quito) (M7 and M24) in Ventura (2000a), Volume II.

4   The Achuar myth that gave birth to Orion provides us with a beautiful tale in which two Achuar brothers flee from their adoptive parents downstream, in a raft, and later use bamboo shoots to climb to heaven. Once in heaven, they form the Pleiades and the raft transforms itself into the Orion constellation. From then on, the adoptive father pursues them without rest in the shape of the Aldebaran star (Descola 1986:87-88). Various Chaco ethnic groups, from Paraguay and Argentina, also believed in the possibility of reaching the world above by climbing a tree which joined earth with the lunar regions (Cipolletti 1996:342). J.P. Chaumeil describes a Yagua shaman's representation of the world in which a liana vine joins 'people-without-anus' to earth (Chaumeil

1982:49). Throughout the *Mythologicals*, Lévi-Strauss provides us with numerous examples of this in the South-American lowlands. Away from Amazonia and the Chaco, much closer to the Tsachila, their Chachi neighbours narrate a founding myth called Tutsa, in which a liana vine is at the very essence of life as a whole: the liana vine of the royal palm which joins two chains, symbol of the world's two extremes and which in the past young couples remembered on their wedding day (Medina 1997:59).

5   This aspect has been closely analysed in Ventura (1999 and 2000b).

6   This subject, amongst others, has been elaborated by Descola (1992,1996) Surrallés (2003) and Viveiros de Castro (1996).

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GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE NASA

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The Nasa of southwestern highland Colombia maintain a historical memory of their passage from an independent nation to a tribe subjugated by Spaniards and Colombians. This history, which is based in part on written documents available to the Indians, traces the trajectory of conquest but, more importantly, outlines the means by which the community has resisted outside encroachment over the centuries through the adoption of novel political strategies. This chapter examines Nasa historical consciousness with an eye to understanding its structure and its utility.

The approximately 60 000 Nasa (also known as Páez) live in the northeastern corner of the department of Cauca, in southern highland Colombia. Cultivators of potatoes, maize, coffee and sugar cane, they inhabit the slopes of Colombia's Central Cordillera. The best-known Nasa population is based in Tierradentro, on the eastern slopes of the mountain range. Their first contacts with Europeans were in the mid-16th century, when the *conquistador* Sebastian de Benalcázar invaded Tierradentro. The Nasa were able to hold off the invaders for almost a century, and it was only in the 17th century that the *encomienda* or royal labour-grant was established in the area. By the 18th century, indigenous political leaders, or *caciques,* consolidated power in Tierradentro and expanded onto the western slopes of the cordillera, establishing *resguardos* - indigenous communities defined by clear boundaries within which title was vested in the community, individual members claiming usufruct rights. The *resguardo* was an early colonial means of penetration of indigenous communities in the Sabana de Bogotá (see González 1979), an institution which the Nasa turned to their own uses. Through the *resguardo,* they were able to consolidate political power, legitimize pre-colonial boundaries and even expand their land-holdings to include terrain colonized since the time of the Spanish invasion.[1] The strength of *caciques* and the *resguardo* system diminished after independence from Spain, when the new creole overlords sought to liquidate *resguardos* and free indigenous lands for commercial

exploitation. The 19th century marks further integration of the Nasa into the Co-
lombian politican system. The Indians participated in the numerous civil wars
that took place in this era, joined nascent political parties and opened their terri-
tory to the exploitation of cinchona bark or quinine. The contemporary Nasa still
live on *resguardos,* and still enjoy some degree of political autonomy through *res-
guardo* councils, or *cabildos,* but the institution has been weakened through Co-
lombian legislation, both in terms of the political power of indigenous authorities
and the size of communal land-holdings.

The Nasa' own account of their history follows these general lines, but focuses
on a type of supernatural culture hero, the *cacique,* tracing his rise to power and
his subsequent decline. Nasa historical narrative concentrates more on political
institutions and social relations than on events *per se,* and often events taking
place over a broad span of time are condensed into single, catastrophic occur-
rences. These historical referents are subtly changed so that, in effect, Nasa his-
torical thought concentrates more on 'what should have happened' than on what
really occurred. Most importantly, the Nasa locate their historical record in sa-
cred sites dispersed throughout the area, which serve both as mnemonic devices
for remembering history[2] and as clear-cut boundary markers for *resguardos.* Be-
cause they are keyed to dispersed topographical referents, Nasa historical narra-
tions are fragmentary, composed of episodes which can stand on their own or can
be related to other episodes through visual observation and movement through
space. In this chapter I analyse the various means by which these episodes can
be grouped into a chronology.

Chronology and narrative

Nasa oral history is an elaboration upon colonial written sources, *resguardo* titles
in which we can hear the voices of colonial *caciques* (Archivo Central del Cauca,
Popayán [ACC/P] 1881, 1883) who tell of how they achieved power and how
they maintained it. The oral history parallels colonial documents, recounting the
birth of *caciques* in mountain streams.[3] Colonial titles speak of the *cacique* Don
Juan Tama y Calambás as the 'son of the stars of the Tama Stream' (ACC/ P 1883:
2182v). According to contemporary stories, the colonial *resguardo* titles were born
with the mythological culture-heroes, serving as their pillows as they floated
down the stream. The *cacique* goes on to save the Nasa people from invaders,
including the neighbouring Pijao and the Guambiano; the second of these groups
is also mentioned in colonial titles as a major adversary of the Nasa (ibid.). Very
similar to the encounters that the Nasa have with other indigenous groups are
their encounters with the Spaniards, who are described as violent historical ac-
tors, as opposed to the more civilized Nasa. In order to repel European advances
'into their territory, the *caciques* climb high mountains and establish *resguardo*

boundaries. Then they disappear into highland lakes from whence they can be summoned in an hour of need.

Nasa historians go on to interpret post-independence events in light of the colonial experiences of these culture heroes or historical figures. Merging independence and 19th century civil wars into one large confrontation which they call the War of the Thousand Days,[4] oral histories highlight Nasa collaboration with Colombian military leaders, and the loss of Nasa lands resulting from this meeting of two distinct cultures and two distinct political programmes. According to the Nasa, the usurpers were not as successful as they would have liked to have been, because the Indians hid the original titles that had been born with *the caciques*, documents which validated territorial claims. However, without these titles, which were safely hidden in highland lakes, the Nasa were without defenses, and could not protect their land-holdings. Thus, we can see that, in the Nasa vision of history, the *caciques* lost power during the Republican era.

Although the titles are missing and the *caciques* weak, the Nasa are able to call upon their culture heroes for assistance in their hours of need. For example, they cite instances in which non-Indian visitors to sacred shrines and sites of buried treasure were turned away by supernatural apparitions sent by the *caciques*. In other cases military attackers were physically punished by the supernatural culture heroes.

All of these histories are told in an informal manner in the absence of any type of stylized performance. Although some take the form of narratives with coherent story-lines, others are simply short references to historical occurrences, information offered in a sentence or two (cf. Cohen 1980, Price 1983). They can be told by anyone: although there are some individuals known as skilled story-tellers, they are not thought of as the sole performers of these narrations. Many of the best narrators are political activists who link the events of Nasa history to present concerns for the defense of the modern *resguardo.* This diffuse nature of historical tradition stems from the lack of a single, clearcut authority since independence. The post-independence era has been marked by multiple indigenous authorities who have acquired transient power through military strength or through elections. These leaders have not been autonomous in any sense of the word, working primarily as intermediaries between reservation members and the State. Without an autonomous and overarching authority, a single official history is impossible; in contrast, multiple histories are created in an attempt to regain the autonomy that the Indians have lost. This is a clear example of the importance of understanding the relationship between indigenous communities and the State if we are truly to understand the nature of Indian visions of history.

It is possible to divide Nasa accounts into two broad groupings: those that treat the mythological *caciques* in the pre-colonial and colonial eras, and those that outline historical process from the independence wars to the present. The Nasa do draw a contrast between these two periods: Colombian independence is described as a 'second conquest' of the Indians by such founding fathers as Simón Bolivar. Interest-

ingly, the Nasa perceive independence as having come much earlier to Tierradentro, when the *caciques* defended their people against the Spanish aggressors and founded the *resguardo* system. For the Nasa, the post-independence era is truly a second conquest, since in this period lands were stolen from them, and they forfeited political power with the creation of smaller, weaker *resguardos.*

Narrations about these two periods are very distinct in terms of style. Accounts of the early period are highly stylized, and emphasize the actions of individual culture heroes, closely following the colonial titles upon which they are based. In contrast, stones about the post-independence period incorporate more historical data into their plots, and concentrate more on human society than on supernatural culture heroes. While the earlier stories are recounted by many, differing from one another in a few details, the accounts of the 19th century can only be heard from a small number of narrators: they are not oral traditions *per se,* but recent interpretations of historical process.

Whether accounts focus on the colonial or the post-colonial periods or not, most Nasa historical analysis takes as its central focus the *resguardo* system. The supernatural *caciques* serve as vehicles for highlighting the importance of the integrity of the *resguardo* in the face of the dominant society. Nasa histories do not recount events as such, but the growth of indigenous institutions. Moreover, they deal little with the dominant hispanic society, preferring to concentrate on Nasa actions, Nasa innovations in the face of change.

Many times these stories apologize for indigenous loss of power. Other stories appear to grant more power to indigenous communities than has really been the case in the historical record. Sometimes accounts contradict each other in their descriptions of confrontations with the dominant society or with other invaders[5]. What is actually occurring in these narrations is that the Nasa are recounting 'what should have happened', instead of what really occurred.

Integrated into a continuous narration, these accounts and bits of accounts have a clearly chronological nature. They delineate two broad periods - the period in which *caciques* ruled and the period in which they lost power - which roughly correspond to our colonial and republican eras. They exhibit a clear understanding of historical process and of change over time. They depict quite clearly the changing relationship between the Nasa and the State. Nevertheless, the history is never told in its entirety, but in fragments which must be put in context by the listener who has at his or her disposal a store of historical knowledge derived from listening to and recounting other historical episodes. Although the chronological nature of these accounts is implied, the narrators use time in a distinctive manner. Time is compressed in the narratives, so that events taking Place over a period of a century are recounted as though they took place simultaneously. This telescoping does not arise from a lack of historical consciousness among the Nasa. What is more likely is that it is a means of placing emphasis on certain themes as opposed to others, and for stressing institutions

instead of events. These institutions are described within the framework of what could often be fictional or mythological events, so that the narration takes on the flavour of a historical novel.

Breaking the chronology

Although in an integrated version these accounts cohere into a clear chronology, they are never told in this integrated fashion, but are recounted as short episodes or fragments. These bits of historical interpretation are associated with sites of historical and symbolic importance, dispersed across Tierradentro's landscape. For example, the place at which Juan Tama is believed to have been fished out of the waters, the mountain atop which the *cacica* Angelina Guyumús distributed indigenous lands at the time of the Spanish invasion and the high-land lakes, where the *caciques* disappeared, are talked about in oral histories and acted upon through pilgrimage and ritual.

On the one hand, the sacred precincts which serve as referents for historical narration are mnemonic devices which aid the Nasa in remembering their history. Most of the people of Tierradentro are illiterate or only semi-literate, and cannot record their history in writing. The sacred geography serves as a means for encoding historical referents. Moreover, these same sacred sites form the boundaries of individual *resguardos,* and also delineate the major historical *cacicazgos* of the colonial era. Thus, a knowledge of history as lodged in the landscape also serves as a means for remembering political boundaries: history is a direct means for defending territory (Rappaport 1982, 1985).

However, space serves as more than a simple mnemonic device for Nasa historians. It is a tangible link with the past, something that can be seen, touched and climbed, something that merges past with present. Space is part of the process of interpreting history. It is not just a medium which records the past, but a means for making sense of it. This use of space as a framework for interpretation breaks down the chronology of the spoken narration, creating new relations among historical referents. This redefinition of chronology takes place along two lines: visual relationships among sacred precincts link their historical referents into a spatial, as opposed to a temporal, framework; and historical referents reordered as their spatial representations are linked through ritual activity in an annual calendar.

Visual relationships

Tierradentro is a mountainous region, and many of the precincts sacred to the Nasa are located on mountain peaks. From one of these mountain-tops the ob-

server can see many other mountains, some of which are also sacred sites. Villages or places of residence are also linked with sacred precincts in this manner. Because certain historically important mountains block the line of vision of a community, forming its horizon and often the limits of its domains, many of these peaks are the focus of rituals which define the community. Even though a village and a mountain, or a mountain and a mountain, might not be closely related in a chronological manner, the visual or geographical relationship between them lends an immediacy to the relationship between its historical referents. A good example of this is Chumbipe Mountain, located in southern Tierradentro. Here, the great *cacica* Angelina Guyumúa viewed her dominions and created the colonial *resguardo* of Togoima. Chumbipe is also believed to be a petrified Pijao chief who was transformed into a mountain after he was defeated by the Spanish invaders. The same mountain lies on the southern limits of Togoima, beyond which the *caciques* of the northern community of Calderas banished the Pijao invaders. One of Calderas' mythical chiefs disappeared into a lake behind Chumbipe. Standing atop the mountain it is possible to see Cuetando Bridge, where Nasa Liberals were massacred during the 1950s civil war. Thus, a single peak encodes a variety of historical referents occurring at different times, all of which are related by having taken place at the same site or by having used it as a visual reference point. The relationship among these referents is not chronological, but spatial or territorial.

The calendar

Similarly, the ritual calendar regroups historical referents linked with sacred precincts into a new order. Most of the sacred sites of Tierradentro are in some way related to the December or the June solstice, or to atmospheric phenomena related to changes in the seasons. In some cases, on these dates rituals take place at these sites. In other instances these are the months in which the Nasa engage in ceremonies which refer to the site and re-enact historical events that took place there. Finally, several of the narrations which mention particular topographic features also locate historical events as taking place at the winter or summer solstice. Thus, historical referents are arranged through the activity of ritual into a new order which corresponds to the annual calendar, an order which does not necessarily correspond to the chronology outlined above. A good example of this is the relationship between Alto de Tama, where Juan Tama is believed to have been born, and Vitoncó, where be lived. These two points associated in mythical narration are also astronomically related to each other: Alto de Tama is the point at which the Sun emerges on the June solstice when viewed from Vitoncó. Another nearby mountain, Chuta, is called the 'Mother of the rains' because the appearance of clouds around its peak as viewed from Vitoncó marks the onset of

winter. Chuta is a pilgrimage site at which the staffs of office carried by the *cabildo* are ritually refreshed (Rappaport 1985), linking the contemporary Nasa political leaders with their mythological progenitor who lived in Vitoncó. Thus, these sacred precincts will be remembered in an order which corresponds more to calendrical or annual markers than to a chronology marked in years or eras.

The close relationship between space and time is also evident in other, non-ritual, activities. For example, Bernal Villa (1954) notes that the Nasa describe extensions of land in terms of the number of harvests they will produce, since the Nasa practise slash-and-burn agriculture.

Rebuilding the chronology

The Nasa arrange historical referents into a variety of coherent patterns, defined both temporally and spatially. While the insertion of history into physical space serves to alter the chronological character of the narrative, linking referents from different periods, an examination of the movements of mythico-historical figures through space reveals that this very process of spatializing history also rebuilds the original chronology.

In her study of memory techniques in the Western world, Yates (1966) describes how the classical Greeks utilized buildings as mnemonic devices, so that architectural features became the repositories for facts, which could be recalled in a fixed order corresponding to the order of the features in the building. Harwood (1976) expands on this example in her analysis of the arrangement of Trobriand mythic episodes within and across sacred geography. She asserts that the temporal order of Trobriand mythic episodes is recapitulated in geography: the directionality of mythico-historical sites corresponds to the chronology of the myths. This relationship between sacred place and mythic episode is not static; the myth is merely a reference to a whole series of further episodes which might be recalled, reformulated or recombined.

In Tierradentro an interesting situation results when we apply the ideas of Yates and Harwood to the relationship between myth and geography. At the time of the Spanish invasion the Nasa occupied the valley of La Plata, to the south-east of Tierradentro, and what is today the Nasa heartland was then a rustic outpost for the more developed La Plata settlement (Velasco 1979). The Nasa migrated up the cordillera during the first few centuries of colonial rule, and it is only in the late 17th century that we first see Nasa settlements at the higher altitudes of Tierradentro itself Seventeenth century caci*ques* living on the western slopes of the cordillera are mentioned in the documentary record as hailing from Tierradentro (Archivo Nacional de Historia [ANH/Q] 1703). The great Nasa *cacique,* Don Juan Tama, claimed to have inherited his *cacicazgo from* Jacinto Mus-

cay (ACC/P 1881), a Guambiano. It was only at the beginning of the 18th century that the Nasa established stable communities in this area.
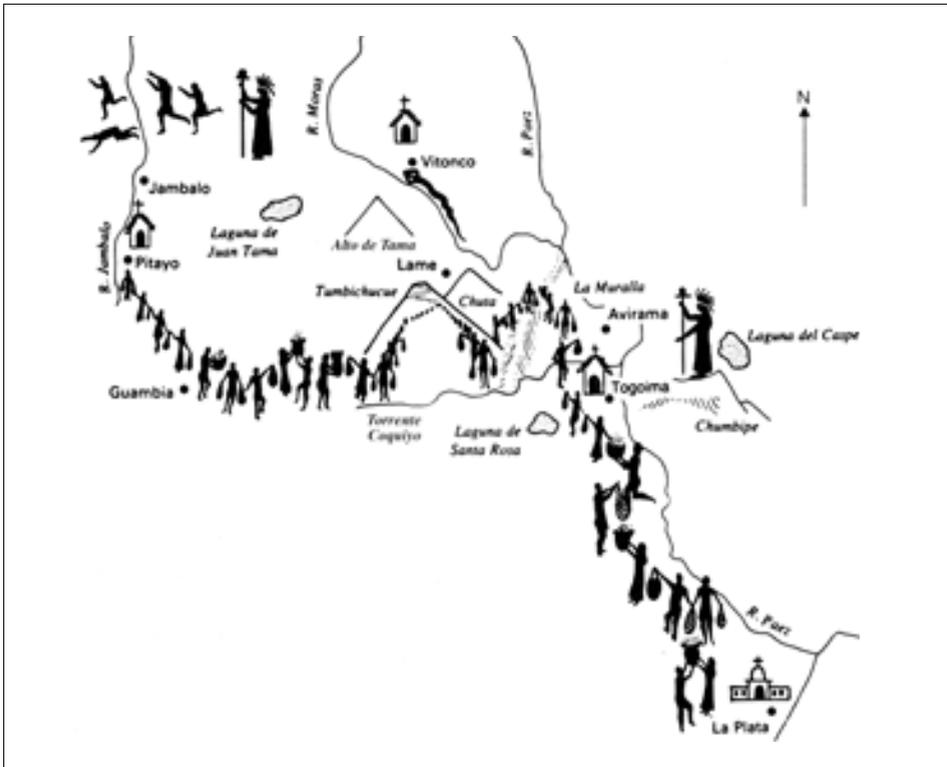
Figure 1: Schematic topographic profile of Tierradentro, from the Spanish invasion to the present.

Nasa oral tradition recapitulates this chronological and geographical trajectory, lending it immediacy by framing it with mythical concepts. The Nasa believe that, after having destroyed the colonial city of La Plata, they transported the riches of this mining town to Tumbichucue, a mountain in the centre of Tierradentro. The treasure was passed from hand to hand along a huge line extending from La Plata to Tumbichucue, the petrified remnants of which can be seen in the ridge called La Muralla. Some time before the Spanish invasion the *cacique* Juan Tama was born in the heart of Tierradentro. Some of his unbaptized siblings were transformed into evil serpents that ate people. The villagers killed these serpents, cutting them into pieces, which fell into the river, their heads oriented upstream pointing toward the western slopes.[6] One of the best-known of these supernatural beasts lived in the village of Lame. When he was cut into pieces, his head fell into the Moras River above Lame and his tall, in front of Suin (see Figure 7.1). Juan Tama himself settled in the village of Vitoncó, chosen after repeated attempts in which crosses were placed at various sites overnight so as to choose

a place at which the cross was left standing in the morning. Tama saved his people from the Guambiano, neighboring Indians who were sacrificing Nasa children to a sacred lake in order to.[7] cquire gold .[7] The decisive battle between Guambiano and Nasa was fought at a point near the modem village of Jambaló. At the end of his life Juan Tama travelled to Juan Tama Lake, located in the high grassland *(páramo)* between the two slopes of the cordillera, where he established the *resguardo,* passed on his inheritance of power to the shamans and finally disappeared into the lake. Tama's journeys are marked by sacred places. Thus, the life of this *cacique* is represented by a journey up the cordillera, recapitulating the historical ascent of the cordillera during the colonial era, a migration which marks the founding of many contemporary Nasa villages and *resguardos.*

Here we have an interesting case in which the very arrangement of Tierradentro's sacred geography recapitulates historical migrations of the Nasa nation. In both cases there is a clear movement from east to west, from lower to higher ground. The same sacred geography that reconstructs temporal experience in non-chronological form is also a vehicle for regrouping episodes in a chronological account which, moreover, follows the same temporal and geographical trajectory that we can reconstruct on the basis of colonial documents and chronicles.

Innovation in geography and history

Nasa historical referents are encoded and interpreted through a localized sacred geography. Each community has its own topographical referents which structure its local historical accounts. Few Nasa are able to interpret their history on a broader regional basis, using the regional system of sacred geography to construct a pan-Nasa history, because they are familiar with only a small number of localized sacred sites and only their own local culture heroes. They confine themselves to the local level, where sacred places are immediately observable. This aspect of the nature of Nasa historical thought might be construed as a handicap obstructing the development of a broader historical consciousness, and it has, indeed, forced both observers and the Indians themselves to understand Nasa history as a series of histories of discrete territorial units.[8]

An attempt has been made in the past decade to transcend this regionalization of historical consciousness among the Nasa. A solution was found in a series of maps which span the entire Nasa area and which illustrate in pictorial form the various historical actions taking place over the landscape (Bonilla 1982).

An interesting result of the use of these maps is the development of a Nasa coat of arms which depicts a hand holding a staff of office, superimposed over a circle containing a mountain range. The circle is said to represent the boundaries of *resguardos* (Alvaro Velasco pers. comm.). The mountain range undoubtedly represents the sacred peaks in which historical information is lodged. The hand

holding the staff of office might possibly be Juan Tama's. This coat of arms is carried by Nasa activists to political meetings, and it can be understood as a regional application of the traditional ritual of refreshing a *cabildo's* staff of office, a ceremony which generally takes place at locally important sites. Movement through space with this innovative but traditional symbol lends a broader regional significance to the localized sacred geographies which encode the history of individual *resguardos* or groups of *resguardos.* A very simple innovation, this new symbol permits the Nasa to continue to engage in their own mode of interpreting the past within a new and broader regional context.

By way of conclusion, it can be stated that Nasa historical thought is spatially organized, its chronology understood and alluded to in geographic referents rather than being stated directly through the order of narration. Although this brand of historical analysis is quite different from a European one, it does not prevent Nasa from using their own mode of historical interpretation as a very effective arm of resistance against a nation that orders its narration of temporal experience according to a more chronological (or Historical, with a capital H) mode. Nasa historical thinking makes the past immediate, tangible and relevant for contemporary concerns which pertain, as does the history, to territorial matters. ❏

Notes

1   At the time of contact the Nasa occupied the eastern slopes of the cordillera, and it is only in the 17th and 18th centuries that an expansion to the western slopes took place. In fact, the conquest-era Nasa were settled further down the cordillera, near La Plata, and even the inhabitants of Tierradentro were thought to be a rustic outpost of the more-established La Plata Nasa (Velasco 1979; for an analysis of colonial history, see Rappaport 1982).

2   This brings to mind the ancient Greek mode of remembering, which was based on the mental location of ideas in distinctive points of architecture (see Yates 1966).

3   For a detailed recounting of the *cacique* stories, see Bernal Villa (1953, 1956) and Rappaport (1980-1, 1982, 1986).

4   The War of the Thousand Days was only one in a long series of civil wars which raged in the newly formed Colombian nation. This war, which was the last of the 19th century and thus the most recent in Nasa memory, occupied the last few days of the 19th century and the first few of the 20th.

5   An interesting case of this sort of contradiction is the set of *resguardo* titles secured by the *cacique* of Pitayó and Vitoncó, Don Juan Tama y Calambás. In one account Tama claims to have inherited the *cacicazgo* from his Guambiano uncle (ACC/P 1881). Only a few years later, in another title, he claims to have been born of the waters of the Tama Stream, and to have won the *cacicazgo* by military means (ACC/P 1883).

6   Of interest here is the parallel between this Nasa account of the liquidation of a mythical destroyer, and the Desana origin-myth which recounts the journey upstream of a primordial anaconda who creates Desana communities (Reichel-Dolmatoff 1972). These similarities in symbols utilized in the accounts do not indicate a lack of historical content in them, but point to the fact that mythic concepts can serve as useful conceptual frameworks for making sense of historical process.

7   This same narration is recapitulated in ritual in the western Nasa community of La Ovejera, where bread children are eaten in remembrance of the sacrifices at the lake (Diego Berrio pers. commun.).

8   The largest divisions of the Nasa nation, which are both historically-based and conceptually defined in the present, divide Tierradentro into a northern and a southern portion separated by a high mountain range, and distinguish Tierradentro as a whole from the western slopes of the cordillera, separated from Tierradentro by the *páramo.* These divisions were the basis for colonial *cacicazgos,* are separated from each other by hours of travel, and each provide for their residents a different horizon of sacred peaks.

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WRITING HISTORY INTO THE LANDSCAPE: YANESHA NOTIONS OF SPACE AND TERRITORIALITY

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Very early in the morning, during a bright September day in 1977, I started what was going to be a three-day walk from the Yanesha community of Yorenãõ to that of Muerraõo,[1] passing through the communities of Huacsho and Yoncollmaso, all of them in the eastern slopes of the Peruvian Central Andes (see Figures 1 and 2).[2] My travel companion was Francisco, a middle-aged Yanesha who was going downriver to visit relatives and do some hunting and fishing. When we departed, I had no idea that this trip was also going to be a fascinating journey along the landscape of Yanesha history and myth.

Shortly after leaving Yorenãõ along the colonization road built in the 1970s we went by a gently sloping hill on top of which, Francisco told me, lay the foundations of an old Yanesha temple/forge. At its base, he claimed, one could still see rests of the furnace in which iron ore was melted. A few hours later, close to the colonist town of Eneñas he singled out the site of the last fully functioning Yanesha temple, abandoned in the 1950s after the death of the officiating priest. Before arriving at the settlement of Huacsho, we went by a small lake in a site called Cacasaño. Francisco told me that here the warrior divinity Yato' Caresa (Our Grandfather Caresa) hid himself after being defeated by the Muellepen, ancient cannibals who used to travel upriver along the Palcazu River in order to attack the Yanesha settlements of the Cacazú Valley.

We spent that night in Huacsho and the next day headed to Yoncollmaso, walking along the right bank of the Cacazú River. Soon we came to the end of the colonization road and entered an old trail. Some fifteen minutes later, Francisco informed me that right across the river lay the remains of the house in which his grandfather had died. He told me that in the old-house site one could still see his grandmother's large manioc beer pot - an object no longer manufactured by Yanesha women - as well as the peach palms and coca bushes sown by his grandfather. Before arriving in Yoncollmaso, Francisco showed me the trail to the old Yanesha settlement of Asopeso (nowadays inhabited

Figure 1

Yanesha
"traditional" territory
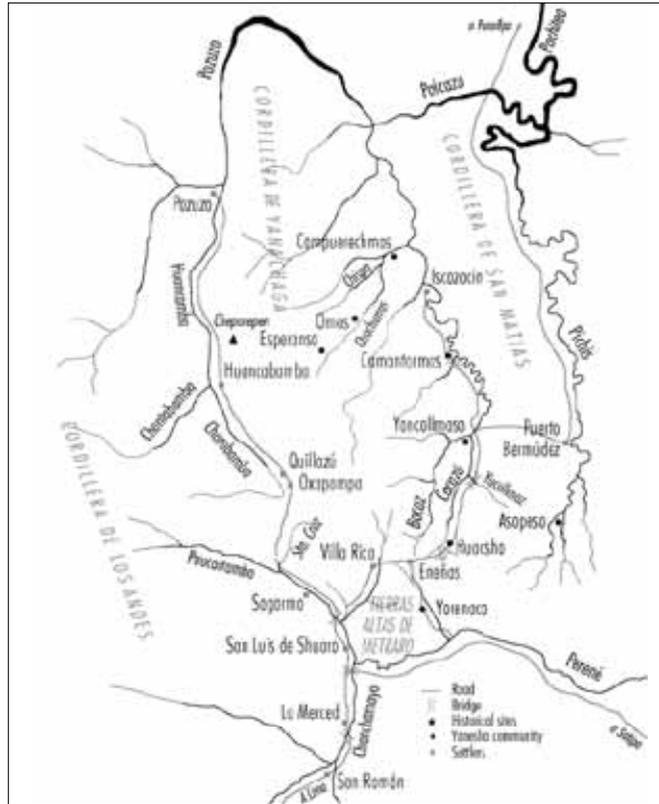
mostly by Ashaninka), which he and his father had followed when he was 12 years old. He recounted the happy memories of that trip, the first long walk he had undertaken with his father.

