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**Memories of Difference: Amazonian Oral Historians' Representations of the Past from the Present**

Through indigenous women's narratives about recent inter-ethnic marriages in the Ecuadorian Upper Amazon, this paper analyses these women's representations of the past of white colonialism as dialogues with the voices of powerful internal and external Others. It also shows how consciousness of alterity in the present is still forged of old memories, continues to be hierarchically structured, and contributes to the formation and transformation of modern social and individual identities in the context of the new global cultural economy. Finally, the paper reflects on the implications of these women's historical memories for a critique of our own Western conceptions of Otherness and difference.

(No citar ni publicar sin permiso de la autora)

## **“Sólo pensaba en escapar”: Historias de una mujer Amazónica sobre el matrimonio y su imaginario**

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Es el año 1941 y el mundo está en guerra. Escondida detrás de un árbol en la floresta tropical de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana, una hermosa niña de diez años siente miedo de que algo terrible le va a pasar, pero todavía no sabe qué es. La han mandado afuera de su casa, pero ella no se dá cuenta de que es porque sus futuros suegros han venido a su casa para pedir su mano en matrimonio. Pronto se va a ver forzada a dejar el mundo acogedor donde nació y el refugio del amor de su madre. Ella no comprende de guerras extranjeras o de la búsqueda de petróleo y caucho que sirven para alimentarlas. Sin embargo, estos acontecimientos, aunque sea indirectamente, jugaron un papel en la vida de esta niña indígena y aparecen como sombras y persistentes recuerdos en varias de las historias que ahora, ya como mujer madura, ella cuenta sobre su vida. La historia de su matrimonio arreglado es la que he elegido para analizar en este ensayo.

En el período de varios años en que he conocido a Francisca,<sup>1</sup> la narradora, ella me ha contado este evento crucial en la historia de su vida varias veces y siempre en vivos detalles. Aún más, en el proceso de tratar de explicar el significado de ese evento para su vida presente, para la vida de sus hijas, y también para mi propia instrucción y placer intelectual, Francisca ha visto la necesidad de contar otras historias sobre el matrimonio. Algunas de estas historias están basadas en el rico acervo tradicional de su cultura, en sus propios sueños y experiencias, y otras en la igualmente brillante imaginaria de la tradición Católica Romana, tal como le fue traducida por sus antepasados y reinterpretada por ella con la habilidad intelectual de una teóloga consumada.

En este trabajo, cuyo principal objetivo es comprender la importante institución del matrimonio Napo Quichua principalmente a través de la visión de las mujeres,<sup>2</sup> voy a compartir estas historias de Francisca con el lector a mi propio paso.

La versión de la narrativa de la historia de vida de Francisca que voy a presentar aquí es la última que contó en 1996 mientras trataba de explicarme sus sentimientos de angustia por el problema que su hija menor tiene actualmente con un marido extremadamente abusivo, y su preocupación por el reciente matrimonio de su hijo menor con una mujer no indígena. Tanto la creciente incidencia de violencia doméstica entre parejas jóvenes, como los problemas creados por los matrimonios inter-étnicos, constituyen sólo dos de los muchos cambios sociales que los Napo Quichua, al igual que otros indígenas de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana, están experimentando mientras son, una vez más, incorporados a la nueva modernidad que se origina en la economía cultural globalizante. Aunque Francisca contó su historia como una sola narrativa continua, para su análisis voy a dividirla en unidades temáticas y entretjerla con sus otras historias “explicativas.”

### **Retrato de la narradora en un marco más amplio**

Los Napo Quichua (que se llaman a sí mismos Napo Runa, o simplemente Runa), pertenecen a una bien establecida cultura de la floresta tropical Ecuatoriana que comparten, en diferente grado, con miles de otros Quichua de las Tierras Bajas. Tradicionalmente, todos los Napo Quichua fueron cazadores, recolectores, y agricultores de roza. A través de cuatrocientos años de contacto, primero con los conquistadores Españoles, y luego con la sociedad nacional, han adaptado sus estrategias de subsistencia al tributo en trabajo, al lavado de oro, y a la extracción de caucho bajo un sistema de peonaje por deudas controlado por comerciantes y patrones. Este sistema se acaba a mediados de este siglo, y desde entonces los Runa se han acomodado y resistido grandes cambios “modernizantes” originados por la colonización, la explotación de petróleo, la urbanización, y la consolidación del poder del estado en toda la región Amazónica, conocida como el Oriente. En la década de 1990, la preocupación internacional por el destino del bosque tropical ha atraído a muchos ambientalistas y ecoturistas a esta área. Han bastado unos pocos matrimonios entre hombres y mujeres Napo Quichua con

estos extranjeros para causar considerable preocupación entre las mujeres indígenas, y para ser el objeto de sabrosos chismes y de más serias conversaciones sobre las prácticas matrimoniales.

Aunque los Napo Quichua tuvieron contactos ocasionales con los diferentes sacerdotes que acompañaron a los conquistadores españoles desde el siglo dieciseis, y con los Jesuitas desde el siglo diecisiete, la presente tradición oral indígena acerca del Cristianismo se remonta al siglo diecinueve cuando los Jesuitas, junto con las religiosas del Buen Pastor, volvieron para establecer una misión en la zona de Tena-Archidona hasta 1896, año en que fueron expulsados por el gobierno Liberal de Eloy Alfaro. En 1922, la Orden de los Josefinos, en colaboración con las Hermanas Doroteas y Murialdinas fundó una misión en el territorio de los Napo Quichua que continúa hasta hoy día. Cinco años mas tarde, un pequeño grupo de Protestantes Evangélicos entró al área Amazónica y comenzó a competir agresivamente con las órdenes Católicas. Desde entonces, el número de sectas Evangélicas que operan en esta área se han multiplicado, aunque su éxito en crear nuevos conversos no es relativamente muy significativo.

Francisca es una mujer de unos 60 años. En su cultura se la considera una *rucumama*, es decir, una respetada anciana. Su marido vive todavía y de sus tres hijas mujeres y dos hijos varones casados, Francisca tiene 22 nietos. Ella se autoidentifica como Quichua hablante del área del río Pano, que incluye el pequeño pueblo del mismo nombre, ubicado a unos pocos kilómetros de Tena, la Capital de la Provincia del Napo. En tiempos pasados, varios grupos residenciales compuestos de un número de grupos de parentesco, conocidos como *muntuns*, y generalmente dominados por una figura masculina, vivían todos en un conjunto de casas en un asentamiento. En los últimos treinta años, más o menos, debido a migraciones, escasez de tierras, y otros factores como la creciente preferencia por la residencia matrimonial neolocal, ha habido una tendencia a la atomización de estos grupos en unidades residenciales más pequeñas, cuya composición varía considerablemente. Al separarse en varios asentamientos a lo largo del río Napo y sus tributarios, los diferentes muntuns adquirieron características lingüísticas y culturales distintivas que con el tiempo se transformaron en estereotipos mútuos y en pequeñas rivalidades, algunas de las cuales se asentúan y se actualizan en las ocasiones de matrimonios entre hombres y mujeres de diferentes muntuns, como fue el caso de Francisca, cuyo marido proviene de uno de los muntuns del área de Archidona, la segunda ciudad más importante de esta región.

Los Napo Quichua tienen un sistema de parentesco bilateral y, siguiendo la costumbre Española, los niños heredan los apellidos del padre y de la madre. Sin embargo, las mujeres se apartan de esa costumbre porque no cambian su nombre después de casadas. El *ayllu*, la principal unidad de parentesco, puede ser definida como una categoría social compuesta de tres generaciones de familias extensas. Todos los miembros del *ayllu* son considerados parientes consanguíneos, pero en casos individuales se hacen distinciones entre parientes consanguíneos “cercaños” o “verdaderos” (*quiquin ayllu* o *ayllu pura*), y parientes distantes (*caru ayllu*). El *ayllu* es la institución que establece los límites de las regulaciones matrimoniales, que generalmente prohíben las uniones con parientes cercaños, y especialmente con todos aquellos clasificados como primos hermanos. El origen de este tabú inclusivo puede residir en la temprana y persistente influencia del Cristianismo entre los Napo Quichua, ya que los Canelos Quichua, lo mismo que otros grupos indígenas de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana, muestran una preferencia por los matrimonios entre primos cruzados (Véase Whitten 1984 para los Canelos Quichua; Taylor 1983 para los grupos Jivaro; Rival 1996 para los Huaorani). Una vez que se ha realizado un matrimonio, los padres del novio y de la novia pueden referirse respetuosamente y recíprocamente como *auya* (parientes afines). Sin embargo, dada la preferencia tradicional por la residencia virilocal, una mujer que se convierte en *cachun* (nuera) es tratada primordialmente como un Otro subordinado por sus suegros y debe demostrar su respeto a través de la adherencia estricta a una etiqueta asimétrica de términos de parentesco, mientras que las reglas para el yerno (*masha*) son considerablemente más flexibles.<sup>3</sup>

Las fuentes etnohistóricas (Dickey 1924, Jouanen 1977; Orton 1876; Rice 1903; Porras Garcés 1955; Villavicencio 1984; Wavrin 1948) proveen una amplia evidencia para confirmar que, aún antes de la segunda llegada de los Jesuitas a la zona de Tena-Archidona, los Napo Quichua habían sido ya Cristianizados, al menos nominalmente, eran monógamos, y tenían una forma de matrimonio arreglado con residencia virilocal que era similar en estructura y proceso al que describe Francisca. En la tradición oral, estas costumbres eran usadas por los Napo Quichua para distinguirse de otros grupos Amazónicos tales como los Záparos, los Achuar, y los Shuar, quienes eran considerados “salvajes” porque “tenían muchas mujeres,” aunque existe evidencia etnográfica de matrimonios inter-étnicos de Napo Quichua con Záparos y Canelos Quichua (Ver

Muratorio 1991; Whitten 1984). La práctica de matrimonios de intercambio entre hermanos y hermanas puede haber sido común hace unas tres generaciones. Hudelson (1981) los menciona como la forma preferida de matrimonio en las regiones de Avila y Loreto, en la provincia del Napo, y había algunos casos en el área de Tena-Archidona hace unos quince años. El status de soltero es considerado una anomalía, aunque ahora con mayor frecuencia, jóvenes madres solteras se encuentran viviendo con sus padres sin mayores conflictos ya que, a diferencia de esos casos en la sociedad nacional, sus hijos son fácilmente incorporados en la unidad familiar de los padres de la mujer.

Como en muchas otras sociedades Amazónicas y Andinas (Shapiro 1984:26; Millones y Pratt 1990:18), entre los Napo Quichua, el matrimonio arreglado tradicional supone varias etapas en un proceso que puede llevar dos o tres años para completarse. Su característica distintiva reside en el ritual que se lleva a cabo en cada una de sus etapas, y especialmente en el elaborado simbolismo de su ceremonia de boda (*bura*). Aún hoy día, cuando los matrimonios arreglados tradicionales son raros, y cuando algunas de sus etapas han desaparecido totalmente, la boda, si bien modificada, sigue siendo una realidad para todos aquellos que pueden costear los onerosos gastos.<sup>4</sup> También sigue siendo un ideal a alcanzar para las parejas y sus familias, aún después que han tenido varios hijos y que han realizado el matrimonio civil y eclesiástico. En un período de crecientes matrimonios enter-étnicos, esta sobresaliente característica de los rituales de matrimonio de los Napo Quichua, los distingue como cónyuges potenciales muy deseables para otros grupos indígenas tales como los Huaorani (Rival 1996:179-180). Paradójicamente, recientemente esta característica se ha convertido también en una fuente de tensión y conflicto cuando las mujeres Napo Quichua se casan con Norteamericanos o Europeos (localmente conocidos como “gringos”), quienes pueden ser cónyuges “deseables,” pero generalmente permanecen indiferentes o ignorantes del significado real y de la importancia de los rituales del matrimonio Napo Quichua.

No es mi intención aquí buscar el “verdadero” origen de este ritual Napo Quichua del matrimonio que es casi único entre las culturas Amazónicas, pero a través de las historias de Francisca, vistas a la luz de otra evidencia etnográfica e histórica, quiero explorar dos conjuntos de preguntas que han sido poco examinadas en los estudios de prácticas matrimoniales en la

Tierras Bajas de América del Sur (Shapiro 1984): las experiencias vividas de las mujeres, y el impacto ideológico de los misioneros Cristianos vistos desde el punto de vista indígena. Debido a su temprana situación de contacto y Cristianización, la tradición oral Napo Quichua nos ofrece un punto de vista privilegiado para explorar estos hechos en detalle. ¿Cómo se sienten las mujeres cuando son “cambiadas” o “vendidas” en situaciones de matrimonios arreglados? ¿Cómo se conforman o resisten su propia cultura y qué precio pagan por esas acciones? ¿Qué memorias se transmiten en la tradición oral de las mujeres que son distintas de las de los hombres? ¿Qué nos dicen los matrimonios de las tensiones y contradicciones dentro de la cultura Napo Quichua, o acerca de sus relaciones con la cultura dominante? ¿Más específicamente, cómo han traducido e internalizado las mujeres en su propia cosmología las enseñanzas Cristianas sobre el matrimonio y qué significados derivan de sus relaciones con prácticas “seculares”?

Al tratar con la historia de vida de Francisca se nos hace evidente el hecho, ya aceptado y bien investigado en estudios de historia oral y en psicología cultural, de que “el sentido del ser es un fenómeno esencialmente narrativo” (Stivers 1993:412) y que construimos una realidad significativa contando historias sobre nosotros mismos y escuchando las historias que otros cuentan sobre nosotros. Como lo expresa Clifford Geertz, “desde que nacemos todos nos convertimos en activos y apasionados ‘constructores de significado’ en búsqueda de historias creíbles...(1997:24). En la narrativa acerca de su matrimonio arreglado, su huida de la casa de sus suegros, y su deseado arreglo final de vivir con su marido en la casa de sus padres en contravención de establecidas normas culturales, Francisca moldea sus memorias de estos hechos para fraguarlas en un elemento central de su sentido de identidad. Ella selecciona cuidadosamente los personajes, las escenas, las imágenes, y particularmente los momentos y emociones más significativas para forjarse dramáticamente como una persona rebelde. Como otras famosas heroínas románticas, desafía lo ordinario, hace difíciles elecciones entre caminos bifurcantes, pagando un precio oneroso por su decisión, para surgir finalmente victoriosa de su experiencia como protagonista de su propia historia. El poder de la particularmente dotada personalidad de Francisca brilla a través del significado de sus palabras y del tono de su discurso, pero su historia, como la de muchos otros narradores de historias en su propia cultura, está

literalmente llena de las voces -y los silencios-<sup>5</sup> de otras personas significativas en su vida, proporcionándonos así profundas intuiciones sobre la sociabilidad fundamental del ser, su situación en múltiples discursos de identidad (Smith 1993:396; Moore 1994:140-144), y su inmersión en la afectividad de las relaciones sociales. Pero la voz de Francisca también entra en diálogo con discursos dominantes pasados y presentes, obligándonos así a contextualizar su subjetividad en las estructuras y procesos más amplios que afectaron su vida.

### **La historia de Francisca: sobre penosos escubrimientos y primera traición**

*Cuando ven a una niña que le gusta acarrear leña y hacer chacra, vienen los padres de un hombre y le dicen: “Esta niña es buena, la quiero para mi hijo.” Así es como me escogieron a mí. La madre de mi marido me escogió. Dijo que era inteligente, que mi mamá y mi papá eran de un buen muntun, inteligentes, y trabajadores. Así ha de ser la hija. Se pusieron de acuerdo para venir a pedirme a mi papá. Fui pedida cuando tenía los senos muy pequeñitos. Perdí mi muela del juicio cuando ya estaba con marido. Estaba lejos con mis padres en el río Ansu. Allí ellos [sus futuros suegros] me vieron y allí mi padre dió la palabra (**maquipalabra**). Le pidieron que no me dieran a ningún otro hombre, pero mi padre les dijo que vinieran a la casa para el pedido, que no lo hicieran en un lugar extraño.*

*Así es como vinieron a la casa para la **tapuna (pedido)** cuando yo era muy niña. Insistieron que querían una mujer de Pano y dijeron que me iban a cuidar bien. Trajeron un mono asado y también pescado. Pero mi mamá dijo que yo todavía era muy joven y decidieron esperar. Siguieron trayendo comida de vez en cuando por un año. Cuando yo oía que venían me iba a esconder en el monte hasta que se iban. No quería comer la comida que traían, tenía miedo de que me iban a poner un sobrenombre (**burla**) o iban a burlarse de mí. Yo miraba hacia la casa desde mi escondite detrás de un árbol grande, y aún entonces pensaba en escaparme. Yo sabía que estaban hablando de mí pero no sabía lo que me iba a pasar.*

*Después de un tiempo, cuando ya había crecido un poquito, ellos vinieron a anunciar que iban a hacer la **pactachina (compromiso)**. El **versiaru (cantor y tamborilero)** y el **tucaru (el que toca el violín)** vinieron y todos estaban vestidos para bailar. Las mujeres y los hombres vinieron hasta la puerta bailando. Yo busqué mi escondite en el monte desde donde podía ver y oír todo. Pidieron licencia en nombre de Dios, entraron a la casa y allí bailaron. Se saludaron con todos los hombres y mujeres y ofrecieron trago sacando de las **quisas (recipientes de barro)**. Tomaron toda la noche y al otro día se fueron.*

*Luego, pasando un tiempo vinieron de nuevo con comida para decir que iban a hacer la **bura**. Trajeron pescado y carne de monte. Dijeron: “Vamos a empezar a preparar la boda; nuestro hijo ya está grande y queremos darle mujer. Pensamos que podemos encontrar aunque*



sea hierba en el monte. Esto es lo que venimos a decirle para que pueda avisar a su gente.” Y mi papá dijo: “Está bien que usted diga eso, pero tome en cuenta que nosotros no estamos pidiendo una boda. Si usted piensa que su hijo necesita mujer, nosotros tenemos sólo lo que nos dan para comer y beber.” Y mi mamá dijo: “Si la van a querer, si es verdad que su hijo no le va a pegar, si usted le va a enseñar bien todas las cosas que tiene que saber para ser una mujer, entonces sí se la daré.” Ellos [los futuros suegros] se fueron de cacería, y cuando tuvieron bastante carne dijeron que estaban listos para hacer la boda, aunque no sabían qué bebida y comida iban a ofrecer. También prometieron ir a casa de los padrinos con una **shigra (bolsa)** de carne. Mi papá les dijo que trajeran chicha y trago. Ellos dijeron que la boda iba a ser en el Ansu. Yo me preguntaba entonces porqué me llevaban allá. No entendía nada de lo que estaban haciendo. Yo creía que después de la boda me iban a traer de vuelta a mi casa a vivir con mi mamá. Entonces mi abuelita que se llamaba Mariquita y mi abuelito que se llamaba Domingo me aconsejaron diciendo: “Mira hijita, tú no eres mayor, sólo estás empezando a pensar un poquito, tus senos recién empiezan a aparecer. Te están dando a un marido, debes irte con él como tu mamá te lo pide. Recuerda lo que te enseñó tu mamá: allí tienes que trabajar, cocinar la huayusa y una vez que les has dado de tomar a todos debes empezar a cocinar la yuca. Si no hay comida debes darles yuca con ají. Debes buscar leña, hojas para tapar las ollas, y paja toquilla para amarrar las hojas; debes buscar todas estas cosas por donde puedas. Ni pienses que vas a volver a tu casa mi hijita. En ese lugar lejano vas a enterrar tus huesos, allí vas a morir. Ahora te vas de mis manos. Yo ya no soy jóven para verte de nuevo. Yo soy vieja mi hijita. Cuando te vayas de mi lado me voy a morir llorando. Te están llevando para dejarte allí.” Yo tenía mucho, mucho miedo; pensaba que siempre iba a vivir con mi mamá. Yo decía en mi corazón: “No me voy a quedar.” Cuando mi abuelita me aconsejaba, yo ya estaba pensando: “¿Cómo puedo regresar? ¿Cómo me puedo esconder de ellos y regresar a casa?”

Cuando salimos de mi casa para ir al Ansu, sabiendo que yo quería volverme, mi mamá me dió una canasta y un **huahua (niño)** para cargar para que no pudiera escaparme en el camino. Era muy lejos; tuvimos que pasar la noche en el camino. Temprano en la mañana cruzamos un río y los potreros. Yo me dije: “¿Dónde me están llevando?” y no podía dejar de pensar cómo escaparme. Miraba muy bien el camino para recordar todos los detalles de mi regreso. Era un camino muy ancho, construido por la compañía [de petróleo], lleno de huellas, de zapatos de vacas; lleno de huellas de ganado. Los blancos sabían sacar el ganado por ese camino. Mi mamá me mostraba las huellas diciendo que eran de los zapatos de los soldados para que yo pudiera reconocerlas y tuviera miedo de ese camino. Cuando estábamos cerca de llegar mi mamá me dijo: “No llores mi hijita, no estés triste; yo te he traído aquí tan lejos; como decimos los **runa (gente)**, te estoy “vendiendo,” no trates de volver porque es muy lejos. ¿Ves este camino mi hijita? Es así porque por aquí caminan los blancos y los negros. Es el camino de los soldados; ellos te van a llevar a Quito, a la Costa, si vuelves por este camino te van a secuestrar,

*te van a dar comida hedionda, cebolla de comer y leche de vaca de tomar. No trates de escaparte. En el otro camino, en cambio, los ríos son muy correntosos, vas a morir si tratas de cruzarlos.” Cuando yo oía eso temblaba de miedo. Mi mamá me dió estos consejos durante todo el camino, pero yo lloraba y lloraba, y temblaba toda. Yo creía que ella se iba a quedar conmigo como me había prometido; yo era todavía muy niña para comprender. Cuando entendí que me iban a dejar allí con mis suegros hasta la muerte, me desesperé y allí mismo decidí que no me iba a quedar.*

*Hicieron la boda, y tres días después todos los invitados se fueron. Sólo mis padres se quedaron por dos semanas. Mi suegro trajo un mono gordo, pero yo no quería comer. Las hermanas de mi marido me llevaron al río a bañarme. Mis padres decían: “Ya se está acostumbrando,” pero no era verdad. Mis suegros me prometieron que me iban a llevar a visitar a mi mamá, pero me mintieron. Pasó un mes y no me habían llevado. Mi suegra era brava. Me botó mi machete y mi canasta para que no pudiera seguirla a la chacra. Debe estar quemándose en algún lado. Mi suegro era bueno; debe estar sentado cerca de Dios. El compartía su comida conmigo. Le sabía decir a su mujer: “¿Tú piensas que esta niña es vieja? ¿Qué te dijo Mariacu [la madre de Francisca] cuando te la dió? ¿No tenías sesos en tu cabeza? ¿Dónde estaban tus oídos entonces?”*

Francisca comienza su historia estableciendo sus impecables credenciales de parentesco y certificando su meticulosa socialización en manos de su madre y abuela como una perfecta mujer Napo Quichua (Muratorio 1997). Se identifica como una mujer de Pano, dando por descontado que quien la que escucha “sabe” que este muntun “naturalmente” produce potenciales cónyuges muy deseables. Pero aún más significativamente, Francisca afirma haber heredado de sus padres los dos rasgos de carácter considerados más valiosos en su cultura en ese tiempo: la reputación de ser una mujer trabajadora heredada de su madre, y la inteligencia crítica y el espíritu de lucha de su padre. Estos dos últimos rasgos no son particularmente considerados valiosos por los hombres como atributos de las mujeres, ni se espera que ellas estén así dotadas. Al enfatizar estas cualidades como suyas desde el comienzo, Francisca está ya bosquejando su retrato singular como persona, pero está también montando el escenario para explicar más adelante porqué su resistencia a su matrimonio arreglado le permitió ser socializada por su padre, un hecho no común en su cultura, pero un recuerdo que ella atesora.