Next day, we started walking toward our destination very early in the morning. We went past the spot where the Yuncullmaz River flows into the Cacazú to arrive at a point called O'machpuetso where the river narrows and flows through steep hills. Francisco asserted that it was there that Yato' Caresa, the warrior divinity, used to post his guards in order to prevent the cannibalistic Muellepen from entering the territory. He showed me the large rock where the Yanesha of ancient times used to burn the bodies of the Muellepen enemies they had killed.

Further downriver, he singled out several large, elongated, and polished stones lying on the riverbed and explained that those were the bodies of the Yanesha warriors killed by the Muellepen in the attack in which they finally defeated Yato' Caresa (see Photo, p. 173). At noon we arrived at a small waterfall called Sa'res. My companion informed me that the flat slabs along which the water ran were the hiding place of the ancient divinity Yato' Ror (Our Grandfather Ror), for which reason this water had the property of prolonging human life.

Figure 2

Historical
landmarks in
Yanesha territory

So we bathed under Sa'res before arriving at our final point, the settlement of Muerrãto.

Experiences such as this were in no way exceptional. During my two periods of fieldwork among the Yanesha, whenever I drove or walked along the roads and trails that crisscross their territory my Yanesha companions would point out different sites or features of the landscape,[3] readily connecting them to past events, whether personal, historical, or mythical. The present article constitutes an attempt to understand the implications of such associations.

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Archaeological evidence suggests that the Arawak-speaking Yanesha migrated upriver from the Amazon basin before settling in what became their "traditional" territory (Lathrap 1970). Because of their strategic location and the existence of important commercial networks (Lathrap 1963; Tibesar 1950), present-day Yanesha share cultural complexes with both Amazonian and Andean peoples. Andean influences are manifested in Quechua linguistic borrowings (Wise 1976); in the development of a religious complex of priestly leaders, temples, and pilgrimage sites (Smith 1977; Santos-Granero 1988, 1991); and in the incorporation into their mythology and astronomical lore of important Andean motifs (Santos-

Petrified bodies of the defeated warriors of Yato' Caresa, Cacazú River. Photo: Fernando Santos-Granero

Granero 1991, 1992). In addition, Yanesha people have adopted Christian elements from the Franciscan missionaries who tried to convert them – briefly and intermittently during the 17th century and for a longer period of 33 years during the 18th century. After enjoying a spell of relative political autonomy between 1742 and 1847, Yanesha were again subjected to further foreign pressures, this time from the Republican Peruvian governments.

As the archaeological, linguistic, and historical evidence clearly indicate, the Spanish conquest was not the starling point for the history of Yanesha people, which extends much further back. Far from being tranquil, the history of the Yanesha has been an eventful one, characterized by long-distance migrations (from the lowlands to the Andean slopes and back again into the lowlands), dramatic cultural encounters (with the agents of the Inca empire, the Spanish Crown, and the Peruvian state), defensive and offensive warfare (with the Panoan peoples of the Ucayali River, the Andean peoples, other neighboring Arawak-speaking groups, and Spaniards and Peruvians), and revolutionary material changes (such as the adoption of iron-forging techniques from the Franciscan missionaries in the 18th century). Despite the fact that the history of Yanesha people is among the best-known and documented cases for the indigenous peoples of

Western Amazonia,[4] very little is known about the way in which Yanesha recall and transmit it (see Santos-Granero in press).

Much has been written about "how societies remember" and, more specifically, about how members of nonliterate societies remember. Three means or modes through which historical information is transmitted and historical consciousness manifested have been underscored: the mythical mode, including myths and related narratives and ritual action (Hill 1988); oral tradition, with mythical narratives occupying a secondary place (Vansina 1988); and performative acts such as commemorative ceremonies and bodily practices (Connerton 1989). Recently a number of authors (Bender 1993; Feld and Basso 1997; Friedland and Boden 1994; Hill 1989, 1993; Rappaport 1989; Renard-Casevitz and Dollfus 1988; Schama 1995) have emphasized the importance of landscape as another means of encapsulating and transmitting historical memory in both literate and nonliterate societies. The goal of the present article is to explore the subtle ways in which Yanesha people have "written" history into the landscape. I shall concentrate on two spatiohistorical processes: the occupation of what became their traditional territory in pre-Hispanic times, and the process of territorial despoliation and physical displacement to which they have been subjected in colonial and Republican times.

I shall begin the analysis with a brief account of the cycle of myths that narrate the wanderings and actions of the solar divinity Yompor Ror and his brothers and sisters at the end of the second of the three eras into which Yanesha divide their history. According to Yanesha people, in his trajectory the solar divinity left important landmarks. These have become salient reference points for demarcating their traditional territory. Relying on archaeological evidence, I shall contend that the events of the saga of Yompor Ror recalled in myth and recorded in the landscape reflect the actual migration of the proto-Yanesha from the Amazonian lowlands into the eastern slopes of the Andes. I shall also argue that Yanesha people interpret the process of occupation of what became their traditional territory as an act of "consecration"; they conceive of the topograms through which this process is recalled as sites of creation and, in some cases, of veneration.

Subsequently, I shall provide a brief account of the long process of territorial despoliation that Yanesha people have experienced since 1847, arguing that the most recent events in this process have been interpreted by the Yanesha in terms of the *pishtaco* mythology of Andean origin. In their reinterpretation of this mythology, pishtacos are malignant beings, employed by the road-building company to kill the Yanesha and bury them in special sites in order to advance and consolidate the roads and bridges under construction. Thus the Yanesha have interpreted the process of occupation of their lands as an act of desecration, conceiving of the new landmarks created in the course of this process as sites of destruction.

Finally, I shall try to demonstrate that the myths, oral tradition, personal memories, rituals, and bodily habits through which, Yanesha build their history coalesce in support of a major inscribing practice. This is the "writing" of history into the landscape. This "topographic writing" constitutes a kind of protowriting system common to other Amerindian societies such as the Nasa (or Paez) of Colombia (this volume) and the Wakuénai of Venezuela. It is my contention that even though topographic writing constitutes an important means of preserving historical memory and consciousness in nonliterate societies, it is by no means a mechanism exclusively employed by simple, unstratified societies. It is present in hierarchical societies as well, and can even coexist with 'true writing systems'.

The mythical consecration of Yanesha territory

The saga of the birth, deeds, and ascension of the solar and lunar divinities Yompor Ror (Our Father the Sun) and Yachor Arrorr (Our Mother the Moon) is recounted in numerous myths comprising the central core of Yanesha mythology. According to myth, before Ror and his sister Arrorr were born, the heavens were ruled by Yompor Rreṭ̃, a maleficent solar divinity. At that time, women did not give birth to normal children but to lizards, monkeylike beings, and rotten wood. The wondrous birth of Ror and Arrorr inaugurated a new era of normal childbirths and biological order (Santos-Granero 1991:54-67); their ascension to the heavens and the defeat of the previous solar deity inaugurated the present historical era. As we shall see, the actions that took place in between these two events mark "this land" *(añe patsro)* as the territory of the Yanesha.[5]

Myths recount how on his way to Cheporepen –a hill in the Huancabamba Valley from which he and his brothers and sisters would ascend to heaven[6]- Yompor Ror wandered along this land, first in an upriver, north-south direction along the Palcazu-Cacazú basin, and later in a downriver, south-north direction along the Chorobamba-Huancabamba basin (see Figure 2 to identify the landmarks mentioned in the text). At that time the land was inhabited by gods of the "grandfather," "father," and "brother" categories, as well as by *mellañoṽeñ* spirits, powerful demons, the primordial human forms of present-day animals and plants, and the ancestors of Yanesha people. According to myth, along his way to Cheporepen Yompor Ror was angered by the behavior of the beings he encountered. Using his divine power, he transformed them into stone, or into the animals and plants that Yanesha know nowadays.

According to the myth, Yompor Ror came from the downriver area of the Palcazu Valley. After walking along the Cacazú River, he arrived in the valley of Eneñas, where he found out that Yompor Huar – a boy he had raised as his son- had had sexual relations with his wife Yachor Coc, Our Mother Coca. Infuriated by Huar's deceit and Coc's infidelity, Ror dismembered his wife's body and scat-

tered her body parts in all directions. From them grew the coca bushes the leaves of which Yanesha people consume nowadays. Knowing how angry Ror was, Huar attempted to escape toward heaven. But Ror, dressed up as his wife Yachor Coc, deceived him, planting him firmly on this earth so that Huar would have to support the weight of the heavens forever after.[7]

Yompor Ror went on to the Metraro highlands, where he heard that his brother Yompor Yompere was impatiently waiting for him in the Chorobamba Valley. When he arrived at the mouth of the Paucartambo River, he changed his route to a south-north direction. Two kilometers past the present bridge over the Paucartambo River (at the site called Matano), he met Oneñeʈ̃. The latter attempted to run away from the angry Yompor Ror, but to no avail. With his divine power, Ror transformed him into the master of the present-day *oneñeʈ̃* demons. Further on, Ror arrived at a small stream where he met Quer, the human primordial form of a kind of parrot, transforming him into the bird we presently know. Nowadays, this stream is known as Queroso (parrot stream). Ror went on upriver along the Santa Cruz, one of the tributaries of the Paucartambo River, until he reached a stream on its left bank. There he met Cherom and transformed him into the small swallow that nests close to the homes of the Yanesha. At present this stream is called Cheromaso (swallow stream).[8]

Yompor Ror continued his way northward. He was fishing in a small tributary of the Santa Cruz River when a group of travelers passed by. They were loaded with *chemuer* and smoked fish that they had collected in the Palcazu Valley.[9] Ror asked one of the men, called Matar, to give him some fish and chemuer, but the man refused. When Matar started climbing a hill, Yompor Ror shouted his name in anger, transforming him into a large while boulder that is still visible over the right bank of the river. This place is now known as Cancllo, and the white boulder as Matarpen. Further on he saw another group of travelers who were also coming from the Palcazu Valley loaded with chemuer and a large variety of parrots. The divinity asked Huacanquiú, one of the travelers, to give him a parrot, but Huacanquiú refused. Ror became angry at the travelers and transformed them into boulders that are now visible on the left bank of the Santa Cruz River close to the place called Mesapata.

He then left the basin of the Paucartambo River and walked toward the Chorobamba Valley. He arrived at a large stream, where he met Llamaque' (another kind of parrot) and transformed him into the bird that nowadays bears that name. This is why this river, which flows into the Chontabamba in order to form the Chorobamba River, is now known as Llamaqueso.[10] By then the divinity was very angry. When he reached a stream called Quelleso (silver stream),[11] he chased away the people who lived there. The inhabitants ran away, farting from their fear; this is why this place is now known as Tellesoch (the place where people farted). Further on he met Camarempue' in a small stream and transformed him into the large butterfly that nowadays bears that name; this stream is known as

Camarempes (butterfly stream). He then met a powerful mellañot̃ eñ spirit called O'patenaya, who picked a fight with him. Yompor Ror won the battle, forcing the spirit to hide forever in the place known as Amo'cho.

Further along the Chorobamba River, Ror met two men, Pueshestor and Arrarpeñ, who were chasing down the river all the water beings he had created. They were sifting the water with a round sieve in order to catch even the tiniest of fish. When asked why they were doing this, they answered that they wanted to deplete the river in order to keep all its creatures for themselves. Ror became angry at their greed and transformed them into stones; their stone bodies can still be seen, together with their stone sieve. He dealt similarly with a man he found driving away –downriver and across the Yanachaga range-, all the terrestrial beings he had created. He asked the man, "Why Opana, my child, do you want to empty the land that I have created?" By calling him Opana he transformed him into a dumb person (*opan* being the word for dumb). That is why the stream where Ror found him is now known as Opanmaso.[12] Yanesha people say that had it not been for Pueshestor, Arrarpeñ, and Opana, the upriver area (the valleys of Chorobamba and Huancabamba) would now have as many fish and game animals as the downriver area (the valley of Palcazu).

When Yompor Ror headed for the site from which he would ascend to heaven, his elder brothers -Yompere, Yompuer, and Et̃etar- and their respective sisters/ wives decided to precede him. When Yompere reached the stream now called Opanmaso together with his sister/wife Yachor Mamas (Our Mother Manioc Beer), his classificatory son Yemo'nasheñ Senyac (Our Brother Senyac), and another minor divinity called Yepañer Señyac (Our Brother-in-Law Senyac), he stopped to rest and wait for his younger brother. When Yompor Ror arrived there after having transformed the greedy men, he was still very angry; he argued with Yompere, starting a fight with him. Ror won, transforming Yompere, his wife, and Yemo'nasheñ Senyac into stones. These divinities are now visible as large boulders on the right bank of the Chorobamba River.

After or before that event (informants are not clear on the sequence of events), Yompor Ror transformed his brother Yompuer into a small polished stone. Having transformed his two brothers, Yompor Ror continued along the Huancabamba River toward Cheporepen, the hill from which he was going to ascend to the heavens. His third brother, Yompor Et̃etar, had preceded him and was waiting for him. Knowing that Ror had transformed his other brothers, Et̃etar was angry and defiant. When Ror arrived, they started fighting. In the fashion of gods, they gleamed like fire, knocked each other down, and cast each other far away, burning all the surrounding hills. This is why, it is said, these barren hills are nowadays covered only with, tall grass. Ror defeated Yompor Et̃etar and, at the latter's request, transformed him into a half-stone, half-human being. Finally, Yompor Ror ascended to the heavens amidst a fabulous celebration.

Ror's ascension marked the beginning of the present era through a series of rup-
tures. It signaled the end of Yompor Rreť's rule over the heavens immediately above
the land: Ror forced the evil solar divinity into an upper heaven where he could not
harm Yanesha people any more. It marked the separation among humans and plants
and animals: Ror transformed the primordial human forms of plants and animals
into the shapes that bear their names today. It marked the end of sociability between
humans and divinities: Ror was followed into the heavens by other divinities who
became the present stars and constellations (Santos-Granero 1992).

This sort of second creation was not the seraphic kind of event depicted in the
biblical Genesis; it was the violent creation of an angry god.[13] It was nevertheless
through the divine, transformative actions of Yompor Ror that a previously un-
marked space became añe patsro (this land) – in other words, the marked and
consecrated "territory" of the present-day Yanesha. As we shall shortly see, the
consecration of the space of mythical time into Yanesha territory before Yompor
Ror's ascension corresponds closely to what we know about the migratory route
followed by protohistoric and historic Yanesha.

The prehistoric occupation of Yanesha territory

According to Lathrap (1970:102), from 1500 B.C. to A.D. 650 the Upper Pachitea
basin was occupied by Arawak-speaking peoples belonging to the Nazaratequi
tradition. Lathrap suggests that these peoples had migrated from the central Am-
azon River into the Ucayali and later into the Pachitea. Around A.D. 650, the Up-
per Pachitea River was invaded by the Naneini peoples who, according to Lath-
rap, were "one branch of the wave of Panoan-speaking peoples who overran the
whole Ucayali basin at this time" (1970:135). The presence of Naneini peoples in
the area was short-lived. Sites of this period have as their latest component a
layer of refuse left by peoples of the Enoqui complex; their ceramic styles suggest
they were directly descended from makers of the Nazaratequi tradition:

> *The fact that the Enoqui complex is the most widespread and latest ceramic com-
> plex in the area occupied until very recently by the Amuesha (Yanesha), makes it
> probable that the Enoqui midden can be attributed to the proto-historic and his-
> toric Amuesha.* [Lathrap 1970:1351]

The archaeological evidence presented by Lathrap suggests that the route through
which the Yanesha or proto-Yanesha arrived to occupy their precontact territory
was along the Ucayali-Pachitea-Palcazu axis. They were forced to follow this
route by the pressures exercised by Panoan-speaking peoples. Yanesha oral and
landscape history is in agreement with this reconstruction; the northeastern
boundary of their territory was the point at which the Cacazú River flows into

the Palcazu. Here, Yato' Caresa, the warrior divinity, stationed his guards, to stop the cannibalistic Muellepen from attacking Yanesha people. It is highly probable that the Muellepen mentioned in Yanesha mythology are the present-day Cashibo or Uni, a Panoan-speaking people who occupy the left bank of the Upper Pachitea River and who practiced a form of endocannibalism until the 1960s (Frank 1994:207). The entrance to the Cacazú River must have represented the southernmost limit of the expansion of the Panoan-speaking peoples, who ascended along the Ucayali, Pachitea, and Palcazu Rivers.

Historical evidence confirms this suggestion. Soldiers, missionaries, and travelers who visited the Palcazu Valley in the 19th century do not report the presence of a large indigenous population; those they mention were mostly Ashaninka (Campa). In 1886 when the French explorer Olivier Ordinaire (1892) visited Guillermo Frantzen (by then the only colonist in the Palcazu Valley), the latter told him that when he settled in the mouth of the Chuchurras River around 1880 he found only 12 Ashaninka families. At the time of Ordinaire's visit, Frantzen had managed to gather 60 Ashaninka and Yanesha families around him. The latter were brought, from the Chorobamba-Huancabamba Valleys. The low population density of the Palcazu Valley suggests that the area was a buffer zone separating Yanesha people from their enemies, the Panoan peoples located to the north.

The wanderings of Yompor Ror before his ascent to heaven follow the same route as did the protohistoric Yanesha. According to myth, Ror came from the downriver area, the Palcazu Valley, following a north-south direction until he reached the mouth of the Paurcartambo River and a formidable barrier, the eastern slopes of the Andes. From there he continued downriver along the Chorobamba and Huancabamba Valleys, following the foothills of the Andes in a south-north direction. Ror's wanderings marked what was in fact the core of Yanesha territory at the time of their contact with Spaniards. Insofar as Yanesha mythology reflects the actual migratory route and the areas occupied by the historical Yanesha, it is not surprising that the most heavily marked areas in mythicospatial terms are those in which Yanesha people finally settled: the Bocaz and Cacazú Rivers (headwaters of the Palcazu River); the interconnected valleys of Eneñas, Villa Rica, and Yurinaki; the highlands of Metraro; the Lower Paucartambo River; and the axis of the Chorobamba-Huancabamba-Pozuzo Valleys. In contrast, the Palcazu basin appears very poorly marked in mythicospatial terms. This situation changed radically after the mid-19th century, when the region was conquered by the Peruvian army and the displacement of Yanesha people from their territory began.

The historical despoliation of Yanesha territory

The 1847 invasion of Yanesha territory by the Peruvian army put an end to a period of more than a century of autonomy, achieved after the great panindigenous

rebellion of Juan Santos Atahuallpa in 1742. Since 1847, the colonization of Yanesha territory became a gradual but inexorable process. Colonization pressures came from two points: the military garrison of San Ramón in the southwestern limit of Yanesha territory (founded in 1847), and the German colonist settlement of Pozuzo in its northwestern limit (founded in 1856). Waves of colonists originating from these two centers acted as pincers, eventually encircling the Yanesha living in the heart of their territory.

Between 1847 and 1880, Yanesha people were displaced from the southwest portion of their territory, away from most of the left bank of the Chanchamayo River, and from the northwest, away from the valleys of Pozuzo and Huancabamba. Between 1880 and 1900, what was left of the core of their territory was occupied almost entirely by new waves of colonists. As a result of the founding of the missionary post of Quillazú in 1881 and of the colonist town of Oxapampa in 1891, Yanesha people were almost totally dislodged from the valley of Chorobamba. With the creation of the missionary posts of San Luis de Shuaro (1886) and Sogormo (1896), they were displaced from most of the lands located along both banks of the Paucartambo River. Finally, in 1891, with the establishment in the region of the Peruvian Corporation Company, a British coffee-growing firm, Yanesha were forced out of the left bank of the Upper Perené River (Barclay 1989; Barclay and Santos 1980:47-50).

Having been displaced from a large part of their traditional territory, Yanesha people retreated into the Palcazu basin. This sparsely populated area, which in the past had been a buffer zone between Yanesha and their northern Panoan neighbor-enemies, thus became a refuge zone. Many present-day Yanesha settlements located in the Palcazu basin were founded during the first half of the 20th century by families displaced from their original areas as a result of colonization pressures. This is true of the settlements of Camantarmas, founded in the 1940s by Yanesha migrants from the Upper Perené area, and of Omas, founded in the 1960s by descendants of Yanesha families that had originally come from the Chorobamba Valley (Santos-Granero 1991:177-182). In their retreat, the displaced Yanesha followed –but in the opposite direction- the same route once trodden by their ancestors and their divinities.

From the 1940s onward, the process of displacement was accelerated by the construction of new colonization roads –bringing in massive waves of new Andean settlers. During the ensuing decades, Yanesha people were pushed further and further downriver. By the beginning of the 1980s, 14 out of a total of 28 Yanesha settlements were located north of the mouth of the Cacazú River (Barclay and Santos 1980:70-71), which, as we have seen, was the old boundary with their Panoan neighbors. Today there are 65 Yanesha settlements, 44 of which are located north of that boundary (Santos-Granero 2004:169-72). Of these, five settlements are located in the Upper Pachitea River, and two in the Lower Pichis River –the home area, according to Lathrap, of the protohistoric Yanesha. In an ironic twist

of events, Yanesha people, who had been forced out of the Upper Pachitea basin around A.D. 750, were forced back into that area 1,200 years later. We have seen how Yanesha have inscribed into the landscape the history of occupation and consecration of their traditional territory. We will now see how they conceive of their present-day displacement and retreat from this territory and how they have written this story into their landscape as well.

The contemporary desecration of Yanesha territory

In 1977, when I did my first fieldwork among Yanesha people, the colonization road departing from the colonist town of La Merced and skirting the towns of Villa Rica and Eneñas had already reached the Yanesha community of Huacsho. Lack of financial resources forced the Peruvian state to stop construction of the road a few kilometers past this settlement. At the beginning of the 1980s, during his second term in government, President Fernando Belaúnde announced his decision to implement a large colonization and development project - the Proyecto de Desarrollo de la Selva Central - involving most of Yanesha territory. The Proyecto Especial Pichis-Palcazu, a component of the larger Selva Central project, entailed building new roads of penetration and continuing existing roads. When I started my second stint of fieldwork in May 1983, the continuation of the La Merced-Huacsho road had been under way for almost two years; by then, the road had already reached the settlement of Muerrãto.[14] This road building was a joint effort by the Villasol S.A. Company and the Ollantaytambo Battalion of Engineers of the Peruvian Army. The former had its field headquarters close to the settlement of Muerrãto; the latter was encamped in a site called Mãtengo, midway between the settlements of Yoncollmaso and Muerrãto. Associated with road construction were also several sentry posts: immediately past the settlement of Huacsho, near the mouth of the Yuncullmaz River, and immediately before the settlement of Muerrãto. The headquarters of the Pichis-Palcazu Special Project were located in the colonist town of Iscozacín, on the left bank of the Palcazu River, where the road had not yet reached.

By the time I arrived, the landscape between the settlements of Huacsho and Muerrãto had dramatically changed since my 1977 trek. The road builders had dynamited several hills, sometimes excavating the foothills, sometimes cutting the lower hills in two. In order lo avoid having to construct a large number of bridges, they had built the road along the right bank of the Cacazú River. As a result, the old jungle trail had been destroyed and many of the landmarks that I had been shown during my 1977 walk were no longer visible. Some of those that were still visible, such as Yato' Ror's waterfall, had been damaged or highly modified by the builders of the road.

Ten days after my arrival, I heard the first version of the strange things then taking place along the road. Being in Muerra͂o, I went to fish with a friend at night. He was very nervous, walking silently and waving his flashlight in all directions. When I asked him why he was so cautious, he answered that it was no longer safe to fish on the right bank of the river, for the pishtacos now wandered along the new road, "hunting people in order to cut their throats." Further, he said that before the road reached Muerra͂o everything "was silent," for the pishtacos had appeared together with the road builders. I was surprised to hear this, for the pishtacos are malignant beings characteristic of Andean folklore; until then, no Yanesha had ever mentioned them to me.

In Andean folklore, pishtacos - also known by the Quechua name *nakaq* or the Spanish term *corta-cuellos* (throat-cutters) - are evil beings who attack persons walking along solitary places in order to extract their fat and use it for several purposes. They were first mentioned in the 1570s by the chronicler Cristóbal de Molina, who reported that Andean Indians had begun to avoid the Spaniards, accusing them of killing people to extract their fat, purportedly to cure a strange disease affecting only Spaniards (Ansión 1989:69). In 1723 these beings - by then identified with priests - appeared for the first time as throat-cutters under the name of nakaq (Ansión 1989:70). Since then, the figure of the pishtaco, as well as popular interpretations of its activities, has evolved in adaptation to ever-changing historical contexts and circumstances. According to Ansión (1989:9), however, the pishtaco is always a personage associated with the powerful. He has the physical features of a *gringo*[15] and, although endowed with magical powers, is neither a spirit nor a being of the other world but a man of flesh and bone.

During the following days and months I heard innumerable accounts of pishtaco activity in a large area extending from Huacsho downriver to Compuerechmas. The accounts of pishtaco activity followed the same downriver direction as the road under construction. All reports coincided in that the pishtacos were gringos: they were hairy and wore long hair and hirsute beards; they frequently wore masks and cloaks; they generally wandered in groups of twos and threes along the road and close to *huaros* and bridges;[16] they could swiftly travel along the forest, but they frequently used cars to pursue their victims; and they hunted solitary walkers, and cut their throats for several alternative purposes: (1) to extract their fat and export it out of the area and even out of Peru for several uses; (2) to "support" the foundations of huaros and bridges; and (3) to "feed" the hills in order to prevent landslides during the process of road building.[17] Informants were not always in agreement as to the kinds of people pishtacos preferred to attack and kill: some said that they only attacked outsiders, others that they also attacked local Yanesha people. All accounts coincided, however, in representing pishtacos as employees of the Villasol road-building company, or, in some cases, of the Ministry of Public Works.

Later, in that same month, I was informed that two pishtacos had followed with flashlights a member of the community of Yoncollmaso who was hunting close to the river. They also told me that an army officer who worked on the road warned members of the community not to walk along the road after 4:00 p.m., for the workers of the Villasol company were hunting peccaries and could inadvertently kill those passing by. My informant interpreted the officer's words as a warning against the pishtacos hired by the road-building company, and the phrase "hunting peccaries" as a euphemism for "hunting people." In Muerrato I was further informed that one of the engineers of the Ollantaytambo Battalion had warned the local people not to wander along the road after dusk or before dawn, for they could be attacked by pishtacos.[18]

Later on, the rumors spread to the downriver area. I heard reports about the presence of pishtacos in the settlements of Camantarmas, Omas, Compuerechmas, and Esperanso, located along the Palcazu River and its left bank tributaries. In June 1983, while visiting Camantarmas, I was warned not to travel alone, for those who worked for the Villasol company in the Pichanaz-lscozacín section of the road were killing people in order to "support" the bridges that were being built in the Pichanaz-Puerto Bermúdez section. In Muerraʈo, it was explained to me that the road builders needed a total of eight persons to support every bridge (two for each of its pillars). As they planned to build many bridges in both sections of the road, they needed to kill many people. The job of the pishtacos on the payroll of the Villasol company was precisely to secure people to support the planned bridges. In Yoncollmaso my companions added that the pishtacos beheaded the people they killed and then placed them in an upright position in the holes where the pillars of the bridge were to be built. Afterward, and in order to ensure that they would firmly support the bridge, they soaked them with formaldehyde ("so that they stay hard and firm and won't blacken").[19]

In that same month, I heard in the settlement of Yoncollmaso that the Villasol company had killed many soldiers belonging to the Maʈengo camp of the Ollantaytambo Battalion in order to "feed" a particularly rough hill dropping vertically into the right bank of the Cacazú River - downriver from the mouth of the Yuncullmaz. It had taken the road builders almost one full year to dynamite and remove a steep hill in order to build a scant three-kilometer section of the road. People told me that the spiritual beings residing in the hills were very angry at being dynamited and removed. As a result, they caused massive landslides, killing many workers and burying expensive machinery. People said that the hills demanded to be fed human beings in order not to produce further landslides. That would explain, so the story went, why the pishtacos hired by the Villasol company were killing civilians and soldiers: wherever a landslide had occurred the pishtacos killed and buried one or two persons in order to prevent further accidents.