Al mismo tiempo, Francisca menciona que la madre de su marido es la que la eligió como mujer para su hijo, cuestionando así supuestos bien establecidos acerca del rol principal de

los hombres en los intercambios matrimoniales. Puede ser que las mujeres Pano sean “dadas” por sus padres o hermanos en matrimonio, pero son ciertamente “evaluadas” y elegidas por otras mujeres. La reputación y el sentido de identidad Napo Quichua se adquieren principalmente a través del trabajo (Muratorio 1997). En consecuencia, se considera que sólo una mujer puede juzgar adecuada e inteligentemente las sutilezas que las tareas de una mujer implican, especialmente si ésta va a convertirse en su nuera. Idealmente, y particularmente en casos de matrimonios arreglados cuando la mujer era muy niña, se esperaba que ésta iba a recibir una parcela de tierra para hacer su propia chacra y que debía ser cariñosamente socializada por su suegra en todos los aspectos del trabajo femenino que la llevaría, en una fluida transición, hacia su nueva vida como esposa y madre. La realidad, por supuesto, es que la relación entre suegras y nueras es considerablemente conflictiva, especialmente cuando las suegras se ponen del lado de sus hijos en casos de peleas matrimoniales, como ocurre con frecuencia. Es precisamente porque su suegra no cumplió con estas expectativas ideales de su rol de suegra, que Francisca se siente todavía amarga y traicionada en ese primer período tan importante de su vida como nueva nuera. No sólo tuvo que confrontar por primera vez una violencia irracional de parte de una figura maternal, sino que además, la indiferencia de su suegra acerca de sus propias obligaciones, y su falta de generosidad, violaron todas las enseñanzas de la madre de Francisca, de tal manera que causaron la propia crítica de su suegro, cuyas palabras Francisca recuerda tan vívidamente al final de esta sección de su historia.

Sin embargo, la principal queja de Francisca acerca de su matrimonio no se refiere a su “malvada” suegra, a quien a conveniencamente ha mandado al Infierno para no volverla a ver, sino a haber sido dada en matrimonio cuando todavía era muy niña para entender y para tener la posibilidad de elegir a su marido. Frecuentemente me ha comentado cómo su matrimonio temprano le impidió ir a la escuela y aprender a hablar y escribir el Castellano. “De lo contrario podría haber sido abogada o doctora,” me ha repetido varias veces. Esta es una queja que he oído de varias otras mujeres de la generación de Francisca. Más que ser la causa de los matrimonios tempranos, esta actitud de los padres acerca de la educación de sus hijas estaba directamente relacionada con un temor muy realista de que si ellas eran mandadas a los internados de las religiosas, éstas las iban a colocar como empleadas domésticas localmente en casa de los blancos

o, peor aún, las iban a mandar a Quito a trabajar para blancos, y de este modo los padres no las iban a ver nunca más (Goetschel 1996; varios documentos en AGN). El mismo temor existía entre los padres indígenas, de que si sus hijos varones entraban a la escuela de la misión, iban a ser reclutados en el ejército y mandados a luchar en guerras cuyo significado nunca se les explicaba.<sup>6</sup> Aunque ahora la escuela primaria es obligatoria, la educación secundaria para las niñas sigue siendo un tema de conflicto entre las mujeres de distintas generaciones, y este conflicto todavía se centra alrededor de los problemas de la sexualidad y el matrimonio.

El camino que Francisca y su madre atravesaron para llegar a la casa de sus futuros suegros está preñado de memorias de colonialismo en las imágenes de las huellas del ganado y de los soldados, así como en los extraños gustos y “repugnantes” olores a cebolla y leche de vaca que antes como ahora evocan la cultura de los blancos. Es ese sendero de la aculturación violenta el que figura tan prominentemente en la trayectoria de resistencia de Francisca. En contraste con el lujo de detalles que ella nos proporciona con respecto a cada una de las etapas que conducen a su matrimonio, el silencio de Francisca acerca de los tres días de su ceremonia de boda es aún más revelador. Significa su total rechazo a ser transferida, física y emocionalmente, al grupo de su marido y prepara el escenario para su huída. Este es el núcleo central de su historia:

*Yo siempre tenía mi ropa y mi frazada en una shigra listas para escaparme. Sabía irme a hurtadillas detrás de la casa para planear mi huída. Sólo pensaba en escaparme. Por aquel entonces yo pensaba que podía huir como una gacela y así lo hice. Un día mi suegra estaba haciendo ollas;, ella me dijo que se había levantado muy de madrugada, pero ya cantaba el grillo. Mi suegra me preguntó que porqué andaba para arriba y para abajo al río. Yo le dije que me dolía la barriga con diarrea y que por eso tenía que ir así. Lo que pasaba es que poco a poco llevaba las cosas al río para huirme. Primero escondí el machete, despues llevé la canasta que me había dado mi papá. Allí puse mi frazada, un poco de sal, el pilche para la huayusa y el otro pilche que mi mamá me había dado cuando me iba a casar. Tenia dos pensamientos: venirme por el camino de la compañía, pero me acordaba que me iban a llevar los soldados y los negros y me daba mucho miedo. El otro era el camino de Pitua con un cerro bien alto y ríos que cruzar, pero decidí ir por allí. Al día siguiente, cuando todos estaban dormidos empecé a caminar por ese camino y luego a correr tan rápido como podía. Un hombre me ayudó a cruzar el río, como era verano no estaba profundo. Me puse la canasta en la cabeza y cruzé por*

*las piedras. En una mano tenía un machete y en la otra un bastón. Vine corriendo todo el tiempo, no paré para nada, sólo una vez para mirar si alguien me seguía. Bajaba un cerro y subía otro, corriendo todo el tiempo. En el cerro que se llama Huayusa tomé agua y luego de una larga caminata llegué a la tierra de mi abuelito. El me abrazó y lloró diciendo: “¿Porqué han dado a mi nietita así tan lejos? Yo ni teniendo diez hijas hubiera dado así.” Me sobaba la cabeza y me decía: “Mamita porqué te has venido así, no has tenido miedo de los pumas y de los **supais (espíritus)**?” Un camino que se hacía en tres días yo lo había hecho en un solo día. Cuando llegué a mi casa mi papá se arrepintió de haberme dado tan niña y tan lejos. Me quedé en mi casa por un tiempo, pero mis suegros vinieron de nuevo a buscarme. Trajeron trago, pescado, y carne de danta y me llevaron de nuevo. Yo me escapé tres veces de esta misma manera. Cada vez que me llevaron me escapé. Hasta entonces no había dormido con mi marido.*

Es por supuesto un hecho común y aún esperado, que una niña que es casada muy pequeña va a llorar o tratar de escaparse a casa de su madre por lo menos una vez antes de conformarse finalmente a retornar a la casa de su marido (por ejemplo véase Dole 1974:19-29; Århem 1987:134). Se dá también el caso de que, a pesar de la preferencia por la residencia postmatrimonial virilocal, entre los Napo Quichua la residencia uxorilocal existió entonces como ahora.<sup>7</sup> Sin embargo, no he encontrado ningún otro caso en que esta forma de residencia fuese ocasionada por el desafío de una niña a los deseos y presiones sociales tanto de sus padres como de sus suegros. Francisca simplemente los rindió con su obstinada resistencia a conformarse a una regla cultural que casi siempre coloca a las mujeres recién casadas, aún si temporalmente, en la posición social mas baja. Por el contrario, Francisca forzó a su propio marido a asumir esa posición subordinada en la casa de sus padres, ya que allí no tenía ni la más mínima posibilidad de competir con éxito por el respeto, el afecto, o el prestigio social con el padre de Francisca, quien era un líder reconocido.<sup>8</sup>

Aunque este importante segmento de la historia de Francisca está lleno de amargura por su falta de poder de decisión en controlar esos años tempranos de su vida, ahora en retrospectiva, ella considera su elección de resistencia como fuente de identidad personal y cultural. El escaparse por la difícil ruta “salvaje,” en vez de por el camino más fácil por donde transitaban los soldados, significa su determinación de permanecer siendo una mujer Pano, si bien rebelde, y su rechazo al camino forzado de la aculturación blanca. Esta es una elección que Francisca

reitera más explícitamente cuando se niega a ser tentada a la infidelidad matrimonial por los blancos. Pero antes de seguir los pasos de Francisca en esta aventura, necesitamos explicar el imaginario implícito en la importancia del matrimonio arreglado en la cultura Napo Quichua.

### **La importancia del matrimonio: un paradigma imposible**

La regulación y moralización de la naturaleza supuestamente “incivilizada” de la sexualidad indígena fue la preocupación principal de los misioneros, e interferir en las prácticas nativas de matrimonio se convirtió en una de las estrategias preferidas para obtener este objetivo. En la década de 1870, Jouanen (1977:90-91) menciona una carta de un Jesuita donde establece su firme decisión de acabar con las *pactachiscas*, descritas como ceremonias en que el matrimonio era arreglado por los padres cuando sus hijos eran muy pequeños. La fuerza, tal como poner al padre del novio en la cárcel en cadenas por un día, fue una estrategia usada por los misioneros para tratar de impedir los matrimonios arreglados, pero los Jesuitas también trataron de promover los matrimonios tempranos “voluntarios” entre los pupilos de sus internados, asignando un pedazo de terreno a las nuevas parejas para que fueran formando un asentamiento Cristiano; como parte de una estrategia fracasada de estos misioneros de lograr la sedentarización de los Napo Quichua. Un misionero Dominicano que visitó esta área en 1899 (1899:48) señala que los matrimonios tempranos, a la edad de 14 años para los hombres y de 12 años para las mujeres, habían sido impuestos por los misioneros para tratar de aumentar la población y de reducir la incidencia de relaciones sexuales pre-maritales. Los patronos blancos también apoyaban esta práctica matrimonial muy activamente como una forma fácil de incrementar el número de sus indígenas deudores. Más adelante, los misioneros también se opusieron con vehemencia al matrimonio de sus acólitos con conversos Protestantes. De las diferentes etapas del matrimonio indígena, tanto los misioneros Católicos como los Protestantes, ponían las mayores objeciones en contra de la ceremonia de boda: los Católicos porque ésta competía con éxito frente a la ceremonia eclesiástica, y los Protestantes principalmente por el hecho de que la fiesta de boda implicaba beber y bailar.<sup>9</sup>

¿Pero cuál fue el impacto del Cristianismo en las prácticas de matrimonio arreglado de los Napo Quichua? El hecho de que medio siglo atrás esta forma de matrimonio todavía era la

norma, que algunos de sus etapas todavía persisten, y que la boda continúa siendo la expectativa ideal de la mayoría de las parejas, nos llevarían a pensar que el Cristianismo casi no tuvo impacto en esta importante institución. Sin embargo, indagando más a fondo en la ideología y el imaginario comenzamos a descubrir la complejidad con que los Napo Quichua se han acomodado y transformado los significados del dogma Católico acerca del matrimonio y, en este respecto, es que reluce el pensamiento teológico de Francisca.

Su explicación de su matrimonio arreglado es una historia que le narró su padre acerca del matrimonio de la Virgen María con San José.<sup>10</sup> Francisca ofreció esta narrativa como una forma de “excusa” o “disculpa” por la decisión de su padre de casarla, decisión que ella todavía considera que fue “poco razonable” y “equivocada” por parte de su padre. Pero al recontar esta historia, Francisca también revela su propia ambigüedad acerca del matrimonio arreglado y de sus consecuencias para las mujeres. Esta es su versión de la historia:

Mi padre contaba que la Virgen era una niña muy bonita. Durante una fiesta, los viejos estaban buscando las mejores mujercitas. Pero varios jóvenes estaban ya enamorando a la Virgen y querían pedir su mano en matrimonio. Sus papás no querían que se case con el viejo José; entonces les dijeron a los jóvenes que se vistieran bonito y que gritaran fuerte: “Yo la quiero, yo la quiero.” En este mismo momento llegó una paloma con una flor en el pico y comenzó a volar alrededor del salón. María y los jóvenes dijeron: “Que la flor me caiga a mí, que me caiga a mí.” Pero no cayó en ninguno de ellos; la flor y la paloma se posaron en el hombro del viejo que estaba sentado muy quietito en un rincón del salón. Esta es la razón por la cual María se tuvo que casar con José y nuestros hijos tienen que ir a pedir la mano de una niña cuando cae la flor. En tiempos antiguos cuando no cumplíamos con este deber no teníamos flor [hijos]. Mi padre decía que así como la flor cayó para la Virgen y ella tuvo que casarse con ese viejo, así también nosotras tenemos que casarnos cuando nuestros padres dicen y no abandonar a nuestros maridos, de lo contrario no tendremos flor. Cuando José se dió cuenta que María ya estaba embarazada se puso bravo y le dijo: “¿De quién te has quedado embarazada? Tú has estado con otro hombre!” y se fue, pero un ángel le explicó todo en un sueño y lo trajo de vuelta a la casa. Por eso ahora cuando una mujer casada se queda embarazada, a algunos maridos les gusta decir que el hijo no es de ellos, pero ya no hay un ángel que les diga lo contrario y que nos libre a las

mujeres de ser golpeadas. Si una mujer tiene un sueño acerca de su futuro matrimonio [arreglado], y en ese sueño ella no quiere casarse con el hombre que sus padres le han elegido, se puede poner muy enferma.<sup>11</sup> Si en un sueño una paloma se asienta en tu hombro tienes que vivir bien y no andar riéndote con otros hombres.

En el pensamiento Napo Quichua, la versión Católica aceptada de la historia del casamiento de la Virgen<sup>12</sup> no sólo requiere tener fé en la encarnación de Dios, sino que también supone aceptar ciertos presupuestos cuestionables tales como la castidad de José y la concepción virginal, así como otros más creíbles, como la importancia de los sueños para la acción futura y el episodio de un espíritu poderoso que se transforma en pájaro. Pero, en general, la trama del matrimonio de la Virgen es extraño a las normas culturales Quichua. De acuerdo a éstas, es inconcebible que que una mujer como María -siempre representada como jóven, hermosa, y virtuosa- pueda haber sido presionada a casarse con José, cuya imágen es siempre la de un viejo. Entre los Napo Quichua, sólo las jóvenes que han tenido relaciones sexuales con varios hombres y han rehusado casarse con ninguno de ellos, o áquellas que desobedecen los deseos de sus padres en la elección de marido, pueden ser castigadas por sus padres casándolas con un hombre viejo, generalmente un viudo.

Entre los Napo Quichua, la versión Cristiana del matrimonio de la Virgen María con San José, ha sido entonces reformulada como el paradigma normativo del matrimonio arreglado en el marco de sumisión al modelo cultural más familiar de respeto y obediencia a las más altas autoridades en la jerarquía de parentesco. En la actualidad esta norma es asunto de controversia, hecho del cual Francisca es consciente, como se aclarará mas adelante en el curso de su propia narración. Aunque ella no lo “sabe,” siguiendo las normas del pensamiento Católico contemporáneo, Francisca no admite la intervención directa de los ángeles en la vida cotidiana de los humanos, especialmente si es para salvar a las mujeres de las furias celosas de sus maridos. Su pensamiento en esta materia, así como en relación a la infertilidad de las mujeres y otras desgracias de la maternidad, sigue la ortodoxia de la ideología Napo Quichua acerca del poder chamánico sobre el destino de los humanos.



### **Sobre la escatología y el matrimonio: el punto de vista Napo Quichua**

Esta área de la continuación de la vida después de la muerte y tres asuntos relacionados, ha presentado serios problemas a los filósofos de la religión, especialmente el de la continuación del matrimonio en otros mundos (Benz 1973:507-508), un asunto que está fuera de mi competencia. Pero los teólogos también reconocen el carácter mitológico de la imagería sobre el Cielo, el Infierno y el Purgatorio (Mckencie 1973:995-996). Este hecho ha permitido que la imaginación de los pueblos indígenas de todas las Américas elabore esta mitología en distintas formas para enriquecer las ya existentes mitologías nativas.

Los Napo Quichua conciben el cosmos organizado en tres niveles: *ahuapacha* (o el mundo de arriba), *caipacha* (este mundo), y *ucupacha* (el mundo de abajo). Consideran que “este mundo” está poblado, no sólo por seres humanos sino por otros espíritus (genéricamente llamados *supais*) que pueden moverse a su voluntad en el bosque, en el agua, y en espacios domésticos, adquiriendo formas humanas o animales. También tienen relaciones de parentesco entre ellos similares a las de los humanos (incluyendo el matrimonio), e interactúan activamente con éstos a través de sus sueños, sus visiones inducidas por alucinógenos, o a través de experiencias que los Napo Quichua describen como “encuentros,” positivos o negativos, y que pueden tener lugar en situaciones totalmente cotidianas. Dependiendo del contexto y del contenido de las situaciones que son experimentadas y explicadas, estos niveles cosmológicos son traducidos a los estratos Cristianos: Cielo (*Diuspallacta* o Tierra de Dios), Tierra, e Infierno, a los cuales se agrega el Limbo como un nivel “liminal.”<sup>13</sup> Las funciones de cada nivel en relación a la conducta humana también son aquellas asociadas con las enseñanzas Cristianas, aunque sus significados han sido transformados significativamente, como demostraré más adelante. El diablo Cristiano es considerado un *supai*, pero coexiste con otras variedades de *supais*, a pesar de los intentos Maniqueístas de los misioneros de reducir todos estos *supais* a un sólo personaje representando al Mal como el principal antagonista de Jesucristo. La imagen del “diablo-supai” es similar a las versiones populares de este personaje en el folklore medieval, representado con una larga cola y siendo capaz de transformarse en un perro negro.

Entre los Napo Quichua se cree que las relaciones incestuosas entre los parientes cercanos producen “niños deformes,” parecidos a aquellos vástagos (*supaihualhuas*) que resultan

cuando una mujer es impregnada por un supai. Los que tienen relaciones incestuosas son ciertamente castigados siendo mandados al Infierno. Así como los niños que no han sido bautizados, los solteros van al Limbo, lo cual confirma el principio que tanto los hombres como las mujeres se convierten en adultos sólo después del matrimonio. En una nota más optimista, los que se casan “bien” van al Cielo. A causa de la importancia decisiva de la ceremonia de boda, casarse “bien” significa no sólo seguir las reglas matrimoniales acerca de la selección de cónyuge, sino también celebrar esta ceremonia de acuerdo con las complejas reglas de intercambio y reciprocidad. Los castigos que pueden resultar por desafiar estas últimas costumbres parecen ser más onerosos que aquellos que resultan de no llevar a cabo el matrimonio eclesiástico, un asunto que Francisca cree puede ser siempre negociado.

La pesada responsabilidad por el matrimonio y la boda resta con los padres de la pareja. Francisca, cuya hija menor no ha realizado todavía la ceremonia de boda, explica esta situación como una “carga.” Bien si las hijas crecen sin haber sido pedidas en matrimonio, o si la familia del novio no hace la bura, se cree que las madres sufren un castigo poco comfortable, situación que crea una continua fuente de tensión y conflicto entre consuegros. Hasta que la bura tiene lugar, las manos de la madre de la novia y del padre del novio “permanecen atadas con grillos y sus brazos les duelen.” Esta es la razón por la cual, de acuerdo a Francisca, cuando finalmente se celebra la bura, uno tiene que buscar un buen tamborilero y cantor que “le pide licencia a Dios” para liberar las manos de todos de ese castigo. Sólo cuando los novios bailan y la bura está terminada, los padres se salvan. Esta creencia puede ser también la fuente de un serio dilema ideológico y psicológico para los padres Napo Quichua: entre el deseo de liberarse de ese castigo y la culpa que puede resultar, como en el caso de Francisca, de haber tomado muy pronto la decisión de casar a sus hijos o de haber hecho la decisión errada.

Como otros grupos Amazónicos (Véase Cipoletti 1987), los Napo Quichua cuentan historias de personas que, cuando han sufrido una severa enfermedad, han ido al Cielo y vuelto con vívidas memorias de sus experiencias. Usualmente estas historias son contadas para reforzar las normas de un comportamiento cultural específico y para proveer explicaciones adicionales de sus significados. En relación a las costumbres matrimoniales, Francisca me contó el caso de un hombre que había muerto dos días antes de que ocurriera nuestra conversación. Durante su

enfermedad este hombre se había ido al Cielo donde Dios le había mostrado “a todos aquellos que estaban nadando en las llamas azules porque sus hijos no se habían casado apropiadamente por la Iglesia.” Luego, “misericordiosamente,” Dios había mandado a este hombre de vuelta a la tierra para que terminara bien su trabajo de casar a sus propios hijos. Francisca explicó que éste fue un procedimiento mucho más fácil y más rápido que llevar a cabo una bura, porque el hombre volvió, hizo bautizar y casar a todos sus hijos por un cura en tres días, dijo que estaba ya “libre de culpa,” y se murió en completa paz.

### **Memorias de colonialismo y resistencia**

Si bien por una parte, a través de un largo período de tiempo, los Napo Quichuas lograron traducir los guiones teológicos Cristianos imprimiéndoles sus propios significados culturales, por la otra resistieron firmemente la interferencia personal de los misioneros en su vida cotidiana (Muratorio 1991). Esto fue cierto especialmente en aquellas situaciones en que los misioneros cuestionaron o trataron de desvirtuar la estructura de autoridad de la unidad de parentesco, como en los casos de arreglos matrimoniales. Los padres indígenas resistieron particularmente aquellas estipulaciones de los misioneros de que una pareja joven debía pasar un tiempo viviendo en la misión con el objeto de ser indocinados por los misioneros antes de consumar su matrimonio. Considerando los celos que la mayoría de la gente indígena todavía siente acerca de los votos de castidad de los misioneros, se entiende que tuvieron miedo de que en esa situación en la misión, sus hijas pudieran ser sexualmente abusadas. La preocupación por sus hijos varones era principalmente de que iban a ser explotados con demasiado trabajo.

Las religiosas tenían la tarea de indocinar a las jóvenes indígenas para convertirlas en “ideales madres y esposas Cristianas,” aunque siempre tuvieron dificultad en conseguir que las niñas se quedaran en el convento por largos períodos de tiempo o de que renunciaran a las enseñanzas de sus madres. Las mujeres indígenas consideraron el convento como un lugar de refugio temporal donde podían escapar de patrones o de esposos abusivos. Aún hoy día, las religiosas presionan a las mujeres indígenas que han sido objeto de abuso doméstico por sus esposos para que se queden y trabajen en el convento, en vez de ayudarles a recurrir a las autoridades pertinentes, pero muy pocas siguen este consejo.

Desde los tiempos en que los Protestantes Evangélicos llegaron a esta área, el último desafío de los indígenas a los misioneros Católicos fue “convertirse” a la nueva religión. No es entonces una sorpresa descubrir que, fiel a su propio espíritu, Francisca siguió esta drástica ruta de resistencia. La narrativa de su conversión al Evangelismo, nombre genérico de todas las sectas Protestantes, se refiere al intento de un sacerdote Católico y de unas religiosas de entrometerse en el matrimonio arreglado de su hermana. Como Francisca, su hermana resistió su matrimonio arreglado por sus padres retornando a la casa de su madre. Una vez, cuando los padres se fueron en un viaje de pesca, la dejaron en el convento por unos días al cuidado de las religiosas. Allí ellas le aconsejaron que deje a su marido porque éste era “un Evangélico y el mismo diablo.” Cuando la madre de Francisca retornó por su hija, el cura le dijo que “le iba a cortar las orejas para dárselas a los perros” y la amenazó con retener a la hija en el convento indefinidamente. Aún varios años más tarde, Francisca todavía recuerda vívidamente las reacciones suya y de su madre ante las injuriosas palabras del sacerdote. En sus propias palabras:

Nos pusimos muy bravas y mi mamá le dijo al cura: ”¿Es Dios que te mandó a cortar las orejas de la gente? Quieres tratarnos como animales! ¿Es ella acaso tu hija? La madre es la que dá a su hija en matrimonio, y si ella no quiere el marido que le dan, tiene que servir a su mamá, no a vos.¿Así es como me pagas por todas las veces que vine a la iglesia a escuchar misa?” Luego yo misma le dije: “¿Fuiste tú el que cambiaste los pañales de mi hermana o el que le diste de comer? Puedes mandarme a la cárcel, pero no hay ley que diga que no puedo reclamar a mi propia hermana. Yo soy hija de Basilio. Mi papá y mi mamá construyeron Tena, no vos. Mi papá trajo al primer cura cargado en su espalda. Tu, en cambio no hiciste nada, y todos ustedes se van a ir al Infierno y no van a ver la cara de Dios. Yo soy Católica y me tratas así, pero desde ahora me voy a ir a los Evangélicos. Ellos predicán en Quichua, vos sólo predicás para vos y para algunas señoras.” Cuando fuí a Pano ví a Guamundi y a Gilberto Tapuy (dos pastores Evangélicos indígenas) cantando y me hice Evangélica. Lo hice para desafiar a los Padres, sólo para molestarlos.

Esta no fue la última “conversión” de Francisca. Unos años después de este episodio se reconvirtió al Catolicismo, irónicamente por dos razones que se refieren a la equidad de género. Primeramente se ofendió con los Protestantes porque éstos no ofrecían ninguna oportunidad a las mujeres para poder ser pastores para lo cual, por supuesto, Francisca se consideraba calificada. Y segundo, ella se resintió mucho por la “pobre opinión” que supuestamente los Evangélicos tenían

sobre la Virgen María, a quien Francisca, como otras mujeres en su cultura, considera un poderoso chamán.

### **Sobre el amor, las relaciones conyugales, y la violencia**

Aún en casos de matrimonios arreglados cuando la joven no tiene nada que decir en el asunto, llega un momento en que hay que enfrentar la difícil realidad de las relaciones matrimoniales. El amor romántico puede no haber sido el motivo original para el matrimonio, pero el amor y el afecto, como todas las emociones, no son solamente “naturales” y personales, sino también cultural y socialmente construidas en todos los aspectos de la vida humana, y el matrimonio no es una excepción.<sup>14</sup> Siempre se están haciendo conflictivos compromisos entre los paradigmas culturales ideales y prescritos que la gente busca vivir, y las realidades de sus deseos y voluntades personales que, por supuesto, cambian cuando la gente madura y se acomoda a cualquiera haya sido el arreglo matrimonial que realizó. Debemos oír la última parte de la historia de Francisca para entender cómo ella logró resolver esos problemas en su propia vida, y dentro de las restricciones impuestas por su propia cultura y tiempo histórico. Esta es su historia:

*Querían que durmiera con mi marido pero yo me negaba. Por tres años por lo menos no dormí con él. Cuando quería tocarme, nada. Cuando estaba cansada me iba a dormir cerca de la candela. Un día me llevaron a Puyo para hacerme dormir con mi marido. Me pusieron a dormir entre una vieja y mi marido, pero yo me envolví bien apretada con una frazada. Allí tampoco dormí con él. Mi marido estaba bravo y celoso. Me botó la chicha en la cara, luego la derramó en la frazada y en el lodo. Venía a la casa borracho y se quejaba a sus padres de que no me hacían dormir con él. Oyendo esto me escapaba al monte. Todas las mujeres le recriminaban diciendo: ¿”Porqué le pegas? Acaso ya has dormido con ella? Si la tratas así no se va a quedar.” El seguía diciendo: “Ustedes me han dado una niña, mira cómo me trata.” Una vez me dejaron un tiempo con una gente blanca en Puyo. Si hubiera sido como las niñas de ahora, me hubiera ido con uno de esos hombres blancos. ¿Pero dónde estaría viviendo ahora? Estaría muy triste. En vez de hacer eso, continué escapándome.*

*Mi marido decía que me iba a matar con la escopeta, que me iba a cortar en pedazos con el machete. Y eso era peor; menos quería yo dormir con él. ¿Acaso Huagra [su marido] era gente? Ahora es más o menos, pero antes quería dispararme con la escopeta. Por eso es que todos los días le hago acuerdo. Sólo cuando me pongan en el ataúd voy a*

*olvidarme de las cosas que me hizo. Sabía decirle: “Archiruna, Archiruna, comedor de culebras, regresa a Archidona.” Ahora si me insulta lo puedo denunciar a las autoridades, antes no sabía nada. Tengo todo lo que me hizo grabado en mi mente como si estuviera escrito en papel. Por eso pienso que tal vez el marido de Juanita [su hija menor] no se va a arreglar. Sólo áquellos que son inteligentes y escuchan consejos, se componen. Yo sabía decir: “Me pega y me voy,” pero mi hija se queda con él a pesar de que casi la mata a palos.*

*Finalmente retorné a la casa de mi marido porque mi suegro era yachaj (chamán) y podría haber matado a mis padres y a mí. La tercera vez que me escapé ya no volví donde mis suegros. Entoces mi padre dijo: “No voy a mandar a mi hija de vuelta. Que el marido venga y viva conmigo como un hijo, le voy a dar tierra. La he hecho sufrir, casi se murió por escaparse,” y mis suegros estuvieron de acuerdo. Mi marido volvió de la compañía [de petróleo] enfermo de malaria y muy pálido. Lo podría haber escupido y dejado ahí mismo. Pero después mi madre me aconsejó que debía dormir con él y tuve que hacerlo. Ella me decía que si yo me seguía negando me iba a dar a un viudo, a un viejo que se llamaba Laticu. Esto es lo que le pasaba a la jóvenes que abandonaban a sus maridos . Les pelaban la cabeza y las daban a un viejo. Yo dormí con él después de mi tercera menstruación y comencé a portarme como una mujer.*

*Desde entonces no regresé a su casa, ni aún cuando tuve mi primer hijo. Antes de eso perdí cinco hijos. Los mayores decían que yo no pude tener niños por bastante tiempo porque estaba embrujada por mis suegros. No los estaba sirviendo y había quebrado la ley. Pero mi suegro lo negaba y decía que me quería, que yo era su huayusamama (la mujer que sirve la huayusa, aquí usado como término de cariño), que me extrañaba. Luego comenzamos a visitarlos más seguido y a ayudar en la casa. Me llevaron con ellos muy lejos a sacar caucho y les dimos las bolas al patrón que las vendía a los gringos. Mi suegro le dió un pedazo de terreno a mi marido en Pasourcu, la tierra que tenemos ahora. Es buena tierra y yo la he repartido entre mis hijas. Pero yo también trabajo la tierra de mi padre y ahí es donde vivo ahora, ahí es donde él quería que viviera y donde voy a morir. Yo aprendí de él muchas de las cosas que te he contado.*

En tiempos pasados la consumación del matrimonio no tenía lugar en el día de la boda, que se celebraba en la casa de los padres del novio. En algunos casos, dependiendo de la distancia entre los distintos asentamientos, la joven era mandada de vuelta con sus padres por unas pocas semanas, o dormía con su suegra hasta que se le pasara el miedo inicial. La ceremonia ritual de hacer dormir a los novios era la obligación de los padrinos, una ocasión que

iba acompañada de prolongados consejos sobre el futuro de la relación matrimonial. De acuerdo a Francisca, y juzgando por su propia experiencia al menos, los dos novios lloraban al tener que sobrellevar esa “penosa experiencia” por primera vez.<sup>15</sup> Pero ella piensa que jugar a “hacerse la difícil” y rehusar dormir con el marido eran también estrategias que “realzaban” el valor de las mujeres al incrementar el deseo de los hombres y su consecuente frustración. En su opinión, si las mujeres dormían muy rápido con sus maridos eran criticadas, y ésta es una razón por la cual las mujeres de ahora se han vuelto “baratas,” ya que ceden fácilmente y no reciben los consejos rituales apropiados. Esto también se aplica a los hombres, quienes al no recibir esas enseñanzas, son más propensos a pegar a sus mujeres, aún en la primera semana del matrimonio. Los hombres mayores también comparten esta opinión acerca de este aspecto del matrimonio, pero la expresan de diferente manera en términos de los “sufrimientos” y las “humillaciones” que tenían que pasar para pedir a la joven en primer lugar, para luego, después de todo ese trabajo, tener que enfrentar su “tonto” rechazo a tener relaciones sexuales. Como es una creencia, al menos por parte de los hombres, que ellos van a “domesticar” a las mujeres a través del sexo, su propio poder de control está siendo cuestionado por el rechazo de las mujeres. Además, la auto-imagen de los hombres en relación a la importante cuestión de su propia identidad está en juego. Si no “actúan” con prontitud, y “producen” un hijo al final del primer año de matrimonio, sus reputaciones sufren considerablemente, dejándolos expuestos a las inexorables e implacables burlas de tanto hombres como mujeres (Véase Muratorio 1991:63).

Se entiende como sentido común, sin embargo, que el sexo debe verse como uno de los aspectos importantes del matrimonio, pero no necesariamente ligado al afecto y al respeto por el cónyuge, que están basados principalmente en las imágenes culturales ideales del hombre y la mujer. La imagen que Francisca tiene de su marido se puede resumir mejor en los pocos versos que ella le dedica en un canto autobiográfico (Véase Muratorio 1994) que, como la mayoría de la poesía, es el medio preferido por las mujeres para la expresión de verdaderos sentimientos. Estos son los versos de su canción:

Yo no sé porqué cuando era tan niña  
me dieron este marido inútil.  
No sabe cómo hablar.  
Si yo quiero me voy,

para que mi voz se oiga en el viento.  
A mi marido puedo dejar,  
él es un hombre simple, no sabe leer ni escribir.  
A donde lo llevan,  
vá sin protestar.  
Si yo puedo partir,  
al Cielo voy a llegar.  
Soy una mujer Andi,  
hija del que fundó este pueblo.

Obviamente, en la opinión de Francisca, su marido no está a la altura de la imagen de su poderoso y rebelde padre. Más aún, como un hombre proveniente del muntun de los Archidonas (Archiruna), a quienes los Panos consideran como “malos pescadores,” su marido no puede cumplir con las expectativas de una mujer Pano, quien demanda que los hombres sean buenos proveedores de pescado. La única vez que he oído a Francisca un comentario positivo y entusiasta acerca de su marido, ha sido cuando recordó cómo él la llevaba a viajar a lugares lejanos en la Sierra o en la Costa, donde ella pudo acrecentar sus poderes de curación aprendiendo nuevas cosas de otros curanderos. Cando ella mencionó que en algunas ocasiones había “tocado con ternura” la “trompa” (instrumento musical nativo de una cuerda) a su marido cuando estaba enfermo, lo hizo también para recordarle con nostalgia los viajes a esas tierras distantes. Por el contrario, ella recuerda muy bien todas las canciones que su madre sabía cantar cuando su padre viajaba a Quito, y éstas ciertamente expresan una calidad diferente de sentimiento, más cercana a aquella asociada con la poesía romántica (cf. Harrison 1989).

Como muchas otras mujeres Napo Quichua, Francisca considera “irracional” la violencia marital de parte de los hombres. Cualquier tipo de violencia niega la sabiduría de la palabra, expresada en la calma y consideración de los consejos, y confunde el don del discurso elocuente, que es el signo de un alma poderosa. Esta es la razón principal por la cual Francisca piensa que su brutal yerno, quien es sordo a los consejos y sólo habla con golpes, no tiene remedio y no se vá a corregir. No puedo aquí discutir en detalle el problema de la violencia, pero en el caso de Francisca al menos, la violencia de su marido, aún antes de que ella se convirtiera en una poderosa y “pensante” mujer adulta, fué el principal factor que contribuyó a que ella no le



tuviera el respeto intelectual que otras mujeres otorgan a los hombres. Su encolerizado resentimiento continúa, como lo exagera dramáticamente en su retórica acerca de sus peleas matrimoniales, aunque reconoce que, a diferencia de su yerno, su marido finalmente mejoró su conducta porque escuchó los consejos de los mayores. Desde el punto de vista de una mujer, tanto en su canción autobiográfica como en la historia de su matrimonio, Francisca deja bien claro que hay límites a la violencia que las mujeres deben sufrir silenciosamente, y que éstas deben tener la capacidad de elegir abandonar a sus maridos en casos de violencia excesiva. Por el contrario, la mayoría de los hombres piensa que ellos poseen un derecho “dado por Dios” de pegar a sus mujeres si éstas los “fastidian,” aunque sea por un asunto trivial.<sup>16</sup> Esta idea es confirmada por un anciano que fue un famoso tamborilero y cantor (*versidor*) en muchas bodas. Los dos siguientes versos en una de sus canciones totalmente contradicen la opinión de Francisca y de otras mujeres, aunque no de todas, en este asunto:

Si mi marido me pega,  
debo quedarme con él.  
Aún me haga tener hambre,  
debo quedarme con él.

De acuerdo a la iglesia Católica, la indisolubilidad del contrato matrimonial es garantizada por el derecho natural y divino, y el adulterio es condenado bajo esas mismas leyes (Donoso, citado en Moscoso 1996:25). Los Napo Quichua han traducido esta obligación como el “llevar la cruz.” En casos de matrimonios tradicionales arreglados, su indisolubilidad estaba reforzada por el hecho de que en la cultura Napo Quichua los deseos de los padres tienen que ser respetados casi a cualquier costo. Francisca reflexionó con tristeza en la presente paradoja de esta norma tradicional cuando me habló del problema de su hija menor que está siendo abusada por su marido:

Antes nos daban un marido y con él teníamos que morir. No podíamos romper la cruz. Pero ahora nuestros hijos se juntan con los blancos y piensan como ellos, y esto es un problema. Todos nuestros parientes la aconsejan [a la hija de Francisca] que abandone a su marido, pero ella se niega. Ha aprendido bien las lecciones de los mayores. Tal vez demasiado bien. Ella dice que su papá y su mamá le dieron ese marido y que en sus manos tiene que morir. Sus padres así lo quisieron. Si yo hubiera sabido que iba a ser tan

bruto!

Si esta es la razón principal por la cual su hija no abandona a su marido es, por supuesto difícil de decir. Este es un caso complejo que involucra varios otros factores, tales como el miedo de la mujer de haber sido embrujada por su marido. Pero, sin embargo, es interesante que ella todavía siente que puede hacer uso de una norma tradicional como justificación de su conducta, mientras que al mismo tiempo esta justificación comienza a sonar irracional, o simplemente vacía, para sus mismos padres. A pesar de que en este caso Francisca arregló el matrimonio con el entusiasta consentimiento de su hija, como su padre, Francisca siente la culpa de haber tomado una decisión equivocada.

Se dá por supuesto que la norma prescriptiva de monogamia fomenta la infidelidad en las relaciones matrimoniales. En tiempos recientes ha habido más casos declarados de infidelidad por parte de mujeres Napo Quichua, pero la infidelidad ha sido siempre más común entre los hombres. Este puede ser uno de los factores que contribuyen a la “mala reputación” de la que gozan los hombres Napo Quichua entre otros grupos indígenas polígamos tales como los Achuar y los Shuar (Véase Descola 1996:253). Los celos sexuales por infidelidades reales o imaginadas son, en la actualidad, la principal causa de violencia contra las mujeres y una de las razones preponderantes de fracasos matrimoniales. La separación en estos casos es común, pero la mayoría de las parejas evitan un divorcio legal debido a los costos y al tiempo que lleva contratar a un abogado y seguir los prolongados procedimientos burocráticos.

### **Sobre arriesgadas tentaciones, perros diabólicos, e infidelidades matrimoniales**

En la teología Cristiana, la actividad sexual es el espacio de tentación preferido del demonio, y sus seducciones en este respecto están dirigidas particularmente a las mujeres (Benz 1973:479-480). En impecable tradición intelectual Napo Quichua, Francisca usa la narrativa de un sueño personal para comentar sobre este aspecto del pensamiento Cristiano acerca del adulterio. En este sueño ella describe su propio encuentro con el Diablo en su encarnación como un perro negro, y explica que, como resultado de este sueño y con una pequeña ayuda de la Virgen, ella logró evitar las tentaciones que le tocó enfrentar cuando muy reales diablos blancos trataban de seducirla durante los primeros años de su matrimonio:

Este fue un sueño que tuve cuando estaba todavía sin hijos. Ví a una señorita muy linda,

la ví muy claramente, como en las pinturas. Me mostró un perro negro muy grande, con una cola muy larga, que estaba acostado en mi cama y me dijo: “Si no crees, si te portas mal en tu matrimonio, este perro te va a envolver con su cola y te vá a llevar directamente al Infierno. Vé y mira en tu cama.” Yo me asusté y le rogué que me tomara en sus brazos y me salvara del perro. Entonces ella dijo: “Diablo, vete de aquí” y me ordenó que fuera a mi cama . Yo le pedí que “limpiara”[como hacen los chamanes] mi cama, pero ella dijo que no era necesario, que desde ahora yo tenía que vivir bien, En esos tiempos yo era gorda y bonita, mi pelo era negro, brillante, y muy largo. Aún los blancos casi me hicieron caer en la tentación. Sabían decirme: “¿Porqué has elegido a un Indio para marido?” Y yo comencé a pensar cómo deshacerme de mi marido; pero también pensé que yo no sabía Castellano ni leer ni escribir y que estaba mejor con un Indio. Esta fue una tentación muy grande, pero luego de este sueño cuando la Virgen me visitó, prometí no escuchar más malos consejos y abandoné el vivir con el demonio en mis pensamientos.

El Demonio no es el único perro que aparece en el imaginero Napo Quichua en relación a la infidelidad matrimonial persistente. Como Francisca me explicó, tanto hombre como mujeres casadas que copulan como perros, se transforman en perros, y cuando se mueren, sus espíritus deambulan gritando. El término genérico para referirse a esos seres es *suapai* (perro-espíritu) y al espíritu infiel específico se lo conoce localmente como *andacosupai* o *cajónsupai*. En tiempos antiguos, las mujeres mayores sabían romper un pedazo de la pollera adicional que usaban cuando menstruaban y lo colgaban en un árbol, o vestían con él a un palo. Cuando el *andacosupai* aparecía, olía eso y se escapaba rápidamente corriendo. Una puesta de sol roja era el signo para que salieran estos supais, y sólo un chamán muy experimentado los podía hacer desaparecer definitivamente. Aunque los misioneros Josefinos todavía practican el exorcismo de demonios,<sup>17</sup> los Napo Quichua son bastante escépticos acerca de la efectividad de esas prácticas contra los espíritus nativos.

Las mujeres casadas también sufren riesgos causados por otros supais que quieren enseñarles a ser chamanes dejándolas embarazadas con un *suapihuahua* (niño-espíritu). Estos supais sólo buscan a mujeres casadas, y como la mayoría de los amantes, usualmente aparecen cuando los maridos están ausentes. Las mujeres de los chamanes jóvenes corren mayor peligro porque sus maridos tienen que hacer abstinencia sexual por lo menos por un año. Entonces, las jóvenes esposas pueden buscar a otros hombres, y son presa fácil para los supais. Para entender

la particular preferencia en mujeres de estos supais debemos recordar la creencia de que sólo las mujeres casadas pueden tener el privilegio de ir al Cielo. Privados de ese privilegio, los supais tratan de robar las almas de las mujeres casadas como una forma furtiva y fácil de entrar al Paraíso. Como se ha explicado de Satanás en la teología Cristiana (Benz 1973:479-480), este espíritu tiene “un hambre insaciable de realidad,” y careciendo de la posibilidad de encarnación y de salvación, sólo le queda la posibilidad de robar a otros para obtener para él no sólo los placeres substantivos de esta vida, sino también los menos tangibles de la vida en el más allá. Al hacer esto, como Francisca me explicó, “deja a las mujeres vacías de sus almas e imposibilitadas de volar al Cielo.” Como en la mayoría de otras culturas, entre los Napo Quichua, las mujeres pagan un precio mayor que los hombres para poder reconciliar sus reputaciones con sus deseos.

### **La última senda hacia la identidad personal y cultural**

En la última parte de la narrativa de Francisca nos damos cuenta de las “verdaderas” razones por las cuales finalmente se resignó a dormir con su marido, y el alto precio que tuvo que pagar por su resistencia a las normas de residencia post-maritales y al servicio debido a sus suegros. Pero, aún más significativamente en términos de entender su sentido de identidad personal y étnica, Francisca nos ofrece una evaluación final de lo que ella considera los resultados positivos de esta crucial decisión en su vida.

Juzgando por el relato de Francisca, la atracción física no fue el factor decisivo en consumir su matrimonio, sino el temor. Temor por sí misma del escenario aún menos atrayente de ser casada con un viejo y de que le corten su hermoso cabello; y miedo por su familia, que hubiera podido ser gravemente afectada por los poderes chamánicos vengativos de su suegro. Ya sea por razones positivas o negativas, el poder otorgado a los chamanes en la cultura Napo Quichua los transforma en respetados o temidos intermediarios matrimoniales (cf. Macdonald 1979:110; Hudelson 1981:131), y en la mayoría de los casos son considerados directamente responsables por cualesquiera sean las consecuencias de esa intervención. Francisca vé el hecho de haber perdido cinco hijos en los primeros años de su matrimonio como el resultado de la brujería ejercida por sus suegros por su resistencia a cumplir con sus obligaciones de nuera. Al enfatizar la influencia tradicional de la brujería en el destino humano, ella no hace caso de la admonición implícita en el paradigma del matrimonio de la Virgen María acerca del castigo de

infertilidad (no tener flor) por desobedecer los deseos de los mayores.

El poder de los chamanes en controlar la sexualidad de las mujeres es un asunto que casi no se menciona en la literatura sobre el chamanismo Amerindio, pero todavía continúa siendo extremadamente importante en relación al matrimonio y a la violencia doméstica, asunto que mencioné brevemente en relación a la hija menor de Francisca. A pesar de esta penosa experiencia de la pérdida de sus hijos, que Francisca trató de remediar adoptando y criando a dos niños varones, ella termina la historia de su matrimonio con una nota positiva. La reacia reconciliación con sus suegros le permitió poseer la tierra a la que tenía derecho como nuera, pero su resistencia la llevó a vivir en la tierra de su padre, un pedazo de la cual fue otorgado a su marido cuando su padre lo adoptó como si fuera un hijo propio. De acuerdo a Francisca, el hecho de que a través del samai de su padre ella “heredó” su espíritu de lucha, es el factor que contribuyó a su éxito en ganar el argumento contra sus hermanos para retener ese pedazo de terreno después de la muerte de su padre. Entre los Napo Quichua, tradicionalmente las mujeres no heredan tierra de esta forma, pero ella pudo hacer uso de la ley Ecuatoriana de herencia bilateral para retener este tan preciado terreno donde quiere que la entierren.

Mas significativo para el sentido de identidad de Francisca en su propia cultura, ella siente que su individualidad reside en su habilidad de incorporar en sí misma, no sólo todas las valiosas cualidades de una mujer Napo Quichua ideal que aprendió de su madre, sino también aquella cualidad especial que dá prestigio, status, y respeto a los hombres: el poder de la palabra racional para luchar por lo que es justo. Como me dijo en otra ocasión:

Cuando mi padre me dió su samai me aconsejó que después de su muerte yo no debería temer a ningún blanco. “Vive como yo -me dijo- actúa como yo, que toda mi vida luché contra patrones abusivos.” Si sólo supiera Castellano, hubiera sido como él, pero heredé sus pensamientos y tú vas a poner los míos en papel.

Como una modesta escriba, siempre me he sentido abrumada por la difícil tarea de transcribir las palabras de los poderosos oradores que he encontrado en otras culturas. En el caso de Francisca, creo que puedo entender muy bien cómo se debe haber sentido Tiro tratando de transcribir los discursos de Cicerón en taquigrafía.

b. muratorio29

b. muratorio30

b. muratorio31



b. muratorio32

b. muratorio33

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### Notas

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1.El trabajo de campo en que se basa este ensayo tuvo lugar durante un período de varios años en la zona Tena-Archidona de la Alta Amazonía Ecuatoriana. Conozco a Francisca desde 1981. Desde entonces he trabajado con ella casi todos los años durante los meses del verano Canadiense, recogiendo su historia de vida y conversando con ella sola, o en grupo con otras mujeres Napo-Quichua, acerca de muchos otros aspectos de su cultura.

2.Existen varias descripciones y análisis detallados del matrimonio Napo Quichua y de su ritual de boda, principalmente desde el punto de vista masculino (Véase Macdonald 1979; Muratorio 1991; Palacio 1992).

3.Véase Macdonald (1979:86-97) para una discusión detallada de “*masha*” como término de parentesco.