Further downriver, in the settlement of Omas, rumors of the presence of pishtacos began in August 1983, when a dead young man was found in Esperanso with his body severely sliced in the manners in which the Yanesha prepare fish and game for smoking and salting. In the ensuing days, pishtacos were sighted in the surroundings of Omas, in Compuerechmas, again in Omas, in the area of the Chispa River, and once more in Omas. People reported that the pishtacos were very hairy, dressed in black, wore masks, cloaks, and helmets, and were armed.[20] In this downriver area Yanesha people identified the pishtacos with the state functionaries working for the Pichis-Palcazu Special Project, whose headquarters was located in lscozacín. According to my informants, visitors to the headquarters of the Project were magically "appeased" (amansados) and rendered defenseless by the state functionaries living there - who later on cut their throats. Yanesha were not sure as to what they did with the dead visitors, but they suggested that "it might be to extract their fat and export it."

Reports of the presence of pishtacos in Yanesha territory were clearly associated with the implementation of the Pichis-Palcazu Special Project and the construction of roads and bridge - in short, with the process of modernization prompted by the Peruvian state. Yanesha people are conscious that roads constitute a mixed blessing. On the one hand, because of their increasing involvement with the regional and national market economy they require cash to buy the manufactured products they now consider indispensable. In this sense, roads constitute a blessing for they provide an easier way to transport local produce to the marketplace. On the other hand, Yanesha know that roads bring with them colonists, lumberjacks, merchants, soldiers, and state functionaries - people who despoil their lands, exploit Yanesha people economically, and diminish their sociopolitical autonomy. By May 1983, the road had just arrived at Muerrãto. Even though it took more than one year before private transport was allowed along the road, the mere fact of its opening meant a rapid increase in contacts with regional and national society. Recent literature on pishtacos (Ansión 1989; Wachtel 1994) suggests that they are a widespread phenomenon, reported by traditional rural or urban dwellers who are undergoing accelerated change under external forces. Moreover, as Ansión has argued, reports of the appearance of pishtacos are always associated with pressures exercised by an external power, be it the state, the Catholic Church, or other organizations and institutions that attempt –and have the means- to impose their will over these sectors of society. Pressures may take different forms: attempts to control the labor force, extract votes, or expropriate lands or resources; pressures toward acculturation or modernization; and much more. Not surprisingly, in 1987, when Peru was undergoing the worst crisis of its Republican history under the violence generated by Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and the Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (MRTA), pishtacos were reported in many of its war-ridden regions, in both rural and urban areas (Ansión 1989).

Among Yanesha, pressure from the state came under the guise of a large colonization and development project, the most visible expression of which was the construction of roads and the most foreseeable and threatening result of which was the further displacement of Yanesha people. Events in this process of territorial despoliation and physical displacement interpreted in the light of pishtaco mythology and conceptualized as acts of desecration, were recorded in the landscape in the form of evil sacrificial sites -burial places that appear as sites of destruction.

The writing and reading of history in landscape

In his recent work, *Landscape and Memory,* Simon Schama contends that "landscape is the work of the mind" (1995:7). By this the author means that landscapes result from the application of human agency to specific natural settings over time. It is "our shaping perception that makes the difference between raw matter and landscape" (Schama 1995:10). As a result of human agency and perception, landscape becomes the carrier of "the freight of history," its scenery "built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock" (Schama 1995:5, 7). Schama traces the origins of this phenomenon to "the days of ancient Mesopotamia" and asserts that it "is coeval with writing" (1995:7). The author does not elaborate on this assertion, which presumably derives from the bias historians generally have for written sources, as well as from his subject of study - namely, landscapes in the Western tradition. In any case, if the connection among landscape, memory, and historical consciousness is important in the context of Western literate societies, it is even more important in the context of nonliterate societies, where landscape not only evokes memory but is written upon it, thus becoming materialized memory.

The Paez of the highlands of southwestern Colombia and the Wakuénai of lowland Venezuela will serve to confirm this point. In analyzing how historical memory is transmitted among the Nasa or Paez, Rappaport asserts that they "locate their historical record in sacred sites dispersed throughout the area, which serve both as mnemonic devices for remembering history and as clear-cut boundary markers for *resguardos* [indigenous communities]" (1989:85 this volume). These sites may have symbolic significance at the local level of the resguardos, or at the more general level of the ethnic group. According to Rappaport, in either case sacred sites "are talked about in oral histories, and acted upon through pilgrimage and ritual" (1989:87). Moreover, as Espinosa (1995) reports, the Paez visualize themselves as being involved in a constant process of "sowing history" through their historical migrations and the occupation of lands outside their traditional territory. According to Rappaport, however, rather than recounting events as such, these histories allude to "the growth of indigenous institutions,"

serving the very pragmatic objectives of "remembering political boundaries" and thus of defending their territory (1989:87-88).

Wakuénai, an Amazonian indigenous people scattered in lowland Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil, are, like Yanesha people, members of the Arawakan linguistic family. According to Hill (1993:44), the ritual naming of places in the *málikai* (particular kinds of sacred chants) narrating the second mythic creation of the world reflects Wakuénai's historical consciousness of the past, particularly at the level of political relations with distinct peoples. Wakuénai use the names of places, natural species, objects, and geographical landmarks to "construct a historical consciousness of outsider others." Through the processes of "searching for names" and "heaping up names," the keepers of málikai chants draw a mythical map of the world with its center at Hipana, the place where Wakuénai people emerged according to myth.

According to Hill (1993:44), this map reflects with great accuracy not only the distribution of the different Maipuran Arawakan language groups in pre-Hispanic times, but also that of the principal Wakuénai phratries. More important, the map that emerges from the málikai songs incorporates the presence of the white invaders. The songs recount the location of Portuguese and Spanish settlements, and the routes that Wakuénai people were forced to follow either after being enslaved or when they returned to their lands after regaining their freedom. According to Hill, this proves that far from freezing history into a static mythic order, Wakuénai have incorporated the experience of Western colonial domination into "their narrative representations of the original coming-into-being of human society and history" (1993:159). Through this and other rituals the Wakuénai have produced what Hill has called an "environmental history."

Although the Yanesha, Paez, and Wakuénai build up their history through myths, oral traditions, personal memories, rituals, and bodily habits, all these elements, I contend, contribute to and come together in the practice of writing history into the landscape. The inscription of the landscape that we observe among peoples like the Yanesha, Paez, and Wakuénai does not, however, constitute a writing system in the strict sense of the term - that is, the "systematic link between sign and sound" that allows for "an exact transcription of a linguistic statement" and is characteristic of "true writing systems" as defined by Goody (1993:17). Rather, what I have called "topographic writing" can be defined as an "identifying-mnemonic device" of the kind Gelb (1974) attributes to protowriting systems.

A further distinction should be introduced here. Whereas in the pictorial protowriting systems that Gelb describes the identifying-mnemonic device is based on "pictograms," or drawn signs, in topographic writing it is based on landmarks resulting from the action of human or superhuman beings. I will call these "topograms"; they are elements of the landscape that have acquired their present configuration as a result of the past transformative activities of human or superhu-

man beings. Examples of human-made topograms are old building or garden sites, graves, mines, trails, bridges, or battlefields.[21] In contrast, topograms attributed to supernatural agency are generally natural elements that stand out in the landscape because of their extraordinary aspect (shape, size, color) –this, according to Yanesha people, constituting evidence that they are not in fact natural. While pictographic writing is based on human-made signs that recall things or events, topographic writing is based on attributing the character of signs to particular elements in the landscape believed to manifest some kind of supernatural intervention: the transformation of a divinity or a human into stone, the burning of a forested hill slope in the midst of a battle between divinities and its transformation into a patch of grassland, or the transformation of a natural element such as a waterfall into the hiding place of a superhuman being. By attributing a transcendental reality to particular elements in the landscape, Yanesha wise men transform these salient natural elements into signs that recall past events. In this sense, and in spite of their differences, pictograms and topograms share the property of being varieties of "shorthand, a mnemonic, which attempts to recall or prompt linguistic statements" (Goody 1993:17); but they are also, as we shall see, performative acts.

As pictograms, topograms constitute signs that stand by themselves and evoke a single thing, event, or idea. As in the case of pictograms, which when combined in a sequential manner become "pictographs," however, topograms can also be combined in various forms, thus becoming what I would call "topographs." These can be defined as landscape signs that "stand in opposition to or in conjunction with other such signs," forming a "wider semiotic system" (Goody 1993:8). Examples of this kind are the 16 or more topograms through which the saga of Yompor Ror is recalled, or the three or more topograms that recall the deeds of Yato' Caresa in his struggle against the cannibalistic Muellepen.[22] In both cases, a person walking along the trail followed by these ancient divinities could, and actually does, "read" their histories, either partially (by reading single topograms) or in their totality (by reading the interrelated topograms that compose a topograph).

According to Rappaport, this is also the case among the Paez, whose historical narrations, "keyed to dispersed topographical referents," are "composed of episodes which can stand on their own, or can be related to other episodes through visual observation and movement through space" (1989:85). Rappaport asserts that these "topographical referents," which I call topograms, are sometimes related in a chronological -that is, sequential- manner, but that more frequently the "use of space as framework for interpretation breaks down the chronology of the spoken narration, creating new relations among historical referents" (1989:88). This would be the case for those topograms that encode "a variety of historical referents occurring at different times, all of which are related by having taken place at the same site" (Rappaport 1989:88). Also, it would include those "re-

membered in an order which corresponds more to calendrical or annual markers than to a chronology marked in years or eras" (Rappaport 1989:89). In other words, very much like Lévi-Strauss's "mytheme" (1969), topograms can be combined and recombined, either temporally or spatially, in order to generate new associations, or stories that may be used to illustrate, explain, legitimize, or question new historical situations.

Among Yanesha people three different types of topograms can be distinguished according to the predominant means through which they have been infused with historical significance: personal reminiscences, collective oral traditions, and mythical narratives. Examples of each can be found in the account of my 1977 walking trip. In spite of the importance of these three types of topograms as means of preserving historical information and memory, however, they turn into powerful mnemonic devices only when they become the subject of mythical narratives. In effect, even though it is through personal reminiscences and collective oral traditions that certain features of the landscape are originally imbued with historical meaning, it is only when these features have been in some way sacralized through myth that topograms and topographs acquire collective significance and a greater resistance to the erosive forces of time and oblivion. Personal memories are generally shared by only a few people and consequently tend to be short-lived. Collective oral traditions seem to have a longer life. The cases of the Yanesha and Paez nevertheless suggest that at most these latter traditions go back in time for a century. The only historical events that are preserved in topographic writing for much longer are those imbued with mythical significance, whether positive or negative, as witnessed by the existence of sites of consecration and desecration. It seems, therefore, that in these nonliterate societies it is through the legitimizing power that derives from the sacred nature of myths that particular elements of the landscape are historicized in a collective and, to a large extent, permanent manner, thus becoming true topograms and topographs within a sacred geography or cartography.

The events signified by these topograms are recalled not only through mythical narratives but also through ritual activity. Among the landmarks established during the pre-ascension era, the site of Opanmaso or Palmaso –where Yompor Yompere and his companions were transformed into stone- became an important ceremonial and pilgrimage center. According to Father Navarro (1924), at this site there was a temple that had been functioning until the early 1920s. The temple consisted of a rectangular thatched building inside which resided the two larger stone divinities, Yompor Yompere and his wife Yachor Mamas, while a third smaller stone divinity, Yemo'nasheñ Senyac, was placed outside (Navarro 1924:16). Navarro (1924:15) reported that the ceremonies held in the temple were officiated by a *brujo* (witch) who acted as a *sacerdote* (priest). He further stated that ceremonies held in the honor of the stone divinities were attended by people who came from neighboring and distant places, bringing with them offerings of

Vein of red mineral salt in the Cerro de la Sal (Posapno)

manioc, maize, meat, fish, coca leaves, and manioc beer (Navarro 1924:17). Although the temple was abandoned shortly before 1924, the Yanesha peoples living in the neighboring settlements continued to deposit offerings of coca leaves, chemuer, and lime at the feet of the stone divinities of Palmaso at least until the 1970s.[23]

Some sites that became significant in the present era, after the ascension of Yompor Ror, were also the object of collective rituals. Thus, for instance, the grave

of Juan Santos Atahuallpa, the leader of the 1742 multiethnic revolt against the Spanish, became an important ceremonial center visited on an annual basis by Yanesha and Ashaninka pilgrims until the late 19th century (Santos-Granero 1991; Smith 1977; Varese 1973). The Cerro de la Sal, located in the boundaries of the Yanesha and Ashaninka territories and traversed by a large salt vein, was visited annually during the dry season by the Yanesha, Ashaninka, Conibo, and Piro peoples from the lowlands, and by Andean peoples from the neighboring up-lands, all of whom came to extract the mineral (see Photo, p.189). According to myth, the Cerro de la Sal was the place where Posona', the primordial salt-per-son, was transformed into the edible salt that Yanesha know today. People who came to extract the mineral left offerings of coca leaves, lime, and chemuer for the divinity. Although salt is no longer extracted from it, the Cerro de la Sal still con-stitutes a very important topogram, not only for Yanesha people but also for the Ashaninka (Renard-Casevitz 1993). Under the guise of the religious ceremonies held at the temple of Palmaso, the commemorative rituals held at Juan Santos Atahuallpa's grave, or the sacrificial offerings performed at the Cerro de la Sal, in all cases ritual action underlines the importance of specific topograms while at the same time preserving the memory of past events. It is through the narration of myths and the performance of rituals that Yanesha people write history into the landscape, thus transforming raw space into a religious topography that en-capsulates historical memory.

Although topographic writing does not offer the multiple advantages of a true writing system, it plays a crucial role among peoples like the Yanesha, Paez, and Wakéunai as a means of preserving the memory of what they consider to be important historical events. Through the combined assistance of mythical narra-tives, ritual activities, and personal memories, these peoples keep fresh the his-torical significance of their topograms and topographs. For the traveling Yane-sha, landmarks comprise history *tout court*; they can be read. Furthermore, the information they contain in shorthand writing can be transmitted to members of the succeeding generations. The power residing in these topograms and topo-graphs is such that even those now located outside "traditional" Yanesha lands continue to be recognized by old and young people alike. The latter might not know in full detail the myths that recount the origin of these landmarks –these they will only learn as they grow older- but they know the main outline of the stories and recognize their significance.

The extent and persistence of topographic writing

While I would argue that topographic writing is a form of protowriting charac-teristic of at least some nonliterate societies, it is by no means exclusive of small-scale societies with little social stratification. In fact, it is highly probable that the

development of topographic writing systems in these societies resulted from their contact with the complex and hierarchical societies of the Andean highlands. In effect, the common denominator of these three societies is that they are native to Amazonia but have maintained historical relations with Andean peoples. In the case of the Yanesha, as we have seen, there is ample evidence of this long-term interaction. As for the Paez, Rappaport (1989:90-91) asserts that in pre-contact times they lived in the tropical lowlands east of the Andes; they migrated into the Andean highlands in the early colonial era. In turn, Hill (1989:10) asserts that there is ethnological and linguistic evidence that the Wakuénai, as well as other neighboring Arawakan groups, had been in contact with Quechua speaking peoples of the central and northern Andes.

Topographic writing seems to have been a common feature among the stratified societies of the highland Andes, as attested by the Inca *ceque* system of sociospatial organization. According to Zuidema (1977, 1989), the space surrounding Cuzco, the imperial capital, contained 328 *huacas* or sacred places –hills, boulders, springs, burial sites, buildings, and so forth- organized in 41 imaginary lines radiating from the Temple of the Sun like the spokes of a wheel. Each of these ceques was associated with a different social group, a *panaca* or an *ayllu,* of Inca or non-Inca descent. The sacred places aligned in a ceque had mythical or historical significance for the members of the particular group to which they were ascribed; in many cases they included the sites from which the groups' ancestors had emerged in mythical times (Zuidema 1989:479). Members of each group were in charge of maintaining the huacas of its ceque and performing the appropriate ritual ceremonies. Zuidema (1989:468, 475) argues that the ceques also acted as "optical lines" that allowed the viewer to establish visual connections among the different huacas comprising them. Although Zuidema only asserts that through the ceque system the Inca "integrated history and religious topography" (1989:483), the data he presents strongly suggest that the Inca practiced a form of topographic writing. The huacas had the character of topograms, while the ceques constituted topographs that could be visualized and "read" from specific viewing points.

I would also argue that the advent of true writing systems does not necessarily result in the total displacement of topographic writing. Forms of this protowriting system persist hand in hand with true writing systems in literate societies where literacy is not yet extensive. In the Western tradition several instances of this kind of topographic narratives exist, the best known of which is that of the Passion of the Lord. Among Catholics and Orthodox, but also among Protestants of the Anglican faith, the Passion of the Lord constitutes a segment of a longer narrative relating to the life of Jesus Christ. Known also as the Way of the Cross or Via Crucis, this narrative recounts the events that took place in Jerusalem between the moment Jesus Christ was condemned to death by Pontius Pilate and the time of his burial. The 14 events that comprise this narrative are known as the

Stations of the Cross. They are associated with particular sites along the way followed by Jesus Christ, from the praetorium to Calvary, the hill on which he was crucified and close to which he was buried. At present, these events are annually reenacted in Jerusalem, when thousands of pilgrims follow the 14 Stations of the Cross along what is also known as the Via Dolorosa.

When comparing the topographically written narrative of the Passion of the Lord with that registered in the Gospels, it becomes apparent that at least six of the 14 events in the former do not appear in the latter.[24] I would suggest that this is because in early Christian times, when literacy was still not widely disseminated, the memory of the events of the Passion of the Lord was preserved through both true writing - the Gospels, which very few could read - and topographic writing, consisting in this case of the topograms along the Via Dolorosa, which the illiterate majority could indeed read. While the writing down of the narration of the Passion of the Lord in the Gospels "fixed" the events recalled, the writing of those same events in the landscape allowed for further elaboration with the passage of time. It was not until much later, when the events in the topographically written narrative were registered in true writing, that they became fixed in the tradition of the Catholic, Orthodox, and Anglican Churches. In this case, however, it is the topographically written version of the Passion of the Lord, rather than the literally written version found in the Gospels, that has prevailed in the memory of millions of Christians. Throughout the world, many Christians continue to recall or reenact the events of the topographic version through the visitation of the sites in which they supposedly took place, by means of a symbolic tour of the 14 Stations of the Cross as represented pictographically, or by numbered crosses along the lateral walls of their Churches.

Conclusions

Numerous topograrns and topographs attest to the fact that Yanesha people have "written" their past history into the landscape. This is certainly true for historical events having an important spatial dimension. Most important among these is the occupation and appropriation of their traditional territory, a process recalled through the saga of the solar divinity Yompor Ror. Although these narratives, and the topograms and topographs into which they have been written, might not convey the kind of historical information expected in Western societies, they certainly seem to reflect some past events with striking accuracy. Among Yanesha people, the north-south-north wanderings of the solar divinity Yompor Ror replicate the route followed by their ancestors as they gradually settled into what became their traditional territory. Among the Paez, the journey of the mythical cacique (headman) Juan Tama, marked by a sequence of sacred places giving origin to numerous contemporary villages and resguardos, recapitulates their

migration from east to west and from the lowlands to the highlands in the early colonial period (Rappaport 1989:91). Finally, among Wakuénai people, place-naming in the málikai chants that recount the second mythical creation of the world reconstruct the spatial distribution of Arawak-speaking groups at the time of first contact with Europeans (Hill 1989:19, 1993:44). Foundation myths-cum-history, or histories-cum-myth, are by no means alien to the Western tradition; one only has to think of King Arthur, William Tell, El Cid, or Pocahontas. Their importance does not lie in their fidelity to what "really" happened, but in having become an integral part of the historical consciousness and the identity of the peoples that bear them.

More important, the same mechanism through which Yanesha people have preserved the memory of how their traditional territory was consecrated at the beginning of the present historical era has been at play in writing the more recent history of its despoliation. The burial of the purported victims of the pishtacos in the foundations of bridges and in landslide sites has created new landmarks in what is left of Yanesha traditional territory. These are now the landmarks of des-ecration, terror, and retreat. Thus, despite increased involvement in the national market economy, new forms of political organization, massive conversion to Christianity, and acquisition of literacy by almost everybody below 30 years of age, Yanesha people continue to write their history into the landscape. It is still too early to know whether the sites created around pishtaco activity will become true topograms in such a way that a Yanesha grandmother traveling along the road a century from now will be able to read them and tell her granddaughter how the road was built and what events were associated with its construction. For now, however, the new landmarks have entered into the historical conscious-ness of Yanesha people as an expression of the invasion of their territory by white foreign agents. The Acropolis of Athens bears witness to Turkish occupation and defacement. The Auschwitz concentration camp, transformed into a museum constitutes a testimony of the death of millions of Jews during World War II. The old astronomical observatory of Hiroshima, incinerated by the atom bomb in 1945, reminds us of the horror of weapons of mass destruction. In like manner, the sites where the victims of the pishtacos have been buried stand as signs of the desecration of Yanesha territory, but also as signs of resistance, and as reminders of what should never have happened.   ❑

Notes

1   Yanesha people, known in the 17th and 18th centuries as Amage and from the 19th century on as Amuesha (or one of its variants), have recently rejected this latter foreign tag in favor of their self-designation term, Yanesha, which can be literally translated as "we, the people."

2   In order to preserve a certain degree of anonymity, the names of Yanesha settlements or communities mentioned in the text are not those officially recognized by the Peruvian state; in some cases the names mentioned are presented in Yanesha rather than Spanish orthography, in other cases I have presented the Yanesha traditional names instead of the new ones; finally, in a few cases I have assigned them a fictitious Yanesha name. In contrast, I have maintained the Spanish names or the Yanesha names rendered in Spanish orthography, of the main rivers, ranges, and areas.

3   By "traditional" territory I mean the region occupied by Yanesha people at the time of their first contact with Spanish colonial agents.

4   Among the missionary sources of colonial and Republican times the most important are those by Amich (1975), Córdoba y Salinas (1957), Izaguirre (1922-29), and Rodríguez Tena (n.d.); among the contemporary studies that deal directly or indirectly with the history of Yanesha people are those by Barclay (1989), Barclay and Santos (1980), Lehnertz (1969), Ortiz (1967,1969,1979), Renard-Casevitz et al. (1986,1993), Santos-Granero (1980,1985, 1986, 1987, 1983, 1991, 1993, 2000, 2002, 2004, in press), Smith (1974, 1977), Tibesar (1950, 1952), and Varese (1973).

5   Like most Amazonian mythologies, Yanesha mythology is not narrated in sequential order. In general terms, it could be said that every adult Yanesha has heard, in one or other of its versions, all the narratives that conform their mythology, but can recount only a few of them. Myths are rarely told sequentially as a saga but are narrated individually in specific circumstances and for specific purposes. When one is able to record and analyze a large corpus of Yanesha myths, however, it becomes apparent –through the informants' use of phrase such as "before (or after) this or that happened"- that Yanesha people conceive of them as ordered in a sequential manner. This is the case with the myths that recount the action of Yompor Ror in the period between his birth and his ascension to the heavens. The following account derives from an abridged presentation of some of these myths provided by Smith (1977:87-90) and from my own recordings and transcriptions of one or more versions of each of the myths that compose the Yompor Ror saga.

6   As in the Andean saga of the Ayar siblings, the Yompor Ror saga narrates the deeds of four divine couples: Yompor Yompere = Yachor Mamas
                 Yornpor Yompuer = Yachor Capac-huan
                 Yompor Et͂etar = Yachor Coc
                 Yompor Ror = Yachor Arrorr

Yanesha mythology is clear in asserting that the couples Ror/Arrorr and Yompere/Mamas are simultaneously siblings and spouses; it is less clear about the couples Et͂etar/Coc (most informants claim that Coc was sister and wife of Yompor Ror) and Yompuer/Capac-huan (informants claim that Capac-huan was Yompuer's sister but do not state whether she was also his wife).

7   In the version of this myth recorded by Smith (1977:88), Yompor Huar appears instead as one of Yompor Ror's brothers. According to this version, while fighting they burned the hillsides of the lower Eneñas Valley. This would explain why nowadays the latter have no forest cover and appear as extended grasslands.

8   At present the Cheromaso River is known as Churumazú.

9   Chemuer is known as *chamairo* in Spanish. It is a very bitter bindweed that is chewed together with coca leaves and lime. While the lime precipitates the minute amount of cocaine present in the leaves, the chamairo bindweed has a sweetening effect.

10 At present the Llamaqueso River is known as Yamaquizú.

11 At present the Quelloso Stream is known as Quillazú.

12 At present the Opanmaso Stream is known as Palmazú.

13 The first creation was that of Yato' Yos and his evil classificatory brother Yosoper, who, in a fierce competition, created the Yanesha as well as the primordial human forms of all the beneficent and maleficent beings, plants, animals, and minerals that nowadays inhabit "this land."

14 From Muerrato the road was supposed to bifurcate: the Pichanaz-Iscozacín section was intended to go along the Palcazu River, and the Pichanaz-Puerto Bermúdez section across the San Matías range, and on toward the Pichis River. In May 1983 the Huacsho-Muerrato portion of the new road had not yet been officially inaugurated. For this reason, the only vehicles that were allowed to travel along the road were those of the Army Battalion and the Villasol Company. Today all these roads have been completed.

15 In Peru, the term *gringo* is used by members of the middle and upper classes to designate non-Hispanic whites and by indigenous and peasant peoples to designate both Hispanic and non-Hispanic whites.

16 Huaros are horizontal primitive funiculars used to cross rivers.

17 The killing and burying of people in a sacrificial manner in order to turn them into spiritual forces that will "support" human-made structures (bridges, dikes, tons, temples, etc.) does not constitute an exceptional practice in the history of humankind. Hubert and Mauss (1964:65) have called these rites "building sacrifices". In a recent unpublished paper, Uchiyamada reports that in the past in Kerala, India, high-caste landlords would have "soil slaves" killed and buried with open eyes under the rice field dikes "so as to make them strong" (1995:2-3). According to Uchiyamada's informants, this type of sacrifice made it possible for the victims' *shakti* (mystical power) to emanate from their open eyes and thus support the dikes from below.

18 Some skeptical Yanesha suggested that these warnings by army personnel were aimed at preventing the local people from seeing how they were illegally cutting logs from Yanesha lands and transporting them by night to the sawmills of the colonist town of La Merced. To support this claim they pointed out the busy flow of trucks that traveled by night along the road –an unquestionable fact.

19 As far as I know, formaldehyde is not a substance used by Yanesha people for any of their activities. Thus I take it that the term must have been introduced in the area together with the rest of the pishtaco lore.

20 If we take into consideration that two years later there was reliable evidence that insurgents of the Shining Path and the Movimiento Revolucionario Túpac Amaru (MRTA) had entered into the Palcazu River from the north and east, respectively, it would not have been surprising if the pishtacos sighted in1983 had in fact been advance commandos of either of these two organizations, exploring the area.

21 Although petroglyphs can be considered to fit more properly into the category of human-made topograms, I am excluding them from my analysis both because they do not seem to be important among Yanesha people and because I am more interested in the way landscapes are inscribed through myth and ritual than in their actual material inscription.

22 I say "or more" because it is possible that there are other topograms associated with these two narratives that I was unable to register.

23 In 1973 Smith (1977:229) promoted the restoration of the sacred site of Palmaso among Yanesha living nearby and participated in the first collective ceremony performed in honor of the stone divinities since the 1920s.

24 Mathew and Mark report the same seven events; Luke adds one more, while John reduces the number of events to six.

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PART III

THE ACTION
GROUND

TERRITORIALITY, ETHNOPOLITICS, AND DEVELOPMENT: THE INDIAN MOVEMENT IN THE BRAZILIAN AMAZON

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The encompassment of Amerindian societies in Amazonia by the development frontier (highways, agrarian colonization, ranching, mining, logging, etc.) subjects the sociosymbolic coordinates of indigenous territories and the collective identities they sustain to disruptions that are as profound as those suffered by their systems of production. The ensuing territorial confinement and identity ambiguities impel these groups toward the dynamics of "adaptive resistance" (Stern 1987), which gradually become a crucial dimension of their social and cultural reproduction. They thus become engaged in processes of reconstruction that depend as much on repertoires of legitimation imposed by developing states and advocacy organizations as on their own political-symbolic resources.

In the reflections that follow, I analyze this dialectical reformulation of identity and territory through the example of the Indian movement that has emerged in the Brazilian Amazon in the wake of the multiple interventions of development and "counter-development" occurring there from the 1970s through the '90s.

Amazonian development and indigenous lands: the saga of the "Indian Statute"

After the military coup d'état of 1964, the Brazilian Amazon became a theater of vast governmental programs for geopolitical integration, demographic occupation, and economic development. Policies aimed at incorporating the region were implemented by creating a huge communication and transportation network, building military bases, elaborating colonization projects, constructing hydroelectric complexes, and attracting major investments in the mining, logging, agricultural, and ranching sectors through fiscal concessions and credit subsidies. Through this large-scale restructuring, the region was opened to intense competition for control over space and resources, which soon escaped the control of those

who initiated the process and threw together a myriad of economic actors: the State itself (notably through the army and public enterprises), large-scale ranchers, corporate enterprises, banks, speculators, logging and mining companies, gold panners, small farmers, and landless peasants.

The Brazilian Amazon is currently inhabited by approximately 170,000 Indians (not counting isolated or urbanized groups), divided among 160 peoples who represent 61% of the indigenous population of the country (and about 1% of the total population of the region). Here live the largest ethnic groups, such as the Tikuna of the state of Amazonas (23,000 people) and the Makushi of Roraima (15,000 people). This region includes more than 98% of the total extension of indigenous lands in Brazil, which form an archipelago of 371 "indigenous territories" covering 987,664 square kilometers (more than those in Venezuela, which cover 912,050 square kilometers). This represents 11% of the surface area of Brazil, or 19% of "Legal Amazonia." Moreover, these territories are distributed in such a way that they sometimes constitute a significant part of the states within which they are located, particularly in northern Amazonia, where they make up 20% of the extension of Pará and 47% of that of Roraima (Oliveira 1994:325). Furthermore, they are often situated in regions considered "sensitive" in economic terms (such as areas of mineral deposits) and/or geopolitical terms (such as international border zones).

The situation of Yanomami lands, which have suffered pressures linked to the mining lobby, clandestine gold panners, and the military for two decades, represents an exemplary case. The Yanomami Indigenous Territory covers 96,649 square kilometers spread over two states and runs along some 900 kilometers of the border with Venezuela. Although this territory was ratified by a presidential decree in May 1992, it is blanketed by 780 requests and 39 concessions for exploration by mining companies, while its central area is invaded by 3,000 gold panners. The Brazilian army has always considered the legal recognition of the Yanomami territory as a "threat to national sovereignty."

Despite the slight demographics of indigenous populations, the "Indian question" has become so prominent in Brazil primarily because of its role in the territorial stakes at issue in the politics and media coverage of Amazonian development. Since the 1960s, military governments have made an effort to institute new legal instruments for resolving the thorny problem of "indigenous lands" lying at the center of its policy for integrating Amazonia. In 1966, the government signed Convention 107 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) regarding indigenous peoples. In 1967, Brazil created a new administrative agency, the National Indian Foundation (*Fundação Nacional do Índio*, FUNAI), a step made all the more urgent due to international condemnation of the former Indian Protection Service (*Serviço de Proteção aos Índios*, SPI) when its employees were denounced for exploiting and coercing native peoples. Finally, in 1973, the military government promulgated new indigenist legislation, the "Indian Statute" (Law 6001),

which sought to reduce the obstacles to implanting development projects within indigenous lands in Amazonia. The first version of the Statute was presented to the Brazilian Congress in October 1970, at the same time that a meeting was held between FUNAI and SUDAM (Superintendent for Development of the Amazon) to ensure the "pacification" of thirty Amerindian groups along the planned Transamazonian Highway. The text of the Indian Statute instituted a range of mechanisms for legal expropriation: the forced displacement of indigenous communities for reasons of national security or public works; the granting <s; assigning FUNAI the right to set up indigenous agricultural colonies, etc. Nevertheless, the government had to preserve the "protectionist" character of the legal and rhetorical framework for these reforms in order to avoid contravening national indigenist ideology (inherited from the quasi-mythic figure of Rondon, SPI's founder), the political weight of the Catholic Church, and the goodwill of international funding agencies (to which the economy of the "Brazilian miracle" became, by and large, tributary).

The Indian Statute conferred a generic identity on autochthonous societies of the country, that of "indigenous communities," inseparable from their legal status as only "relatively capable" persons. Indians, called *silvícolas* ("forest-dwellers"), are considered to be on par with minors under the tutelage of the State, which therefore owes them assistance (legal, economic, health, and educational) administered by a specialized agency, FUNAI, up to the point of their "incorporation into the national community" as agricultural producers, through individual or collective "emancipation." The Indian Statute also imposed a new territorial regime on indigenous societies by granting them rights to the occupation and exclusive usufruct of specific collective spaces taking the form of restricted lands called *áreas* (categorized as "reserves," "parks," "agricultural colonies," or "indigenous territories"), while the State was assigned ownership prerogatives and the responsibility for defining the boundaries and guaranteeing the integrity of such lands.

For over two decades, the Indian Statute has constituted the administrative and legal foundation for defining the identity and territoriality of native societies within the framework of the Brazilian State. More broadly, the "indigenous question" is constantly articulated with reference to the Statute's regulations (demanded, revised, or manipulated). It organizes the political field where contests take place between opposing camps of anti-Indian groups (civil or military factions in the executive or legislative branches of the government, associated with an array of private interests), members of the Indian movement (indigenous organizations, local interest groups, emblematic leaders, elected representatives, or Indians employed by FUNAI), and pro-Indian groups (the Catholic Church, advocacy NGOs, progressive sectors of the administration, associations of lawyers or university members, etc.). Since 1991, the text of the Indian Statute has been the target of proposed revisions in the Brazilian legislature in order to bring it

into conformity with the new Constitution of 1988 (by doing away with the policies of tutelage and assimilation) and with current concerns (intellectual property rights and environmental protection). However, this process of emendation has still not been completed, so the regulations of the 1973 Statute remain valid as long as they do not contradict those of the Constitution.

Article 65 of the Indian Statute directed that all indigenous territories in the country should be legally registered within a period of five years (by the end of 1978). But by 1981, FUNAI had ratified the delimitation of only 15% of such territories (Oliveira 1985:22). Meanwhile, interethnic land conflicts multiplied throughout the country and a powerful Indian and pro-Indian movement "for the demarcation of indigenous territories" emerged, under the impetus of the progressive arm of the Catholic Church. The demands of this movement were based directly upon the protectionist rhetoric and regulations of the Indian Statute. The political strength and media coverage of this mobilization increased in strength and breadth to the extent that its focus on territorial and legalist issues gradually became a privileged site of opposition to the military dictatorship on the agrarian question, due, notably, to the immunity of indigenous leaders, legally treated as minors, with regard to the national security laws.

To defuse these dynamics, the Brazilian State instigated a long series of manipulations of the clauses in the Indian Statute, which, in turn, the indigenous movement utilized to construct its legitimacy. In 1978, the government tried to impose a complementary decree for the so-called emancipation of the Indians. This text gave the executive branch the *ex officio* power to remove "integrated indigenous communities" from State tutelage, annul their collective territorial rights, and submit their leaders to common law. Articles 9–11 of the Statute had already defined a procedure for individual and collective emancipation, but *at the request of the beneficiaries*. But the government's strategy of legal camouflage had to be quickly abandoned, having accomplished nothing except to intensify the process of Indian and pro-Indian mobilization by giving it a national dimension.

The 1980s saw many other initiatives designed to curb this movement toward the reconquest of indigenous lands. With greater subtlety than before, they concentrated this time on the administrative procedure for delimiting indigenous territories, removing the prerogatives to do so from FUNAI, which had become politically too vulnerable (Oliveira and Almeida 1989:49-50). The legal procedure for delimitation, covered by Article 19 of the Indian Statute, had been regulated by a decree issued in 1976 that assigned responsibility for carrying it out to the indigenist agency, but in 1983, a new decree transferred this responsibility to an interministerial group directed by the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Land Affairs, the latter being placed directly under the authority of the National Security Council. The regulations of the 1983 decree gave the military government the means to paralyze or modify the course of legalizing any indigenous

territory that represented an obstacle to public or private economic interests the State wanted to promote (Carneiro da Cunha 1984). Although a civil government came to power in 1984 and a new ministry was created "for agrarian reform and development," military authorities continued to exercise their power backstage over the question of indigenous lands by blocking the majority of demarcations underway (Oliveira and Almeida 1985). They returned to the forefront of the political stage during the "New Republic" (Albert 1987) and issued a third decree in 1987, which accentuated the control of the National Security Council over indigenous territories, especially those in international border regions.

The progressive Constitution of 1988 and the direct vote for president in 1989 (the first since 1960) through universal suffrage modified this political conjuncture to some extent. In 1991, a fourth decree modified the Indian Statute, applying to Article 19. This decree reassigned a significant role to FUNAI (which was transferred from the Interior to the Justice Ministry in 1990) and made room in it for Indians to participate. This enabled a certain degree of progress to occur in the legal recognition of indigenous territories during the administrations of Presidents Collor and Franco, despite numerous attempts at interference by the military and/or Congressional members (mostly those from states in the Amazon region). However, President Cardoso, elected in 1994, courted Amazonian Congressional members to gain support for his neoliberal reforms. In this quest, he issued a decree in 1996 that modified the administrative procedure for demarcating indigenous territories for the fifth time, once again exposing large spaces to interference by local private interests (especially those dealing with mining and land).

Transitory rulings of the 1988 Constitution set a period of five years for completing the process of legalizing indigenous territories in the country (Article 67). In 1993, this period expired without seeing the mandate fulfilled – fifteen years after the first five-year period set by the Indian Statute in 1973 similarly ended in failure. It is unlikely that the lands undergoing demarcation and ratification will be completed by the end of President Cardoso's term, even if those that are the least sensitive economically and politically have some chance of success. Certain statistics offered a disturbing picture: twenty years after the promulgation of the Indian Statute, 48% of the 563 indigenous lands in Brazil had only precarious legal protection (14.3% of them were only "delimited") or practically none (33.7% were merely "identified" or "to be identified"). Most of the rest, whether legalized or not, (84%, according to FUNAI), were the targets of many types of invasions and economic activities by non-Indians (logging, mining, farming, hydroelectric dam construction, etc.). These figures were often cited in ethnopolitical campaigns, but they underrepresented the impact of the Indian and pro-Indian movement on the legal recognition of indigenous lands in Brazil. Their actual extent is much clearer if we consider the increase in the number and surface area of the territories that, since the late 1970s, gradually went through the procedures

for legalization: in 1981, FUNAI recognized the existence of 308 indigenous territories, covering some 400,000 square kilometers; by 1996, the Brazilian government counted 554 such lands, occupying 947,000 squire kilometers – more than doubling their total surface area in fifteen years.

Parallel to this increase of indigenous territories, the interethnic political field has become considerably more developed and diversified ever since the first "indigenous assemblies" promoted by CIMI in 1974 and the national campaign against the emancipation decree of 1978. As of 1996, there were about 109 indigenous organizations (the majority in Amazonia), along with some 30 pro-Indian associations (Ricardo 1996b). Besides their abilities to construct alliances and organize campaigns at the national level, these entities have managed to obtain financial and political support through a complex international network of nongovernmental organizations (mainly in the United States and northern Europe) specialized in minority rights, environmental protection, and local development, as well as through connections with relevant sectors of multilateral organizations (in the United Nations and Europe) and agencies for international cooperation in various countries (Austria, Germany, Canada, Norway, United Kingdom, etc.).

Counter-ethnicity and ethnopolitics: from official indigenism to nongovernmental indigenism

This historical overview indicates the complex relations that the genesis of the Brazilian Indian movement has maintained, on the one hand, with the State's development projects in Amazonia and, on the other, with the increasingly influential activities of militant nongovernmental actors, both of which are associated with the economic and information globalization that has been expanding since the late 1960s. Amerindian strategies regarding identity and territory are inscribed within international political conjunctures that set out their conditions of possibility, sustained their emergence, and delineated the range of their implementation. We cannot understand such ethnopolitical struggles outside this context. The "Indian question" could not have emerged as a legitimate cause at the heart of public space on the national and then international levels except through the indigenous appropriation of systems of norms (laws) and values (symbols) utilized by protagonists dominating this space. These codes of legitimation, emanating from State and nongovernmental constructions of "Indianness," provide the framework for political and ideational negotiations through which indigenous societies must redefine their alterity and territoriality, using modes of "strategic syncretism." Discursive hybridity has thus become a structural condition for expression in the Indian movement. Its ethnopolitical constructions draw as much from the sources of official indigenist rhetoric (juridical and administra-

tive) as from the political imaginary (culturalist, communitarian, and ecological) of the diverse array of nongovernmental solidarity organizations.

Official Indigenism and Generic Indianness

Despite the great variety of social and symbolic coordinates in the spaces they occupy, Indian groups in Brazil have linked all their cultural and territorial demands to the categories of "indigenous community" and "indigenous lands" inherited from the regulations of the 1973 Indian Statute and, subsequently, from the 1988 Constitution. Imposed by the State and its indigenist administration, these "exo-definitions" were nevertheless taken up and reinterpreted in a counter-discourse of legitimation, which, by formulating demands and mobilizing campaigns, established the social reality of the Indian movement on the national political scene. These categories had been instruments of ethnic and territorial redefinition for the benefit of the larger objective of developing the Amazon (note that FUNAI was subordinated to the Interior Ministry until 1990). They became the target of a strategic inversion that reconstituted them as referents for a generic Indianness of resistance sustained by shared experiences of expropriation and denial of justice. The State's policies of assigning identity and territory were thus turned against their author in the form of a discourse of ethnic affirmation and legalist demands – a discourse that was constantly nourished by the dysfunctionality and duplicity of official indigenism. In practice, it was largely through FUNAI's system of "indigenous posts," implanted in most of the reservations in the country, that constituted the cradle where this dialectic of imposition and subversion of the Indian Statute's regulations plays out. Serving as the line of transmission of official indigenism to the field, this system made it possible to inculcate the government's categories and rhetoric through a wide array of indigenous intermediaries (whether they were FUNAI employees or not). This grassroots apprenticeship of State indigenism, as well as its reinterpretation by nongovernmental organizations (and often by missionary schools), provided fertile opportunities for nurturing the formation of local and national leaders in the emergent Indian movement.

The Indian Statute's policies on identity and territory were imposed on indigenous groups in the Brazilian Amazon that had undergone a wide range of historical experiences. For analytical purposes, this diversity can be simplified into two main kinds: on the one hand, groups that had only sporadic or limited contacts with the regional frontier up until the period of Amazonian development in the 1970s (such as the Yanomami, Waiampi, or Kayapo); on the other, groups that were subjected to the sway of traders seeking forest products since the late nineteenth century (in the Juruá-Purús river basins), to the sporadic tutelage of SPI starting in the 1910s (in the Upper Amazon, known in Brazil as the *Alto Solimões*),

or, more continuously, to the activities of Catholic and evangelical missions (in the Upper Rio Negro).

Nevertheless, all of these societies, despite the differences in their contact situations and degrees of social transformation, found themselves subjected by the Indian Statute to the same inversion of perspective regarding the legitimation of the spaces they occupied (transformed into "indigenous territories") and the definition of the collective identities they generated (transformed into "cultures" and "indigenous communities"). All of them had to undergo a self-objectification through the prism of the same generic Indianness and the same abstract territoriality defined by the legal framework of the State. This represented an unprecedented change in perspective, as much for native peoples controlled by river traders (*patrões*) as for those still isolated or semi-independent. This was particularly clear in the case of the latter, who had linked their collective identities to open territorial spaces where residence was legitimated with reference to the era of creation and to sites in their mythical geographies. But it was also evident for the former, for whom spatial enclosure and legal norms used to be irrelevant, but whose societies and territories were reconfigured in private forest domains set up by *patrões* through the control of captive clienteles (Geffray 1996:128-130).

The difference in the situations of the two types of societies with respect to the 1973 Indian Statute was linked to the degree of intercultural competence that their members could mobilize to master and redirect the Statute's regulations to serve their own social and political projects. Thus, FUNAI's interventions in Amazonian regions of long-term contact (Juruá-Purús, Upper Amazon, and Upper Rio Negro) soon became the target and occasion for indigenous movements to push for ever more organized territorial demands. These movements rebelled against the forms of spoliation historically practiced in these regions, as well as against more recent types of intrusive economic activities (which the Indian Statute had been designed to promote). Today, the largest number of indigenous organizations (created between 1984 and 1995) are found in these three Amazonian regions: eight in the Juruá-Purús (Acre), four in the Upper Amazon, and no less than twenty-eight in the Upper Rio Negro (Amazonas). The territorial rights of those groups without intensive contact until the 1970s were first defended by militant non-indigenous intermediaries (anthropologists, missionaries, and indigenists), then demanded by a few emblematic leaders in the '80s, and subsequently taken up by indigenous organizations in the '90s. In particular, after the campaigns launched by indigenist NGO in the late '70s focusing on the Kayapo, Waiampi, and Yanomami territories, certain symbolically potent leaders, such as Payakan and Raoni (of the Kayapo), Waiwai (Waiampi), and Davi Kopenawa (Yanomami), emerged on the interethnic political scene in the late '80s, and then, in 1993-95, Kayapo and Waiampi organizations were created, while the Yanomami continued to be represented by essentially one solidarity NGO (the Pro-Yanomami Commission, CCPY).

The emergence of ethnic movements in the Brazilian Amazon can thus be ascribed, in the first place, to the expansion of State interventions and the reinforcement of its functions in this region. Through its development policies and indigenist reforms in the 1970s, the Brazilian State became a central actor in the construction and mobilization of local identities. This was due to the dynamics of territorial expropriation that it instigated as well as to the forms of legal recognition conferred on its victims (inhabiting a residual archipelago of indigenous "communities" and "territories" within national space). This statist process of ethnic and territorial recalibration, intended to facilitate new forms of economic occupation was not actually new in Amazonia. The Indian Protection Service (SPI) had been utilized for such purposes ever since its creation in 1910, notably through the mediation of its "Regional Inspectorates" in Amazonas and Pará. However, the public policies of the 1970s saw a redeployment of this strategy with unprecedented breadth and power.

SPI's presence in Amazonia had always been weak. The number of indigenous posts in its first Regional Inspectorate, which covered the northern region in what are now three states (Roraima, Amazonas, and Acre), was only six in 1913 (out of a total of twenty-six throughout the country), reaching a maximum of nineteen in 1930 (out of sixty-seven), cut back to eleven in 1945 (out of one hundred and four), twelve in 1954 (out of ninety-seven), and falling to nine in 1962 (out of one hundred and eleven). By comparison, FUNAI maintained fifteen posts in the Yanomami territory alone until the '80s. During its existence, SPI managed to complete the legalization of only nine indigenous territories in this immense Regional Inspectorate – territories that, moreover, were considered more as reserves of manual labor than as true territorial reservations (Oliveira 1983:17-19). Their total area under the SPI topped out at 5,113 hectares. By the mid-'90s, the indigenous territories in the northern region of Amazonia were officially estimated to cover 165,467 square kilometers (PR 1996:12).

Recognizing the part played by public policies of national development in the emergence of the indigenous movement in the Brazilian Amazon does not mean that its social and political dynamics can be assimilated to a mere strategic use of the legal and administrative framework created by the official indigenist agency. Here, as elsewhere, the assertion of ethnicity can never be reduced to the imposition of ethnicity. Even if the violent annexations they have undergone compel aboriginal societies to reconstruct their identity and territorial references in line with the State's exo-definitions and development apparatus, they do so in terms of an autonomous social project and according to their own symbolic perspectives. The provisions of official indigenism are thus simultaneously reproduced and redirected by the very dynamics of their appropriation. Certainly this involves a tactical inversion of the discourse of official "ethnification," but above all, it entails a political and cultural surpassing of the State's hegemonic and assimilationist aims.

The Waiampi case, among others, can provide a relevant example of this process. On the basis of the administrative and legal framework imposed on them, these Indians took it upon themselves to define and delimit the territorial space they wanted to have legally recognized, which, to them, meant expelling non-indigenous gold prospectors (*garimpeiros*). They then consolidated this reconquest through a strategy of independent artisanal extraction of gold deposits in their region. They legitimated their mode of extraction through a millenarian discourse about the mythological creation of the universe and the risk of "rotting the land" when *garimpeiros* use mechanized means of gold prospecting (Tilkin Gallois 1989, 1990, 1996). This type of ethnopolitical formula, with its weighty components of cultural symbolism and identity, is by no means restricted to groups with the most recent sustained contact, since it is also used by ethnic groups with much longer historical experiences with non-Indians (even though the emblematic leaders emerging from the former seem to specialize in this formula, more so than the organizations that often represent the latter).

Nongovernmental Indigenism and Ethnopolitical Hybridity

The relations of power and meaning that underpin the mobilizations of the Indian movement in Amazonia are not only nurtured by the encounter of the State with autochthonous societies transformed in the process into "indigenous communities" through official legislation and interventions. If we fail to consider a decisive third term, the dialectical interaction between public policies and political ethnicities remains incomprehensible. Actually, the ethnic subversion of indigenist categories – that is, the concrete movement from their statist imposition to their indigenous appropriation – is directly linked to the intervention of the "third sector," made up of nongovernmental indigenist actors. Because of the alliances formed by Amazonian Indian leaders with NGO militants, first at the regional level, then at the national and international levels, there leaders gradually acquired the discursive tools and social mediation they needed for the political and symbolic inversion of official indigenism. Through their political-pedagogical associations with representatives of successive phases of the pro-Indian movement, such leaders learned how to use the referents and strategies that were indispensable for the construction of an "indigenous cause" in the public space, both local and global, of Amazonian development.

The first phase in articulating links between Indians and social justice NGOs was contemporaneous with the intensification of the State's interventions in Amazonia, the expansion of the economic interests it promoted in the region, and the revision of indigenist legislation. Such links took shape under the initiative of progressive sectors of the Brazilian Catholic Church that were inspired by the history of the early evangelizers (notably the Jesuits) and by liberation theology

in the wake of Vatican II (1962-65) and the Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellín (1968).

Concerned with pastoral renewal and concrete solidarity with Indians as part of its philosophy of evangelical incarnation (*encarnação evangelizadora*), this new missionary movement gave birth to the first two nongovernmental indigenist associations in Brazil: Operation Anchieta (OPAN), created in 1969 (an organization of lay volunteers working among the most marginalized populations, notably indigenous ones), and the Missionary Indigenist Council (CIMI), created in 1972 under the wing of the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB) (becoming an auxiliary organization of CNBB in 1977). At first, CIMI was composed of a secretariat and a traveling field team. With the assistance of volunteers from OPAN, especially in Amazonia, it launched a national inquiry into the situation of Indian peoples, accompanied by a regional and national movement to organize "study meetings," "indigenist pastoral assemblies" (intended to institutionalize regional sections), "assemblies of indigenous chiefs" (of which fifteen were held between 1974 and 1980), and other meetings. This proliferation of assemblies and panel discussions, which lay at the core of Catholic missionary indigenism, revolved around the question of indigenous territories and Indian "consciousness-raising" about the legal measures of the 1973 Indian Statute. CIMI considered such actions among indigenous peoples to be "a weapon for their defense and a demand for their rights." Implementing this approach to indigenous self-empowerment was supposed to lead eventually to a "free association of Indian leaders, which, without any tutelage, can fight for the rights and true interests of their peoples," as well as to a broader "indigenous federation" (suggesting that CIMI was directly inspired by the experience of Indian movements in Colombia and Ecuador).

The dynamism of CIMI members and the "assemblies of indigenous chiefs" it organized around the country lay at the origin of the remarkable political virulence and media visibility of Indian struggles in the latter half of the 1970s. Amazonian groups soon assumed the front lines of these struggles. The first "indigenist pastoral assembly" of CIMI's northern regional section (composed of the states of Rondonia, Acre, Amazonas, and Roraima) took place in 1977, and 1979 was declared the "year of struggle for the demarcation of indigenous lands in Amazonia." In its 1980 newsletter, CIMI published a survey entitled "The Battle Fronts," which listed sixteen zones of major conflicts, nine of which lay in Amazonia. In 1978-79, the most intense conflicts had taken place in central Brazil (involving the Shavante), the south (Guarani and Kaingang), and the northeast (Shokó, Kariri, and Tupiniquim).

During this period, CIMI's political education concerning the Indian Statute and the logistical support it lent to gatherings of indigenous leaders established the historical foundations of the Indian movement in Brazil. Moreover, the missionaries' "counter-indigenism" generated a great deal of ideological and politi-

cal ferment, contributing to the emergence of an "indigenous cause" on the national scene during the most repressive period of the Brazilian military dictatorship and its indigenist policies, guided by national security concerns (evinced in "Institutional Act 5" of 1968 and the administration of FUNAI by army generals in 1970-79). The mobilization by civil society in favor of indigenous peoples, which at first was primarily limited to academic circles, grew in social and political strength in response to the development of Indian struggles supported by CIMI and their impact in the press.

In the late 1970s, this process culminated in a national movement to protest a decree proposed by the administration of General Geisel that would force "emancipation" upon indigenous peoples. Launched in 1976 after the announcement of a legislative bill on the issue, this mobilization reached its peak in 1978, on the eve of its promulgation, in an expression of political and media effervescence on behalf of Indians that was unprecedented in Brazil. Its remarkable breadth marked the conjunction of the nascent Indian movement with intellectual sectors that were the most engaged in resistance against the military dictatorship, such as lawyers, journalists, and university members. International contacts, such as indigenist associations, scientific organizations, and professional institutions, also made contributions to this mobilization.

Faced with the unexpected breadth of this protest, the government ended up adjourning its emancipation proposal in December 1978. The movement was made up at the time of around thirty pro-Indian associations (known as *entidades civis de apoio ao índio*) active throughout the country, with the objective of supervising official indigenist policies. These organizations became determinant political actors (concurrently with CIMI) in the Brazilian Indian movement. Now labeled "NGOs," there are currently some twenty-six such organizations (excluding missionary associations), most of which specialize in a region, indigenous group, or type of action (education, ecology, health, or political documentation) (ISA 1996:94). The impact of the pioneering actions of CIMI, as manifested through the emergence of this national network of solidarity organizations, constituted, without a doubt, a decisive stage in the consolidation of the Indian movement in Brazil. Through this expansion, the movement was able to legitimate its social demands and to multiply its national (and, to some extent, international) political connections.

Less than two years after the emancipation bill was annulled, the first national indigenous organization was created independently from the dynamics of CIMI's assemblies. This entity, known as the Union of Indigenous Nations (UNIND), was formed in April 1980 in Brasilia by a small group of Indian students from Mato Grosso (Terena, Shavante, and Bororo) and Bahia (Patashó and Tushá). In June of that same year, UNIND was reinstituted (under the new acronym UNI) by a group of Terena leaders during an assembly held at Campo Grande, Mato Grosso. It was then validated during the fourteenth assembly of indigenous

chiefs sponsored by CIMI and, soon thereafter, was introduced at a public convention for the "Creation of the Brazilian Indigenous Federation" (attended by a representative of the Shuar Federation (CEDI 1981:38-39).

Ever since its formation, UNI had to overcome the determined opposition of FUNAI and the Ministry of the Interior at the instigation of the National Information Service (part of the military security apparatus). UNI's representatives were the target of a wide range of attempts to intimidate them. These maneuvers persisted or were replaced by job offers, but they were not enough to undermine the movement's organizational capacity (holding local, regional, and national assemblies) or to hinder the development of its presence on the national political and media scene. Thus, despite its informal character and instability (it was never institutionalized nor even officially recognized), its internal dissensions (involving rivalries and defections over the offices of president and coordinators), and its logistic dependence on indigenist NGOs, UNI and its directors (notably Marcos Terena, Álvaro Tukano, Lino Miranha, and, later on, Ailton Krenak) were successful in ensuring the politico-symbolic representation of a type of generic Indianness during the redemocratization process that led to the 1988 Constitution (Ricardo 1996b:91). But they did not do so by themselves: various other emblematic Indian leaders also made decisive contributions to the development of the indigenous cause during this period, such as Mário Juruna (Shavante), who participated in the Russell Tribunal (1980) and served as a Congressional representative (1982-85), or Raoni (Kayapo), who accompanied the Constitutional process in Brasilia (1985-88).

As of 1988, the new Constitution modified the rules of the interethnic political game through Article 232, which recognized "indigenous communities" and "indigenous organizations" as parties that could legally enter the justice system in defense of their rights and interests, under the supervision of the Public Ministry but outside the tutelage of FUNAI. After the Constitutional battle, UNI underwent a gradual effacement, having become too generic and informal. In its place emerged a proliferation of local organizations with registered statutes, elected councils, and bank accounts. These dynamics had already begun timidly in Amazonia before the new Constitution, with the creation of the Tikuna Council and seven other indigenous associations in the Upper Amazon and Upper Rio Negro between 1984 and 1987. But the rhythm picked up in earnest after 1988: already by 1991, the number of Amazonian indigenous organizations was more than 29 (out of 48 throughout the country); by 1996, there were some 71 (out of a national total of 109).

The majority of these organization were local (representing one or more villages or the population of a single river basin) or regional (such as UNI-Acre; CIR, the Indigenous Council of Roraima; and FOIRN, the Federation of Indigenous Organizations of the Rio Negro). Similarly, they are often constituted on behalf of a particular indigenous group or a professional category (such as health

agents, teachers, students, or rubber tappers) within an ethnic group. Several associations of indigenous women were also created. The Coordination of Indigenous Organizations of the Brazilian Amazon (COIAB) was founded in 1989 to serve as a framework for confederation. In 1992, COIAB stimulated the formation of a new national indigenous representative body, the Joint Council of Indigenous Peoples and Organizations of Brazil (CAPOIB). However, the latter did not become truly operational until 1995, during the campaign against the Cardoso administration's decree affecting the demarcation of Indian territories (ISA 1996:95-99).