4.Conozco varios casos de jóvenes que en estos últimos años han ido a trabajar a las compañías petroleras sólo para pagar los costos de la pactachina. Según Francisca, los costos de la boda significarían por lo menos tres temporadas de trabajo en las compañías para reunir el dinero necesario.

5.Notablemente, la voz que falta en la narrativa de Francisca es la de su marido, por razones que espero se tornarán claras en el curso de este ensayo, especialmente en la sección sobre relaciones matrimoniales.

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6. En 1941-42, todo el Oriente Ecuatoriano estuvo envuelto en una guerra con el Perú. Además de los problemas de fronteras entre estos dos países que se remontan a la época Colonial, se considera que esta guerra en particular fue ocasionada por la competencia entre dos gigantes del petróleo, Standard Oil y Shell Oil, por los recursos petroleros de la región Amazónica. Los pueblos indígenas tenían buenas razones para temer a los soldados, quienes mal equipados y peor alimentados, se abusaban de ellos, especialmente de las mujeres (Varios documentos en AGN).

7. Macdonald (1979:91-93) menciona casos de residencia uxori-local entre los Napo Quichua que ahora viven en el área del río Arajuno, pero que originalmente provienen del área de Tena-Archidona.

8. Basilio, el padre de Francisca era un *varayuj*, un líder que portaba la vara de mando; es decir un tipo de autoridad indígena creada en esta área por el colonialismo de los blancos. Como muchos otros, lideraba un grupo de hombres que trabajaban para los blancos. Trabajaba también llevando el correo y carga a Quito para el gobierno. Para evidencia de la resistencia ofrecida por Basilio a los arbitrarios abusos de los patrones y autoridades véase Muratorio (1991: esp. Pp. 160-161).

9. Entre las distintas denominaciones Protestantes, el matrimonio es un rito y no un sacramento como entre los Católicos. En consecuencia, los Protestantes no asignan demasiada importancia a la ceremonia de boda por sí misma, al menos no de acuerdo a los estándares de los Napo Quichua.

10. Existen otras versiones similares de esta historia del casamiento de la Virgen María entre los Napo Quichua que viven en el Bajo Napo, alrededor del área del río Aguarico (Véase Ortíz de Villalba 1976:140-141, 1989:133-134), y entre los que viven aún más abajo en Perú (Véase Mercier 1979:175-177).

11. Macdonald (1979:183) anota el caso de una niña adolescente que rehusó casarse con el hijo de un chamán, se enfermó varias veces, y finalmente se murió. Durante su enfermedad contó que había tenido un sueño en el cual el padre del novio se le había aparecido y la había atacado con una variedad de armas.

12. De acuerdo a la historia Cristiana, María permaneció en el Templo hasta que tenía 14 años cuando, después de haber recibido la revelación de un ángel, los sacerdotes le dijeron que debía casarse. Ferguson (1961:73) continúa con la historia: "Los hombres que estaban en edad de casarse tuvieron que traer al Templo su vara. Estas fueron dejadas en el Templo toda la noche cuando se había pronosticado que un signo iba a indicar cual de los pretendientes de María iba a ser favorecido por el Señor. Todo se hizo de acuerdo a las directivas del ángel, y en la mañana se descubrió que la vara de José, el carpintero de Nazareth, había florecido. Entonces él fue el elegido como esposo de María." Otro ángel aparece para tranquilizar a José y para contener su ira: "Después de casarse con María descubrió que ya estaba embarazada y 'como era un hombre de honor' quiso divorciarse, pero un ángel le dijo que el niño era el hijo de Dios y que había sido

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concebido por el Espíritu Santo. Obedeciendo al ángel, José tomó a María como esposa (Matt.1:19). Se dice que la paloma que representa al Espíritu Santo salió de la vara de José y voló al Cielo. La imagen de José como un hombre muy viejo proviene de narrativas apócrifas del segundo y cuarto siglo que lo representan como un viudo con hijos que vivió hasta los 111 años (Enciclopedia Británica, Micropedia V:610). La paloma, como es obvio en las narrativas de sueños de Francisca, es también un símbolo de pureza. Goody (1993:154-157) anota que durante los siglos doce y trece, la Iglesia comenzó a usar flores con propósitos educacionales en varios rituales, especialmente en aquellos dedicados a la Virgen María. Ella era representada como una rosa, un lirio, o una violeta. Las mismas flores comenzaron a recibir los distintos nombres de la Virgen pero, como también anota Goody, durante la Reforma “sus nombres fueron decretados ser ‘tontería Papal’ y despojados de su significado religioso.”

13. La Iglesia Católica nunca ha endosado oficialmente la doctrina del Limbo como un estado o espacio existente, por lo que ésta permanece como una cuestión no resuelta (Enciclopedia Británica, Micropedia VI:225). El Limbo es considerado un espacio “liminal,” una especie de área “límite” entre el Cielo y el Infierno. Para mi propósito aquí, la sección relevante del Limbo es la llamada “*limbus infantum*” o “*puerum*,” (el Limbo de los niños), la morada de los niños pequeños que han muerto sin pecado, pero cuyo pecado original no ha sido lavado por el Bautismo. De acuerdo a Francisca, en el Limbo las personas solteras regularmente deben bañarse debajo de una cascada para “refrescarse porque se están quemando un poquito.” La otra menos conocida sección del Limbo, llamada “*Limbus patrum*,” es considerada como un lugar de descanso transitorio para los Santos del Viejo Testamento hasta que fueran liberados por Jesucristo, y se asemeja al “*Docemundoi*” Napo Quichua, un lugar que se origina en el centro de la tierra donde se dice que residen los chamanes después de la muerte y las almas de aquellos que están aprendiendo (Véase Muratorio 1991). En la controversia teológica Católica Apostólica Romana sobre el destino de una persona en el período entre su muerte y el Juicio Final, la noción de Purgatorio se desarrolló como una suerte de compromiso, un espacio y estado intermedios donde a la persona todavía se le da la oportunidad de mejorar su pecadora condición (Benz 1973:508). Aunque la doctrina del Purgatorio se deriva de los conceptos Judíos que datan de los siglos segundo y primero AC, acerca del juicio de Dios a las personas de acuerdo a sus obras, sólo se convirtió en doctrina después de dos concilios medievales y del Concilio de Trento durante el período de la Reforma. Las preguntas sobre el lugar, la duración, y la naturaleza de los castigos del Purgatorio no han sido contestadas definitivamente en la doctrina Católica, y las iglesias Protestantes niegan la existencia del Purgatorio como “no-Bíblico” (Enciclopedia Británica, Micropedia VIII:307). Los Napo Quichua generalmente no mencionan el Purgatorio, probablemente debido a su diferente, más social, concepción del pecado, y debido a su indiferencia acerca de la oración para redimir las acciones pecaminosas individuales. Cuando le pregunté a Francisca sobre el Purgatorio ella, de otra manera siempre tan elocuente, me dió sólo esta sucinta definición: “Es un lugar -yo creo- donde uno se va a quemar sólo un poquito.”

14. Para una discusión comparativa del amor en casos de matrimonios arreglados entre los Achuar, véase Descola 1996; entre la gente de una comunidad Musulmana de Sri Lanka, véase Munck 1996. Los trabajos recientes sobre la antropología de las emociones son muy numerosos



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para poder citarlos aquí. Para el propósito de este ensayo he consultado principalmente Lutz y Abu-Lughod 1990; Myers 1979; Levitt 1996; y Trawick 1990).

15. Puede ser que en tiempos antiguos el mito de la *vagina dentata*, o la asociación de los genitales femeninos con heridas y peligro, existió entre los Napo Quichua en versiones similares a aquellas que se han encontrado entre otros grupos Amazónicos (Véase, por ejemplo, Gregor 1985:71). La única evidencia que pude encontrar proviene de Francisca tratando de explicarme el poqué del miedo que los hombres jóvenes sentían de tener relaciones sexuales con una mujer virgen. Ella dijo: “Tenían miedo porque pensaban que si recibían a una virgen, ella iba a tener una *pangora* (cangrejo) que iba a morderles el pene. Por eso los viejos solían decir al joven: “Préstamela, yo le voy a cortar el filo a ese animal.” Entre los Napo Quichua de Loreto (Véase Hudelson 1981:151) y del Aguarico (Palacio 1992:53-54), el ritual de hacer dormir a la pareja de novios incluía un muñeco en forma de bebé (*cari huahua chaucha* [varoncito fuerte] o *chaucha huahua* [niño fuerte]) simbolizando la futura fertilidad de la nueva pareja. De acuerdo a Francisca, esta parte del ritual de boda no se practicaba entre los Napo Quichua de la región de Tena-Archidona. Hoy día, en esta área, el simbolismo del muñeco ha sido tornado al revés. Muchas mujeres me han contado que ponen a sus verdaderos bebés entre ellas y sus maridos cuando no desean tener relaciones sexuales.

16. Para una discusión comparativa de la violencia marital entre los Achuar, véase Taylor 1979 y Descola 1996. Para la gente indígena de Perú, véase esp. Harvey 1994.

17. Hace sólo unos pocos años presencié un exorcismo Católico llevado a cabo por un sacerdote Josefino en la casa de una vieja mujer blanca en Tena. La mujer afirmaba que estaba siendo visitada todas las noches por un hombre vestido con un terno negro y usando un sombrero negro. Las personas indígenas que también estaban presentes en la casa me aseguraron que ellos consideraban el ritual perpetrado por el sacerdote como muy poco efectivo para tratar con este tipo de “supai.”

**Uses and Misuses of traditional Knowledge**  
**Dept. Talk Oct. 9, 1997**

**I. Traditional Indigenous Knowledge as field of study**

I.1 By Whom? Anthropologists, scientists, bureaucrats, environmentalists, indigenous peoples

I.2 Why? Plants, health, curing, management of resources (herds, fish, forests), land claims, large scale economic development, oil, ecotourism, “new spirituality” interest in alternative medicines.

I.3 Proliferation of ethno-studies :ethnobotany, ethnoarcheology, ethno...etcposes questions of ethno-vs non-ethno ,manipulation of knowledge to make it compatible with Western “truths”.

I.4 from indigenous point of view. As strategies of cultural and political empowerment. As sources of aid money and local income (differences between men and women).[ In Ecuador political strategy after fall of “second World” from a class to a purely ethnic discourse and incorporation into new hegemonic discourse of environmentalism in which nature ( natives included) is the new proletariat to be saved.]

**II How this knowledge has been conceptualized**

from obstacle to modernization and development to pillar of sustainable development.

From animistic religion to indigenous science

from cultural capital to “real” capital (concepts of utility and commodification)

within evolutionary models of primitivism to civilized to new “synthesis” (science and tradition)

as new moral paradigm of “salvation”: non-western cultures offering alternative models for rethinking universality and the issues of moral attitudes towards non humans.

Going back to edenic paradigm: tradition as purity, modernity as corruption.Re-elaboration fo

“noble savage” paradigm and indigenous self-identification with it in public discourse (e.g.

discourse (Julie) “respect for elders, and meaning of respect. And in Ecuador indigenous leader in government denying any violence in indigenous “culture”

From monophonic ethnography to multivocality and new bricolage???

**Consequences**

Reification of knowledge rather than studied as system of knowledge

decontextualization of knowledge

Eradication of knowledge/ eradication of indigenous histories

commodification of knowledge. Problem of cultural rights and corporate profits.(and Western justifications of it, e.g Body Shop gives money for Violence against women in the West)Shamans Incorporated and main pharmaceutical companies. Patent of ayahuasca (hallucinogenic) by US corporation.

Consequences of new prestige of that knowledge: for women in Amazon: new source of income as curers.(fuzzier boundaries between witches, curers, shamans in public eye, not internally)

Also source of travel for conferences, small ecotourist industries (see I.4)New pedagogies: problems of “shamanic schools”

Knowledge use to establish hierarchies and inequalities between communities. Knowledge use in official indigenous federations’ discourses to deny history to less acculturated groups and women).

Problems of authenticity of knowledge and its carriers and consequences when they “fail” to meet those standards. Western insatiable appetite for heroes and for debunking them.(e.g. Huaoranis, Kayapo, Yanomami, Rigoberta Menchu)

### **III Specifics of Environmentalist Discourse**

Native americans as part of nature. Perpetuates dualisms Them and Us

lived in harmony with nature (indigenous women’s point of view on these issues)

native americans as “pure” conservationists (different subsistence strategies)

denying history and histories of native peoples and of nature (conceptions of “virgin forests” versus anthropogenic forests and debate about the conservationist vs the destructive native)

\*\*\*by denying history and in search for authenticity deny problem of deconstruction of native populations and **deconstruction of memories**. Native use of Western paradigms (e.g.

Christianity) to give new meanings to their lives (explains transformations of oral traditions in term of the present) and fact that oral traditions are inscribed in **power relations**

memories essential in individual and collective identity but also as instruments of power to be erased and manipulated. Struggle for domination over remembrance and traditions.

### **IV Epistemological Issues**

#### **The character of knowledge**

Different expressions of causality . Distinctive paradigms to convert knowledge into everyday

practice. (Canadian example song, shamanism, cariboo; example Amazonia: explanations of environmental “disaster” “scarce resources”= lockers are rusted.

Do not translate easily cross-culturally.

Classifying, mapping, harvesting, (universalistic paradigm of science) fragmentation human experience. Categories that distance people from lived experience.

Impose paradigm of cabinets of curiosities or museums of natural history to lived culture.

Learning as situated in communities of practice

knowledge embedded in social relations with non-humans Indigenous peoples are likely to raise questions about **whose stories , who identifies events** , how is the meaning of **place** constituted rather than **What** actually happen (Julie 1994's article).

establishing evidence and truth in scientific knowledge and oral tradition

\*\*\*importance of the **body** in transmission knowledge;embodying knowledge (case Kayapo and african slaves in Brazil) (In amazon concept and practice of paju). Knowledge goes beyond linguistic representations

Role of shaman (true shamans vs.younger ones. Assumes one knowledge “shared” under paradigm of universal science.

### **Dualism nature culture--Human-non-human relations**

Dualism does not account for developments in modern science (producing natural events in non-natural ways. It is a historical product of the Renaissance.

Does our understanding of difference leads us to endless relativisms and descriptions of local cosmologies (also embedded in power relations[some knowledges more relative than others) or is it possible to find general trends towards **a unified analytical framework**.(possible alternative models to a dualist paradigm).that goes beyond the universalizing of science (which assumes the dualism, or the universalizing of spirituality (unified native religions with all the consequences of native orientalisms) or economics.(3 attempts Ellen, Palsson, Descola)

What is the role of anthropology in this task. What can we learn from native **perspectivism** (Viveiros de Castro). Or from native historians’ conceptions of US (the West).

Do natives have just one conception of nature?

The realm of social relations implies a wider domain than the society of humans.All beings are ontological equals.Relations humans no-humans as relations subject-subject. Affinal charming

of game and consanguine mothering of plants.

Societies based on objectifications of self-other projects same dichotomy subject-object into relations between persons and the natural world. (If this is an argument for change in social relations has to be an argument in the opposite direction to bureaucratization and compartmentalization. (No debt to nature, debt is relations between humans in a particular historical context. Concept of debt vs. Reciprocity.

Role of anthropology in understanding this aspect of traditional indigenous knowledge

If environmental determinism is dead why bother with understanding interactions between humans and other living and non-living components of their surroundings?

A) Real consequences and public agenda of environmental crisis both in North and Amazon

B) Globalization, ethics and politics of nature

Julie (1994) demonstrate how all social constructions, including our own, factor into social processes we are trying to understand .

Contextualism denies the capacity of abstract totalizing systems such as science and the market to solve basic problems of human survival. Sober recognition of these limitations but different from mysticism. It is an argument for recontextualization. .

MOA meeting for new MA  
April 24, 1998

Blanca Muratorio, Anthropology and Sociology

My ethnographic area of interest is Latin America, more specifically The Andes and the Amazon. I do fieldwork in Ecuador every summer.

Courses I teach that can be of interest for this program are: oral tradition, the anthropology of colonialism, anthropology and history, popular culture in Latin America, and the two new courses for next year: a) The anthropology of Memory and Forgetting, to be taught jointly with Julie Cruikshank, (here I am interested in developing a section on personal and public iconographies of memory). b) Visual Anthropology, a course in which I am planning to incorporate the interests, not only of anthropologists, but also of sociologists, art historians, museum specialists, and historians. I would like very much to have the input of all those interested in suggesting topics and readings, as soon as possible, to plan the outline for next academic year. I will concentrate on photography and film for the moment, but I am most willing to sensitize the students and myself to other media. I will also welcome volunteer lectures for that course.

Some themes in my current and future research that could be relevant for this program are: Gender and representation; representation (in narratives, paintings, monuments) of indigenous peoples in the history of Ecuador; women's artistic expressions and oral histories in the Amazon; and popular religiosity and gender in the Historic Colonial Center of Quito, Ecuador, combining ethnography, archival research on representation of religious rituals such as pilgrimages, the anthropology of food in connection with religious rituals (incorporating insights from the anthropology of the senses), and contemporary and historic cultural objects in relation to popular religiosity (including paintings, saints, ex-votos, shrines, etc). I will start preliminary research on this last topic this summer of 1998.

My other past and very much present interests are: the oral tradition of resistance as expressed in puppetry in different cultures, and the whole area of "folk art."

## **Ponencia Foro Habitar el Patrimonio.**

El debate que gira en torno al tema del Patrimonio y las prácticas de la vida cotidiana o los usos sociales de estos espacios de la ciudad considerados patrimoniales nos abren un campo de análisis para entender como ciudades latinoamericanas como Quito se muestran como escenarios donde diferentes actores constantemente ponen en juego y disputa varios discursos y representaciones sobre un universo simbólico, que se materializa en los usos y los significados que se atribuyen a estos espacios de acuerdo a las diferentes experiencias e intereses. Kingman (2011); Salgado (2008); Delgado (1999).

García Canclini (1987) analiza como el Patrimonio constituye un espacio de disputa "económica, política y simbólica", donde las contradicciones en su uso están dadas o modificadas por la interacción entre tres tipos de agentes: el estado, el sector privado, y los sectores sociales en sus diferentes períodos. En este sentido, las desigualdades en la formación y apropiación del patrimonio demandan estudiarlo no solo como cohesionador nacional, sino también como espacios de enfrentamiento constante y negociación social. En este debate la memoria juega un papel fundamental, el discurso normalizador de la "memoria institucional" Richard (2010) ligado al de patrimonio, desdibuja las voces de quienes dotan de significados a estos espacios y los atribuyen de sentidos como espacios de la vida cotidiana. Espacios que han sido construidos en un proceso histórico de luchas y negociaciones.

Lo que trato en esta ponencia es cuestionar el uso de una memoria oficial en la construcción de discursos patrimoniales en espacios como los mercados de la ciudad de Quito, en cuantos depositarios de un "patrimonio cultural alimentario" pero también como espacios patrimoniales habitados, (hablo en el caso de los mercados del CHQ, como San Francisco y San Roque). Y por medio de la recuperación de una memoria social, como construcción de una memoria colectiva de quienes han vivido estos espacios, visibilizar las formas de constitución y representación de los mercados en la ciudad y más específicamente de representación en el espacio público, como forma de visibilización, reconocimiento y construcción de una memoria colectiva.

### **Espacios en disputa.**

Los mercados de la ciudad de Quito se han constituido como espacios en constante disputa, entre la gente del mercado y las instituciones de gobierno como por ejemplo, el Concejo o Municipio, la policía, la policía sanitaria, las comisiones de mercados en los años 40-50, la comisión de higiene, la policía metropolitana, entre otras. Así como han habido varias instituciones como parte de la gubernamentalidad del estado que se han ido especializando en la administración de esta población y del espacio público en los diferentes momentos históricos, han existido también varias estrategias de apropiación y de resistencia de parte de la gente de los mercados y ferias en la ciudad. La memoria de estas luchas por los espacios y la creación de los mercados es un referente, pero sobre todo es una memoria colectiva que dota de significados a los espacios y oficio del mercado. Abrahán Azogue analiza precisamente como San Roque y el mercado incluido, es considerado por la gente indígena migrante como un espacio de acogida, donde se generan unas formas de ayudas específicas y reciprocidades que van más allá de lo individual y pasan a ser formas colectivas de atención y cuidado donde la "obligatoriedad de recibir a los recién llegados, se transforma en una norma moral". (Azogue, 2011. pp.23).

Estas formas de relaciones permiten crear redes y la reproducción de una cultura en común, pero también una apropiación simbólica del espacio por diferentes grupos sociales, como lo demuestra en su estudio Gina Maldonado al analizar las relaciones de los jóvenes de San Roque como nuevas generaciones de indígenas que han migrado a la ciudad y que se han radicado de manera permanente en la vida urbana, de igual manera se puede entender las formas de apropiación por parte de las mujeres considerando que este ha sido y es en la actualidad un espacio mayoritariamente femenino. Algunas mujeres que han participado en la fundación de los mercados aún se encuentra trabajando, sus trayectorias laborales están inscritas en redes familiares donde el oficio en algunos caso se ha aprendido de generación en generación y en el trajín del mercado. Cuando se visibiliza la actuación de los diferentes grupos sociales y las formas y usos que tienen cada uno dentro del espacio, se puede entender el entramado de significaciones que hacen de estos lugares, lugares de la vida cotidiana, más allá de las lecturas institucionales cruzadas por una serie de recelos de lo que son o deberían ser estos lugares de la ciudad.

Los mercados situados en el CHQ dan cuenta de estas dinámicas de resistencia y disputa, que se han mantenido como una constante hasta tiempos actuales y se podría decir sin duda



que en estos momentos se encuentran en el centro mismo de la atención del gobierno seccional por estar en espacios considerados patrimoniales y por tanto espacios en procesos de intervención, revitalización.

Una serie de documentos del Archivo Municipal de Quito y más específicamente de las Cartas y solicitudes al presidente del Consejo de los años 40 y 50s, y que las analiza Eduardo Kingman en su texto sobre los trajines callejeros, dan cuenta de las peticiones, reclamos y exigencias hechas por varias mujeres principalmente al Alcalde de la Ciudad de Quito, solicitando se reconozca su trabajo y se respete sus puestos de venta en el mercado de San Blas. Muchas de estas cartas son de mujeres trabajadoras del mercados pero también de otros oficios relacionados directamente con la vida cotidiana de sectores populares, por ejemplo comerciantes de varios artículos de consumo, vendedoras de pequeños productos usados, vendedoras de dulces (que ahora son considerados tradicionales y que se los vende en restaurantes y cafeterías restauradas en el CHQ, pero que para dicho momento eran considerados insalubres). Estos documentos dan cuenta de un momento particular en el que se pretendía reubicar el mercado de San Blas y la Plaza de la Marín. Tanto en estos documentos como en la memoria de las mujeres que trabajaron en el mercado de San Blas está presente la posibilidad que estas cartas brindaban para poder hacer conocer sus exigencias y peticiones, pero también visibilizan las constantes pugnas por los espacio de la ciudad.

Si entendemos a los mercados no solamente como espacios de venta y consumo de alimentos, por medio de la memoria de la gente podemos ver como se reconstruye la historia de la ciudad, una historia contada desde ellos, del surgimiento de nuevos barrios alrededor de los mercados, de los usos cotidianos de ciertos espacios de la ciudad y formas propias de representación en el espacio público, como las representaciones religiosas por ejemplo, que hasta el momento ocupan un lugar importante en la reproducción de la cultura como un "lugar común", que trasciende a la ciudad y a la ocupación simbólica del espacio urbano. La organización de las fiestas religiosas dentro de los mercados hablan de un saber propio, "hay que saber pasar la fiesta", dice Doña Rosa, ella es Prioste y dirigente fundadora del mercado de Iñaquito, hay que saber que dar de comer, preparar la comida, saber donde hay que mandar a hacer el traje del niño, entre otras cosas esta la forma de

organizarse con los diferentes giros o puestos de venta de alimentos. Del mismo modo en cada mercado la dinámica de cambio de *priostasgo* es distinta. En Iñaquito por ejemplo se lo hace por giros (legumbres, frutas, comidas, etc.), en Santa Clara se hace por delegación y en el mercado Central es la Asociación quien ha tomado la posta. Se trata de poner en juego un capital social y económico donde la fe y la religión forman un sentido colectivo. En dichas celebraciones sus habitantes ocupan los espacios ciudadanos de alrededor del mercado como escenarios y puestas en escena de sus representaciones religiosas en donde se "muestran" las cuestiones espirituales, pero donde también se da cuenta de un espacio vivo, de sentidos y significaciones. Eduardo Kingman analiza como en estos espacios se reproducen una serie de "*costumbres en común*", se comparten y generan economías, una religiosidad y que su entramado dibuja una cultura popular de base urbano-rural.