The first indigenous organizations of the 1980s had been established to push forward the territorial, health, educational, and economic demands of local groups in light of the chronically deficient or abusive tutelary State. The organizations emerging in the 1990s were apparently formed more as means for capturing and managing foreign funds in order to make up for the lack of the services performed by the official indigenist agency, which was reduced to its simplest expression. These funds, issued by NGOs in the global north and, increasingly, by bilateral and multilateral cooperation agencies, were usually channeled through local solidarity NGOs. In this regard, the new indigenous associations have tended to become service and (ethno)development organizations rather than entities with political demands (Ricardo 1996b:92). Moreover, the recent increase in the pace of their creation is certainly linked to this structural change. Of the 47 Amazonian organizations (out of a national total of 71) for which we know the date of their foundation, nine were created in 1988-89, ten in 1990-91, nine in 1992-93, and seventeen in 1994-95.

The case of the Waiampi offers a prime illustration of this phenomenon. In August 1994, these Indians created the Council of Waiampi Villages (APINA). Dominique Tilkin Gallois, the anthropologist who is their advisor, described the drive behind its creation in this way (1996:268): "Like many other indigenous associations, APINA emerged out of interests that were more pragmatic than directly political. The Waiampi were anxious, above all, to set up direct means for obtaining resources and equipment that would no longer belong to FUNAI or be controlled by other institutions working in the region."

This shift from making political demands to seeking replacements for official indigenist services appears to be typical of new indigenous organizations, but it cannot be ascribed to their efforts alone. Indigenist NGOs had largely preceded them down this path, offering a model and a stepping stone for these initiatives. APINA was created in the framework of the effective politico-logistical support provided by the Center for Indigenist Action (CTI) for Waiampi demands and initiatives in the form of a complex set of "projects" financed by various international entities. This is nowadays the rule for all pro-Indian NGOs. In 1992, CTI assisted the Waiampi in setting up a program for environmentally sound gold prospecting, first with support from the Brazilian Environmental Secretariat (SE-

MAM), then in 1993-94, from the European Commission (Tilkin Gallois 1996; CTI 1997). In 1994-96, the Waiampi themselves undertook the demarcation of their lands on the basis of a joint contract signed by CTI with the German Association for Technical Cooperation (GTZ). In order to fill in for the local educational system, which had been plagued by clientalism, CTI also began a Waiampi teacher training program, with some funding from the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC) and even greater amounts from the Rainforest Foundation of Norway and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) (Kahn 1996; CTI 1997).

The political thrust and logistical support afforded to the Indian movement by the network of nongovernmental militants (missionaries or lay persons) made it possible, to a certain extent, to overcome a serious structural handicap: the demographic weakness and geographic dispersion of indigenous societies with which the movement had to contend. This exterior support gave the movement the means of braking and counteracting the pressures exerted jointly by the State, local powers, and private interests over indigenous lands and natural resources. However, the role of nongovernmental indigenism cannot be reduced to simply that of lending support: by providing a mirror of identity and an ideological horizon, it has a decisive impact on the processes of cultural reflexivity and discursive hybridity upon which Indian mobilization constructs its legitimacy.

Thus, even though indigenous leaders use a discourse that mobilizes their own symbolic resources (mythic-historical, ritual, and cosmological), they can only attain the status of ethnopolitical emblems if such discourse is filtered through the prism of the imaginary of militant indigenism (appealing to cultural integrity, community solidarity, or "eco-spirituality"). At the same time, however, these leaders find converse ways of re-elaborating the repertoire of nongovernmental political discourse in the context of their culture's own logic. The Indians' demands are thus usually clothed in discursive borrowings that draw on a combination of essentially three broad registers of legitimation – identity, ethics/politics, and environment – stemming from the values of the diverse kinds of indigenism pursued by academic, religious, and nongovernmental organizations. Therefore, although the impetus for the indigenous movement and its legalistic profile were derived from the model of State tutelage, the fact that the State ignored its own regulations and legal responsibilities allowed the movement to achieve social recognition through its appropriation (more or less complex and more or less conscious) of the ideological universe of its nongovernmental allies.

The first of these borrowed registers arose from the diffusion of studies of interethnic contact and ethnicity that dominated Brazilian anthropology since the 1960s. The teachings of Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira exercised an especially significant influence on the formation of the pro-Indian movement, whether missionary or secular, during the 1970s. His influence extended to official indigenism

due to the presence of his disciples and colleagues from the University of Brasilia in the "Indigenist Council" of FUNAI at the time and, even more so, because of the "indigenism courses" they regularly taught to future "*chefes do posto*" (heads of FUNAI Indian posts).

The second register emerged during the same period from the discourse used in denouncing the patterns of large land holdings, social exclusion, and State illegalities. Such discourse emanated from the progressive Catholic Church, with its strong communitarian dimension, from leftist militants in professional organizations and unions, and from "alternative" political parties and social movements. The importation of these discursive frameworks into indigenous forms of political expression and their articulation with nongovernmental sources of assistance in the Indian movement appear to be classic in Latin America (Lebot 1994).

The third of these registers took shape in the late 1980s, based on the international media attention to environmental questions (such as the greenhouse effect, tropical forests, biodiversity, and sustainable development). The media coverage that sanctified the emergence of a new cosmology of "eco-management," for which Indians and Amazonia, classic symbols of a state of nature, served as cautionary emblems. This period was marked by a rapid expansion of NGOs (especially environmentalist ones), a considerable increase in the weight they carried on the international development scene, and a growing political recognition of indigenous peoples by multilateral organizations (mainly agencies of the United Nations and the European Union). This conjunction of factors propelled the notion of ecological sustainability to the status of the vehicular language for development and the main repertoire for legitimation used by local political actors. It also opened a new transnational institutional and economic space – the universe of local or sustainable development, formed out of the overlapping of interventions and funding coming from NGOs, multilateral organizations, agencies of bilateral cooperation, environmental administrations, and "green" enterprises.

This new context altered considerably the discourse and practices of NGOs working with Amazonian Indians. The names of organizations created from 1989 to 1995 testify to this change of course: "Institute for Anthropology and the Environment," "Life and Environment Association," "Poverty and Environment Program," and the like. The older ones, associated with the democratization movement of the 1970s, were no less sensitive to these constraints: some redirected the legalist orientation of their leftist politics toward "sustainable ethnodevelopment" (as in the case of CEDI, the Ecumenical Center for Documentation and Information, when it was reorganized as ISA, the Socioenvironmental Institute), while others merely changed their name (such as OPAN, once standing for Operation Anchieta but then Operation Native Amazonia). Increasingly, these NGOs have been serving as substitutes for official indigenism (conducting territorial demarcations, health programs, or educational services) and supporting indige-

nous economic activities (in the form of "alternative," "community," or "sustainable" projects). All of them are largely beneficiaries of international funding, formerly provided mainly by nongovernmental organizations, but, since the '90s, coming more often from governmental, bilateral, and/or multilateral sources. Many also depend increasingly on public monies (local or federal). In general, funding agencies favor projects for sustainable local development and programs for health, education, or land protection that are imbued with strong environmental components.

The Indian movement, confronted with the new ideological and logistical parameters imposed on the activities of their nongovernmental allies, was not slow in incorporating them into its own dynamics. The grand themes of Amazonian environmental awareness quickly entered the political discourse of indigenous leaders, taking on various forms, depending on the speakers' contact experience and education or the context of enunciation, such as the *bricolage* of New Age stereotypes about nature and Mother Earth or syntheses of "eco-shamanic" conceptions. Nowadays, this process of reinventing and "greening" cultural differences comes across in nearly all Amazonian Indian demands concerning land and identity, without, for all that, eliminating discursive layers inspired by earlier concerns (legalist, culturalist, leftist). Since the late '80s, this allowed the Brazilian Indian movement to reach audiences of unprecedented proportions. Regional in scope from 1974-77 (from the first "assembly of indigenous chiefs" to the campaign against supposed emancipation), national from 1978-88 (from the shelving of the emancipation bill to the new Constitution), the movement gained an international dimension when it turned toward ecological and Amazonian themes, consecrated during the 1992 "Earth Summit" in Rio de Janeiro. Given the moribund condition of government indigenism, Indian groups nowadays are increasingly seeking the means for their economic autonomy and political affirmation from the institutional field, both local and global, of sustainable development policies. From this arises the widespread tendency to create new indigenous NGOs, like so many monadic identities, that are directly articulated with political and financial networks in this novel space where the nongovernmental domain, the public sector, bilateral cooperation, and multilateral aid are inextricably intertwined.

Ethnicity, ecologism, and citizenship

In order to understand better the political-symbolic mechanisms and socioeconomic stakes underlying the "ecologization" and globalization of the Indian movement in the Brazilian Amazon, let me conclude by examining some fundamental aspects in greater detail. To do so, I will turn to the example of the Kayapo Indians, who, for the past decade, have been the uncontested media and political

stars of these dynamics. This choice has the advantage (and the limitations) of exemplifying certain processes that, although also observable among other Amazonian groups, are perhaps less complex or intense elsewhere.

Local cosmologies and global ecopolitics

The model for the economic integration of Amazonia in the 1960s and '70s involved large-scale links between public investments and multinational capital. This opened the way for the process of globalizing regional stakes over minorities and the environment to unfold during subsequent decades (Fisher 1994:226-228). Accordingly, the Amazonian "indigenous question" took shape in the heart of a political and media arena that was, at first, essentially national (involving the military's indigenist policies and the democratic opposition), but soon becoming transnational (with the emergence of nongovernmental indigenism and sustainable development). To deal with this context, Indian leaders have had to learn how to translate their people's demands through imported codes in order to be culturally audible and politically efficacious on two fronts: a local one, where the legalist discourse still prevails (citizenship and collective rights), and a global one, where the ethnoecological imaginary reigns (natural wisdom and "eco-mysticism").

No matter how dependent the contemporary ethnopolitics of compromise may be, or how heterogeneous its discourse, they constitute the sole political and symbolic instruments available to indigenous groups for legitimizing their social existence within a national space that has excluded them ever since its formation and in the face of which they formerly had no choice except war, millenarian revolt, or individual assimilation. In this sense, instead of revealing some kind of particularistic involution, these hybrid identities lead to an "ethnicity of openness." Indeed, if those who adopt such a stance invoke specific historical and cultural idioms, it is primarily because these serve as vehicles of the will toward political, social, and economic participation in modernity.

Finally, I would argue that the interminable debate about the "authenticity" of such (re)elaborations is based on false premises. No matter how simple or sophisticated such constructions may be, they are as strategic as they are unconscious, and as constructed as they are subjective. How could their authors avoid being reliant on an imaginary in which so much of their quest for legitimacy is embedded (Bayart 1996:164-166)? Far from being reducible to alienated recreations of themselves in the image that others make of them, these ethnopolitical formulas constitute the means of reproduction of a differentiated cultural space in the midst of a globalization that has become an irreversible reality of their existence (Sahlins 1993:20-21).

Nevertheless, even though these new ethnic identities are politically necessary for Indians to be socially recognized – and thus for their collectivities to en-

dure – they are not culturally sufficient to account for the societies that assert them. Usually produced and transmitted (in Portuguese) by an avant-garde of indigenous leaders, this discourse of ethnicity offers less a summary of the traditional symbolic universe it comes from than an external identity showcase for it. Conversely, to be fully acceptable in its society of origin, such discourse depends on elaborated translations that make it both intelligible and legitimate in the eyes of the populations that constitute its local audience, usually monolingual and unfamiliar with the interethnic political scene. Thus, the media visibility of these new identity constructions should not blind us to either the symbolic logic from which they arise in each society or the cultural mediations necessary for them to arouse local acceptance.

To briefly illustrate the dialectical play between generic ethnicity and specific traditions, and between leaders and commoners, let us briefly consider a major event in ecological ethnopolitics of the 1980s in Amazonia: the Altamira meeting, organized in February 1989 in the state of Pará by the Kayapo Indians to protest a project for constructing a series of dams on the Xingu River. These dams threatened to inundate part of their territory and other groups in the region. They were slated to be constructed by Eletronorte, a public enterprise, with funding from a World Bank loan. The meeting brought together some five hundred Kayapo and around a hundred people invited from forty different ethnic groups. The non-Indian participants – journalists, filmmakers, photographers, representatives of various NGOs (indigenist, ecologist, humanitarian), local and foreign politicians, and representatives of different Brazilian government agencies – were almost as numerous as the Indians (around four hundred people).

For five days, the protests and demands of the Kayapo leaders (in speeches delivered from the podium and in conferences with the press) were articulated (in Portuguese) and transmitted to national and international televisions. The speakers used a culturalist and ecological discourse to serve as a sort of political Esperanto aimed at their varied non-Kayapo audiences, both Indian and non-Indian, domestic and foreign. Meanwhile, in counterpoint to these intercultural exchanges under the exoticizing media glare of the meeting, these same leaders simultaneously organized a collective rite (in their own language) that gave meaning to the meeting for the majority of the Kayapo present, almost all of whom were monolingual, thus enabling them to be actively mobilized for this politico-identity event. The choice of rite was not random: it was the New Corn Ceremony (*Baridjumoko*), which, according to the Kayapo, activates and redirects the harmonious cosmological interdependence between the production of human sociality (through male and female initiation) and the appropriation of the natural surroundings (through forest horticulture). In fact, the Altamira meeting was scheduled as a function of their own ritual calendar, the New Corn Ceremony being the only one that all fifteen Kayapo communities (containing around

4,000 people) celebrate at the same time. Moreover, the campgrounds where the Indians stayed in Altamira were set up as a replica of Kayapo villages.

For these Indians, the performance of the New Corn Ceremony in front of their non-Indian interlocutors assumed the form of a socioecological manifesto in action – a manifesto based on symbolic premises that were diametrically opposed to the hydroelectric project, which the Kayapo perceived as an apparatus that would deplete their natural milieu and lead to their social destruction. By enabling this neo-ritual to emerge in this type of interethnic context, the symbolic and political creativity of the Kayapo leaders allowed their group to collectively express its opposition to Eletronorte's dams, using cultural terms that were intelligible to all and perfectly suited to the type of menace bearing down on their territory. Conversely, it was by articulating the ritual form given to this cosmological ecology (in Kayapo) with the political expression of their ecological ethnicity (in Portuguese) that Kayapo leaders succeeded in giving the Altamira meeting its world media impact. This strategy was remarkably efficacious: soon thereafter, the World Bank cancelled its loan for constructing the dam.

Eco-ethnicity and citizenship

Far from dissociating ethnicity and tradition, Amazonian groups are elaborating their new discourse of identity using a complex dialectic of cosmological reinterpretations of the effects of development along with cultural self-objectification through the prism of indigenist categories (both governmental and nongovernmental). They are using, *mutatis mutandi*, a similar synthesis in their economic strategies. In this case, however, it entails a double paradox in which the stakes, equilibrium, and results are much less certain. In the attempt to reconcile their customary model of production with intensification (ecologically predatory) of their efforts to gain access to the market, and, on the other hand, to associate their quest for market revenue (socially destabilizing) with a project for "traditionalist" cultural reproduction. Let us return to the recent history of the Kayapo to illustrate this double paradox.

The majority of these Indians maintain their traditional subsistence activities (swidden agriculture, hunting, fishing, and gathering) as well as a conception of the interdependence between society and the natural surroundings. They contrast this to the predatory behavior of non-Indians in the symbolic terms evoked during to the Altamira meeting (Turner 1993b, n.d.). This has not prevented a number of young leaders who attended schools during the 1970s (including Payakan, who was to become the master of ceremony in the Altamira meeting) to illegally negotiate concessions for mining and logging in Kayapo lands over the following decade. At first, these contracts were signed to gain some autonomy from FUNAI's tutelage, as well as a way to reap some kind of advantage from ongoing land invasions, which had been impossible to avoid anyway, given the

unfavorable power relations at the time. Subsequently, these arrangements opened the door to large-scale personal corruption, causing profound social inequalities within the very collectivities in the name of which the contracts had been made. The plundering of resources unleashed on their territories provoked serious ecological degradation, contaminating the rivers with mercury and causing widespread deforestation (Turner *loc. cit.*).

Despite (and, in part, because of) their spectacular enrichment and financial excesses, these leaders played a decisive role as interethnic mediators in the dynamics of political autonomy and territorial reconquest that their group witnessed during this recent period of their history. In the same way, the profits earned from their predatory contracts sustained, in spite of (and due to) their ostentatious and clientalistic dilapidation, initiatives that were essential to the Kayapo offensive on the local and national scene. These funds contributed to their strategy of cultural reaffirmation (intercommunity meetings, bilingual schools, video documentation), to their ability to wrest control of FUNAI's infrastructures in their territory (posts, health dispensaries, radio systems, transportation by river, road, and air, and border surveillance), as well as to their flamboyant political and media lobbying in Brazilian government forums, particularly during the Constitutional process (Turner 1993a, 1993b).

This paradoxical strategy, constantly engaging a sort of "mimetic resistance" (Augé 1984), between negotiated alterity and cultural continuity, between communitarian territoriality and market logic, has proven to be as successful in land issues as in political ones. The Kayapo obtained legalization of a territory containing 100,000 square kilometers (an area larger than Portugal). Furthermore, several of their leaders were elected to municipal councils of towns near their reservations, and their mobilization at the Brazilian Congress had a decisive impact on the progressive formulation of Indian rights in the 1988 Constitution. Today, they are the most autonomous and well-known indigenous group of Brazil.

The Kayapo's exemplary achievements should not, however, mask the gravity of the social and ecological problems that this has cost them at the local level. Economic inequalities and resource degradation reached such proportions in the Kayapo villages that, by 1994, they ended up provoking a veritable revolt against the leaders who had become corrupted since the 1980s. This uprising was led by a new generation of young Kayapo associated with the elderly traditional leaders (Turner 1995a, n.d.). The "Kayapo revolution," supported by a court action filed by the Public Ministry, led to the annulment of the illegal mining and logging concessions in the group's lands, despite attempts at blackmail by local politicians and business interests. In January 1995, the measure entered into effect for the full ensemble of Kayapo lands, with the exception of a few peripheral sites that were, for the most part, personal fiefdoms of deposed leaders, where mining and logging continue on a small scale (Turner n.d.).

The shelving of mining and logging contracts has led the Kayapo toward new economic options that are both "politically correct" and socioecologically sustainable. Their involvement in ethnodevelopment projects and their ability to attract funding linked to this type of project have recently led them, like many other groups, to form legally recognized associations. There are currently three such Kayapo organizations. The first, the Iprenre Association, was formed in 1993 by the Kayapo of the Xingu who, lacking the mining and logging revenues that others earned in the 1980s, led other Kayapo groups in the move toward setting up indigenous NGOs. This association administers an audiovisual center with equipment donated by the Japanese (Panasonic). In 1995, the Iprenre Association began building an ecotourism center (financed by revenue from running a ferry and renting pasture lands) and elaborating projects for sustainable development (involving agricultural and forest products) on the basis of traditional experience.

The second Kayapo organization, the Bep-Noi Association, was founded by the Kayapo-Xikrin of Cateté in 1995. Its main aim is to manage a project for extracting alternative forest resources as a means of bringing to a close a long period of illegal, predatory contracts with local logging interests. For this project, the Bep-Noi Association receives technical and legal assistance from the Socioenvironmental Institute (ISA), an NGO in São Paulo (Vidal-Giannini 1996). The statutes of the Bep-Noi Association indicate that it seeks to promote other "agreements and projects with national and international institutions, both governmental and nongovernmental" (ISA 1996:396).

The third of the Kayapo organizations is the Pukatoti Kamokore Association. It was also established in 1995, this time by the Kayapo of Pará (those who "revolted" in 1994). Its projects are similarly oriented toward sustainable development (agriculture, forest products, nonpolluting gold mining) and ecotourism. In addition, its members benefited from income from bidders who purchased the mahogany logs seized by the Kayapo when they expelled loggers from the reservation.

Shortly before the emergence of these associations, some other Kayapo groups had already created small ecodevelopment enterprises (the A'ukre Trading Company, headed for a while by Payakan, and the Pukanu Trading Company), involving the extraction of Brazil nut oil, in conjunction with the British cosmetics company, The Body Shop.

This panorama, although abbreviated, gives us an idea of the capacities of various Kayapo groups and factions to devise means for economic adaptation in order to ensure their social reproduction and political autonomy in a new market context. Their strategies have covered the entire range of available options, from committing ecological pillage to tapping public funds to pursuing sustainable development projects – projects that, in turn, have taken on both associative and managerial forms, involving both national and/or international links. We can

appreciate even more the dynamism of Kayapo methods for seizing opportunities in all directions when we compare the group's current situation to its subordinated state up to the 1970s, when it was controlled by governmental indigenist administration (Turner 1991a).

Nevertheless, just as any consideration of the Kayapo successes of the 1980s must be nuanced by taking into account the social and ecological costs they entailed, we must also place the recent orientation of this ethnic group toward sustainable development within the context of its economic and political limits. The formula of Kayapo association enterprises of the 1990s is not proceeding without certain problems being triggered (common, it seems, to the phenomenon of new indigenous organizations as a whole). In the first place, there is a disturbing disparity between the modest income their economic projects are able to offer in comparison with the considerable profits from illegal mining and logging concessions. The current fancy for sustainable projects might thus crumble quickly if they are unable to respond to the material aspirations held by the emerging generation (those under thirty years old). A return to plundering communal resources may then be almost avoidable, with economic and social consequences that are likely to be considerable after the income from these natural resources dries up.

Furthermore, there is the worrisome issue of new forms of multidependency (national and international, nongovernmental and governmental) that are being induced by the offshore financial and commercial arrangements of most of their "eco-ventures." The risk is not negligible that this may end up leading to the formation of subsidized economic enclaves, situated on the margins of the real market and subjected to clientalistic relations with organizations (indigenist or indigenous) that redistribute support funds. From this perspective, the champion in neopaternalist practices is surely The Body Shop enterprise, which, as the sole client and investor for the Kayapo trading companies, exercises total control over their activities. Its Brazil-nut project seems to be economically kept afloat through injections of small loans and donations, which enable The Body Shop headquarters to "buy," at a very low cost, the right to exploit Kayapo "eco-exoticism" in its advertising.

Yet the most troubling aspect of this orientation toward multisubsidized ethnodevelopment is the extent to which it has accompanied (or perhaps accentuated) a growing dilution of the legal responsibilities of the State to provide public services to Indian collectivities. FUNAI has not given any sort of assistance to the Kayapo since 1990. This tendency of official indigenism to withdraw suggests that the Brazilian government may take advantage of the current ethnodevelopment initiatives of the Indian and pro-Indian movement and turn toward a rampant privatization of the indigenous question (its recent opening to NGOs and international "eco-indigenist" financing could be a forewarning of that strategy). Should this occur, the State may manipulate the ideology of autonomous development and multiculturalism expounded by nongovernmental indigenism,

thereby instituting a policy of indirect rule in which NGOs and development agencies would assume responsibility for the services that the law obliges the government to provide to indigenous communities.

This neoliberal orientation toward a policy of delegated, multisubsidized administration of ethnicity within a weakened national framework – a local incarnation of a world-wide logic of economic globalization and cultural fragmentation – appears to be introducing new elements of uncertainty for the future of indigenous societies in Brazil. The proliferation of ethnodevelopment projects (with weak income generation and growing multidependency) could favor the shrinking of public services in indigenous communities without being able to adequately substitute them, since their funding capacities seldom reach beyond the scale of micro-level "demonstration projects" (for health, education, boundary protection, etc.). The mode of granting funds for setting up such projects also appears to be both precarious and unequal, since, too frequently, it depends on the variable "identity quotient" of indigenous groups (or their leaders), as measured by a value scale of culturalist and ecologist worth used by the funding organizations (which have a tendency to disregard non-Amazonian groups, especially the less "traditional" among them). Finally, to the extent that public authorities shed their legal responsibilities (land demarcation and resource protection) by hinging their exercise on the availability of international funds (public or nongovernmental) and mobilization in the private domain (local NGOs), indigenous territorial rights could become increasingly vulnerable to local economic interests and political clientelism.

In conclusion, if the current expansion of associations for ethnodevelopment in the Brazilian Amazon seems promising, especially in comparison to the dark years of military indigenism, it also runs the risk of inviting serious unintended consequences. Among them is the possibility of implicitly promoting a differential scale of access of Indian groups to the benefits of citizenship, depending on their political-symbolic abilities for capturing resources from the transnational complex of sustainable development support – resources that would thus end up constituting unequally distributed "identity incomes." ❏

Note

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TERRITORY AS BODY AND TERRITORY AS NATURE: INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE?

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In the second half of the eighties the Colombian government recognised and titled large territorial extensions of the Colombian Amazon in favour of indigenous groups. In 1988, and subsequent years, approximately twenty million acres constituting more than half of Colombia's Amazon (UAESPNN 2001) were titled as indigenous *Resguardos* (preserves).[1] These Preserves stretch almost uninterruptedly all the way to Colombia's southern and eastern border, an area still unaffected by peasant colonization crossing the Andean mountains.

Various factors contributed to the hasty introduction of this large-scale cultural protection and territorial recognition policy which, in fact, also constitutes an environment protection policy, given that these large areas inhabited by indigenous peoples are now segregated and protected from future occupation and titling. Without getting into an analysis of the role played by external forces driven by a swing in environmental and defence of ethnic minorities' rights policies on the part of international financial organizations, the fact is that the existing indigenous organizations of the Colombian Amazon sprang from this collective land recognition and titling process. In the particular case of the Predio Putumayo Preserve, the largest one in the country, occupying nearly six million hectares, conflicts of interests arose within the Colombian State itself. What is now Preserve was previously titled in favour of a state-owned bank (Caja de Crédito Agrario, Industrial y Minero) which, back in the forties, had purchased its rights to the land from the heirs of the notorious Peruvian Amazon Company, also known as Casa Arana. The bank had already initiated an ambitious 'development project' for the whole region, which was aborted when the rights to the land were transferred to its initial owners – the same indigenous people who, at the turn of the twentieth century, survived the massacres and forced labour conditions under the hands of the very same rubber company.

This recognition was highly significant and it was to equip native communities with a new political vocabulary essential for expressing the values of the indigenous organizations that emerged in the eighties and gradually consolidated themselves in the following decade. The term 'territory' has been one of the keywords to this new ethnical-political vocabulary, although its meaning and usage hold complex connotations which do not exactly reflect its judicial-political or natural sciences' meanings. One of the fundamental reasons behind this lack of concordance lies in the fact that these Amazon indigenous peoples use the Spanish term *territorio* as an approximate translation of their own languages' native concepts. The use and meaning of this term has its own particular history originating in Colombia's indigenous movements in the Andes, which nurtured the more recent political developments of Amazon Indians, and gained ground in Colombia's political agenda, after the promulgation of Colombia's 1991 new Political Constitution.

But before going any further, let's take a closer look at these territorial issues.

The semantics of territory

In Spanish, as well as in Indo-European languages in general, we can recognise two general senses for the concept of territory. On the one hand, 'territory', in a political-jurisdictional sense, is understood as the geographical space that defines and delimits the sovereignty of a political power. The prototypical example of territorial jurisdiction in modern times is the national territory, framed by a closed-border polygon. The precise and complete limit constitutes the decisive element of this political-territorial notion - from national states that demarcate and protect their borders using physical barriers and armies, to the title deeds that define each property's precise boundaries.

Another sense of the term territory, derived from the natural sciences, particularly etology (the study of animal behaviour), refers to the protection of a space in which an individual or a species reproduces and obtains its resources. *Territoriality* is defined with signals such as occupation marks, reactions to intruders, real or ritualized combats, etc. 'Territories', in this sense, can be delimited. However, one or more species can define different territorialities within the same area, thus generating competition for the same resources, coexisting when occupying different niches or establishing complementary relationships. Territories so defined lack clearly delimited borders and thus can be perceived as networks of niches interlacing and competing with other networks.

Although both the above senses share common elements with the meaning employed in the indigenous' claims' vocabulary, neither one matches it exactly. The indigenous movement's use of this term stems from a particular political history, at least in Colombia. Its most remarkable roots originate from the differ-

ences between the indigenous movement of Southern Colombia and the left-wing movements of Marxist revolutionary ideology. These latter movements brandished a 'land struggle' slogan in which the 'land' was understood as the peasantry's fundamental means of production, whose control had to be recuperated. In this left-wing ideology, the indigenous communities were generally considered as belonging to both the peasantry and the proletariat. The disagreement that led to the split between the indigenous' claims and the class struggle claims came about precisely from the emphasis placed on the difference between the peasantry's 'land struggle' claims and the indigenous' *territorial* claims. This particular concept of territory was to be widely used in the national indigenous movement, acquiring a remarkable subtleness and complexity that set it apart from its mere political-jurisdictional meaning (with which it is occasionally erroneously compared), its animal territoriality sense, as well as with the senses implied in the land struggle claims.

Territories so defined, in the indigenous sense, although encompassing settlement, productive and natural resources extraction areas could also include areas not necessarily associated with economic production. Although this territorial notion comes close to the concept of national territory, insofar as it represents a collective asset and an identity marker (national or ethnical), it differs in one crucial aspect. Whereas a political-jurisdictional territory is primarily defined by a closed and precise limit, an indigenous territory, although possibly demarcated and delimited, is defined not primarily by its borders and limits but by geographical marks which represent the bond between a group of humans, landscape and history. This concept of 'territory', which had already been widely used in the Colombian Andean area back in the seventies, was introduced into the political lexicon of the emerging Amazonian indigenous organizations in the Eighties and Nineties.

This process coincided in 1991 with the promulgation of a new Political Constitution which declared Colombia a 'pluri-ethnical and multi-cultural' country, recognised the indigenous languages as official "in their respective territories", and raised the indigenous Preserves to constitutional rank, declaring them 'unseizable, unenforceable, and imprescriptible'. But besides this, the new Constitution placed the country's 'territorial reordering' issue at the top of the political agenda, which meant the redefinition of the existing Territorial Entities (Departments and Municipalities) as well as the creation of new Entities (Provinces, Regions and Indigenous Territorial Entities). This opened the door to the possibility of promoting the Preserves, especially the Amazonian macro-Preserves (which until then only constituted a means of land ownership) to these Indigenous Territorial Entities that held a political and administrative autonomy statute. To this day (2005), the Statutory Territorial Ordering Law, which should have been passed shortly after the new Constitution, has not been successfully approved in

Congress, despite the number of advanced Bills – some of which actively backed by the indigenous movement.

However, the questions concerning us here are not as much the political and judicial ups and downs of Colombia's territorial issues, as their effects on the semantics of the Amazonian peoples' concept of territory, nourished by all these factors.

First of all, the Constitution introduced the concept of territorial *ordering,* an expression that made little sense in the Colombian political vocabulary prior to 1991. Territorial ordering was often conflated with "environmental zoning", a technical task based on discriminating areas based on a range of physical-biotic attributes – and more recently, on data compiled by remote sensors. However, since the 1991 Constitution, the territorial ordering began to be conceived of as a political issue that put at stake the reordering of the electoral districts, the distribution of resources, competencies and jurisdictions, as well as opening new possibilities for autonomy and access to resources for marginalised sectors and regions –including also the indigenous peoples.

Both these meanings – technical and political – of territorial ordering have often been confused and overlapped in the decisions and debates, although the concept of territorial ordering as a matter concerning the zoning of areas has tended to dominate.

The ideas presented here stem from my participation as anthropology consultant for the implementation of a joint-management agreement of an area overlapping the above mentioned Predio Putumayo Preserve and the National Cahuinarí Natural Park. The difficulties experienced in trying to bring together two territorial management concepts such as the ones reflected in the Parks' management programmes (based on the environmental zoning methodologies) and the indigenous' concepts of territorial management, led us to reconsider 'the territory' from another angle, which we came to denominate 'non-areolar territory'.

Non-areolar territory

If we review the 'territorial ordering programmes' elaborated by a number of Amazonian indigenous groups' organizations, (see, for example, Vieco et al. 2000), we get the feeling that the zoning of areas is far from their main concern. On the contrary, the programmes' key issue is the ethnic legitimisation of the group or groups, the reproduction of the people (education, health and economy) and the relationship with other groups, as well as with the rest of society. The so-called *planes de vida* ("life programmes"), a phrase coined by the *Organización Nacional Indígena de Colombia (ONIC)* at the end of the nineties, are exactly the same.

These territorial ordering programmes are usually accompanied by maps sketching a number of delimitations. The maps serve to indicate historical or mythological sites or legally defined territorial entities (Departments, Municipalities, Preserves and Parks). When new 'zonings' are attempted (the delimitation of sacred or reserved areas, or of areas belonging to specific groups), these zonings have a provisional or accessory character and do not reflect the programme's key objective, which is the ordering of relationships over and above the zoning of geographical areas.

This manner of 'territorial ordering' is based on a *different* concept of 'territory'. By highlighting the word 'different' we emphasise that this is not only about 'cultural' difference. It is not so much a question of this territorial ordering concept being uniquely 'indigenous', but rather that the indigenous peoples have articulated that notion of territory in this manner. However, in no way is it 'unique' or culturally specific to them. It is different because it is another, non-areolar, way of perceiving the territory. The political-administrative zoning and ordering tasks require an areolar notion of territory. 'Territory' is a geographical area to which meanings or attributes are assigned (physical, political jurisdictional, ownership and legal statute characteristics). The non-areolar ('indigenous') notion of territory is conceived based on a *relational* model – as a fabric, not as areas. If the areolar notion of territory corresponds to the image of two-dimensional maps, the non-areolar notion coincides, to a greater extent, with an image modelled as a living body that nourishes itself, reproduces and weaves relationships with other bodies. Parting from this idea, it seems coherent that, in 'indigenous' versions, the 'territory' is frequently represented, for example, as a *maloca* (a woman's body) or that the rituals and ceremonies are conceived as territorial management (ordering).

In an article written by Rodrigo Botero and myself (Botero and Echeverri 2002), about the territorial policy of the Ministry of the Environment's Park Division (UAESPNN), we propose the application of this non-areolar territorial notion to the UAESPNN'S territorial policies on the management of protected areas overlapping with indigenous Preserves. The instrumental notion of territory that we propose is based on a basic formula: 'territory' is primarily understood as "appetite" – vital impulse, desire. In order to understand how, from this fundamentally non-areolar notion, we arrive at territories, expressed as geographical spaces, we go back to the model of a living being's development. Thus, we affirm that every creature's *first territory* is the maternal womb, a salted sea from which the creature obtains its nourishment and satisfies its needs. After the birth, the baby's territory becomes its mother's body, especially her breasts. From this unique and self-containing territory, it has to establish relationships and find nourishment in other 'territories'. During its development, the human being has to find nourishment in the natural environment (plants and animals), an environment that is also the territory of other species. Later, upon reaching the reproduc-

tive phase, it also has to seek a partner from another human group. This fundamental need to use others' territories (i.e., others' bodies) in order to grow and reproduce is what makes the territory to naturalise itself, as well as to socialise itself by establishing relationships, of a conflictive or bonding nature, with other natural or human agents.

The spatial weaving of the territory produces a relational fabric with other beings' territories. A fundamental characteristic of this territorial notion is its net-like shape and structure based on what we term 'channels'. *Channel* is defined as the appropriation of another territory's energy or vital substance, which leads to domination, conflict or competition, or to the establishment of ordered relationships.[2]

Territorial vision

These ideas help us to redefine the spatial structure of the territory and relocate the observer or agent's position who 'sees' that territory from a specific 'territorial vision'.

Our cartographical habits have accustomed us to seek the territory in two-dimensional scaled maps. The observer's vision is from the top and *simultaneous* - covering all the points of the map - given that a scaled map's representation has no perspective distortions, i.e., the observer is necessarily outside of the map.

By contrast, the vision of territory that we propose is not based on the model of the two-dimensional scaled map but on the model of the human body that grows, consumes food, has sex, establishes relationships, reproduces and intermingles with other territories which also grow, consume food and have sex. In this vision, the spatial representation of the territory acquires the shape of a net, or a network of relationships that may be partially mapped and where scale does not constitute a crucial element. The crucial elements indeed are the *channels* that connect the net's nodes. In addition, instead of the observer being outside and above the territory, she is located in one of its nodes from where she builds and maintains the channels or conducts with neighbouring nodes and participates, or contributes, to the order or disorder of the system as a whole.

This model has interesting methodological consequences. First of all, our redefinition of territory and territorial vision forces us to reconsider the meaning of territorial ordering. The structural model that compares territory with cartographical representations of geographical areas leads to an ordering methodology consisting of arranging the 'information' in layers (geology, soil, vegetation, human settlements, public services, etc.) and subsequently, by combining and selecting these information layers, it delimits areas which break down the compilation of information into roughly homogenous groupings. The most sophisticated version of this method is landscape ecology, based on images captured by

remote sensors, which identifies homogenous areas (by colours, textures and densities) and then explains these areas as the hierarchical combination of different formative factors.

By contrast, our territorial vision leans towards an ordering methodology that emphasises the operation of the territorial net based on specific spaced nodes, and not on the definition of areas which characterise its formative elements based on a hierarchical explanatory chain. Our aim is not to propose a divorce or competition between these alternative ways of conceiving the territory and its ordering. On the contrary, we propose an instrument to improve the resolution to understand the territory as a fabric of relationships, without losing sight of the potential of other instruments which aid to obtain a global spatial vision.

Interculturality and territorial management in overlapping areas

The notion of territory as a fabric of relationships may serve as an adequate focus for introducing the notion of interculturality to the definition, for example, of a system of protected areas, and thus applying a methodological principle to the elaboration of management programmes for these areas.

The Colombian lawyer Roque Roldán has pointed out that in the areas where indigenous territories and natural protected areas overlap, "two administrative authority figures cannot coexist simultaneously" and, taking into account the higher juridical hierarchy of the Preserve and the precedence of indigenous peoples' rights, "is clear the deduction that points to the inapplicability of the administration's postulates concerning the Parks in these types of territories" (Roldan 2001:37). The Colombian natural parks' system is conceived on the premise that the Ministry of the Environment's Parks Division (UAESPNN) holds absolute power and control over them. However, in the vast majority of areas this absolute control is far from reality, and the fact that a 'social participation conservation policy' was recently formulated (UAESPNN 2001), highlights the need to negotiate and interact with other territorial players in an effort to reach the objectives of the protected areas' system. The protected areas overlapping with indigenous Preserves are an extreme example, where the UAESPNN's decision power is limited to a high degree by indigenous rights and national and international laws governing indigenous communities.[3]

'Interculturality' – and other related terms, such as participation, dialogue, consensus, etc. – should be key concepts for the planning of parks and protected areas, although that label is often used as meaning the taking of fragments of the native 'world view' and adding them as footnotes to a plan elaborated from an areolar and zoning territorial vision. What we propose is rather the meeting of territorial visions (not environmental visions), as a conceptual tool for addressing the *intercultural* construction of management programmes. It entails addressing

interculturality as a combination and creation, not as a device. This not only implies the gesture of 'recognising' and 'valuing' indigenous thought, but also adopting it as part of oneself, experiencing and re-creating it. It entails a type of reversal of the conventional discursive hegemonic relationships: instead of adapting the indigenous peoples' 'world view' to an environmentalist paradigm, it is rather about integrating the UAESPNN, for example, into the indigenous or social territory in which it operates. To use a apt expression pronounced by the Miraña leaders during the first Governing Body's meeting to discuss the implementation of the joint-management agreement for the Cahuinarí Park, interculturality means that "We are a single mass".

One of the key components of the National Parks' management programmes is the zoning, which is based on a rigorous framework determined by the Law. The application of these regulations, as well as of the management programmes' elaboration frameworks, need to be reviewed, starting with the overlapping areas. This could have interesting consequences on the methodology of the programmes used for the entire system of protected areas.

In the above mentioned article (Botero y Echeverri 2002) we made progress on a methodological proposal for the territorial organization of protected areas, which in fact constitutes a proposal for the shared construction of management programmes. In the non-areolar territorial vision that we propose, the observer is actor and agent, being that she is inside the territory, not outside or above it. The methodological steps of this method of territorial ordering are as follows: (i) identifying its 'appetite', which in institutional language can be denominated conservation mission or objective; (ii) this institutional appetite is found in other actors who share the same appetite for the same space: native communities or homesteaders who occupy them and from where they obtain their sustenance, other institutions that have their jurisdictions there, etc; the actor-node has to identify those other territorial nodes and establish and *organise* the channels between them. From here, two methodological rules emerge: (a) The channels are identified, established and organised *one by one*, not all at the same time, (b) the channels are not formal but vital and, furthermore, the maintenance of the channel is a daily and face-to-face activity. This procedural method can in effect be considered as the ordering of the territorial fabric.

This is the founding nucleus of a 'system' of protected areas, or better still, of a territorial system of protected areas.

One of the most difficult aspects of this methodology is to determine how to establish, maintain and cultivate those channels with the actors. The principles that may help to guide this task are the base of an ethic of new relationships methods, i.e. a political pedagogy.

The Miraña, the maps and the Agreement

The Miraña are currently settled in the middle and lower Caqueta River (known in Brazil as Japurá) and number approximately 200 people. They are linguistically related to the Bora and the Muinane. The Miraña from the middle and lower Caqueta River are the remains of a formerly numerous group that used to inhabit the basins of the Cahuinarí and Pamá Rivers. It was during the rubber boom (1900-1930) that the Miraña, together with other groups from the area between the Caqueta and Putumayo Rivers, were left decimated after suffering epidemics and the brutal extortions of the infamous Peruvian Amazon Company or Casa Arana. Today, practically none of the groups which in the 20th Century occupied the area between the Caqueta and Putumayo Rivers remain in their ancestral territory, after resettling on the banks of the Putumayo, Caraparaná, Igaraparaná and Caquetá Rivers.

In the past, the Miraña were organised in patrilineal exogamic clans and apparently occupied their own exclusive territories – at least according to one of the 'traditional maps' elaborated by them. With the demographic decline, the exoduses and resettlements, many clans disappeared and the ones that survived remained socially weakened and reduced. In the current settlements we encounter the coexistence of different clans, with diverse social prestige and demography. The Miraña have also married women from other groups, mainly Yucuna and Carijona, as well as from non-indigenous groups.

Since the creation of the Cahuinarí Park in 1987 and the Predio Putumayo Preserve in 1988 (85% of which overlaps the Park's area), the relationships between the Miraña and the environmental authorities (the UAESPNN and previously, the *Instituto Nacional de los Recursos Naturales Renovables* INDERENA) have gone from direct opposition to occasional agreements on local issues. In June 2001 an 'inter-administrative agrreement for the coordination of the government task of conservation and management of the Cahuinarí National Natural Park's area, between the Ministry of the Environment and the Miraña public authority' was signed. This agreement marked a significant step forward towards ending more than ten years of differences about each party's territorial legitimacy. The Miraña affirmed that the Park's area was part of their traditional territory and the environmental authorities defended their territorial competence in protecting the resources, a responsibility handed down from central government.

In these disputes, the maps played a role in both parties' vindications of territorial knowledge and representation. In the Nineties, the elaboration of indigenous maps experienced a significant boom very much linked to political vindications. The Miraña, on their part, produced several maps. In 1989, they produced a magnificent traditional map showing all the Miraña names of all the streams and rivers, indicating the salt licks, the mythological sites as well as the

places of origin of the clans.[4] It is a map of the 'ancestral territory' covering the entire area of the Cahuinarí Park and stretching beyond it several times over. This map is full of mysteries, partially revealing a truth that always escapes us; the places are traces of mythological stories whose meanings are barely insinuated; it is full of 'secrets' that cannot be revealed. The map is an immense and detailed act of symbolic possession, and even though we do not understand its details and logic, we do understand that it constitutes an affirmation of territorial legitimacy weighted with political power to dispute the Colombian environment authorities' territorial pretensions to the Cahuinarí Park.

It is not surprising to discover that few Miraña recognise and understand the names and places of this traditional map, in the same way that it is no surprise to see that few 'whites' understand the maps that scientists – geologists, ecologists, botanists – also draw up to justify and manage their protected areas: geology, geomorphology, edaphology vegetation, climate – with a 'legend' (instead of a myth) explaining everything. Shamans and scientists holding undecipherable maps who cannot find one another.

After drawing up this first traditional map, efforts continued to be made to complete and correct it. Inspection tours and investigations, backed by Non-Government Organizations and cooperation agencies, left little more than drafts and manuscripts which were even harder to understand. From 1997 onwards, and as the result of a project financed by the International Organization for Tropical Timber (OIMT), the maps' issue was reviewed in an effort to reach agreements on the joint-administration of the Park. The initial focus was changed. It was now a question of finding common ground between the shamanic concept and the conservation interests. The maps were gradually domesticated, so to speak, in two ways. On the one hand, maps that came closer to the houses and current uses (settlement and cultivation areas, paths, fishing, hunting and wild resources areas) were drafted. Here, women, fishermen and hunters, not only the shamans, were given a say in the matter. On the other hand, attempts were made to move away from the shamanistic notion of the traditional map and, without explaining their mysteries and secrets, efforts were made to draw-up management zones in the same way as environmental zones: a housing and sustenance zone, a 'sacred' zone where no one can enter or investigate, a protection zone, a special management zone where the *charapa* tortoises lay their eggs, etc. All in all, seven zones where drawn-up, delimited by thick lines and filled-in with colours.

Later, in an attempt to make the maps more accessible to the whites' cartographical, biophysical and zoning conventions, these indigenous maps gradually lost their power – they represented the areas but not the vital territory.

The territory that we refer to is vital and relational, not cartographical. What we proposed to find when we were invited as consultants was not so much the 'Miraña territory', which is outside our sphere of competence, but something that we could call 'the territory of the agreement' - the relational space where mutual

appetites coincide or fail to coincide. This territory is a channel, a fecundation area, a playing field. Scientists' and shamans' maps do not manage to reflect this territory. In the excesses of their mutual inscriptions (exhaustive nomination of *all* the mythological sites and streams, exhaustive demarcations of *all* the physiographical and vegetation zones), what they were illustrating was the deficit of signification of the encounter. There were maps but there was no agreement, no play and no channel. Those maps – the scientists' and shamans' – signalled this territory, but by its absence.

To find this territory, more than detailed maps, what are needed are the points of encounter. The area of the Cahuinarí Park is what brings the Miraña and the UAESPNN together. The more significance each party gives to this area (the more the area is drawn-up and explained) the more the parties draw apart. The maps that attempt to illustrate the entire area as known territory are a distraction to the search of the territory that needs to be found, known and investigated – the mutual relationship territory. Indeed, this is a territory that we could call 'sacred' because it is vital, because the things that matter are at stake.

We have mentioned that this territory is a channel and have also insinuated that it is a playing field, a regulated space where two players come face-to-face. The question here is – What are the rules of the game?

The Cahuinarí Agreement as intercultural dialogue

In the Governing Body's first plenary session, in which the implementation of the Cahuinarí Park Agreement was discussed, it was made clear that 'the Agreement', over and above a legal instrument that formalises the coordination between the national environment authority and the Miraña indigenous authorities, is a political and pedagogical process. It entails a new way of engaging in politics, insofar as sharing the government task of conservation, which is not simply a question of transferring a few responsibilities to the 'communities', but it implies *combining* two ways of conceiving that government task – for the UAESPNN it means the conservation of a protected area, and for the Miraña authorities, looking after the territory. This combination leads to new management methods that are not strictly in response to one or the other, but emerge from dialogue, trust and mutual teaching and learning. This is the reason why the Agreement is a political exercise through pedagogy.

But this is not simply a question of mutual learning (which is essential for the process), but more a question of the teaching and learning responsibilities that each party had been performing. For the Miraña, all the maps drawn-up at the end of the eighties, all that 'design' work was, in the words of the Cacique Boa, "for the new generations, so that they would familiarise themselves with their ancestral territory". Likewise, today the Agreement with the UAESPNN implies

that the indigenous leaders and authorities familiarise themselves with new responsibilities. That very same Governing Body's session became a learning opportunity - a workshop. But this is not just about a learning exercise exclusively targeted to the indigenous peoples. The UAESPNN seems to conceive and manage all the issues deriving from the Agreement as learning and teaching processes. For example, the main activity implemented by the Park's administrative workers after the signing of the Agreement focussed on 'socialisation' routines, consisting of awareness workshops to explain the meaning of the Agreement's text.

One of the objectives of the Agreement is 'intercultural training'. In the Governing Body's plenary session it was made clear that this training was not meant to be formal training courses, but that it was at the very heart of the Agreement, stemming from the fact that the essence of the Agreement was the *sharing* (and not merely the delegation) of the government conservation task. This requires conceptual readjustments by both parties and imposes challenges that can only be overcome through dialogue and mutual learning. That is, neither party knows beforehand how this combined management method should be. Both parties know and manage their own organization skills, and they lean towards the others' with curiosity and perplexity, increasingly becoming aware of their mutual ignorance. The Agreement has implications for the very definition of the conservation objectives which should guide the Park's management programmes. For the Miraña, the management is founded on two principles which they call 'territory' and 'law of origin'. In the Governing Body's plenary session the Miraña did not reveal much information about the meaning of these concepts, limiting themselves to explain that they are fundamental concepts and that, for them, they hold a 'more profound' and different meaning than the interpretation that the 'whites' could possibly give them. However, one thing is definitely clear, the notion of 'territory', the base of the Miraña management programme, is centred on the concept of human life and its reproduction. As the Cacique Boa expressed it, "Our territory is Centre" and "it is with nature that we must consult". 'Centre' means human life (which socially and spatially manifests itself in families, clans, cultivation fields, fallows, landscape), and natural beings also have their 'territories', therefore the management has to be 'consulted', negotiated. As examples of this consultation, the Cacique Boa described the chopping of trees to prepare a cultivation field (where humans speak to the natural owners to explain that they are going to strip down a section of the forest but that they will replant it with fruit trees), and a hunting expedition (where the humans ask the natural Master of the Animals to give them some of his 'fruits'). The territory is a space for human life which expands, from the centre, in negotiations with other spaces (natural and social).

By contrast, the territorial notion based on the science of conservation is centred on wild life and human action consists of delimiting and demarcating areas to guarantee the reproduction of this wild life. These differences are illustrated in the following table:

	Indigenous Territory	**Conservation Area**
What is its focal point?	Reproduction of human life	Reproduction of wild life
How does it spatially express itself?	A centre that expands and enters into relationships with other centres	A limit that segregates an area to protect it
Conservation objectives	Consolidation of the territory (expressed in a *plan de vida* 'life programme')	Maintenance of the conditions for the reproduction of wild life (management programmes)

Territory as nature and as body

The above chart summarises, in political and management of an area terms, the contrast between an areolar (environment authorities) and a non-areolar vision (Miraña authorities) of the 'territory'. It is not a question of an agreement between different 'territorial' visions, which would need to be discussed. It is rather about different 'perspectives' which are elaborating, in contrasting fashions, the very object of what is being negotiated.

I use the term 'perspective' deliberately here, in the sense employed by Eduardo Viveiros de Castro (in this volume). Viveiros de Castro confirms certain frequent facts in South America's ethnography (and probably far beyond it) which are difficult to understand from a strictly naturalist perspective as, for example, the common belief that certain animals (tapirs, tigers, fish, etc.) are 'people' and that, from their own point of view, we humans, are 'animals'. That, which from our own perspective (as human beings) are natural objects – a salt lick and wild fruit trees -, from the tapir's perspective is a house and a cultivation field. These types of affirmations are unintelligible (indeed, irrational) from a perspective that conceives nature and its objects (plants, animals, landscapes, etc.) as something that is given and is equal to all. Therefore, from this naturalist perspective, a tapir is a tapir and a human being a human being and they are different from one another. From a contrasting, non-naturalist, point of view, the affirmation that tapirs are people is understandable, from a point of view that takes for granted, that which is 'given', not nature and its objects, but a knowing subject. Human beings are subjects, as are tapirs, and each one, from its own point of view 'builds' its nature; from the human point of view, a nature where the tapir is tapir and a salt lick a salt lick; from the tapir's point of view, a nature where the human is a 'tiger' (because it is it's hunter) and the salt lick is a *maloca* where it dances.

The same applies to the 'body'. In Amazonian ethnography we often come across the general belief that having a *Homo sapiens* body is not a guarantee for being a 'human being'. In other words, a human body is not a 'natural' object; it must be constructed by way of nourishment, healing, marks and transformations. If, from a non-indigenous point of view, we understood that there exists a unique human nature, common to all, on which multiple human 'cultures' are constructed; from a contrasting perspective we would then understand that we have a unique culture (the human one) on which multiple human natures are built on. As Viveiros de Castro affirms, instead of a multi-culturalism, we would talk about multi-naturalism.

These perspectives, based on defining what is conceived as 'given' and what must be constructed, can help us to interpret the above table, in which the territorial visions of the UAESPNN and the Miraña authorities are compared and which we, in principle, have identified as an areolar vision (the first) and a non-areolar vision (the second). From the UAESPNN'S point of view, what is 'given' and is common to both parties, that which raises no doubts, is the geographical area of the Cahuinarí Park, a natural object. On the other hand, what needs to be built are the actions and decisions concerning the area, a 'management programme', an issue that they are prepared to settle and negotiate with the indigenous people though a type of intercultural dialogue - to incorporate into the biology principles of conservation what supposedly are comparable and complementary principles of indigenous management (derived from a peculiar shamanistic vision, etc.)

From the traditional Miraña authorities' point of view, and taking as hypothesis our idea of the non-areolar vision of the territory, what is 'given' (and what would be equally common to the indigenous, to the UAESPNN as well as to other actors) is the vital and reproduction impulse of a body (individual or social) which gradually grows, establishes channels and interchanges with other bodies (social or natural); and what needs to be built is the social and natural landscape where this body can expand and reproduce, modifying it, nominating it, establishing links, etc.

We normally take for granted that the indigenous people have 'different' visions or conceptions of things that we assume are given. An example of this would be the Park's 'territory'. It would then be a question of trying to understand, through an intercultural dialogue, that 'different' vision. Based on the previous analysis, we would be coming to terms with the idea that it is not so much a question of different visions of the same thing but, from the indigenous perspective, of the same vision that builds different objects. In other words, for the Miraña, the 'Park' would not mean the same to the UAESPNN, but what would indeed be the same is each other's 'humanity'.

A couple of interventions during the first Governing Body's plenary session serve to illustrate this contrast. A UAESPNN high official summarised the importance of the Agreement in the following terms, (my italics) "The Convention is not just a text, but a *new* method of making decisions about managing the terri-

tory." Let us compare this with another affirmation pronounced by the Miraña's Cacique during the same session, "It is not another thought [referring to the Agreement] it is the *same* thought as ours', this is the way to make people understand. This is how the Agreement is socialized, by talking to the people."

For the UAESPNN, what is interesting about the Agreement is that it is innovative, a new way of doing things. By contrast, for the indigenous people the Agreement does not have to be anything new, it must be the same, the same thought. What needs to be done is to communicate it to the people. We have here what appears to be a typical example of intercultural (mis)communication but, in fact, from the indigenous point of view, the 'interculturality' issue is not important. It is not a question of interchanging knowledge, where a dialogue about shamanic and scientific concepts of nature and its management would come into play. For the UAESPNN, following a general trend of recognition and positive evaluation of indigenous issues, this intercultural dialogue would mark a political step forward. What is essential for the indigenous people, for the management of the Cahuinarí Park, is not the exchange of concepts, notions and principles (as expressed in the Agreement's objectives), but the exchange of food and objects. To express it in Viveiros de Castro's words, this is not a question of constructing 'souls' (as the conceptual principles of a management programme would have) but the construction of bodies. Perhaps it is for this reason that UAESPNN administration officials had the feeling that the indigenous people did not appear to be conscious of the fact that this was an opportunity given to them by the State, to participate in the elaboration of environment policies and, by contrast, they seemed to be more interested in having access to the job vacancies available in the Park (and their respective salaries), and to productive projects, etc.

The Cacique expressed it in a brilliant manner "The Agreement's thought is no other, it is the same thought as ours", and that concept of 'ours' (the human beings, and I would even go as far as to affirm that in that 'ours' the Cacique includes all human beings) is nothing more than living comfortably, eating, reproducing bodies and establishing relationships with others, including the UAESPNN and the tapirs.

The interesting aspect of an agreement (or, from another point of view, a channel) is not so much the formulation of principles and novel concepts, but the circulation of mutually reproducible substances and food. This circulation of substances is of course dangerous, requiring regulation and care; which, for the indigenous people, is the foundation and principle of 'territorial management.'

Words, like 'territory', can be the same but represent completely different concepts. It is not a question of having different 'meanings' but, because they stem from different perspectives, they have no way of making reference to the same objects. In the political exercise that we have reviewed, the main negotiation issue does not stem from the problem of the different cultural conceptions that would need to be placed on the 'dialogue' table, but more from the problem of establishing good *social* relationships that would enable the growth and repro-

duction of the bodies. This is how the Cacique clearly explained it "This is how the Convention is socialized, by talking to the people."

If the UAESPNN expects an intercultural dialogue from the indigenous people, in which certain shamanistic management principles would complement the principles of conservation biology in order to elaborate a management programme for that common objective, which is the Cahuinarí Park; what the indigenous people expect from the UAESPNN is that it establishes a social relationship with them, which will allow both parties to reproduce in their respective bodies - the indigenous reproducing their families, fields and *malocas* as well as acquiring goods and substances from the whites, which they also need in their lives, and the UAESPNN reproducing its method of becoming a body, in the shape of a hut, monitoring stations, investigations, publications, etc.