Hay también otras formas de representaciones que están presentes en la memoria de la gente, algunas se refieren a la protesta contra las políticas oficiales y exigencias y otras a "actos cívicos" como la participación en el tradicional desfile de los mercados que abren las fiestas de Quito. **"Sin la presencia de los mercados no hay fiestas de Quito"**. El nivel de organización para participar en este desfile trasciende a todos los mercados de Quito, se pone en juego una serie de redes familiares, comerciales, pero también la organización del oficio mismo por medio de la Federación de los Mercados, o de la "Unión de los Mercados" que no solo dan cuenta de la capacidad de agenciamiento sino que también da cuenta de la politicidad dentro de estos espacios, no se puede pensar a los diferentes mercados de la ciudad de una manera aislada o de un espacio desarticulado entre sí, por el contrario las relaciones y las formas de organizarse dan cuenta del complejo entramado de relaciones al interior de estos. Esta capacidad de agenciamiento y de representaciones entran también en un juego de reconocimientos, pues desde la institución se atribuye este desfile a su gestión, mientras que en la memoria de la gente está presente como se organizan los bailes, se arman los carros alegóricos, se hacen los vestidos y se practican las comparsas desde que se inició el desfile.

Esta presencia de los mercados de Quito expuesta en un ámbito urbano público "rompe" con la vida cotidiana de la ciudad convirtiéndose en una situación de irrupción y de carácter extraordinario [Eliade, 1983] que modifica momentáneamente la vida social en dicho

espacio. No pretendo hacer una lectura folklorista de este desfile por el contrario lo que intento es visibilizar las formas propias de representación de la quiteñidad por ejemplo, la religiosidad, de las maneras en que miran a la ciudad y de las lecturas que hacen de sus habitantes pero también una representación del mundo indígena del que son parte como forma de orgullo.

Estas formas de representación que he mencionado de una manera rápida, pueden ser consideradas como procesos de usos y apropiación simbólica del espacio público al imprimir de manera momentánea su "huella" o sus marcas sociales en un lugar que formalmente está sometido a la vigilancia policial o al control social.

Manuel Delgado [Delgado, 2007:129], hace referencia a que en este tipo de irrupciones debilitan estas vigilancias o formas de control y el espacios público aparece como "tierra de todos y de nadie", ya que "todo mundo" puede pasar o estar en dicho lugar abriéndose la posibilidad de que se den las expresiones de la desobediencia y la insolencia en una especie de apropiaciones furtivas [Delgado, 2007:129]. Pero también pueden ser considerados elementos importantes en los procesos de construcción de una memoria social de la ciudad de Quito por fuera de una memoria oficial.

### **Reflexión final. De simples mercados a mercados del Buen Vivir.**

El discurso de "patrimonio cultural alimentario" atribuido a los mercados de la ciudad se ha configurado desde la noción de los mercado como lugares del "buen vivir", esto como formas de centrar la atención más que en el mismo mercado como espacio vivo en su funcionalidad, este interés está mediado por la idea de hacer de éstos, espacios controlados, salubres, llenos de conocimiento y dignos de ser visitados. Este interés por los espacios del mercado ha creado una serie de disputas entre la gente o grupos de dirigentes que negocian estrategias para poder asegurar un espacio en los nuevos lugares destinados para quienes queden por fuera de estas transformaciones e intervenciones en los actuales lugares. Muestra de esto es por ejemplo el mercado de San Roque en Quito.

11 minutos.

**Uses and misuses of traditional Knowledge  
Talk : Dept October 9, 1997**

If last week's talk was about political culture, this talk to-day is about the politics of culture and some of the interesting epistemological problems that it raises for all our disciplines: anthropology, sociology and archeology.

First I want to convey what I know is a shared sentiment with Julie and Nancy of the intellectual enjoyment we experienced in collaborating for this talk through which we discover common grounds despite the fact of working in apparently such disparate areas as the Canadian North and the Amazon.

If nothing else, the nemesis of globalization has had one positive consequence for some of us at least, to remind us of the value of seeing issues comparatively and in an interdisciplinary framework.

For the purposes of this talk I was assigned the task of introducing to you as briefly as possible the framework we developed for our comparative presentations and some of the general issues that each of us will be raising based on our own individual fieldwork.

**1. Indigenous knowledge has become a field of study or at least an issue of international interest and profitability.** Social scientists, other scientists, museum specialists, bureaucrats in government agencies (from the Canada Council to the World Bank), school teachers, the mass media, the film industry, environmentalists of all kinds, and not least the indigenous peoples themselves have sometimes similar, but more often contradictory interests in this field of "traditional indigenous knowledge"

**2. Why?** We can mention at least three areas here

**2.1 There are of course global economic and social concerns involved:** the environmental crisis, and the management of resources ( herds, fish, forests and mineral extractive activities), large economic development projects and the land claims related to them, ecotourism, and also the increasing interest in health and in curing through alternative medicines, (some of which are part of an international search for new forms of spirituality).

**2.2 Within academia there has been a proliferation of ethno-studies:** ethnobotany, ethnoarcheology, ethnomusicology, ethnomathematics, ethnomedicine, etc, which poses interesting questions of ethno-versus non-ethno and the manipulation of the Other's knowledge to make it "compatible" with Western "truths." as well as the issues raised first within ethnography of multivocality and the meaning of collaborative research.

Uses and Misuses of traditional Knowledge  
Dept. Talk Oct. 9, 1997

Summary of Topics and ethnographic examples

(interests of anthropologists, sociologists, archeologists)

I. Traditional Indigenous Knowledge as field of study

I.1 By Whom? Anthropologists, scientists, bureaucrats, environmentalists, indigenous peoples

I.2 Why? Plants, health, curing, management of resources (herds, fish, forests), land claims, large scale economic development, oil, ecotourism, "new spirituality" interest in alternative medicines.

I.3 Proliferation of ethno-studies :ethnobotany, ethnoarcheology, ethno...etc. poses questions of ethno-vs non-ethno, manipulation of knowledge to make it compatible with Western "truths". What is less developed is what Terence Turner called **ethno-ethnohistory**.: to understand indigenous ethnohistories of us. Questions issue of collaborative research.

From Academic point of view

I.4 from indigenous point of view. As strategies of cultural and political empowerment. As sources of aid money and local income (differences between men and women).[ In Ecuador political strategy after fall of "second World" from a class to a purely ethnic discourse and incorporation into new hegemonic discourse of environmentalism in which nature ( natives included) is the new proletariat to be saved.]

from Indig. point of view.

II How this knowledge has been conceptualized

from obstacle to modernization and development to pillar of sustainable development.

From animistic religion <sup>< primitive thought</sup> to indigenous science

from just cultural capital to "real" capital (concepts of utility and commodification)

within evolutionary models of primitivism to civilized to new "synthesis" (science and tradition)

as new moral paradigm of "salvation": non-western cultures offering alternative models for rethinking universality and the issues of moral attitudes towards non-humans.

Going back to edenic paradigm: tradition as purity, modernity as corruption. —

Re-elaboration of "noble savage" paradigm and indigenous self-identification with it in

public discourse (e.g. discourse (Julie) "respect for elders, and meaning of respect". And in

Ecuador indigenous leader in government denying any violence in indigenous "culture"

From monophonic ethnography to multivocality and new bricolage???

collaborative research here?

### Consequences

Reification of knowledge rather than studied as system of knowledge

decontextualization of knowledge

Erradication of knowledge/ erradication of indigenous histories

**commodification of knowledge. Problem of cultural rights and corporate profits.(and Western justifications of it, e.g Body Shop gives money for Violence against women in the West)Shamans Incorporated and main pharmaceutical companies. Patent of ayahuasca (hallucinogenic) by US corporation. *Cultural rights (appropriation)***

**Consequences of "new prestige" of that knowledge: for women in Amazon: new source of income as curers.(fuzzier boundaries between witches, curers, shamans in public eye, not internally) Also source of travel for conferences, small ecotourist industries (see I.4)New pedagogies: problems of "shamanic schools": *Redefinition of shamanistic killing as "community justice" as announced by* Knowledge use to establish hierarchies and inequalities between communities. **Knowledge use in official indigenous federations' discourses to deny history to less acculturated groups and women).** *Leaders of Andean indig. federation***

**Problems of authenticity of knowledge and its carriers and consequences when they "fail" to meet those standards. Western insatiable appetite for heroes and for debunking them.(e.g. Huaoranis, Kayapo, Yanomami, Rigoberta Menchu)**

### III Specifics of Environmentalist Discourse

Native americans as part of nature. Perpetuates dualisms Them and Us

lived in harmony with nature (indigenous women's point of view on these issues)

native americans as "pure" conservationists (different subsistence strategies)

denying history and histories of native peoples and of nature (conceptions of "virgin forests" versus anthropogenic forests and debate about the conservationist vs the destructive native)

**\*\*\*by denying history and in search for authenticity deny problem of deconstruction of native populations and deconstruction of memories. Native use of Western paradigms (e.g. Christianity) to give new meanings to their lives (explains transformations of oral traditions in term of the present) and fact that oral traditions are inscribed in power relations memories essential in individual and collective identity but also as instruments of power to**

*for a country  
indig.  
peoples*

*The  
reelat  
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whole  
society  
only -*

*See my  
paper*

*See  
my  
notes*

be erased and manipulated. Struggle for domination over remembrance and traditions.

#### IV Epistemological Issues

##### The character of knowledge

Different expressions of causality . Distinctive paradigms to convert knowledge into everyday practice. (Canadian example song, shamanism, cariboo; example Amazonia: explanations of environmental "disaster" "scarce resources"= lockers are rusted.

Do not translate easily cross-culturally.

Classifying, mapping, harvesting, (universalistic paradigm of science) fragmentation human experience. Categories that distance people from lived experience.

Impose paradigm of cabinets of curiosities or museums of natural history to lived culture.

Learning as situated in communities of practice

knowledge embedded in social relations with non-humans Indigenous peoples are likely to raise questions about whose stories , who identifies events , how is the meaning of place contituted rather than What actually happen (Julie 1994's article).

establishing evidence and truth in scientific knowledge and oral tradition

**\*\*\*importance of the body in transmission knowledge;embodying knowledge (case Kayapo and african slaves in Brazil) (In amazon concept and practice of paju). Knowledge goes beyond linguistic representations**

Role of shaman (true shamans vs.younger ones. Assumes one knowledge "shared" under paradigm of universal science.

*- also implications for universalizing of spirituality the native religion. Knowledge is private. (women's songs, Shaman's songs).*

##### Dualism nature culture--Human-non-human relations

Dualism does not account for developmens in modern science (producing natural events in non-natural ways. It is a historical product of the Renaissance.

*because gibberish in eco-tourism*

**Does our understanding of difference leads us to endless relativisms and descriptions of local cosmologies (also embedded in power relations[some knowledges more relative than others])**

**or is it possible to find general trends towards a unified analytical framework.(possible alternative models to a dualist paradigm).that goes beyond the universalizing of science**

**(which assumes the dualism, or the universalizing of spirituality (unified native religions with all the consequences of native orientalism) or economics.(3 attempts Ellen, Palsson, Descola)**

What is the role of anthropology in this task. What can we learn from native **perspectivism** (Viveiros de Castro). Or from native <sup>ours</sup>historians' conceptions of US (the West).

Do natives have just one conception of nature?

The realm of social relations implies a wider domain than the society of humans. All beings are ontological equals. Relations humans no-humans as relations subject-subject. Affinal charming of game and consanguine mothering of plants.

**Societies based on objectifications of self-other project <sup>assume</sup> same dichotomy subject-object into relations between persons and the natural world. (If this is an argument for change in social relations has to be an argument in the opposite direction to bureaucratization and compartamentalization. (No debt to nature, bebt is relations between humans in a particular historical context. Concept of debt vs. Reciprocity.**

Role of anthropology in understanding this aspect of traditional indigenous knowledge

If environmental determinism is dead why bother with understanding interactions between humans and other living and non-living components of their surroundings?

A) Real consequences and public agenda of environmental crisis both in North and Amazon

B) Globalization, ethics and politics of nature

Julie (1994) demonstrate how all social constructions, including our own, factor into social processes we are trying to understand .

**Contextualism** denies the capacity of abstract totalizing systems such as science and the market to solve basic problems of human survival. Sober recognition of these limitations but different from mysticism. It is an argument for recontextualization. .



MOA. EXHIBITION: "SEWING DISSENT: PATTERNS OF RESISTANCE IN CHILE  
NOVEMBER 24, 1987

WEFTS OF PROTEST: THE ARPILLERAS OF CHILE

Blanca Muratorio

I am really pleased that the Museum of Anthropology is the host for this exhibit, because the arpilleras constitute wonderful examples of living ethnographies done by the people themselves. They document everyday forms of resistance to the everyday forms of oppression that have become institutionalized in Pinochet's Chile. By creating a counterpoint in a new symbolic language of opposition, the arpilleras become one of the few weapons of the weak, and can be analyzed along with many other cultural forms found among peasants and indigenous peoples in South America, who traditionally have used songs, dances, folktales, myths, poetry and other aesthetic expressions to voice and enact a moral triumph over all forms of unjust domination.

As chronicles of daily life under an oppressive system, the arpilleras can be compared to the most famous Andean chronicle of the early xvii century, written by a Peruvian indian by the name of Guaman Puma, who left us the only existing detailed drawings of the daily lives of the Incas, before and after conquest. Guaman Puma saw the conquest as a cosmic cataclysm that had turned the Andean world upside down. His chronicle was written as a letter to the king of Spain demanding the restoration of the social order. The scenes depicted in the arpilleras also speak of a world turned upside down by a dictatorship. A large number of Chilean families have had their lives torn apart by deaths and disappearances of their loved ones, as well as by economic hardship.

But in the arpilleras, the central values of the dominant power structure are symbolically rejected or stood on their head. For instance, the women have been able to take sewing, a skill considered typically feminine and traditionally used to keep them in their place and isolated in their homes, and turned it upside down, completely transforming it into an activity of communication of rebelliousness and solidarity.

Besides, the arpilleras represent an alternative cultural expression of life, in opposition to the dominant culture of death. The military doctrine of national security is a denial of the right to life and physical integrity by making civilians the targets of death. In contrast, the argument made in the arpilleras is part of a discourse that subverts the main principles of that doctrine, insofar as it speaks for the continuation of life, and even the dead and disappeared are brought back to life in pictures and in the enactment of their detentions, sewn in by the women, time and time again.

The symbolism of color in the arpilleras is also a form of subversion. The intention is to subvert that which they oppose, a denial of the misery and drabness of their everyday lives and an expression of what they aspire to. In this new language with no written rules colors sometimes speak through their intensity to signify the wealth of the privileged few, or the hope of the many, the latter usually depicted as a bright sun. Other times, colors acquire different meanings according to the artist, as when one woman explains she represents the closed factories in yellow, the symbol of cowardice, because yellow is the color in which she also visualizes the owners who closed the factories, and the labor leaders who accepted lower wages. Most arpilleras are divided into two symbolic camps:

the shantytown in the lower camp and the sky and the mountains in the upper camp. These dual classifying categories of "high" and "low" are traditional in the Andes since pre-colonial times, and symbolically associated on the one hand with power and divinities, and on the other, with water and the earth. In interesting ways, animal symbolism in the arpilleras criss-crosses these two camps. Thus, the octopus as the oppressor comes from up high to squeeze the households in the shantytown; the vultures representing the police informers are hidden among the trees or shadowing their victims from above, while the condor, a traditional Andean symbol of freedom, appears flying upwards towards the sun.

In addition, many of the arpilleras go beyond a descriptive ethnography to become explanatory statements of the relations between events and of the causes of social disorder, helping the women to develop a social consciousness in a society surrounded by the silence of press censorship, and by fear. To confront the impact of the State economic policies, the women in the shantytowns have rediscovered traditional forms of social relations based on kinship ties, reciprocity and community solidarity, as represented in the soup kitchens, the "organization of the families of the detained and disappeared", the vigils and the pilgrimages to the jails in support of the prisoners. Thus, in the arpilleras the women sew in an oral tradition of protest, that becomes a form of counter ideology, the charter for a new society, similar to that expressed in the reflexive symbolism of many other folk utopias or millenniums, present in the history of countless popular movements all over the world.

In these many ways, the arpilleras defy simplistic definitions of the little tradition as static or as a watered down version of any great poli-

tical or religious tradition. Contrary to Oscar Lewis' concept of "the culture of poverty" that speaks of passivity and acceptance, the arpilleras show the failure of the dictatorship in imposing its own definition of reality on the common people, and they also demonstrate that the growth of oppression may produce its own negation in the symbolic and material daily life of the oppressed. In summary, the arpilleras are an expression of the people of the shantytown's view of their own history, and an account of how they have transformed their defeat into a remarkable statement of the value of survival and self-determination.

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As chronicles of daily life under an oppressive system, the arpilleras can be compared to the most famous Andean chronicle of the early xvii century, written by a Peruvian indian by the name of Guaman Puma, who left us the only existing detailed drawings of the daily lives of the Incas, before and after conquest. Guaman Puma saw the conquest as a cosmic cataclysm that had turned the Andean world upside down. His chronicle was written as a letter to the king of Spain demanding the restoration of the social order. The scenes depicted in the arpilleras also speak of a world turned upside down by a dictatorship. A large number of Chilean families have had their lives torn apart by deaths and disappearances of their loved ones, as well as by economic hardship.

But in the arpilleras, the central values of the dominant power structure are symbolically rejected or stood on their head. For instance, the women have been able to take sewing, a skill considered typically feminine and traditionally used to keep them in their place and isolated in their homes, and turned it upside down, completely transforming it into an activity of communication of rebelliousness and solidarity.

Besides, the arpilleras represent an alternative cultural expression of life, in opposition to the dominant culture of death. The military doctrine of national security is a denial of the right to life and physical integrity by making civilians the targets of death. In contrast, the argument made in the arpilleras is part of a discourse that subverts the main principles of that doctrine, insofar as it speaks for the continuation of life, and even the dead and disappeared are brought back to life in pictures and in the enactment of their detentions, sewn in by the women, time and time again.

The symbolism of color in the arpilleras is also a form of subversion. The intention is to subvert that which they oppose, a denial of the misery and drabness of their everyday lives and an expression of what they aspire to. In this new language with no written rules colors sometimes speak through their intensity to signify the wealth of the privileged few, or the hope of the many, the latter usually depicted as a bright sun. Other times, colors acquire different meanings according to the artist, as when one woman explains she represents the closed factories in yellow, the symbol of cowardice, because yellow is the color in which she also visualizes the owners who closed the factories, and the labor leaders who accepted lower wages. Most arpilleras are divided into two symbolic camps:

the shantytown in the lower camp and the sky and the mountains in the upper camp. These dual classifying categories of "high" and "low" are traditional in the Andeas since pre-colonial times, and symbolically associated on the one hand with power and divinities, and on the other, with water and the earth. In interesting ways, animal symbolism in the arpilleras criss-crosses these two camps. Thus, the octopus as the oppressor comes from up high to squeeze the households in the shantytown; the vultures representing the police informers are hidden among the trees or shadowing their victims from above, while the condor, a traditional Andean symbol of freedom, appears flying upwards towards the sun.

In addition, many of the arpilleras go beyond a descriptive ethnography to become explanatory statements of the relations between events and of the causes of social disorder, helping the women to develop a social consciousness in a society surrounded by the silence of press censorship, and by fear. To confront the impact of the State economic policies, the women in the shantytowns have rediscovered traditional forms of social relations based on kinship ties, reciprocity and community solidarity, as represented in the soup kitchens, the "organization of the families of the detained and dissapeared", the vigils and the pilgrimages to the jails in support of the prisoners. Thus, in the arpilleras the women sew in an oral tradition of protest, that becomes a form of counter ideology, the charter for a new society, similar to that expressed in the reflexive symbolism of many other folk utopias or millenniums, present in the history of countless popular movements all over the world.

In these many ways, the arpilleras defy simplistic definitions of the little tradition as static or as a watered down version of any great poli-

tical or religious tradition. Contrary to Oscar Lewis' concept of "the culture of poverty" that speaks of passivity and acceptance, the arpilleras show the failure of the dictatorship in imposing its own definition of reality on the common people, and they also demonstrate that the growth of oppression may produce its own negation in the symbolic and material daily life of the oppressed. In summary, the arpilleras are an expression of the people of the shantytown's view of their own history, and an account of how they have transformed their defeat into a remarkable statement of the value of survival and self-determination.



The expedient mirror: Images of the Indians  
in the politics of Ecuadorean Identity

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Western selves seem to have an endless fascination -both intellectual and existential- for appropriating difference and Otherness in the constitution or redemption of their self-identities and in the search for authenticity and legitimacy in their own ~~endeavors,~~ <sup>endeavors,</sup> ~~enterprises,~~ whichever those may be.

Recently, ~~and after Said's work on Orientalism,~~ <sup>The reflexive debate over</sup> the politics of representation and the controversial issue of ethnographic ~~authority have become an integral part of the anthropological~~ <sup>and the</sup> ~~discourse.~~ <sup>have called into question the self-confident assumptions of</sup> ~~discourse.~~ <sup>ethnographic imaging of the Other and, in general, Western</sup> ~~discourse.~~ <sup>narrative and visual discourses about the rest of the world.</sup> In this paper I am concerned with what, for lack of a

better term, I will call "Indigenism"<sup>1</sup>, the symbolic appropriation of images of the Indians in the <sup>Ecuadorian</sup> white-and-mestizo discourse of domination. Through the analysis of the representation of the indigenous Other as a principle of self-identity, this paper attempts to question the generally accepted idea in Latin American ethnography and historiography, that from the XIX century onwards, the criollos and blanco-mestizos did not develop a local sense of cultural and ethnic identity, but only search for it in external European or North American sources. <sup>of our work carefully, at history, we imp.</sup> <sup>Indians in different periods.</sup>

<sup>Presumably,</sup> <sup>I examine here</sup> The problem here is, on the contrary, <sup>is</sup> the incorporation of difference, of the Indian Other -aristocrat, barbarian or idealized

A significant trigger of that epistemological challenge have been the loud voices originating from the <sup>so-called</sup> <sup>peru</sup> <sup>phenomena,</sup> questioning not only ethnographic authority, but also the political hegemony of the West (Friedman 1991, Harris 1991).

noble savage- in the constitution of the <sup>white and</sup> blanco-mestizo individual self-identity and in the construction of that invented community, the alleged collective Self that we call nation state (König 1984; Hobsbawm 1990). (here arreglar) <sup>power contemporary examples military</sup>

It may ~~also~~ <sup>has been argued</sup> be argued that a similar device of appropriation is at work in the ~~academic world~~ <sup>discipline of</sup> of anthropology, in the art world, as Clifford (1988) has convincingly argued (see also Price 1993), and in the more mundane world of daily politics as recent developments in the ecological controversy over the rainforests -both in the Amazon and in British Columbia- can testify.<sup>2</sup>

In his analysis of the 1984-85 MOMA exhibit "Affinities of the Tribal and the Modern," Clifford underlines what he calls "the disquieting quality of modernism, its taste for appropriating or redeeming otherness, for constituting non-Western art in its own image, for discovering universal, ahistorical 'human' capacities," and in the process, suppressing the creativity of contemporary native cultures and artists (1988:193,200). The Other Clifford refers to is the West's encompassing category of "the primitive" in all its different cultural manifestations. More specifically, in a recent article, Randall McGuire (1992) accuses archeological imagemaking of appropriating Native American pasts and incorporating them as "Savage Others" or as "Vanishing Americans" into larger notions of national "heritage," while at the same time hiding the real political struggles of Native Americans to recover and control their pasts. I will argue that the multifaceted images of the Indians created by the different imagemakers are transformed into

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cultural capital that in different historical periods serve the interests of the imagemakers, be those ethnographers, missionaries, foreign travellers, artists, politicians, or other representatives of the nation-State.