The illusion of 'intercultural dialogue' produces the effect that in the end both needs and appetites remain unsatisfied. Neither does the UAESPNN obtain the elements of the shamanistic vision of nature (because they are 'secret', etc.) nor do the indigenous acquire the minimum return that they expect from an ally (because that is not what is 'important'). More than an intercultural dialogue towards understanding the territory (as nature), what is most needed are good social relationships to build the territory (as body). ❑

Notes

Translated from Spanish by Cruz Farina.

1 "Preserves" are different from "Reserves" in that a Preserve grants legal ownership of the land to the natives, whereas on Reserves the government grants the use of the land to inhabitants but retains property rights.
2 For example, the human being can obtain substances from animals (their bodies) in order to consume them, without giving anything in return. Some natives believe that these animal beings are agents capable of 'collecting their dues' by way of illnesses. They therefore regulate such appropriations through their natural owners, as if through social relationships of mutual benefit. Some anthropologists have interpreted this 'shamanic' concept of relationships with animals as native ecology.
3 The lessons learnt from the management of overlapping areas should reveal paths for the management of other areas where the Unit's decisive control and autonomy are compromised in various degrees by ownerships methods, historical rights, etc.
4 This map was elaborated with the help of the sociologist Nicolás Bermúdez and with the support of the Fundación Capacitar.

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INDIGENOUS TERRITORIES:
KNOCKING AT THE GATES OF LAW

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Territoriality is one of the conceptual axes of the indigenous claims platform, not only in its nature of fundamental collective right, but as an essential existential dimension of every group. Hence, its legal treatment has underlying repercussions on these indigenous peoples' ability to exercise the rest of the rights that they claim.

However, territoriality is one of the most conflictive issues in the effort to make interculturally compatible the western legal concepts that steer American States with a real and, therefore, reasonably fair description of what, in practical terms, an indigenous group's habitat entails for its normal development.

These difficulties will obviously disappear as soon as indigenous peoples (specific, with own name) are recognised their right to free determination. The concept of territory would then remain on the margins of civil law's property problematics and there would just be the question of arbitrating procedures to peacefully resolve, with the highest degree of justice, the territories designated as each group's habitat and to specify, as applicable, the relationships between the territories and the national territory that houses them.

Nonetheless, for the time being (and in order to subsist until the negotiation scenes turn more favourable), the reality is that indigenous peoples' rights to their lands have no other option but to integrate into western legal frameworks which, far from providing appropriate solutions in describing the relationships, values and feelings that link indigenous groups to their natural environment, these legal frameworks are imposed on reality in a prescriptive manner, distorting it and often producing ethnocide conditions.

This threatening imposition of law on reality will most probably drive indigenous peoples toward erratic and unsustainable positions, including in the short term.

Is this the role of law in modern societies? Should law continue to be the domination tool that has always been in America or limit itself a role geared towards

the dynamic resolution of conflicts of interests based on a specific society's acceptable values at a given point in history?

The territoriality problem affecting indigenous peoples rattles in a political stage such as ours. The Germanies were unified but the Achual or Yanomami territories remain divided without anyone having consulted them on the matter. Colonies are a thing of the past, but any governor who happens to be in office has the power to decide which indigenous lands will be at the service of oil multinationals. The globalised world promotes free enterprise whilst indigenous peoples are deprived of every opportunity to freely control and manage their means of production.

How long is it possible to keep hiding the fact that it is in the present, and not just in the past, that the permanent conquest of America and the continuous genocide of American peoples is taking place?

The legal recognition (and, obviously, *de facto* respect) of the indigenous peoples' territoriality can help to rewrite, at least partially, the history of America. Do the conditions for this re-composition exist?

1) Indigenous peoples have an inalienable right to self-determination as well as to try to generate an environment of their own, particularly in regard to the legal concepts that define their existential dimensions. Indigenous peoples are currently backed by defined proposals from which to innovate rights without denying the existing legal framework, but using it to recreate a new one based on interculturality.

2) If nowadays differences and diversity are recognised as main sources of innovation - and the legal branch is no exception to this - indigenous peoples could contribute in a decisive manner towards renovating obsolete legal concepts.

3) The recognition of multiculturalism that currently dominates America's Constitutions calls for legal intercultural processes where coexistence is not a question of mere tolerance but a negotiated reflection of a mutual recognition and value between cultures.

Hence, what are the difficulties preventing the cancellation of historical debts with native peoples? To what extent is law to blame? In any conflict scene it is common to find representing lawyers blaming the legal system for all the injustices to which indigenous peoples are subjected. These peoples can negotiate a 'light' relationship regulation with an oil company but they cannot oppose an oil company entering their territories because the law prevents it. They can get as far as acquiring land titles to larger or smaller areas of their territories but they cannot become proprietors of the natural resources found in them because, as far as

the law is concerned, the State has exclusive competence over them. They cannot recover territories because these are bound to third party rights and they are equally unable to impose use regulations or control the rivers and lakes because the law prohibits it.

However, as some positivists suggest, law is no longer a static and unalterable reality - an arrangement where the only player is an all-powerful and unquestionable legislator. It is rather the minutes of an historical moment through which a specific conflict goes through, reflecting not only the real balance between the tensed forces but also feeding law the principles, convictions and values dominating the environment, acting as a counterweight to the disequilibrium between the parties. The law, which is a result of this dynamic process, orders the conflict momentarily and applies itself to the different actors' interpretations, to subsequently rebuild itself, time and time again.

If law is dynamic it cannot be guilty of the irremovability of precepts considered unjust for any society but whose application on native American societies seems pardonable. The answer lies in the sphere of values and there seems to be no other explanation but the following: 1) western societies transmitted to governors of their ex-colonies judgements about indigenous peoples tailored on the colonial conquest; 2) neither party has been able to leave those judgements behind, which refuse subdued cultures the right to organise themselves at their comfort as a pretext for maintaining their territories under a colonial-type control; 3) the fall of the legal concepts that allowed some communities to oppress others, coupled with a human rights respect global environment, have forced American States and their economic partners to live in a permanent state of legal schizophrenia insofar as the terms of the legal treatment given to the indigenous problem is concerned.

In the following pages an attempt is made to present an introductory overview of the most frequent arguments put forward by indigenous' territoriality claims at the gates of law.

Property and indigenous territories

The centrepiece of property in western-orientated legal systems is too obvious and it is therefore no surprise that it has caught indigenous peoples' attention, not with a view to describing their territoriality, but in an effort to protect their territorial rights. Indeed, among the characteristics of western property, indigenous peoples have focussed on those that refer to exercising the power granted by this right over an object - its absolute nature (*erga omnes*), which is exclusive and permanent. It is this point – property's absolute protection – that has raised the interest of indigenous peoples, over and above its capacity to describe or facilitate the social relationships that emerge from territoriality.

There is no doubt that, until other legal solutions are available that can offer full protection to indigenous territorial rights, this option will continue to be the most prudent.

However, the inconveniences of this adaptation are many. Property has a specific legal system that has been extensively elaborated throughout history and it is very expressive in terms of representing specific cultural values that very often fail to coincide with the values and the use that indigenous peoples give to their natural habitat. This legal system is bound to cause frequent problems on both sides of the intercultural relationship.

The concept of private property is the basis of the entire western economic system. It is the sphere of power that an individual holds over objects, enabling him to use them at his will in an exclusive manner in relation to other individuals.

Property is not only the basis, but also the engine of capitalist societies. The ambition to possess is the element that steers social mechanisms towards progress. It is therefore a device characteristic of western culture.

The majority of indigenous peoples have an intuitive notion of the concept of economic property. The riffle and the canoe are 'my' objects and are therefore at my disposal. However, very few indigenous peoples would go as far as to employ this concept when referring to the land, although they have no doubts as to the natural spaces available to them without infringing those of neighbouring peoples.

In Western countries, land property is a civil right that corresponds to an individual. However, in indigenous societies the land issue is something entirely different. Territory tends to be associated with a community and not with individuals, and nobody is under the impression that they can use it as they choose. Something similar can be said in the case of the Bolivian territory. Although it belongs to the Bolivian people, it does not seem adequate to claim that it is the civil property of Bolivia, and especially not the property of any of its citizens (despite the fact that, according to their internal regulations, every specific area of Bolivia is legally bound to a particular individual, society or community.) Bolivia, its citizens or representatives would not be able to sell the national territory, or even part of it, because it would then seize to be Bolivia.

When we talk about Bolivia's territory, we are referring to a political right (respected by other societies) and not to a civil right (which should be respected by individuals in Bolivia.) For indigenous peoples 'territory' corresponds, to a greater extent, to this concept of political right rather than to the concept derived from civil law. Independently of the way in which land tenure is internally regulated by specific peoples, they also require that the territory be integrally respected externally.

Besides the exclusivity, perpetuity and absolute power over the land offered by the legal system, there are many other property characteristics that are incom-

patible with the indigenous concept of territory, and even place their lands at risk. This is the reason why indigenous peoples are permanently forced to modify the 'original version'.

For example, the right inherent in property to freely dispose of an object – the *ius abutendi* -, has forced the indigenous claims platform to integrate an exception - the inalienability guarantee - that is incompatible with the legal institution's essence. This objective, aimed at real estate property within a market economy offering legal protection geared towards guaranteeing credits, in the case of indigenous territory should be counterweighted with an unseizable guarantee; the individual nature (subject-object relation) of the relationship between owner and property has forced the creation of a law subject, the community, which in the majority of cases is artificial and has broken each people's territorial management system into hundreds of pieces, very often spatially or politically unconnected.

And thus successively.

On the other side of the relationship, things are no different. In its nature of institutional mother of the western legal system and in order to continue colonising unknown regions, property has been adopting increasingly hybrid and denaturalised characteristics that threaten to explode the nature of the institution itself. In order to apply property to the case of indigenous peoples, it must accept a collective property that is not joint property or any other recognisable means of property; tenure methods that shift, depending on each case, between the collective, the individual or the supra-collective (political, religious); spaces belonging to everyone and no one; a generalised right of use over goods belonging to an unspecified proprietor, including of a spiritual or psychic nature; rights of past and future generations where the current subject is restricted and obliged. All in all, something totally alien to the property institution in its orthodox essence (outside of which legal institutions seize to be what they are to become something else.)

These are headaches for legislators and politicians who, in the end, settle on giving up and reduce the whole issue to the civil code, in a desperate prescriptive imposition of a unique legal reality that is far removed from the multicultural concept that many Constitutions offer American countries.

If denying current multiculturalism were simply a question of burying one's head in the sand, it would merely be interpreted as a useless solution to the problem. But the truth is that it goes far beyond. It is to pretend that a given culture represents what is natural and others what is abnormal, and to justify impositions on indigenous' primitivism. Everything that contradicts the system or the values that it responds to is rejected.

When this occurs, law seizes to be an instrument for regulating social realities and becomes an instrument of repression for the powerful. And others will outweigh the need to temporarily resign themselves, or the other alternative of exer-

cising pressure through the means at their disposal. It is a continuation of America's violent history's land struggles.

On another front, we do not believe that this uniformity intention will have any real effects on legal diversification. On the contrary, it increases it and muddles it. On the one hand, the difficulties involved in adapting a legal institution to a social world that is ignorant of it, produces new hybrids and adaptations that are periodically renovated and recreated into new adaptive formulas, without completely abandoning the old familiar institutions whilst maintaining some of the new creations that have proved useful.

On the other hand, the verification of the mock-up's inadequacy forces legislators to gradually reformulate new transitory laws that manage to leave something behind during their time in force.

Disagreement does not produce uniformity. In order to evade the 'otherness' of a specific institution which, with due tolerance and mutual understanding could coexist with State institutions without impairment to either party, one witnesses the birth of a multiplicity of new laws that threaten to kill the institutions on both sides of the intercultural relationship.

Western law has centred its task on the efficient regulation of social relationships between people according to common values, principles and needs. However, it is proving to be incapable of articulating relationships between people and societies who do not share those links, although they do share the need to live together. It is then that the affirmation of the superiority of a specific social sector's values occurs, especially the values coming from, or who have aligned themselves with, the exogenous mentality.

These reflections are enough to understand that when indigenous peoples claim land ownership they do not place the accent on the property institution's essential characteristics or on the values that it represents to a market economy (freedom of action for the proprietor, individualization of labour, etc.) Even less so on the economic repercussions that go hand-in-hand with the institution (divisibility, alienability, free market, credit guarantees, etc.) What they do salvage from property are the defence mechanisms that the absolute nature of the right grants them, its exclusivity and its perpetuity. However, a major paradox emerges when these faculties – conceived for the purpose of building the individual's empire (*homo faber, homo economicus)* over an object, whose main characteristic is its ability to circulate within the market – are applied to such different law subjects and objects, as in the case of indigenous peoples and their living spaces, producing the antithesis of their essence, given that they are claimed precisely to stop the object's free circulation and to reaffirm its unavailability.

Hence, property is the centre of private power, a concept incompatible with indigenous peoples' idea of their habitats. Although it is true that inside an indigenous group's habitat specific rights (exclusive or otherwise) can be temporarily or permanently assigned to specific individuals or groups, these rights are never

absolute and there are always restrictions imposed by a larger group. There will be individual rights restricted by family rights and these, in turn, controlled by community rights, a level that is also limited and regulated by supra-communal entities (the population of a river basin, the clans, the indigenous local group, ancestral regulations or those of spiritual owners – the 'mother' – of natural resources, etc.).

In the end, we could identify a group with a specific habitat and, inside it, a series of relationships structured in concentric circles reaching the individuals. But this people-habitat relationship is not exactly the private relationship defined by property. We are looking at a habitat demarcated by a peoples' history, and not so much by physical landmarks. A unit indivisible in essence (although divided in uses in the internal social practice) that sometimes defines a religious relationship, but always a spiritual one, an unavailable and trans-generational asset. This is why indigenous peoples have vindicated the concept of territory as the most appropriate for defining this singular relationship.

International texts have consecrated this concept as the most precise. But in national laws this concept is not free of problems. It is not enough to accept a denomination. One must be aware of its consequences and possible difficulties.

Territory and 'territories'

In western law, territory falls within the public sphere, in the same way that property is considered as belonging to the private sphere. Territory embodies the idea of a communal asset, assumed as absolute, exclusive and perpetual, but in a way that has nothing to do with property, given that it is also trans-generational, conceptually indivisible, unseizable, unavailable and autonomous in its administration. So far, everything is exactly how indigenous peoples define the relationship whose recognition they claim.

Except that territory is conceptually (in western international law) only one – it has no competitors. From here stems the concept of free determination that relates a historic-social unit (peoples, nations) to a single territory where the *imperium,* and not the *dominium,* is exercised. In our case, we are referring to territories of groups whose free determination is still on the negotiating table and which, in any case, are immersed in a national territory (single, unitary). It is possible that, before the end of this decade, this complex relationship will be resolved through new conception of a modern international law seeking concepts open to peace and tolerance for interethnic relationships within national States. This is what the United Nations Declaration draft leans towards.

It must be understood that the legal status granted by a State to indigenous lands is not essentially relevant to indigenous peoples' internal perception. However, it does affect them in an instrumental manner, given that the defensive pow-

er generated by any legal status facilitates, hinders or makes impossible, as in their case, the historical continuity of the people-territory relationship.

The internal regulation of land tenure is a very complicated issue that should be left up to each peoples to decide, leaving law to deal with external guarantees.

For example, when describing the concentric circles that characterise many indigenous peoples' perception of space, some serious difficulties arise: how to proceed to integrate family rights with community rights, with the rights of higher territorial entities as well as with those of indigenous peoples? Property, the powerful recognition claimed at all levels, even accepting the rights of superior concentric circle entities, can only be exercised by one subject. There cannot be two absolute owners (proprietors) to the same object, and this is precisely what occurs in practically every indigenous group: multiple subjects (including of different essences: collective, individual, political, religious, spiritual, etc.) with multiple different rights, temporary or definite, over the land or its accessories. Indeed, the State can hold the *imperium* and the individual the *domimium*, but these are two different types of rights within a situation that, for the moment, is not transferable to indigenous peoples without getting into the issue of free determination.

If every community, territorial entity or indigenous group were to define their rights, their scope and limits within each culture, the orthodox legal framework would be abandoned and advances would be made towards the elaboration of an adequately coordinated multi- and intercultural right.

On another front, both the internal conception (cultural) of each indigenous group and their recent history have produced very diverse situations, including aspirations, which are worth considering.

Not only are the internal uses diversified, also different are the acculturation processes that distance a culture from its original conceptions or take it closer, in part, to more western conceptions. In large Andean regions, as well as in a small number of Amazon regions, individual or family property is already an aspiration. The proprietor community is a generalised concept from the legislation in force and accepted as the only possibility of gaining access to a legal and firm recognition of territorial rights. In many Amazon areas (we do not know whether this occurs in the same way in the Andes) indigenous peoples have reaffirmed themselves through interrelationships with numerous groups associated with specific territorial spaces (in the majority of cases, a river basin), allied or distanced from each other – but generally conscious of the common responsibilities entailed in protecting a perfectly defined common habitat. In the majority of Amazon regions the concept of people-territory finally responds to a perfectly defined global identity.

The State must stop perceiving communal collective property as a maximum and transitory concession on the path to the complete individualisation of indig-

enous territorial property and to facilitate free expression of these peoples' will, arbitrating legal channels to enable them to take the opposite path, should that be their wish.

Scope and characteristics of territoriality

The characterisation of this new concept of indigenous territoriality should be consistent with its objective, which is no other than to allow the historical and cultural continuity of original peoples and to return to them the development options denied to them throughout five centuries. A territoriality understood as a conceptual metaphor and defined in miserable terms does not generate any-thing but the prolongation of the conquest and the denial of the multiple possi-bilities that Andean countries, such as Peru, have to offer in terms of diversity and cultural wealth.

From this point of view it is necessary to conceptually clarify some aspects:

- What spaces are integrated in the indigenous territory? What and who defines this?
- What natural resources are incorporated and in what way?
- What are the characteristics that will define, in practical terms, this relationship within the multicultural legal system?

Although very briefly, we will review the types of problems likely to present themselves.

a) Definition of indigenous territories – scope
Various criteria have been used to define indigenous territoriality. The ideas and the ways reflected in different legislations have evolved at an alarming speed in the last few years, from the primitive conception of the Bolivian paternalist fam-ily plot or the Peruvian vision's communal tenure, maintained for eighty years (in the case of the highlands, and twenty-five years in the Amazonian one), which centred the 'community' as a territorial space complete in itself.

The new conceptions of indigenous territoriality widen their focus, designing new figures such as indigenous municipalities, original communal lands, or eth-nic territories – including dual-nationals - gradually approaching the concept claimed by indigenous peoples that attempts to identify an ethnic group and a territory. On another front, and as we will see later, these conceptions are increas-ingly detaching themselves from the characteristics of private property and lean-ing towards political concepts, or better still, towards public law conceptions of this special indigenous territoriality. However, we should concentrate on that specific territoriality, the one corresponding to a group. Communal property

would be the conclusion to an internal structuring process of a group's territorial uses, specific components of an autonomous territorial administration system. From this point of view, the options have been diverse:

- Criterion for original territoriality. Takes the right and the territorial delimitations back to the pre-Conquest period. It does not lack legal foundations, given that the right to conquer is no longer acceptable. Indeed, if as result of the conquest's force, the lands of original peoples' were incorporated and subsequently, after shacking off the invader, became independent again, the territorial situation generated under the conqueror's control should revert back to square one or, at least, be subjected to consultation and an agreement process with the original peoples. Although recognising its vindicatory and historical justice nature, we consider this an unviable criterion, at least through peaceful means.
- Criterion for traditional occupation. Although similar to the one above, it is much more realistic and, in fact, has been assumed by modern legislations, including the ILO 169 Convention, which incorporates it as one of its alternatives. It entails claiming and defining as 'own' the territorial spaces that are in the collective memory of current generations and that are still recognised as the natural habitat of the group in question, whether completely under the group's control or subjected, in past years, to encroachments and dismemberments. This conception additionally requires the definition of precise territorial restitution processes. The United Nations' Declaration project contemplates this last point in its article 27. Its generalised application could lead to uncomfortable social situations. However, depending on the circumstances, this could be a fair alternative, particularly in cases of groups recently deprived of their traditional territories as a consequence of specific conjunctural policies (an extreme example is the case of indigenous lands that were handed out to friends of drug-dealing, pro-coup militaries in Meza's Bolivia) or procedural irregularities.
- Criterion for current occupation. This criterion can define the Chilean legislation option. It leaves a lot to be desired, given that it accepts, without revision, the *fait accompli* policy. It can have two versions, one more generous than the other. Occupation can be conceived in an extensive manner, covering a group's current and real territoriality, exactly how it was left after the historical events, with or without a prior regularisation process (the OAS's project or the Peruvian Act DL. no. 20653 could be considered an example although, in this case, limited to communal territorial spaces) or using more restrictive criteria, limiting current occupation to farming spaces or other specific economic uses (a tendency insinuated in the new Peruvian Land Act no. 26505.)

- Territory as a space for life (production and reproduction). This is an option geared towards protecting spaces used by a specific indigenous group for its subsistence and development. It can have various versions. In general, the legislative texts that employ it specifically describe the spatial criteria, the natural resources and the uses considered for them (Peru: DL. no. 20653), as well as those excluded (Peru: DL. no. 22175). It is complemented with the possibility of granting additional lands when the current ones are insufficient, according to specific criteria (subsistence, needs – in a wide or limited sense -, development or demographic evolution). On occasions, additional rights to outside lands are also granted in order to satisfy those needs (ILO 169 Convention, article 14, Peru – Act no. 26821, Art. 17). Although Bolivia has declaratively opted for the original or traditional territoriality criterion, a procedural requirement – a study of spatial needs – steers the reality in this direction.

- Territory as habitat. It is a version of the above but not centred on subsistence or development needs but, by incorporating them, it goes far beyond, expressing the permanent relationship (or inter-relationship) of a group with a specific natural space and with its elements (forests, rivers, fauna, flora, environment, etc.). The concept of habitat adapts well to one of the dimensions of indigenous territoriality, that which in the 1980's caught environmentalists' attention – the ecology dimension. This concept is present in practically every modern Indigenous Law text (ILO 169 Convention, United Nations Declaration Project).

- Integrative criteria. The need to cater to indigenous claims, coupled by the fact that, according to circumstances, these claims have centred on one or several of these criteria (as well as others, such as spiritual and cultural control as territorial delimitation criteria), modern Indigenous Law texts tend to make use of integrative criteria that cover all the possible alternatives to steer the definition process of indigenous territories. Hence, the ILO 169 Convention contemplates the right to the lands and territories defined as *traditional*, but it also refers to *those who occupy or use* in any way, to the *habitat of the regions that they inhabit*, to the possibility of assigning additional lands according to *needs*, to the spiritual relationships *(cultural control)* between a specific people and their territory. Until now, the most expressive and complete text is the United Nations' Declaration Project, which is not surprising given that it leaves territoriality to the free determination of the peoples.

We believe that opting for wide-ranging and integrative criteria can offer indigenous peoples more opportunities, provided that the option is combined with various, practically viable, procedural formulas. However, in legal practice and in factual proceedings, the criteria are reductionist, centred on the communal (the

territory no longer as a mosaic but as an incomplete puzzle) and orientated towards an economic and productive conception of the land and its natural resources.

The theoretical question of whether or not the State has eminent power to decide on the limits of indigenous territories is always a conflictive issue.

In fact, property is acquired through transmission (succession, tradition) of a right from a hypothetical original property (which could have been acquired through appropriation – of a *res nullius* nature – or through a special historical prescription method of ancestral *de facto* possession). Given that indigenous peoples never transmitted that right, that the *res nullius* situation is unacceptable for characterising already occupied spaces, that indigenous groups never gave their explicit consent (free determination) to an external national entity for the integration of their possessions, and that these groups were not subjected to conquest, being that the Peruvians (including or, above all, original Peruvians) gained their independence, we cannot see any legal reason (we refer here to civil law and not to political doctrines) with sufficient weight to recognise a distribution right to a State over assets that already have an owner.

However, indigenous peoples are frequently more inclined towards more conciliatory solutions.

In practice, each indigenous group is well aware of what is, or should be, its current territory: the areas that the group withdraws from the traditional territory and those that it is not willing to give up, whether or not under its control. This is the reason why the previous definition of the territorial area should be left to the, duly supported, criterion of the groups themselves. These areas should be allocated special prerogatives (not be susceptible to adjudication rights to third parties) whilst a territorial restructuring and ordering programme is defined or set up, which should conclude in a peaceful, stable, fair and satisfactory manner. In the Amazon case, where this strategy has more favourable application conditions – even though we are referring to a large section of the national territory, it involves a few specific cases (depending on the scope of the concept of people; but never many more than fifty) - this should not give rise to major complications.

In any event, it is worth pointing out that, in may cases, an indigenous territory does not end in specific points, it is not defined by demarcation lines but gradually ends in unsafe zones (whether shared spaces or boundaries between neighbouring groups, 'culturally protected natural areas' or sometimes, a mixture of both, given that these areas tend to be situated in spaces outside the controlled concentric circles). For this reason, whenever the territorial limits of two indigenous groups coincide, special attention should be given to the unclaimed or unoccupied middle spaces, which are important to the indigenous territorial concept.

b) Determining the natural resources inherent in the territorial notion

As we can see, indigenous territoriality implies a rational whole that should be adequately reflected in its legal characterization. Territorial integrity is consubstantial with the economic function, the ecological condition, and the subjective perception of the law subject as well as with the very physical nature of the asset. Any alternation to this integrity modifies the very nature of the territory and undermines the quality of the right recognised to indigenous peoples.

We emphasise that this concept is clearly reflected in international legal texts specifically conceived for describing the real nature of indigenous territorial rights (i.e. the ILO 169 Convention, the United Nations' or the OAS's projects.) In those cases where these texts are of a binding nature and have been ratified by the adhering country, internal incompatibilities with the rest of the legal framework should be resolved without altering the essence of the recognised right. The indigenous territory is not the sum of the natural resources that it contains, which are susceptible to appropriation or economic relationships. Its essence is based on the integration of physical and spiritual elements that link a natural space to a specific group.

Nevertheless, contrary to what occurs with new legal entities that are given a clearly different treatment in reflecting their nature – as is the case of intellectual property – the indigenous territory has not yet been accepted as a new and modern legal institution with its own particular characteristics. On the contrary, attempts are made to adjust it to models designed by the legal system to describe realities that have nothing to do with a territoriality consubstantial with an indigenous group - a reality that is much more akin to the concept of fatherland rather than to the concept of a piece of real estate.

In this sense, the concept of indigenous territory collides with the very notion of economic assets described in civil legislation (susceptible to imposed rights, objectively and subjectively individualised) as well as with the concessionary formula applied by this part of the world's legislation on natural resources.

Indeed, the cultural values of western law centre the social function of assets on their commercial circulation whilst striving to offer alternatives to multiply the frequency of this commercial movement. To do this, it allows different uses to be made and different rights to be applied to the same object, thereby stimulating the market and making the economy more dynamic.

On another front, despite their recent adoption of liberal tendencies, South American States maintain a traditionally statist position in regard to their natural resources. In this sense, the State reserves rights over assets that, naturally and legally, constitute an integral part of the principal asset (i.e. forestry resources, fauna, waters and its concomitant elements, etc.)

As a result of a combination of both the above positions, a legal stratagem is employed to separate, contrary to nature, integral parts of a real estate by applying different legal systems to its different natural components, with the State re-

serving control over some of these components, thus empowering it to assign their uses as well as their specific, and generally opposed, rights amongst different subjects.

In the case of indigenous territories, this way of perceiving the nature of the asset denaturalises it and deprives it of meaning. This is the reason why indigenous peoples claim a special legal treatment as well as new legal definitions which, by having their own specific content, will not force indigenous peoples to perform logical juggling acts to adjust their reality to institutions created for regulating other institutions.

Native peoples are having serious problems in trying to peacefully enjoy the use of their territories because of the State's insistence on practising this legal dismembering of the integrity of indigenous territory, something that could give rise to extremely unfair situations (including ethnocide: see the case of the Ashaninka groups affected by timber concessions or the multiple cases of ethnocide caused by mining, oil and gas operations in indigenous lands throughout the world.)

The disintegration of indigenous territories in a constellation of rights over their different natural components is incompatible with the very economic and social function of the territory and, indeed, with the rights to identity, free management, development and other fundamental rights associated with, in its individual exercise, respect towards the spiritual and cultural integration of a people with their territory. In the case of Amazonian territories, this vision is also inadequate with the ecological nature of the tropical forest. Let us briefly analyse these three aspects:

1) Legal institutions should allow the integration of a human group's cultural values with specific efficiency principles for a convenient regulation of human relationships and to satisfy social needs.

    Even within the western legal framework, property, as institution, is geared towards providing legal protection to a specific fact of social life (that of effective possession) and its *raison d'être* is its economic function: to enable the asset to be of use to its proprietor.

    Except that the social methods of use given to an asset and its utility can vary, subjectively and objectively, from one cultural group to another as well as from one ecological environment to another.