This contradictory and ambiguous process of using Indian images as expedient mirrors to redeem the Western self while silencing the realities of the Indians' experience is as old as Columbus. Its contemporary interest resides in what it can tell us about social relations of domination and cultural assimilation in the context of the historically changing encounter between the nation-states and its surviving indigenous cultures. The past self-confident iconographic monopoly of the West is being challenged by those being represented. The collapse of the hierarchical order of identities that Friedman (1991) attributes to the desintegration of Western hegemony is being accompanied by the resurgence of a plurality of Indian identities claiming to have an active voice and a political space within a single nation. *(See also Hill - 1992)*

Since early Colonial times when Spanish administrators used Inca local lords to legitimize~~x~~ their political rituals, through the Independence period, when Bolivar was heroically crowned by aristocratic white ladies dressed up as Inca Sun Virgins, to the logotype of the Rumiñahui bank established by the military in Ecuador just a few years ago, the iconography of the Indian - preferably the archetypical image of the aristocratic or warrior Indian- has been used by whites and mestizos in Ecuador and in other Latin American countries to legitimize their power over an

ethnically divided population and in their constant search for an evasive self-identity. ~~agui nota de militares~~] In the contemporary social and political scenario, the monopoly of that power of representation is being challenged by <sup>Ecuadorians'</sup> ~~the~~ most significant internal Other -the Indians- who, tired of playing a secondary role in an image of the past created by others, <sup>have</sup> retake the political scenario <sup>through showing the diverse organizations</sup> ~~to become their own~~ <sup>and use it</sup> ~~imagemakers~~ <sup>Furthermore,</sup> searching for <sup>their own</sup> ~~an~~ autonomous, definition~~s~~ of identity. Besides, in this process, the Indians are creatively using past images of themselves constructed by dominant imagemakers and displaying them back, thus creating interesting interferences for those who claim semiotic power, including anthropologists.<sup>3</sup>

In Latin American countries with large indigenous populations, the loaded symbolism surrounding the celebration, and mourning, of 1992 served as a catalyst for quite a few of these iconographic battles. In Ecuador, that year was marked by a successful march of Amazonian Indians to the center of government in Quito in demand of their land titles, their cultural autonomy, and their recognition as distinct nationalities. This march was preceded and made politically possible by a national Indian movement which took place in 1990, and managed to paralyze the whole highland region of the country for several days. Banners, T-shirts, and slogans about "500 years of resistance" were gloriously displayed and chanted in both events. For the first time in history, the Indians made the front pages of the main newspapers for almost two weeks. But the polemic about the quincentenary also rekindled an old debate on the nature

Seth L. Lee  
— 1992

of cultural and national identity that, unlike previous ones, is now multivocal and multiethnic. Newspaper articles with titles such as "Indigenism vs. hispanicism" (*El Comercio*, March 29, 1992), "Latin America or Hispanic America?" (*El Comercio*, July 19, 1992), or "Our roots" (*El Comercio*, July 12, 1992) raised some of the same existential issues of cultural identity and nation-building that creoles and mestizos had to face as early as the XVII century when the Eurocentric arrogance of theories of climatic determinism considered them to be slowly but surely degenerating into the "barbarism" and "irrationality" of the Indians (Lavallé 1990). Since they could claim no past independent of that of the mother country, and the present misery of the Indians made any possible common identity with them unthinkable, the creoles constructed themselves as the true heirs of mythologized indigenous pasts. Ironically, antiseptic -and often republicanized- versions of the imperial civilizations they had overthrown became the primary sources of creole cultural identity embodied in the concept of *patria*. However, the creole reserved the term *nación* to indicate a common racial inheritance with Spaniards (Padgen 1990:98), thus rendering invisible the living Indians. Their periodic rebellions throughout the Andean highlands since the XVIII century had the most irritating quality of disturbing the convenient imaginary spaces into which the creoles had segregated them.

In Bolivar's political thinking and action we can also detect that ambiguity of the blanco mestizos that oscillates between a kind

of "imperialist nostalgia" (Rosaldo 1989) that idealizes the historic Indian already gone ~~desaparecido~~ and the denigration ~~of~~ <sup>omission</sup> the ~~divide~~ of the real Indian as historical agent. While in Cuzco, Bolivar ~~evoca~~ <sup>evoked</sup> the ~~figure~~ <sup>weasel</sup> of the Inca as rethorical figure among the ruins of an already dead past. Manco Capac, in his role of "Adam of the Indians" is transformed by Bolivar in the king of a lost paradise (Bolivar, letter to Olmedo [June 27, 1825] 1986). But, confronted with the <sup>reality of indigenous reality</sup> rebellious ~~Indians as~~ historical agents Bolivar signed decrees abolishing <sup>Andean local titles</sup> cacicazgos, ordered the elimination of the "barbarous" Indians from Pasto whose rebellion represents <sup>ed</sup> an obstacle for the triumph of the revolution, abolished the communal property of land and finally, ~~hides~~ the real Indians under the republican category of "citizens".

In both attitudes towards the Indian personified by Bolivar, the creoles and mestizos declared themselves liberators of the oppressed indigenous race to justify their own struggle against Spain (Ayala 1986:113; Platt 1993:169). ~~Bolivar himself refers to Sucre as the Incas' avenger" (Carta a sucre (Mayo 15, 1825) cited in Favre 1986:283).~~ From the beginning they appropriate <sup>d</sup> of the glorious and aristocratic image of the Inca, selectively inventing a common historic tradition (König 1984:396-97) to construct their own "American" identity in front of an European world. ~~and~~ <sup>when</sup> in control of the republican state, use "universal citizenship" to hide the internal contradictions of an ethnically and socially profoundly divided society. In what rest of the XIX century, as Flores Galindo observes (1988:195), the utopia of the legitimizing

Inca becomes a purely peasant utopia. The influence of modernism in creole liberalism marginalizes the real Indians relegating them to the "savage" space <sup>of the tropical front</sup> or to the claustrofobic vigilance of the haciendas, while the blanco mestizos of Quito and Guayaquil compete in the construction of a "civilized" nation in accordance with European models. But it is in the context of that nationalism in front of Europe, and occasionally as a form of internal legitimation, that the images of the invented Indians, as well as the silences over indigenous reality appear sporadically in all their polivalencia to serve the interests of the social and political dominant groups up to the present.

In front of the perceived contemporary threat to nation-building posed by indigenous demands for cultural autonomy, the current President of Ecuador in his inaugural speech to Congress on August 10, 1992, raised again the ghost of "inclusive mestizaje" as the key to national identity, and clearly warned against what he called "the dangerous fostering of distinct nationalities that seek to destroy national unity, the one and only common identity in need of consolidation" (Hoy, August 11, 1992). X

Mestizaje <sup>see also other</sup>

The reaction of the present group in power seems to be to search for its roots in an individual and collective mestizo identity. However, unlike the civilized and modern European selfhood, constituted primarily as distancing and in opposition to a primitive and savage Other, the Andean white-mestizo population has always, by definition, been forced to incorporate that savage or primitive Other -the Indian alter ego- in its own self-identification. En el

see popular

lenguaje popular, the idiomatic expression *I let my India out* is <sup>to</sup> *me salió el indio* para <sup>sentir</sup> a sudden rage or lack of self control. is the best example justificar un súbito arranque de ira o irracionalidad, es la que <sup>of the ambivalence of the repressed internal urban mestizo</sup> mejor ilustra esta ambigüedad del indio interno reprimido entre los

blanco-mestizos. Platt (1993:171) menciona esta misma expresión tal <sup>as it is used in Bolivia to similarly refer to the internalization of the</sup> cual es usada en Bolivia para referirse de manera semejante a la <sup>"savage India" on the part of the "civilized white". Platt calls</sup> internalización del "indio salvaje" por parte de "los blancos <sup>his process ideological mestizaje</sup> civilizados," en un proceso que él llama "mestizaje ideológico."

(cf. el análisis <sup>que hace</sup> *Abercrombie* [1991:119-120] de este "indio <sup>reprimido" que es externalizado por algunos sectores de la</sup> *reprimido*" <sup>is externalized periodically during carnival and other rituals of reversal.</sup> población urbana de Bolivia en danzas de carnaval y otros rituales

semejantes) ~~The symbolic mantle of "Patria" that worried Mera so much in Sucre's statue, was useful to hide the feminine sexuality of the Indian, always the most problematic aspect of self-recognition in mestizo identity. Precisely, the prolonged debate about this statue, was really about the cultural and ethnic identity of that mestizo middle class of intellectuals to which Mera himself belonged. He is torned appart between an "Hispanicism" to which he claims to be "irresistably attracted" because of "blood, language, and love for heroism and glory," and his need to assert what he calls "americanism," if and when it is not seen as "contaminated" by the incorporation of the real Indians. Mera and others like him, fall then in the same contradiction that Sider considers central in the Colonial encounter between Europeans and Indians; that between "the [Europeans'] impossibility and the necessity of creating the other as the other -the different, the alien- and incorporating the other within a single social and~~

analysis.  
That India is usually male.  
India woman

see P 15



cultural system of domination" (1987:7). It is the negation of this contradiction, or the incapacity to resolve it, that compels the intellectuals and powerful imagemakers of the XIX century, and of contemporary Ecuador, to invent an hegemonic national identity that incorporates unnamed or mythical Indians, preferably if they belong to the aristocracy, or to the male sex. The particular "Indians" evoked, internalized or rejected in the individual and collective representations of identity adopted by the blanco-mestizos take diverse forms in different historical periods, even though -as Abercrombie (1991:120) argues- the general shape of the colonial discourse seems to remain the same. ,

Threatened by the different forms of indigenous self-identification, and in an attempt to recover their representational authority, the elites now in power have tried to recuperate a mestizo individual and national identity through a discourse that again leaves aside the living Indian and enters into a dialogue with a ~~textual~~, semiotically constructed one. The most revealing iconographic instance of that silent dialogue -that did not go uncontested- was the Ecuadorean pavillion at the 1992 Seville International Exposition in celebration of the Quincentenary of the Discovery of America. <sup>In what</sup> To make sense of that ethnographic present from the perspective of historical anthropology, I will first discuss the participation of Ecuador in the American Historical Exposition of Madrid in commemoration of the fourth hundred anniversary of the same event. Through this comparison I intend to

show the persistence of that dominant discourse of appropriation of the Indian past and to examine what its subtle changes reveal about the present social relations <sup>between Whites and Indians</sup> between Whites and Indians.

### The images of history in the Madrid Historical Exposition

. The search for an answer led me to the examination of a period in Ecuadorean history known as "Progresismo" (1884-1895), covering the last two decades of the XIX century, during which the society was going through a process of social, economic, and political transformation that would finally bring about the consolidation of radical Liberalism and the demise of a Conservative, Church dominated hegemony.

During this period, the intellectual and political debate involved many of the images and concepts of "Indianness," "mestizaje," "nation," and "ecuatorianness" present in 1992. The former, however, is a monologue within the white and mestizo elite, where the voice of the Indian as a historical actor is conspicuously absent. The Conquest, and the exploitation of the Indians that continued during the Republican period, gave the white and mestizo (here sometimes also referred to as "creoles") imagemakers the monopoly of what Goldie (1989:5) calls "semiotic control," that is the power to imagine and represent the Indians outside of their own symbolic world.

During the period of Progresismo, the dominant groups of creoles had access to several international stages to display their ideology and to legitimize their power: the American Historical

Exposition of Madrid in 1892, the Columbian Universal Exposition of Chicago in 1893, both in celebration of the Fourth hundred anniversary of the Discovery of America, as well as the controversial 1889 Paris Universal Exposition in commemoration of the centenary of the French Revolution. The analysis proposed here of these three exhibitions, primarily through the gazes and the voices of the Ecuadoreans participants, is an attempt to link histories of power with anthropologies of culture (Cohen 1988:227) through the study of cultural conceptions of "ethnicity" and "nationalism" in relation to the history of the constitution of the Ecuadorean nation-state.

Who the imagemakers were from the other paper  
 how they share in cultural universe of fairsds  
 and then the aristocratic past.

*see p. 8 . p. Rocky Mountain.*

*Brief description of  
 image. }*

#### The imagemakers' cultural and social universe

Since the Crystal Palace in 1851, the International Exhibitions became transnational stages to celebrate the global competition for commodities, the successes of imperialism, as well as the emergence of modernism as a cultural form (Breckenbridge 1989:196; Harvey 1989:265). By organizing and classifying the world as an exhibition, world fairs created and reified difference turning cultures into objects displayed in glass cases in the evolutionary order that reflected Western cultural hegemony. By the turn of the XIX century, these dominant ideas established a close relationship between technological progress, evolutionism and scientific racism (Rydell 1984:3). These world fairs then

*revising*

constituted coherent symbolic universes that embodied those ideas in architectural space, objects, events, and the ritual display of subordinate Others. Furthermore, these displays of hegemonic power were legitimated by a scientific discourse provided by the most prestigious anthropologists of the time working from powerful academic institutions both in North America and in Europe.

The coastal Ecuadorean elite that contributed to the organization and textual justification of the three International exhibitions already mentioned, had social and economic access to the ideologies and practices of that globalizing modernism and was looking for Ecuador's participation in the new "imagined ecumenity" (Breckenridge 1989:196) created by the market, eventhough, politically, Ecuador was struggling to achieve the "imagined community" (Anderson 1983) that allows for the constitution of the nation-state.

#### The imagemakers' kaleidoscope

In the narrative texts just mentioned, it is evident that the organizers of the exhibit (mainly Antonio Flores and Pallares Arteta), carefully orchestrated an *economic* representation of the country to promote the already dominant interests of a specific class: the Coastal merchant and landowning bourgeoisie. In that picture which portrays the present, the image of the Indian is conveniently left out. The imagemakers had direct experience of the deplorable situation of the landless *montuvio* (mestizo) workers in the cacao plantations, and close familiarity with the highland Indians concerted in the haciendas. However, their wretched reality

is artfully inverted and hidden under the general image of an alleged prosperous and well remunerated Coastal population, product of the cacao boom. Iconographic silences are often more eloquent than explicit representations in revealing the ideology and practices of the dominant creoles vis a vis the Indians.

### **The aristocratic past**

When dealing with "cultural progress", the other term in the nineteenth century equation of economic success with advanced civilization, the imagemakers engage in a very selective use of the images of Indians current at the time, emphasizing the *past* and the *future* rather than the present. The past is brought to life in the images of the "Incas" and the mythical "Caras". Their history cannot be denied (since their artifacts were obviously being excavated), but it can be adequately touched up and re-invented to demonstrate historical continuity and to legitimize the origins of all Ecuadoreans. They are not to be considered second class Europeans, but the descendants of a "noble" and "aristocratic" race. Not liberal democracy, nor the Enlightenment, but "aristocratic racism" (Muratorio 1980) that traces the ancestry of Ecuadoreans to the historic Indian aristocracy -real or mythical- constituted an important pillar in the social construction of national identity. No mestizo then, or now, ever traced his or her ancestry to a poor Indian peasant or to a "savage" from the Amazonian tropical forest. look at new boor of tropical renaissance

This aristocratic image of the "Incas" also catered to a

European public who, by mid-nineteenth century had already seen representations of the Incas that compared them to the great civilizations of the Egyptians and the Romans, or to the great Sun monarch Louis XIV (see Fig.4 from the *Encyclopedia Londinensis*, found in a shop in Quito). It is in the context of this universe of discourse that the imagemakers compared the archeological pieces excavated in Ecuador with Egyptian mummies. Honour points out that while at the great international exhibitions of the mid-nineteenth century, the Latin American states were "represented almost exclusively by natural products", an exception was made regarding the Incas and the Aztecs. All this reflected the European public's fascination with the exotic and the primitive, cultivating that attitude of modernism that Harvey so adequately calls "the spatialization of alterity" (1989:273).

This invented tradition that appropriates not only the cultural glories of pre-Columbian civilizations, but also their historical past to incorporate it as myth of origin and as an integral part of the collective Self, seems to be the classical case of creole ideology that Minguet calls "archeological patriotism" (quoted in Favre 1986: n.12, 284). According to Favre (*ibid.*), this ideology "implies the valorization and exaltation of the old Mexican and Andean civilizations as well as the appropriation of their corresponding pasts and the identification with the history that produced them." But the coastal commercial bourgeoisie was also searching for a place in the global market created by modernism. The symbol that best expresses this ideological ambiguity of the

social group is "the Inca palace" built by a famous French architect as the Ecuadorean pavillion in the 1889 Paris Exhibition, and located at the foot of the then recently built Eiffel Tower, the quintessential symbol of modernity and progress at the turn of the XIX century.

#### **Exhibition nationalism/Internal Other**

In the World Fairs of the XIX century, political iconographies celebrated ideologies of nationalism and imperialism with the conspicuous display of internal and external Others. All the mentors and organizers of the three exhibits discussed here, considered Ecuador's participation in them as a patriotic act, because it concerned the good name and future well being of the nation. The nationalist symbols displayed at those fairs for the external consumption of other states, reflected an iconographic consensus that consistently excluded the real Indians since, allegedly, they were citizens of the republic and, as such, already invisibly absorbed into the corporate Self. Internally in the country, however, the heated semiotic struggles between an ultraconsevative Church and the moderate Progresista leaders, reveal for us now the subtle contradictions of this myth of assimilation that exploded with the triumph of the radical Liberal Revolution in 1895. An iconographic battle over the statue of Ecuador's Independence heroe could serve as an example

The Indian woman as a symbol of America or of Freedom carrying an asta and the gorro frigio appears very early in the iconography of the Independence period in shields, flags, medals, coins ,

*revisar*

monuments, and in the Bolivarian political rituals. Very soon, that Indian becomes blond, changes her appearance garbed in greek clothing or is displaced by the goddess Minerva or other icons equally inspired on the pantheon of the French Revolution (Lomné 1989:58-59; König 1984:394-398). However, the trope of America represented by the "gentilmente <sup>gentle</sup>savage" and "indefensa" <sup>defenseless</sup>Indian maiden, awoken to civilization or liberated from oppression by masculine creole heroism (see also Platt 1993:169-70) reappears in the political and literary scenario of the Republic and, later on, in the paternalism of the indigenista movement.

#### The 1992 Seville Exposition

the Ecuadorean pavillion at Seville Expo 92 adopted the diplomatic, and for a long time chic attitude among the upper middle classes, of the aesthetization of the Indian, the Indian that can be owned in archeological private collections, or displayed in institutional museums. The pavillion showed, "with dramatic illumination," the Giants of the Bahía pre-Columbian culture from the Coast (see fig.16) in our times described, of course, as "shamanistic idols from 2000 years ago, while the "exotics in costume" all the visitors wanted to photograph with (see fig.17), were only manequins of the famous Corpus Christi dancers from the Highlands (Diario Hoy, August 21, 1992). As Foster argues, the myth of the Other as the exotic is perpetuated by its appropriation as an *objet d'art*, a commodity, a focus of wonder and contemplation (1982:30). This postmodern appropriation of the

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archeological Indian as an *objet d'art*, however, is significantly different than the "archeological patriotism" I mentioned as characteristic of the creole elite at the turn of the XIX century. To-day, the real Indians -unlike the mythical ones- have assumed their political roles as historical agents claiming for themselves the reevaluation or invention of their past to redefine their present, thus questioning, as we argued, the historical and iconographic monopoly of the creoles that archeological patriotism assumed as given.

Besides, the folkloric Indian at the Seville Exposition was turned into a tourist attraction and into an ambassador of an alleged unified nation, which in fact is being forced to go through the process of redefining the imagined community by its contemporary, and very real, indigenous citizens. One of them, a corageus young woman from Otavalo and a museum professional with a degree from Leeds, was the only indigenous person in a position of relative authority at the Ecuadorean pavillion and at Expo as a whole (with the exception of a Cree RCMP officer at the Canadian pavillion). Defying the ideological position of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador to boicot Expo, she insisted on going as a professional curator and was working as a guide. I do not have the time here to examine the analysis she made of her quite dramatic experiences at Expo 92, but one of her statements remains in my mind as a summary: "I'm glad I came, she said, to remind a European public not more enlightened than Columbus that we Indians are still alive."

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## Conclusions

Adopting a historical perspective, this article has focused attention on the Self as the main speaker in the dialogue between dominated Indianness and dominant nation-state. As dominant imagemaker at the turn of the XIX century, the Coastal bourgeoisie used the indians as "semiotic pawns" (Goldie 1989:10) for its own semiotic interests and to legitimize its own very real economic achievements. In the process, it also started to construct a new image of Ecuador as a corporate Self. In this dominant representation, the image of "mestizaje" emerges as a "master fiction" (Geertz 1985) constructed in a historical dialectical process of exclusion and inclusion of the Other. As pseudo-europeans, the creoles pretend to hide the dialogue of domination (Sider 1989) by turning it into a monologue of the Self who has finally assimilated the Other into the familiar Self, or is in the process of doing so. It is possible to say, borrowing a concept from Mason (1990:163), that this is the quintessential "ego-centric strategy" of structuring alterity. However, in this process, the familiar Indian is obliterated from consciousness to be selectively assimilated as the historical and, if possible, the archeological exotic Other. Besides, this strategy also creates the illusion that the indigenous Other, as forged by the dominator, can be brought into the "imagined community" through the doorway of invented "natural" ties.

Times have changed, however, and the Ecuadorean indigenous peoples are increasingly becoming their own imagemakers both in the

national and the international arena. But the new creoles are fighting back by reinventing their own and the nation's cultural and ethnic identity. In addition to the newly elected President of the Republic turning again "mestizaje" into a fashionable commodity, to visully demonstrate it poner aqui lo de su imagen junto a benalcazar.

1. clarification that this is a translation of Indigenismo a movement that has similar characteristics

2. I am thinking here about the use of the image of the Kayapo of the Brazilian Amazon by different ecological organizations, both in Europe and in North America, and the recent tripp to Europe by the Premier of British Columbia accompanied by a First Nation's leader to legitimate his government's conception of adequate logging practices in BC forests.

3. here put ethnographic examples of cases such as otavalenos, kayapo, etc see mi nota 3 de introduccion.

remind a European public not more enlightened than Columbus that we Indians are still alive."

### Conclusions

Adopting a historical perspective, this article has focused attention on the Self as the main speaker in the dialogue between dominated Indianness and dominant nation-state. As dominant imagemaker at the turn of the XIX century, the Coastal bourgeoisie used the indians as "semiotic pawns" (Goldie 1989:10) for its own semiotic interests and to legitimize its own very real economic achievements. In the process, it also started to construct a new image of Ecuador as a corporate Self. In this dominant representation, the image of "mestizaje" emerges as a "master fiction" (Geertz 1985) constructed in a historical dialectical process of exclusion and inclusion of the Other. As pseudo-europeans, the creoles pretend to hide the dialogue of domination (Sider 1989) by turning it into a monologue of the Self who has finally assimilated the Other into the familiar Self, or is in the process of doing so. It is possible to say, borrowing a concept from Mason (1990:163), that this is the quintessential "ego-centric strategy" of structuring alterity. However, in this process, the familiar Indian is obliterated from consciousness to be selectively assimilated as the historical and, if possible, the archeological exotic Other. Besides, this strategy also creates the illusion that the indigenous Other, as forged by the dominator, can be brought into the "imagined community" through the doorway of invented "natural" ties.

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## NOTES

1. I am thinking here about the use of the image of the Kayapo of the Brazilian Amazon by different ecological organizations, both in Europe and in North America, and the recent tripp to Europe by the Premier of British Columbia accompanied by a First Nation's leader to legitimate his government's conception of adequate logging practices in BC forests.

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4. even in north america, hwre mestizo was not a problem , etc see images of pocahontas nand monuments.

Versión resumida

**VIOLENCIA CONTRA MUJERES EN COMUNIDADES INDIGENAS DEL NAPO:  
HISTORIA Y CULTURA EN UN CONTEXTO DE GLOBALIZACION**

*Cam bio social.*

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**Introducción**

In Ecuador, como en otros países de América, los pueblos indígenas han focalizado su lucha por los derechos humanos no tanto en la noción individualista Occidental de derechos humanos sino mas bien en sus derechos culturales colectivos como grupos indígenas o nacionalidades particulares. A pesar de sus recientes éxitos en el ámbito político y de resurgimiento cultural, tanto los lideres indígenas masculinos como las pocas mujeres indígenas líderes de prominencia, niegan o esconden la amplia ocurrencia de violencia doméstica contra mujeres en sus propias comunidades. Como analistas sociales, sin embargo, debemos preguntarnos si esos derechos colectivos necesariamente garantizan los derechos individuales de todos sus miembros. ¿ Puede la cultura ser usada como defensa o justificación para violar los derechos individuales de las mujeres? Muy pocos científicos sociales que trabajan con problemas indígenas en Ecuador han escrito o centrado su trabajo de campo en los conflictos internos contemporáneos que específicamente se refieren a la violencia doméstica contra mujeres. Este trabajo representa un intento de explorar algunos de estos temas complejos y delicados en comunidades Napo Quichuas del área de Tena Archidona en el Oriente ecuatoriano.<sup>1</sup>

Como antropólogos podemos en cierta medida simpatizar con la insistencia de las organizaciones indígenas en una noción esencialista de una cultura indígena tradicional

supuestamente “armoniosa” que se convierte en “contaminada e inauténtica” únicamente como consecuencia de su contacto con la sociedad blanco-mestiza. Muchos de nosotros hemos cometido frecuentemente el mismo pecado de esencialismo aún cuando hemos luchado por evitarlo. Pero lo que sí encuentro difícil de hacer es ignorar las memorias de las mujeres ancianas Napo Quichuas que me han contado las detalladas y vívidas historias de violencia y dolor que los jóvenes indígenas no quieren escuchar. O desoír los pedidos de ayuda de muchas mujeres jóvenes que son las víctimas actuales de la violencia masculina. Es para entender estas historias presentes que quiero mirar al pasado.

Jonathan Hill (1996) ha argumentado que los procesos de etnogénesis están fuertemente arraigados en la historia y en las memorias de los pueblos indígenas de sus relaciones pasadas con los poderes nacionales y globales. Pero Hill señala así mismo, que la etnogénesis está estrechamente vinculada con los conflictos intra e inter comunitarios. Mi argumento en este trabajo es que los conflictos internos de género en las comunidades Napo Quichua son una parte integral de los procesos recientes de resurgimiento étnico. Mi análisis de los aspectos inter-étnicos e intra-étnicos de estos conflictos de género con una perspectiva histórica, y mi incorporación de las experiencias vividas de las mujeres significan un intento de comenzar a revertir la tendencia de una larga tradición del estudio de relaciones de género en la región Amazónica. Esta tradición ha contribuido frecuentemente a hacer invisibles a las mujeres indígenas como sujetos de derechos y como sujetos de su propia historia.

Dos supuestos principales dominan los discursos oficiales de los indígenas Ecuatorianos con relación a la violencia doméstica contra las mujeres. Primero, que las instancias contemporáneas de esa violencia son primeramente el resultado del contacto histórico violento entre la sociedad Napo Quichua y la blanco-mestiza. Y consecuentemente, que este tipo de



violencia no era una característica cultural y social de la sociedad tradicional Napo Quichua.

Para confrontar estos presupuestos en este trabajo discuto primero los diferentes tipos de violencia experimentados por las mujeres Napo Quichua como producto del encuentro colonial a través de la evidencia encontrada en el archivo de la Gobernación de Tena desde comienzos del siglo XX. Procedo luego a analizar las memorias indígenas y algunos datos secundarios como evidencia de los procesos internos de relaciones de género y de conflicto de género en la sociedad Napo Quichua tradicional. Finalmente examino las voces de varias mujeres Napo Quichua tanto jóvenes como ancianas quienes tratan de explicar hoy día sus propias experiencias con repetidas instancias de violencia doméstica.

### **El contexto más amplio de violencia**

Los Napo Quichua o Runa, como se llaman a sí mismos, pertenecen a una largamente establecida cultura de la floresta tropical , pero a través de mas de cuatrocientos años de contacto con la sociedad blanca han logrado adaptar sus estrategias de subsistencia para enfrentar el tributo laboral, la extracción de oro, pita y caucho bajo un sistema de peonaje por deudas controlado por patrones y mercaderes locales. Este sistema llegó a su fin la década de 1940.. Desde entonces los Runa se han acomodado y resistido la continua colonización, la exploración de petróleo, el crecimiento urbano, la consolidación del estado en toda la región amazónica y, más recientemente el ecoturismo y la globalización. Aunque los misioneros cristianos entraron a esta área en el siglo XVI, la presente tradición oral indígena acerca del Cristianismo data de las últimas décadas del siglo XIX.

La violencia de clase y de jerarquía étnica resultó en relaciones coloniales de explotación que afectaron dramáticamente la experiencia social de las mujeres y hombres Runa, incluyendo la

sexualidad y las relaciones de género. Pero lo que muestra la evidencia de archivo es que esta violencia no fue la causa externa principal de los conflictos internos de género en la sociedad Napo Quichua durante el período histórico que se considera, ni la cicatriz cultural y social que desata la subordinación y el abuso de las mujeres que existen en esa sociedad en la actualidad. Tampoco fue la violencia interna de género que existía entonces del tipo de la que Stern (1995:48) llama “violencia de descarga”, esto es el desahogo de la ira, frustraciones y falta de poder étnico y de clase de los hombres indígenas sobre sus mujeres, hijas o amantes.<sup>2</sup> Por el contrario, yo sostengo que los datos históricos corroboran para las mujeres Runa, lo que Deeds (1997) describe como “doble riesgo – étnico y de género -” que sufrieron las mujeres indígenas Tarahumara en el Méjico Colonial bajo la influencia de las misiones Jesuitas. Para algunas mujeres Runa, sin embargo debemos agregar el tercer riesgo de la subordinación de clase.

Una forma en que la clase dominante local pudo mantener sus estándares de vida y evitar el trabajo manual fue haciendo uso del servicio doméstico de mujeres indígenas que habían sido supuestamente “adoptadas” en hogares de blancos cuando eran muy pequeñas. La mayoría de casos de abuso sexual y otras formas de violencia contra mujeres Runa perpetradas por hombres y mujeres blancas que encontré en los archivos se refieren a conflictos que se originan en estas situaciones de subordinación étnica y de clase. Extractos de uno de estos casos presentado ante las autoridades pertinentes a través de un traductor ilustran éste y otros testimonios similares de estas mujeres indígenas:

Tena, Octubre 12, 1945. El Jefe Político procede a solicitar a Francisca Paredes que diga las causas que la motivaron a abandonar la casa de sus patrones y ella contesta lo siguiente en su propia lengua (Quichua): El Sr. Paredes me agarró del pelo, me arrojó al suelo y trató de violarme pero yo grité y no lo dejé. Entonces él me llamó “*shimizapa*” [como mono], me pegó en la boca y trató de pegarme un tiro con una escopeta. Su esposa estaba en el río pero oyó mis gritos y vino a la casa pero cuando me vio así no dijo ni hizo nada..

La huida de situaciones abusivas en casa de sus patrones fue la forma mas común de resistencia de que disponían las mujeres Runa y los documentos ofrecen amplia evidencia de que la usaron frecuentemente. [El enviar a estas “delincuentes recalcitrantes” al Convento de la Madres Doroteas, donde las hacían trabajar como sirvientas, era considerado tanto por los patrones como por las autoridades como una solución temporal para “domesticarlas” con vistas a un empleo futuro. De la evidencia de archivo es difícil deducir como se sintieron realmente estas mujeres acerca de esta solución. Algunas pueden haber visto al Convento como una refugio temporario pero, en general, las mujeres Runa que he entrevistado no consideran a las monjas o a los curas como sus protectores y el Convento es todavía visto como un lugar “ajeno.” Aún hoy día, entre mas de los trescientos casos de mujeres abusadas que hemos investigado, sólo una fue voluntariamente al Convento para escapar del abuso de su marido y sólo permaneció allí dos semanas.]

Las experiencias compartidas de explotación y humillación sufridas por los hombres indígenas a manos de los blancos pueden haber provocado algunos casos de “violencia de descarga” contra sus esposas, hijas o amantes que no fueron denunciadas a las autoridades y en consecuencia no aparecen en los registros de archivo. Pero estas fuentes históricas si muestran varios casos de violencia extrema contra mujeres indígenas por sus esposos y hermanos por razones que son internas a la subordinación de las mujeres en la igualmente patriarcal sociedad Napo Quichua. En un caso en 1935, Elena Andi es herida seriamente por su hermano porque ella quiere casarse con un hombre que no goza de la aprobación de su hermano. En otro caso en 1936, Juana Grefa se suicida bebiendo *barbasco* (un pesticida) en la selva donde ha huido de un esposo abusivo. Para entender mejor las experiencias de estas mujeres debemos recurrir a las voces de las mujeres y hombres Runa contemporáneos quienes negocian los ideales de violencia de género

y los contextualizan dentro de los derechos y obligaciones de lo que ellos llaman su “sociedad tradicional.”

### **Negociando los ideales de violencia de género**

Aunque hoy en día no se practica en todas sus etapas, las negociaciones matrimoniales y la ceremonia de boda son todavía los rituales más importantes en la cultura Napo Quichua. Este es entonces un espacio privilegiado para comenzar a explorar el tema de la violencia interna en la cultura tradicional. Los matrimonios arreglados tradicionalmente suponían complejas negociaciones entre las dos familias de la pareja. Intercambios verbales ritualizados considerados como duelos rituales eran una parte importante de esas negociaciones y el tema de la violencia doméstica masculina fue un aspecto prominente en esos discursos. Este constituía también un espacio social donde las voces de las mujeres adquirirían autoridad en un foro relativamente público. Chernela (1997) y otros han sugerido que discursos formalizados de este tipo sirven para ratificar el orden social. Los discursos de los Runa a través del tiempo apoyan este argumento mostrando que la violencia contra las mujeres fue un hecho social y cultural frecuente que debió ser regulado. Aún en los comienzos de las negociaciones de matrimonio durante el pedido de mano formal de la joven, la discusión sobre violencia está presente. Los padres del novio y el novio mismo hacen promesas de que la joven novia no será maltratada. Si a la joven se le permitía encontrarse con el novio antes de la boda, podía dar su consentimiento condicional precedido de palabras como estas: “Si vas a tratarme bien, si no vas a pegarme continuamente, entonces tal vez me case contigo”. Los consejos al novio por parte de la madre de la novia poco antes de la boda contienen referencias más específicas a instancias de violencia experimentadas por las mujeres con relación a sus roles en el espacio doméstico como

proveedoras de chicha y de comida. Finalmente, el día de la boda las ideologías y normas de género eran reafirmadas mas públicamente a través de canciones rituales. Estas canciones confirman el fuerte patriarcalismo de la cultura Runa y la aceptación general de la indisolubilidad Católica del contrato de matrimonio, obligación que algunas mujeres indígenas definen como "el cargar de la cruz". [ Lo que se deduce de estos discursos ritualizados en las negociaciones matrimoniales es que los adultos trataban de establecer los límites de la violencia conyugal y sus derechos y obligaciones de proteger a las mujeres cuando los hombres sobrepasaban esos límites. Sin embargo, en la extensa floresta tropical, la residencia virilocal a menudo dejaba a las mujeres muy alejadas de la protección de sus parientes cercanos.

Estos discursos reflejaban los arquetipos culturales de masculinidad y femineidad y promovían modelos ideales de relaciones conyugales. Necesariamente, las sutilezas y complejidades de interpretar y decidir sobre las transgresiones a estos ideales, tornaba el control real de incidentes de violencia en asuntos ambiguos y conflictivos que iban siempre mas allá de la pareja. Entonces como ahora, las relaciones conyugales y la subordinación de género están inmersas en una red compleja de otras dimensiones sociales y económicas. ] Pero lo que es claro de estos mismos discursos es que, si bien la dominación patriarcal colonial produjo sufrimientos compartidos por hombres y mujeres Runa, esta sociedad no se encontró con ni ayudó a erosionar un mundo indígena supuestamente regido por la armonía y la igualdad de género. Mejor que los pasados y presentes discursos oficiales, las voces contemporáneas de mujeres Runa, de las que ahora me ocuparé, nos permiten examinar como los ideales, normas y valores de esa sociedad indígena patriarcal son experimentados y desafiados en la vida cotidiana.

**“La dueña de los pies es la que debe irse”**

Estas palabras fueron dichas por una mujer de nombre Francisca, para expresar su total frustración y sentimientos de impotencia después de años de tratar de ayudar a su hija Juanita para que ésta deje a su abusivo marido. Las palabras de Francisca constituyen una metáfora que revela mucho de los cambios que han ocurrido en el Oriente ecuatoriano en los últimos 30 años – primeramente la erosión del grupo de parentesco mas amplio y de los mecanismos culturales que hubieran podido ayudar a la madre para proteger a su hija. La migración interna de parejas jóvenes a nuevas áreas de colonización buscando tierras o trabajo masculino temporario en las compañías de petróleo, ha incrementado el número de familias nucleares que viven lejos de sus grupos de parentesco. Aisladas en nuevas tierras desconocidas y careciendo de testigos, muchas de estas mujeres y aún sus niños se hacen mas vulnerables al abuso de maridos arbitrarios. Este es el caso de Juanita y de muchas otras parejas jóvenes de esta área del Napo. Por mas de seis años Francisca ha recurrido a todos los medios posibles para controlar el comportamiento violento de su hijo político. Todo ha sido inútil, Juanita siempre vuelve a él, a pesar de episodios cada vez mas violentos de su parte.

En estas circunstancias, su madre se siente impotente y en última instancia viene a aceptar una resolución muy individualista a su doloroso problema. Sólo Juanita- la dueña de los pies- es la que puede decidir acerca de su vida. Culturalmente, esta conclusión parece estar en contradicción con los valores sociales de una sociedad basada en el parentesco y con los discursos formales de las negociaciones matrimoniales que presenté aquí. El caso de Juanita y otros que no tengo tiempo de analizar aquí, muestran la presencia de crecientes tensiones dentro de la cultura Napo Quichua, pero también que los límites de la violencia no dejan de ser

cuestionados. Esto ocurre especialmente con relación a los celos de los hombres por infidelidades reales o imaginadas de sus mujeres, que son consideradas la causa principal de la violencia conyugal. Los hombres creen que su poder de vigilar y controlar las actividades de las mujeres se ve hoy en día más amenazada que antes por las nuevas oportunidades que la educación y los cambios en el mercado han abierto tanto para las mujeres jóvenes como para las adultas, incluyendo, por ejemplo, una demanda creciente de los servicios de las mujeres curanderas por los blanco-mestizos. Más aún, unas pocas organizaciones de mujeres indígenas de la zona han estado promoviendo la participación activa de mujeres en reuniones de conscientización. Obviamente, según los hombres, todas estas actividades ponen a las mujeres en contacto con "pretendientes potenciales" y son consideradas como provocaciones para incrementar los furores de celos. El resultado inmediato ha sido que ahora, como en el pasado, las instancias de violencia por celos reflejan la preocupación de los hombres por su pérdida de control sobre la autonomía de las mujeres. [ El caso de Rebeca puede considerarse típico de las narrativas de celos entre las mujeres Runa entrevistadas:

Cualquier cosa que hago, él siempre me acusa de que veo a otros hombres. Cuando llevo mis productos al mercado me dice que estoy alimentando a mis mozos. Y dice eso aún cuando le vendo mis productos a los curas!! Cuando voy a cobrar la renta de las parcelas que tenemos en Arapino me pega porque dice que voy allí a encontrarme con mis mozos. Qué puedo hacer? Ellos se niegan a pagarle a él. Todas las veces que fui a la organización de mujeres me pegó cuando retorné a casa gritándome que todas esas mujeres son prostitutas. Un día me pateó enfrente de mi hijo más pequeño. Ese día me quise envenenar pero decidí aguantar por mis hijos. Mi hermana estaba sufriendo como yo. Un día se tomó el barbasco y ahora todo se acabó para ella. Ahora está en paz.

### **Soportando y resistiendo la violencia**

Al tratar de convivir y de resistir la violencia en diferentes etapas de sus vidas, las mujeres Runa pueden responder a la violencia conyugal en formas muy distintas, desde el

suicidio a la cólera exagerada y la broma irónica. Cambios sociales y legales recientes están también influyendo en este aspecto de las experiencias de género. En 1995, el gobierno del Ecuador aprobó la Ley contra la Violencia contra las Mujeres y la Familia que ahora provee a todas las mujeres con recursos legales y protección contra la violencia que va mas allá de la que antes podían proveer los parientes cercanos. Las reacciones de las mujeres Runa a esta ley han sido ambiguas y a veces plantea complejas contradicciones personales y culturales. Aquí sólo quiero concentrarme en respuestas mas tradicionales, y específicamente en lo que llamo el “factor mágico” por la atención que éste ha recibido en la literatura Colonial y para examinar como este factor puede leerse en la era de la globalización.

La magia, la brujería y el chamanismo todavía juegan un papel importante en la vida cotidiana de los Runa. Por ejemplo, en el caso del hijo político de Francisca que ya mencioné, ella piensa que él ha sido embrujado por los *quiriguiri* or *sacharuna* (guerrilleros u hombres salvajes), como ella llama a esos hombres –los guerrilleros y negociantes de cocaína- que se cree rondan por la selva. La literatura sobre brujería sexual en el período Colonial ha enfatizado principalmente el poder de la brujería como un arma de último recurso usado por las mujeres contra maridos abusivos, o como un medio simbólico por el cual las mujeres podían de algún modo enfrentar la violencia conyugal. Lo que revelan las narrativas de las mujeres Runa es que la brujería sexual puede ser una espada de doble filo. Ellas están de acuerdo que las mujeres pueden ocasionalmente usar este recurso para “hacer” retornar a sus maridos de relaciones extra-maritales, o para castigar a otras mujeres. Pero también es cierto que en casos de violencia conyugal, sólo la amenaza de que un marido va a usar la brujería para impedir que su esposa lo abandone, es suficiente para infundir el miedo necesario para que ella se quede, a pesar de las consecuencias. La creencia es que un marido abusivo secretamente toma las ropas de su mujer y



una fotografía y la lleva a un chamán "especial" quien tiene el poder de mantenerla "atada" a su marido. Francisca, por ejemplo, piensa que su hijo político ha realizado esta brujería, no sólo para "mantener atada" a su hija sino también para impedir que la madre lo denuncie a las autoridades. El poder patriarcal de los chamanes para controlar la sexualidad de las mujeres es un tema que casi nunca se ha mencionado en la literatura sobre el chamanismo amerindio, pero continúa siendo muy importante con relación al matrimonio y a la violencia doméstica en muchas otras formas que no puedo explorar exhaustivamente aquí.

Finalmente, el caso de Juanita muestra otro aspecto del impacto de cambios recientes en la sociedad Napo Quichua. En la mayoría de los matrimonios, se busca el consentimiento de los padres y se espera que sus deseos sean respetados. Estos son valores que ayudan a reforzar la creencia Católica en la indisolubilidad del matrimonio. Pero en casos de violencia conyugal, estos mismos valores pueden producir ambigüedades y contradicciones culturales que impiden que una mujer abandone a su marido abusivo. Con tristeza, Francisca reflexiona sobre su hija

Juanita:

Todos nuestros parientes le aconsejan (a Juanita) que abandone a su marido pero ella se niega. Ha aprendido muy bien las lecciones de los mayores. Tal vez demasiado bien. Ella dice que su madre y su padre le han dado ese marido y que en sus manos debe morir, que sus padres así lo quisieron y que ella no es un perro para abandonar a sus hijos. Si yo hubiera sabido que el iba a ser tan bruto!!!

Este es un caso complejo que implica varios otros serios factores tales como el miedo de Juanita de haber sido embrujada por su marido y la consideración por el bienestar de sus hijos. Pero lo que este caso sí revela claramente es la paradoja de los tiempos presentes de cambio social cuando Juanita todavía siente que puede usar una norma cultural tradicional como justificación de su conducta cuando, al mismo tiempo, las mujeres mayores comienzan a ver esta justificación como una racionalización, o simplemente como una afirmación carente de sentido. Estas mujeres

sienten que tienen que soportar la doble carga de sus sufrimientos pasados y la culpa por el sufrimiento presente de sus propias hijas. Estos versos de una canción autobiográfica de

Francisca expresan la intensidad de estos sentimientos:

He dado mis hijas  
a sus maridos.  
Por eso me siento tan triste  
cuando les pegan tanto.  
Por eso lloro.  
Lloro por mi querida última hijita  
que crié con tanto amor.  
En vez de quedarme con ella  
la vendí a este hombre.  
El la va a matar  
y yo la voy a enterrar.  
Desde los cerros  
la llamaré.  
Deja tranquila a mi hija  
yo la volveré a acoger en mis brazos  
Quisiera otra vez tener  
la fuerza de una mujer joven  
para poder devolverle los golpes.  
Quisiera ser autoridad  
Para encerrarlo para siempre.

### **Conclusión**

Lo que revelan tanto las fuentes etnohistóricas como las memorias de los hombres y mujeres Runa es que las omisiones o las negativas oficiales de las organizaciones indígenas de los conflictos internos de género tanto en la sociedad tradicional como ahora, no tienen fundamento. Como otros esencialismos, el que está implicado en los discursos indígenas oficiales esconde las individualidades históricas que prueban que la cultura todavía está viva y derrota el objetivo principal de la etnogénesis cultural. Por el contrario, yo he argumentado que el revelar las fuentes culturales de estos conflictos de género ayuda a reforzar la auto-dignidad de

las mujeres Napo Runa y las apoya en su lucha por una identidad étnica renovada. Para estas mujeres, la etnogénesis no significa volver a un supuesto pasado armonioso, sino ir adelante para crear nuevas identidades de género que no borren sus memorias de violencia y de resistencia cultural.

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**Mesa 2: Identidad, Interculturalidad y Derechos de la Niñez y  
Adolescencia Indígenas**

**Panelista: Dra. Blanca Muratorio**

**Principales puntos a ser abordados en la presentación:**

- 1. Identidad y reproducción cultural en culturas indígenas.**
- 2. Género, edad, e identidad.**
- 3. Identidad como relación social.**
- 4. La problemática de la identidad cultural en situaciones de cambio social.**
- 5. Los conflictos intra-culturales e inter-generacionales de identidad.**
- 6. El problema de la identidad y la reproducción cultural en la vida cotidiana con relación a los discursos públicos de identidad.**
- 7. El problema de la identidad en el contexto más amplio de las relaciones inter-culturales.**
- 8. Modelos conflictivos de identidad. Identidad y globalización.**
- 9. Identidad femenina y trabajo. Espacio doméstico e identidad.**
- 10. Identidad y sexualidad.**
- 11. Identidad y medios de comunicación. Modelos globalizantes y posible impacto en culturas indígenas.**
- 12. Identidad y cambios en las relaciones sociales en culturas indígenas. Cómo incorporar la modernidad y enfrentar los dilemas contemporáneos de la identidad indígena de género?**

FROM SERFS TO CITIZENS: CAPITALIST ECONOMIC AND  
IDEOLOGICAL PENETRATION IN THE ECUADORIAN HIGHLANDS

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From serfs to citizens: Capitalist economic and ideological  
penetration in the Ecuadorian Highlands <sup>1</sup>

Introduction

"From serfs to citizens! Yes, that's a great change. All the peasants of Colta will be free to vote...I mean, if there are any left. Some have become merchants, others don't have any land left to survive on, the rest starve in the cities. What do they want us to vote for now?" This comment was made by a Quechua Indian peasant from Majipamba, a small community in the highlands of Chimborazo province in Ecuador. He, and other peasants, were discussing a speech broadcasted <sup>on</sup> ~~in~~ the local radio in which the speaker <sup>h</sup> ~~rhetorically~~ proclaimed: "Under the new constitution there will be no more Indian serfs in this country, all will become citizens with equal ~~equal~~ rights." The occasion for the speech was the announcement of the results, in 1978, of the national referendum which approved a new constitution giving illiterates the right to vote, ironically enough, only after the new ~~democratically~~ elected government takes office in August 1979.