    The economic function of land property in western systems (as mentioned above, geared towards commercial use), demands the specification of the object and the possibility of real appropriation. It refers to a specific piece of the earth's crust, agricultural land destined to generating products and fruits, through man's labour. It entails specific spaces, individualised through labour, mainly of an agricultural or livestock nature, where natural elements (wild fauna and flora) are given an accessory treatment. Hunt-

ing, gathering and fishing are secondary uses – very often classified as leisure activities – which generally do not represent the fundamental economic value that characterises land as rational whole.

If the State regulates these accessory natural resources as separate elements, the rational whole of the real estate or country estate is not hindered in its essence, although its economic value could be seriously affected.

But what happens if, under this cultural perception, we limit indigenous territorial property to agricultural and livestock spaces? We would simply denaturalise it because the indigenous territorial right bases its social value on the integral bond between the territory and the ethnic group, and the different components are not longer economically appropriable resources but rather psychic components of a rational whole different to the one that characterises a real estate's. To recognise an indigenous territory without its natural forces and elements is to recognise an unrecognisable skeleton, without capacity for life. The right would not be the legal symbol of the real fact and the institution would not provide legal protection to the true relationship between the subject and the object of that right.

But in addition, the right would deprive it of its economic function that, in this case, is not a commercial one but rather the reproduction of a group's subsistence and development conditions. With the exception of a few indigenous groups reduced to an agricultural status (very often precisely due to legal reasons), a large majority base their economy on the diversity of their natural resources and not on intensive farming.

In the case of Amazonian peoples, this dismembering affects the social economic value of the territory to the extent of minimising it. Indeed, for these groups, hunting, fishing and gathering are their main economic activities. Their lives depend on them and the legal protection that they claim for their territories is based on controlling the reproduction conditions of these renewable resources. When indigenous peoples claim that the forest is their pharmacy, market, university, factories, materials' warehouses for housing, etc., among other things, they are not expressing anything other than an economic reality that is seldom understood by those who do not live in or off the jungle. If, after 500 years, progress has been made towards recognising the right of indigenous peoples to their territories, they should not be deprived of their territoriality through legal tricks that are unnecessary and little in accordance with the liberal approach that governments systematically apply to, for example, such essential resources as the national infrastructure, including the strategy.

2) The cultural value embodied in indigenous territory differs substantially from the production or commercial value that western society attributes

land property. The indigenous territory is integral in essence. It is not possible to recognise the territory and to ignore its components, charged with spiritual values that give it meaning. To imagine, for example, that deer – an animal into which ancestors are incarnated – are leather and a few kilos of meat, affects the identity and culture of the indigenous peoples most deeply. Not to recognise a people its communion capacity (which translates in autonomous control capacity) over the caves, streams and waterfalls, is to deny transcendental values. This is not a question of economic assets, but of a whole of which man is an integral part, and by dismembering it, that whole becomes empty of meaning, causing destructive effects to the group's identity, beliefs and existential purpose.

Given that American countries are, often by constitutional definition, multicultural, the values that their judicial systems' institutions embody should therefore not be mono-cultural, with one culture dominating others. In applying these institutions to different cultural groups, with different cultural values and social needs, the institutions must accept these differences so that the right granted will be equally valid to all.

Considering the spiritual bond between a culture and its territory, the disintegration of indigenous peoples' territorial right is an attack on all the rights of the individual, which are founded on the identity, values and beliefs that sustain him. The social institutions, the relationships network and the very collective survival depend on the integrity of the territory, which is precisely the legal protection that indigenous peoples claim. An indigenous territory whose natural elements are excluded from absolute legal protection (*erga omnes*) constitutes an expropriation - a fictitious legal recognition that distorts de reality that it seeks to describe and protect.

The indigenous territory entails the reestablishment of the appropriate conditions for the survival of peoples whom, together with the rest, gained independence from the colonial metropolises. It entails a vindicatory recognition - a repairing political act for a historical injustice. And it cannot be partial, if it is not at the expense of depriving it of its meaning. Should this collide with any principles or mechanisms designed for application on different situations, it would then be necessary to tailor its legal treatment, excluding indigenous territories from the application of those general mechanisms.

3) Particularly in the case of Amazonian indigenous peoples, the application of the system in general, based on asset divisibility, on the destination of the land for farming and livestock use, on the attribution of State control over the natural resources and its power to assign different rights over them, appears to contradict the very ecological nature of the tropical forests.

First of all, because in the Amazon the forest is valued for its canopy and the wildlife inhabiting its diverse ecological strata. From an ecological point of view, the thin layer of fertile soil is a secondary asset; even the fertility (transitory) of the floor depends on the forest's canopy. Human labour does not individualise the property; the industrial fruits and products are not the result of intensive farming. On the contrary, these tend to be natural fruits (as are the trees themselves) whose supply depends on careful handling and, very often, on disciplined consumption. What gives the forest its vigour is not labour, but non-alteration. If indigenous peoples are forced to intensify the agricultural use of their territories in order to legally defend their ancestral control (as has actually occurred on repeated occasions), their properties will gradually lose value and the forests their true potential.

If, based on specific agro-technical classifications, we wanted to reduce an Amazonian indigenous group's territorial rights to agricultural spaces, we would be surprised to find that not much more than 2% of the entire Amazon space is destined to agriculture or live-stock. In fact, the gardens destined to agriculture in groups like the Peruvian Aguaruna, do not exceed a third of an hectare (which has enabled them to subsist without depredating.) If an Amazonian indigenous territory was to become the size of its agricultural spaces (and this is the logic behind Peruvian law, which excludes forest floors and protection lands from indigenous territoriality) the expropriation would be absolute. On another front, its location and determination would be impossible: a garden is used for a short period of time. It is abandoned in the forest (becoming forest once again) and new small areas of forest are opened in lands with no other agricultural value besides the one given to it by traditional good practice. If every time that, in the indigenous Amazon, an agricultural area became forest once again it ended up in the hands of the State, indigenous territories would soon be reduced to a mere metaphor.

The Amazon forests are ecological units whose elements (whether considered integral parts, accessories, natural fruits or any other legal denomination) are intimately interrelated. Any element lives for, in and from its relationships with other elements, including man who, in the case of indigenous peoples, undertakes (although with increasingly fewer chances) to exercise careful control over that natural arrangement. This is the reason why the ILO 169 Convention or the international texts' projects of the new Indigenous Law, refer to the territory as habitat, alluding to this unit made up of an integral territory and a specific people that administers it based on ancestral coexistence. Any economic right granted that ignores this control will, undoubtedly, have negative effects on the real value of the territory and on the group inhabiting it.

To conclude, we believe that the indigenous territory must be defined as an integral whole and when specific territorial rights are recognised to a group (i.e., property, in its acceptation of absolute, exclusive and perpetual right) this recognition should be extended to all its components.

If the State is concerned about proper management, it should come to agreements on use regulations. If its intentions are focused on revenue, it should set up fund raising systems. If it is a question of reserving rights to specific natural resources of a strategic nature or of common interest to Peruvian peoples, clear guidelines should be established with the people that house them based on their consensual use. But what cannot be done is to feign legal recognition of a historical right by offering remnants of it. A territory without resources is a skeleton without substance.

c) Attributes that should legally characterise an indigenous territory

In the last thirty years indigenous peoples have taken the initiative to establish a political platform to reflect the rights expropriated from them since the conquest, which constitute the fundamental base of their claims. Not only have they fought for international recognition of these rights, but these have been gradually filled with legal contents capable of reflecting the characteristics considered necessary for these rights to be effective, in terms of each group's historical continuity. It is important that any legislative proposal concerning indigenous peoples takes these characteristics into account, which truly define new legal institutions not contemplated in the civil legal system.

In the case of the territory, these characteristics, on the one hand, distinguish the indigenous territory from other, at first sight, similar legal institutions and, on the other hand, define a new institution with no precedents in the current legal system:

1) It is an absolute, exclusive and perpetual right. These property right characteristics of western legal systems are adopted because of the scope of their protection strength: one power against all and forever. As already mentioned, the similarity stops here, given that other concomitant points with this western concept of property are not very appropriate for characterising indigenous territoriality. In any case, these points acquire their own nuances when applied to indigenous territory:

   • It is not an absolute or exclusive power attributed or recognised by the State to a specific individual or group, understood as a legal entity, capable of exercising all the rights included in the concept of property. The persons to whom the current right is attributed cannot, for exam-

ple, dispose of the territory (*ius abutendi),* and its use (*ius utendi, ius fruendi)* is very much conditioned by other concomitant rights (of other individuals or groups of the present and other generations.) To the individual or collective members of a group, the territory provides rights but also many duties and responsibilities, including the responsibility of its administration and defence, as a collectively imposed condition to be able to enjoy the right to its uses and benefits.

Hence, there are few similarities: both the absolute and the exclusive nature of the indigenous territorial right are adopted as mere foot notes to highlight its identification (absolute, exclusive) with a specific group, as well as for its descriptive value to stress its autonomy and protection in relation to non-members, including the State.

- Perpetuity is not limited to highlighting its differences with other rights of a temporary nature (as in the case of the usufruct), but it entails a very concrete historical-cultural dimension. The following are a few examples:

  - It is an original right (in theory, non-dependent on administrative decisions) that is based on myths and historical events prior to the constitution of modern States. A group's territory is not titled for the purpose of the group becoming its proprietor, but because it is in fact its ancestral proprietor, and for others to respect this as well as for that right to be integrated into modern legal relationships with other law subjects, whether public or private.
  - It is not bound to a temporary nature condition; for example, it is not bound to a time-frame, does not prescribe, can not be the subject of abandonment, except in the case of extermination or dispersal of the group as such, etc.
  - It is not linked to the duration of human life (of current members of the indigenous group) and it is conceptually incompatible with inheritance as defined in civil law (whether due to an act of *inter vivos* or *mortis causa),* given that past and new generations of indigenous peoples are in permanent coexistence, with these individuals dissolving in the indefinite course of the law subject.
  - It does not begin or finish with a land title. Recognised or not, the right exists, although in many cases impracticable due to dominating circumstances. In any event, in practical terms, this characteristic entails vindicatory and restitution expectations of lost territorial spaces in a manner incompatible with the territorial right itself. It also clarifies that the territorial limits are not conditioned by state recognition – very often limited to small territorial islands – and that every group

can maintain its claims until the recognised territory coincides with the real habitat corresponding to each group through a historical right or until they decide to give the territories up, should they consider this a necessary or convenient option, given the circumstances.

2) It is a right attributed to a group, a law subject with a particular entity that escapes the private sphere of civil law and whose recognition has specific consequences on International Law, and should also have on the internal legal system of any multiethnic country.

Amongst others, a number of observations stemming from this point are:

- The trans-generational nature of the right, whose objective is to enable the historical continuity of a people, transcends the present generation's legal will, making the territory unavailable (inalienable, unseizable) and conceptually indivisible (its division would affect the very nature of the asset), although internally divisible in uses of a temporary or definitive nature, according to the defined practices of each people's consuetudinary law.

- The cross-border nature of the right, in the event of peoples existing on either side of a national border.

- The transpersonal nature of the right in itself. Which translates not only in the nature of the right in itself (a collective historical heritage), but in the existence of collective guidelines that integrate, define and limit the rights that can be consuetudinary attributed to its members, individually or collectively.

- Its condition of essential attribute of the very concept of people, which makes the indigenous territorial right escape the private sphere to be framed within a concept close to that of public law with undoubted political connotations. Indeed, even when considering the free determination of the peoples as a right to be exercised within the national sphere of the States that house them, the people-territory relationship (that constitutes one of the essential dimensions of free determination) acquires consistency in International Law and even in State Law and the legal characteristics of its recognition come close to the terms of a Treaty rather than to administrative provisions.

- Its association with other rights of a non-material nature stemming from the special relationships of a people with their territory. Hence, the territorial right is intimately related to other rights such as, identity, culture, religious beliefs and cults, spirituality, collective dignity, psychic and moral integrity, etc.

- Its integrity: a consubstantial characteristic with the people-territory relationship from various points of view:

- The territory should legally consolidate all the methods of use, possession, management, access and administration that define the socio-economic relationship of the people with their habitat; the habitat is hence fundamental to a specific indigenous people.
- The territory should respond to this global conception, therefore it must allow the exercise of all, stable or itinerant methods of territorial control within the scope with which that control manifests itself in reality. A territory fragmented in communal islands, hacked or patched, with areas excluded from ethnic control for various reasons (ecologic protection, colonisation, etc.) is still not an indigenous territory.
- The territorial right should embrace all the elements: surface, subsoil, forest canopy, waters and lakes, fauna and flora, genetic resources and the different ecosystems, regardless of their economic classification. A territory fragmented into a series of legally differentiated elements, with separate administration systems and a different executive body, prevents a people from exercising the necessary cultural and economic control.
- Finally, the autonomy with which the territorial right of an indigenous people is exercised constitutes a defining element of indigenous peoples' territoriality.

Autonomy and indigenous territory

The debate over the applicability of indigenous peoples' right to free determination seems to have been decided some time ago.[1] There is no significant reason to exclude indigenous peoples from the benefits of that peoples and nations' 'natural right'. The difficulties are not of a conceptual but of an operational nature. The fear of endangering certain prerogatives (such as concessionary royalties) leads States to recur to arguments that, on many occasions, verge on paranoia. The 'a State within the State' argument is a classic one.

The majority of treaty writers insist that free determination is not a right in itself, but the condition, the prerequisite, for exercising the rest of a peoples' or nation's rights (the question of whether or not States are established is a possibility that arises as a consequence of that prerequisite). If certain rights are recognised to a specific group of peoples, as is the case of indigenous peoples, this prerequisite cannot be denied to them.

In the indigenous claims platform, this aspiration centres on the point that affirms the right to freely dispose of one's wealth and natural resources, as necessary elements for economic, social and cultural development. The fear of the possibility

of separation, or similar claims, arising does not seem realistic. Furthermore, nobody is prepared to question the fundamental right of the States over a national unitary territory, and if the interested parties do not question it, we do not see the need to get into explanations that would divert us from the central issue.

One of the ways to exercise free determination is through autonomy, a viable faculty within integrated national contexts. Legal dictionaries define autonomy as 'the faculty possessed by, or recognised to a population or entity to manage without foreign trusteeship specific interests of its internal life, which can give rise to the creation of own institutions for the spaces in which this internal life is developed' (Raúl Chanamé, *Diccionario jurídico moderno*, Ed. San Marcos, Lima, 1995).

Autonomy is implicit in the ILO 169 Convention in the above terms. Consequently, it has been introduced into various constitutional texts, such as the Peruvian (which describes it as a partial detachment of powers, specifically centred on economic, administrative, territorial, labour and organisational aspects), or the Nicaraguan (which undertakes to issue a regulatory law). In Bolivia, Colombia, Paraguay and others, recognition is implicit in the right to self-regulation.

Autonomy is an uncontroversial concept for those who fear independencies because, by definition, it is applied to peoples within States and entails a legal and regulatory relationship between the autonomous entity and the central State. It specifically expresses the nature of the relationship between central power and its social, cultural and territorial components. It is a way of organising political pluralism in a society built in a multi-ethnical manner.

Although autonomy, as self-government, will be specifically treated at a later stage, it is worth anticipating now that, for indigenous peoples, autonomy is fundamentally based on territorial maintenance, in its material and symbolic aspects. Without a defined level of autonomous control over the territory and its natural resources, autonomy is reduced to mere words. The territory, defined in terms of its objective, to guarantee the historical-cultural continuity of a people, embodies a specificity associated with feelings of belonging and identifying with a group, feelings that encourage a people to develop cultural dynamics capable of reaching high degrees of efficiency in its economic, social and cultural development.

Backed by an adequate recognition of territorial rights, reinforced with firm external guarantees and internal autonomies, the American indigenous peoples panorama could begin to see the light of day.

a) Minimum content of indigenous territorial autonomy
The territorial autonomy of indigenous peoples is defined on the basis of:

- Autonomous control of the lands and natural resources. Autonomy implies externally recognised competence to self-regulate a specific area.

- Use and administration autonomy that excludes the imposition of exploi-tation formulas and use regulations different to those determined by each people, according to their cultural singularities.
- Social, spiritual and cultural control over the territory and its natural re-sources, including the protection of knowledge on biodiversity, control over transmission of the values that constitute each people's economic eth-ics as well as the capacity to self-generate knowledge within the new inter-cultural contexts.
- Freedom to organise the internal redistribution of rights and obligations among members, in order to establish internal law subjects and to regulate transmission.
- Economic control of the variables that can affect the production, reposition and redistribution social relationships of the natural resources (among others, free determination for development.)
- A regulatory framework for relationships with the rest of the socio-politi-cal, central or decentralised entities, to provide legal protection guarantees and efficient reaction against perturbations, defined spheres of compe-tence and adequately designed dispute resolution channels.
- A sphere of jurisdiction over the territory that allows internal regulation of tenure and the use of the natural resources, as well as external respect to-wards these regulations and towards the local groups responsible for their application.

Given the above points and, as already mentioned, we can see that the concept of indigenous territory has political connotations that place it outside the sphere of property rights. Although, in terms of recognition, as we have attempted to dem-onstrate above, it passes the test of intercultural legal comprehension and rea-sonableness, its essence calls for a specific constitutional treatment.

The American constitutions that have taken a step forward towards this defi-nition, i.e., a large number of those in force, highlight the differences between common property, (evidencing a different legal substance) but without plunging into a creative act that, once and for all, could adequately institutionalise the real-ity of American countries' spatially multi-ethnic make-up.[2] They refer to at-tributes but they fail to define essences and aims.

b) Integration of the territorial components in the country's political and ter-ritorial structure

The problem of how to incorporate these autonomous territories into the nation-al territory, politically defined as unitary and sovereign, will depend on a multi-tude of circumstances and on the different historical processes. There are already numerous experiences and projects that can be of help: Colombian territorial en-

tities as well as the proper Indigenous Reserves (defined as socio-political units), the municipalisation Bolivian project, Guatemala's Auxiliary Administrative Areas or the Autonomy Law in Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast. But there are also others that are much more consolidated, such as, the statute of the Abya-Yala District in Panama, the (indigenous) Autonomous Government of Greenland, the Spanish Autonomous Regions, the Helvetic Confederation (one of the cases given a better treatment) or the federal structure of the USA, to quote a few of the most familiar examples.

If countries like Spain and Switzerland, where a fairly uniform socio-cultural substrate exists, have understood the need to come to a peaceful and convenient solution in regard to the spatial-cultural singularities present in these countries, hesitation to tackle, once and for all, the spatial and autonomous problematics of American indigenous peoples can only be justified through petty excuses.

c) The eminent control of the State over the natural resources and indigenous territorial autonomy

Indeed, it is the concessionary power of States over the natural resources found in indigenous territories, as well as the resulting royalties, that hinder progress in the institutionalisation process of the indigenous movement's legal vindications.

Land, waters, forests, timber, genetic resources, landscapes and, especially, subsoil resources in indigenous territories are a succulent treat that States are not prepared to give up. This is a remnant of colonialism that States try to hide behind sophisticated arguments.

And this is how, after indigenous territorial rights have been recognised, the State reserves a series of intervention opportunities inside these territories. On occasions, as in the Peruvian case, what is 'reserved' surpasses by far what has been conceded, disfiguring its essence in a lamentable caricature of territoriality.

This point is transcendental, given that the greatest problems affecting indigenous peoples (including the genocide of many of them) stem from these control rights that the State reserves itself (forestry, mining and oil concessions) and which, very often give rise to serious perturbations that cause the disappearance of entire peoples.

It is important to be clear on this issue. In Peru, a group like the Nomatsiguenga is currently in a desperate situation because of the economic interests of four large timber companies. In a short period of 25 years, the Harakmbut groups have been demographically reduced as a consequence of the perturbations caused by the direct or indirect effects of auriferous mining and other territorial intrusions. The Quechua and Achuar groups of the Tigre and Corrientes Rivers are experiencing serious survival difficulties due to the impact caused by the thirty-year presence of the company OXY in the area.

It would seem that the general answer to this is silence and acceptance that these interests are untouchable. Whenever oil is found, everything else takes second place - including the livelihood of a people.

If the reasons for these control reserves are founded on important national interests, we should be able to see what important interests have been enhanced through these exploitations. Human dignity? Healthy environment? National protection? Balanced growth? Any of the ones constitutionally defined as of high interest? - reason and foundation of the delegation of power to the State by its citizens.

Just to touch on the question of national growth, we should point out that, for example, in Peru the Districts along the northern border, where oil was extracted during a period of 30 years, have all been officially categorised as 'extremely poor'. That, after 30 years of extraction, the company has transferred its rights, without any civil servant having claimed compliance with the exit plan or supervised environmental damage. That the River Tigre has been left incapacitated for meeting the needs of the population and that the Quechua and Achuar groups of the region have been left traumatised by the experience. Today only remnants of the nature that was remain, and a sad feeling of abandonment is palpable both in the environment and the people.

Given the correlation of existing forces, indigenous peoples have no other choice but to accept the unavoidable and they fight for the proceedings in an effort to prevent further damage. But we are not aware of any mining or oil company that, in the extraction phase, has not deteriorated the indigenous territory to the extent of incapacitating it for its end use. This is why, despite this curious consensus of not being able to say no, we believe that, the most prudent, the rule, should be the opposite, i.e., the most sensible solution would be to only authorise an activity when the group agrees to it, when the activity is compatible with the end use of the indigenous territory, when the activity is backed by sufficient guarantees and when, in practice, these guarantees are truly met. If, in natural protected areas, certain dangerous activities that are incompatible with the finality of the area are prohibited – would it not be more necessary to establish such limitations when an entire people's survival is at stake?

In any case, this is such a controversial issue! The interests at stake are so large (on both sides), and so powerful (on one side), that the debate becomes distorted and does not focus on what is legally at play: social prioritisation (reflected in the Constitution) of the national interests (it is worth remembering that the Peruvian Constitution stipulates, in its heading, that the protection of human beings and their dignity is the supreme objective of society and the State). The fact that oil happens to be in far-away lands (ultra-peripheries) and that the victims are indigenous peoples, prejudicially limits the responsibility of the criterion. We do not believe that, in order to allow the State to enjoy its royalties, people were willing to resign themselves to receiving poisoned water for their families or to being

deprived of their nourishment, peace, health, etc. But this is what happens, and if in the eyes of the Constitution we are all equal, indigenous families have every right to protest about this fundamental rights abuse.

This is why we believe in the need to seriously consider the recognition of an effective autonomy for indigenous peoples that will enable them to enjoy their territories.

An initial incompatibility hindering a meeting point between the legal perspectives of the States and that of Indigenous Peoples' is precisely, as we have mentioned earlier, the legal disintegration of nature's elements, which is characteristic of State Law- as a system centred on the economic uses of the different resources. From the economic perspective of State Law, divisibility is essential; from the perspective of indigenous peoples' personal experience, what is essential is a combination that encompasses, not just the integrity of the territory, but its identification with the people that inhabit it - the relationship that the ILO 169 Convention characterises as essential for the cultures and spiritual values of indigenous peoples. A space that cannot be interchanged with any other.

If this feature is recognised, and it defines de legal asset to be protected, it cannot be subjected to the disintegration of its integral parts (fauna, flora, sacred spaces, rivers, lakes) without risk of destruction, deterioration or alteration of its essence and its finality.

There is no doubt that the uses of the water, fire-wood, timber or the resources of the forests are, in themselves, of vital importance to indigenous peoples, but we base ourselves on the hypothesis that, among indigenous peoples, these represent much more than a mere combination of resources. From the indigenous perspective, water, living beings and forest resources are not just material, but symbolic elements, specifically linked to the integral habitat that maintain the subjective feelings of property, identity and dignity, as well as the cultural dynamics of the people, under cultural control.

The basis of the local interests is not limited to the conservation of the natural resources or their sustainable use which, admittedly, is vital to their historical continuity, but it centres, to a greater extent, on the level of control that the inhabitants can maintain over an area – the territory – conceived as a territorial remnant safeguarded not only from depredation but also from external conquest.

Without doubt, the forests, lakes, streams, hills, waterfalls, nature's forces, rivers, fauna and flora that make up the territory, constitute the most important reference to the collective identity of the different families, communities and other indigenous territorial entities. We should remember that, in the Amazon, the forest, and not the floor, is the natural sustenance. To disassociate the treatment of forest, fauna, water and genetic resources from the space that they belong, is an attack similar to the one suffered by the Andean indigenous peoples during the conquest.

And, given the fact that the device employed in this attack is the law (a science whose end objectives include social justice) and that law claims legal multi-culturalism in response to the constitutional multi-ethnicity of American countries, a major challenge for the indigenous movement is to influence the law, in an effort to adjust it to these justice criteria.

The eminent control expressed by the State's sovereignty is not in question. What is questioned is the freedom to randomly decide the granting of rights to third parties to intrude, pillage, and on many occasions, destroy an asset considered of historical transcendence for a people's survival. This concept of colonial warehouse from which anyone can take what he needs and then throw away the wrapper goes against the meaning of the State's sovereignty.

For indigenous peoples, territorial autonomy - expressed in practical terms as functional and non-declaratory - is a fundamental aspect to vindicate. An autonomy where each people define their territorial uses according to their consuetudinary law.

d) Social indigenous organisation and territorial autonomy

In the organisation structuring process of indigenous peoples, the relationships generated around the management of the forests and the territory play a fundamental role. This may well be the basic element through which the group of families, communities or any other territorial entity perceive themselves as one people. The importance of not artificially altering these relationships and social processes, built around joint territorial management, is directly related to the importance of maintaining the vitality of the collective identity.

Indigenous peoples embed themselves in a territorial base and this common bond with the land of their ancestors is one of the elements that steer their structuring processes. Indeed, in indigenous peoples' organisation structuring processes, the relationship with the territories' management has played a fundamental role.

A number of administrative bodies have taken on, occasionally or permanently, various specific roles in the different tasks needed to provide territorial protection, whether of a material or legal nature. None, however, have assumed their entitlement exclusively and the 'common' has always re-emerged whenever any of these administrative bodies have sought special rights for themselves.

This 'conceptual' indivisibility purpose seems to centre on the global entitlement to the territorial heritage, a type of right that could be mistaken with a sovereignty concept embodied in ample collective-identity circles.

However, the uses would be linked, in various ways, to social units of different inclusion levels. If we had to illustrate the idea that we seem to perceive from this, we would draw a diagram with numerous concentric circles reflecting increasingly enveloping group identity units linked to the specific uses of specific

spaces. The accessible uses and benefits in the different spaces tend to be distributed according to a specific type of social structure.

The following example illustrates the manner in which each indigenous people establish these relationships in accordance with their consuetudinary law:

In an expression like, the lands of the Kiak family, from the Tsamajén lineage of the Mamayak Community of the Aguaruna Jívaro village of the Cenepa, they would be describing, from inside outwards, concentric circles of collective identification (Kiak family – Tsamajén lineage– Mamayak Community – Cenepa Valley – Aguaruna Jívaro Village) related to specific spaces as well as to specific benefits and responsibilities stemming from these spaces.

In general, the uses (benefits and responsibilities) are gradually conceptually structured from inside outwards, from the more purely economic and domestic uses to other uses (benefits and responsibilities) of a social, administrative, political or spiritual nature, according to each circle's progressive social inclusion.

A vision like this one could explain the reason why, throughout history, different institutional subjects appear spearheading different heritage protection initiatives and why, in different conjunctures, they take a back seat. How the community reacts to any initiative from institutional subjects of a social inclusion circle that seek to obtain benefits or attributions corresponding to other circles of a superior level and also, how those specific subjects react when the community tries to ignore or sacrifice the rights corresponding to it based on its position within each of the circles.

An explanation like the one above explains the reason for the lack of common ground between the legality and the legitimacy of indigenous lands and the difficulties of western legal systems to capture a reality that incorporates historical, cultural, religious, ecological, economic and political dimensions.

As far as treating the law subjects and the uses located within the first circles (family, community) is concerned, we could find more or less satisfactory answers in civil and agrarian law.

From there, a number of uses corresponding to more enveloping circles could resemble certain environmental law institutions (such as the Master Plans under the competent authority's control). For the more exterior circles, positive law would be forced to recur to political law institutions.[3] The fact is that it would be difficult to describe the complexity of the people-territory relationship through national law, which is the reason why the only sensible, fair and multicultural solution is to leave the regulation, protection and use of the territories and their natural resources in the hands of each people's autonomy. ❑

Notes

This article was originally published in 2001 (in *Revista de Indias,* no. 233 pages 619-647). The English version was translated from Spanish by Cruz Farina.

1 The United Nations' Declaration Project already incorporates it without restrictions. When big words knock on international Treaties' door, two things are for certain: they will eventually enter and, when they do, they will have to pay an entry- fee.
2 The one that has gone furthest is Columbia's, but because of its categorisation (as territorial entities) not because of a precise definition.
3 An issue that the self-determination argument of the proposal debated in the United Nations centres on.

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