The full meaning of this peasant's remarks will be obvious to anyone who has had recent experience with peasants anywhere in the 'underdeveloped' world, whether in Africa, Asia, or Latin America. They reveal, in a nutshell, the essence of that historical process which social scientists refer to as 'the penetration of capitalism in the countryside.' They condense, in one paragraph, the complexities of economic, political and

ideological changes which this process has brought about, as well as the patterns of class differentiation to which it has given rise. ¶ My main purpose in writing this paper is to provide the context in which this peasant's words can come to life, in the particular historical period when his rural community- and others like it in the Colta area of Chimborazo- <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ being incorporated into the process of capitalist expansion. The paper is not intended as an intellectual indulgence in nostalgia for a disappearing Indian peasant culture, nor as an empty search for an elusive and theoretically pure peasant mode of production. It is rather an attempt to contribute to the understanding of the present Ecuadorian social formation, looking at the whole from the perspective of one small rural area. <sup>explanation of the</sup> ~~total picture~~ <sup>total picture</sup> of that puzzling social formation, including its dependent insertion in the global capitalist system, is well beyond the limits of my competence. However, I will argue that <sup>it is</sup> ~~only~~ <sup>only</sup> through ~~specific~~ historical and ethnographic studies of particular processes of economic and ideological articulation of capitalism with pre-capitalist social relations, <sup>that</sup> ~~we can~~ <sup>leave dogmas aside, and</sup> begin to understand the peculiar character of the social formations of the so-called Third World.

As a justifiable reaction against those theoretical attempts to explain the complexities of the peasants' present problems by ideology alone (e.g., Erasmus' 'encogido syndrome' or Foster's 'Image of Limited Good'), much of the recent literature on the

penetration of capitalism in the rural areas has emphasized the economic processes involved, at the expense of relegating to secondary place the political, religious, juridical and, in general, ideological practices which, on the one hand, reveal the continuous efforts of the ruling classes in maintaining and reproducing domination ~~within~~ <sup>and</sup> outside the productive process and, on the other, the peasants' own understanding of what is presently happening to them and their efforts to create alternative conditions for their emancipation. Much of the otherwise <sup>intellectually</sup> stimulating trend of the 'new economic anthropology' inspired by Althusser's re-reading of Marx, seems to me to suffer from this imbalance. (see Clammer 1978)

By deliberately including ethnicity, values, norms, symbolic forms of domination and resistance, bureaucracy and law, in sum, institutions and ideology as constitutive ~~elements~~ of the mode of production (see Anderson 1974: 403) and as they appear in the peasants' everyday social <sup>and cultural</sup> practices, this paper will argue against dissecting that experience looking for abstract 'instances', 'levels', or 'ultimate determinants' (see Althusser 1971: 129). <sup>-130</sup> The most recent <sup>I know</sup> critique of Althusserian Marxism is a brilliant and refreshing essay by the social historian E.P. Thompson. According to him, the fundamental process which Althusser's reading of Marx overlooks is "the dialogue between social being and social consciousness" (1978: 201, <sup>emphasis</sup> in the original). Let me include here a lengthier quote from Thompson's



work, because it best expresses the intellectual ~~spirit~~ spirit in which my own paper is written. His (Althusser's) notion of 'levels' motoring around in history at different speeds and on different schedules is an academic fiction. For all these 'instances' and 'levels' are in fact human activities, institutions and ideas. We are talking about men and women, in their material life, in their experience of these, and in their self-consciousness of this experience. By ~~the~~ determinate relationships we indicate relationships structured within particular social formations in class ways - a very different set of 'levels', and one generally overlooked by Althusser - and that the class experience will find simultaneous expression in all these 'instances', 'levels', institutions and activities." (289).

On the also difficult and ~~hotly~~ hotly debated issue of the nature of the articulation of capitalism with non-capitalist modes of production, several authors (e.g., Cliffe 1977, Bradby 1975, ~~Brenner~~, Laclau 1971) seem at least to agree on the assessment that capitalist expansion and its penetration in the rural areas of the Third World has not been ~~a~~ universally ~~xxx~~ successful, nor even ~~a~~ smooth and inevitable process but a convergence of contradictory forces. Complex forms of articulation involving both persistence and destruction reflect a continuous dialectic between capitalism and previous social formations. Class formation and conflictual transformation will be important elements in this process, and will <sup>be</sup> shaped both by the changes brought about by capitalism and by the specific internal dynamics of the pre-existing social formations, which might prove to be quite resistant to easy assimilation. Confronted with these

complexities in the case of Ecuador, I tend to agree with that theoretical approach which sees capitalism as having different needs ~~diff~~ from the non-capitalist modes of production, at different historical periods in its development. Bradby suggests that "as this theory assumes neither universal destructiveness on the part of capitalism nor a general tendency towards the preservation of pre-capitalist modes of production, the task of analysis will be to discover what are the historical conditions which lead to either of these tendencies in particular cases." (1975:129). Finally, I will argue that this same process of contradictory articulation takes place in relation to that whole ensemble of human practices usually known as the "superstructure." Here, as I will try to show further on in this paper, cultural, political and juridical bourgeois discourses interact with ideological "survivals" of previous social formations to shape both the nature of the ruling ideology and the peasants' class and ethnic consciousness. Consequently, they become important elements in any analysis of the possible outcome of the class struggle.

### The Colta lake region

The Colta area, in Chimborazo province, comprises several peasant communities located on the shores, or nearby the Colta lake, and on the upper lands leading to the high plateau, known as páramo. They are inhabited almost exclusively by Quichua Indians.

In the last ten years, or so, the majority of the Colta Indians have been converted to Evangelical Protestantism by the Gospel Missionary Union, <sup>(GMU)</sup> an interdenominational religious organization. Because the "Evangélicos" <sup>↑</sup> Protestant Indians are called- do not drink, many ~~are~~ <sup>↑</sup> Mestizos, owners of stores and chicherías (bars), who used to prospered on the Indians' consumption of alcohol for folk-Catholic rituals, have now left the area. A small group of White North American missionaries of the GMU live in Majipamba, one of the lake communities which is the center for the diffusion of Protestantism. My field work was ~~also~~ centered in this community. However, this essay attempts to deal with the Colta area as a whole, since most other communities basically share Majipamba's ecological and socio-economic characteristics.

The Colta lake region is <sup>located</sup> ~~situated~~ at the center of a busy network of highways and railroad lines <sup>connecting</sup> ~~that connect~~ Quito with Guayaquil on the coast, and with Cuenca ~~in~~ the Southern Sierra. Riobamba, the capital of the province, and the major market town, is easily accessible by a 15 to 20 minutes bus ride from Colta. Cajabamba, the capital of the cantón (county) is <sup>situated</sup> ~~only~~ around 5 kilometers beyond Colta to the North.

The Colta peasants rely on subsistence agriculture, complemented by sheep, pigs and cattle raising on a small scale, as a source of cash income. Due to the altitude (Around 3000 meters <sup>by</sup> around the lake <sup>side</sup> to 4000 in the high plateau) and land erosion, agricultural

production is confined to barley, potatoes, broad beans, quinoa, some of the highland tubers (ocas, mellocos and mashua) and onions.

The primary unit of production is the nuclear family. Extra-household work is obtained, <sup>primarily</sup> by reciprocal labor arrangements with kin, fictive kins (compadres) and now, ~~more~~ often, with other Protestant "hermanos" or "brothers in Christ".

The land bordering the lake is held and utilized communally for grazing sheep flocks and cattle belonging to individual families. Women and small children are in charge of this task. The titora reeds from the lake are gathered for fodder, fuel, and for the weaving of esteras (mats), sold in Riobamba as a minor supplement to the peasant household's income. Very few peasants have access to cultivable plots around the richer soil bordering the lake. Most of the land used for cultivation is scattered in the slopes of the rolling hills which ascend from the lake. However, like most Andean peasants (Murra 1975), the ones in Colta try to get access to other microecologies by entering into socio-economic relationships with peasants living in communities located in the upper lands or near the páramo.

Since the 1930's, the peasants of Majipamba (and, at least 5 other communities) are organized into an "indigenous community" (comuna indígena), <sup>which</sup> ~~this means that it~~ is legally recognized as a political entity by the Ministry of Agriculture, according to the Law of Communes (Ley de Comunas). The governing body of the community is the Cabildo, headed by an elected president helped by five other members who serve in different functions. If the president -also known as cabecilla - can count on the support of the comuneros (comuna members), he becomes a crucial figure in the relationship ~~next~~ between the comuna and the outside world, specially local and national authorities. However, <sup>in Colta,</sup> the role of the comunas is rapidly changing

due to the organization of the Association of Evangelical Peasants of Chimborazo (AIECH), which groups native churches and not comunas. AIECH is also a political organization in so far as it, <sup>mainly</sup> deals ~~mainly~~ with the relationship of the Evangelical peasants with the State authorities and other local and national institutions.

Regularly on Saturdays and Sundays, Colta Indians go to the markets in Riobamba and Cajabamba. They also visit these ~~towns~~ towns in order to do business with parish, <sup>na</sup>~~ional~~ and provincial authorities and to seek the services of lawyers. Specially on Saturday mornings, large groups of Indians congregate at the regional office of the Institute of Agrarian Reform and Colonization (IERAC) in Riobamba, where they wait for long hours trying to settle their land claims.

" We were serfs before "

At night, by the fireside, older men and women in Colta often talk about their past life in the large hacienda. In these accounts they referred to themselves as "serfs" and "slaves" in relation to, <sup>the</sup> Whites and Mestizos who controlled their lives. Their stories are not intended as formal ideological statements, but constitute forms of practical consciousness through which the peasants relive and reflect upon ~~their~~ social relations of production. As conscious experienci<sup>es</sup>, <sup>these relations</sup> ~~they~~ have become internalized as part of the peasant culture of this area ~~but~~, a culture which, as Williams argues, has to be seen "as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes" (1977: 110). In all their tragedy and humor these remi<sup>n</sup>iscences represent a form of critical consciousness and ideological struggle, in so far as they help the peasants to demystify the feudal and colonial ideologica<sup>l</sup> elements, which still support oppressive

social practices. This<sup>s</sup> a complex and ongoing process. My intention in this section of the essay is just to provide some evidence of the 'objective' background upon<sup>which</sup> these stories are based. <sup>2</sup>

Until the Agrarian Reform decade of the 60s, the<sup>Colta</sup> peasant economy of ~~Colta region~~ was subordinated to the pre-capitalist mode of production dominated by the hacienda. The largest estate in the region was the hacienda Colta Monjas, originally owned by a religious order of nuns. When in the early 1900's the liberal government of Eloy Alfaro confiscated church properties, Colta Monjas was placed under the administration of the Junta Central de Asistencia Social, a State charity organization. The Junta rented the hacienda to individual landowners who relied on Mestizo administrators and overseers (mayordomos) for the daily supervision of production. All the labor force was of Indian descent.

The social relations of production under which the Indians ~~were~~ — considered ~~as~~ an "inferior race" — were used as servile labor, were legitimized as "sacred" by the ideological practices of the Catholic church<sup>or</sup>, and legalized by the State in the Constitution of 1930, where parish priests were nominated as legal guardians of the "miserable indigenous race" (Hurtado 1977: 69). A series of secular and religious rituals, such as forms of address, prayers and specific fiestas were used by<sup>priests,</sup> landowners, and mayordomos to symbolize the ~~alleged~~ alleged inferiority of the Indians, and to impress upon them the power of the hegemonic ideology (see <sup>Connell</sup> ~~Maynard~~ <sup>Maynard</sup> 1966). <sup>6</sup>

The hacienda had 22 huasipunguero families attached to it.

Huasipungueros were those peasants who paid their rent in labor to the estate and worked as huasicamas (house servants), in exchange for the rights<sup>to</sup> their usufruct plots, rights of pasturage and, rights

to gather totora from the lake. Although huasipungueros were paid a nominal wage of <sup>a</sup> few cents a week for their labor, they speak about their condition then as one of "serfdom", because the value of the produce supplied by the hacienda, and the cost of the animals lost while working as shepherds for the estate, was always greater than their wages. The system of debt-peonage kept them tied to the hacienda; fear of losing their usufruct plots, and physical punishment, kept them subordinate.

Since Colonial times, the peasant communities surrounding the hacienda Colta Monjas were "free indigenous communities" with legal titles to arable and pasture lands. Nevertheless, they were also inextricably subordinated to the hacienda. The overseers extracted rent in labor and in kind from the community peasants by all forms of extra-economic coercion, including physical violence. Any trespassing on hacienda lands was a good excuse for the overseer to seize clothing and animals from the Indians in order to force them to work a few days free for the estate.

In order to insure <sup>this</sup> ~~that~~ labor more efficiently, in 1935, the then renter of the hacienda, seized part of the communal pasture land and cut the comuneros from access to their totora lands. Conflicts resulting from that seizure were finally resolved only in 1978.

Internal strifes between communities, and later between communities and ex-huasipungueros of the hacienda, involved the peasants in tiresome and costly litigations to recuperate their rights (Cornell ~~Maynard~~

5  
1965:161-163). Through these endless legal battles, provincial and parish authorities, lawyers and finally IERAC, drained surplus out of the Colta peasants for 43 years.

Having limited access to land, many comuneros entered into share-cropping arrangements with the hacienda Colta Monjas, and with other medium-size landowners in the area. These arrangements always resulted in the over-exploitation of the peasants. For the usufruct right to the plot and sometimes <sup>for</sup> less than half of the crop, they not only had to ~~provide~~ <sup>the</sup> provide seeds, tools and labor, but were also forced to work for free in the lands and private residences of the owners.

Several peasants from Majipamba, who were share-croppers under that system are still (1979) involved in litigations in Riobamba and Quito fighting for their legal right to buy the plots, or, at least, to recover part of their unpaid wages, for more than 20 years of labor. Now they confront the landowners, or their heirs, in the IERAC offices, but are still subject to racial slurs, humiliations and threats by these <sup>land</sup>owners and their lawyers, under the impassive eye of the IERAC officials. To the stigma of being Indians is now added the "insolence" of demanding their rights.

There is no doubt in the minds of these peasants that they were treated as "serfs" under the previous system, and that many of the institutional and ideological mechanisms of feudal domination still persist under the modern bureaucracy of the bourgeois State.

#### Penetration of capitalism : Economic and ideological dimensions

Agrarian Reform reached Colta in 1965. Under the terms of the 1964 Agrarian Reform Law, the hacienda Colta Monjas was turned over to IERAC for its parcelization, something that had been requested by the peasant communities long before. IERAC granted titles of the usufruct plots to the huasipungueros, and sold the rest of the land to individual peasant households in the communities. The



result was, again, inequality in land tenure. Some <sup>among the</sup> more aggressive or ~~just~~ better informed comuneros, were able to get more and better lands.

Like in other parts of highland Ecuador, in Colta, the general effect of the Agrarian Reform has been to increase the number of very small units, or minifundios, of less than one hectare <sup>(2.47 acres)</sup>. The plots allotted and sold to the peasants have been of poor quality, or of insufficient size to support a family. This <sup>peasant</sup> predicament turns into helplessness as soon as droughts, hail storms, or any other natural disaster adds misery to the already eroded and overused lands, throwing the majority of the adult males out of the area in search of paid employment to make up their incomes.

Seasonal and temporary migration to the coastal estates and to the main urban areas, as a mechanism by which the Colta peasant economy articulates with the capitalist sector, is not a new phenomenon. Since the beginning of this century, the development of capitalist export agriculture on the coast used seasonal labor, which the highland peasant economy reproduced most cheaply. Colta was not an exception (<sup>Cornell</sup> ~~Howard~~ 196<sup>5</sup>: 84). The majority of the peasants ~~there~~ have had some experience as wage laborers in the coastal plantations. They have also worked in the construction of ~~inter~~ roads and railroad lines which, in turn, facilitated migration out of the area.

However, in the last two decades, the development of import-Substitution industrialization, and the exploitation and exportation of oil have changed the dynamics of capitalism in Ecuador and, consequently, the forms of its penetration in the countryside. Industry looks for an enlargement of the internal market. Participation in oil revenues has allowed for a greater role of the State in the

economy, and for the possibility of enlarging and modernizing the State bureaucratic structure (NACLA 1975; Verduga 1977).

The development strategies followed by the Ecuadorian political elites (civilian and military) to industrialize and modernize the country, are modelled on those of the advanced capitalist economies. Bureaucratic structures <sup>became</sup> ~~were~~ the inevitable outgrowth of the need for centralized authority and planning. As Weber argued, capitalism thrives on a rational-legal culture based on the use of bureaucratic procedures, the domain of law, and impersonal social relationships which, in turn, bestow new legitimacy <sup>on</sup> ~~to~~ the bourgeois State.

In the Colta area, the operation of IERAC, the Ministry of Agriculture and other State agencies dealing with storage and commercialization of agricultural products, irrigation and water management, and credit and technical assistance, are evidence of this expansion of State bureaucratic structures. In order to get access to the means of production, the Colta peasants now help to maintain a superstructure of State officials, lawyers and other intermediaries. Already Marx had noticed for the XIX century French peasantry: "By its very nature, small-holding property forms a suitable basis for an all-powerful and innumerable bureaucracy" (1963: 128).

Although writing before the development of large bureaucratic structures, Marx also recognized the ideological role of bureaucracy, accusing it of mystifying private interests under the mask of defending the "universal" interests of the State (Avineri 1970:51; O'Malley 1970: 111). But in the Marxist tradition, it is Gramsci who later on saw, more explicitly, bureaucracy and technological rationality as an integral part of the more general problem of bourgeois hegemonic ideology. In his notes on "Americanism and

Fordism", Gramsci clearly considers bureaucratic structures as source of cultural ideological domination with becloud class and power relations (1971: 277-316).

These ideological and mystifying functions are particularly evident in the IERAC bureaucracy, which is the one the Colta peasants have to use most often. On the one hand, IERAC administrators, agricultural engineers, and community workers share ideological definitions of what constitutes "progressive agriculture", "adequate land management", "modern efficient techniques", and "civilized forms of cooperation". By implication, and often quite explicitly, they regard as "ignorant", "retrograde", and "deficient", all indigenous forms of cooperation and management of the ecology. The active role of the IERAC officials is to impose upon the peasantry of the area their version of a "modernizing" ideology.

On the other hand, conflicts over land are still the main form of class confrontation between peasants and landowners in the Colta region. IERAC, as the State <sup>most important</sup> ~~main~~ agricultural agency, allegedly plays the open, public role of an "universalistic", "neutral" mediator between the two opposing classes. In reality, however, IERAC is far from being a bureaucracy working on universalistic principles. All forms of private arrangements based on paternalism, patronage, ethnic prejudice, kinship and friendship ties creep into the land settlements to obscure and, at the same time reinforce, existing relations of domination based on White and Mestizo supremacy over the Indian ~~peasantry~~ peasantry.<sup>3</sup>

What we actually witness now in the Colta region, is a peasant subsistence economy, being articulated in highly contradictory ways with a form of capitalism which is, itself, structurally dependent on foreign capital. The region is poor, and its participation in the market for industrial products is limited; the peasant economy is being eroded but - unlike the Northern and Central provinces - Chimborazo does not have a significant agricultural bourgeoisie in search of more land for capitalist agriculture. Finally, the dependent character of present Ecuadorian industrial capitalism ~~cannot~~ <sup>cannot</sup> ~~allow the~~ absorption of the labor force <sup>by</sup> the poverty of <sup>the</sup> Colta region is being made available. The contradictory character ~~of~~ of these processes <sup>is</sup> ~~are~~ as much the result of the extent and forms of capitalist penetration in this area, as of the dynamics of the pre-existing social formation.

The complexities of the actual process of capitalist penetration in agriculture <sup>can</sup> be elucidated in the analysis of the different mechanisms by which part of the peasants' surplus is appropriated and distributed by non-peasants (landowners, merchants, moneylenders, lawyers and the State) through economic and extra-economic means. More subtly, the consequences of capitalist penetration can be discerned in the changes of the role of family and kinship in production relations; in the forms of peasant participation in ~~the~~ both the produce and labor markets, in the trend towards absolute privatization and the concentration of land, and in the resulting incipient class ~~at~~ differentiation among the peasantry.

I will now examine in more detail some of these specific mechanisms by which capitalism manages to extract the surplus, and therefore to exploit the Colta peasant economy, without yet having turned social relations of production into capitalist ones, as it has done in other areas of the Highlands.

Access to land

One of the aims of the Agrarian Reform was to transfer resources and capital from agriculture to industry. ~~4~~ <sup>7.</sup> In addition to other measures which favored accumulation in the industrial sector, forms of payments for land were designed to accomplish this <sup>a</sup> transfer of surplus from the "traditional" sector ~~to~~ the "modern", capitalist one. I intend to discuss here some examples of how this process is actually taking place.

When <sup>in 1966)</sup> IERAC sold the hacienda Colta Monjas to the peasants, ~~in~~ <sup>1966,</sup> the prices differed slightly, according to the quality of the ~~is~~ land, but <sup>the</sup> ~~an~~ average price was 3500 sucres (US\$ 150) an hectare, to be paid in 15 years. Many peasants have to borrow money in order to make the yearly payments. ~~Agrrarian Reform~~ Through the Agrarian Reform ~~Law~~, the State transform<sup>ed</sup> the semi-serfs into free-holders. The consequences of the way in which this transformation took place ~~are~~ are not very different from those described by Marx for the XIX century French peasantry: "...the feudal obligation that went with the land was replaced by the mortgage; aristocratic landed property was replaced by bourgeois capital. The small holding of the peasant is now only the pretext that allows the capitalist to draw profits, interest and rent from the soil, while leaving it to the tiller of the soil himself to see how he can extract his wages" (1963: 127).

However, bourgeois capital in the Colta region is <sup>mainly</sup> ~~in~~ the hands of Mestizo money-lenders and merchants. In the Highlands of Imbabura and Pichincha, a group of modernizing landowners accepted, and even encouraged Agrarian Reform, kept the best land for themselves, got rid of unnecessary and troublesome tenants, and

instituted wage labor in technically efficient and commercially oriented estates (Barsky 1978, Murmis 1978). For structural and ideological reasons which I cannot discuss in depth here, this ~~main~~ entrepreneurial fraction of the agricultural bourgeoisie did not develop in Chimborazo. Here, most large landholdings were parcelized due to peasant pressures, or because they were already in State hands. In the Colta area, small and medium-size landowners, deprived of access to free labor, started selling their lands to the land-hungry peasants.

These land transactions involving White and Mestizo landowners, Indian peasants and IERAC, cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration some non-economic factors. Language difference is, for instance, an important component in these transactions.

In Ecuador- like in other Andean countries- the fact that the majority of the peasants speak Quichua and the dominant classes speak Spanish is regarded as just another "cultural" difference which is ~~going to~~ "hopefully" going to disappear as soon as the Indians become finally assimilated in the alleged "national Mestizo" culture. To ~~demystify~~ demystify this component of the "national" ideology it is important to understand the different ways in which language difference is used in everyday social relationships to reproduce the relations of domination (see Dorais: 1979).

The hegemony of Spanish was established as a fact of conquest, but has continued because the Spanish speaking dominant classes control all those institutions of the State and civil society where official and unofficial policies and ideologies are created and disseminated. As soon as the Indian peasant leaves the security of kin and community he/she is confronted <sup>with</sup> a world dominated by a

foreign language. Spanish is the language of the bureaucracy, of the market, of the towns and cities, <sup>where</sup> the peasant goes looking for work, and of the schools where he/she sends his/her children to be educated. Any economic advancement for the Indians is mediated by their <sup>o</sup>knowledge of Spanish. Particularly, in terms of their access to land, because any land claim has to go through IERAC where all transactions are conducted in Spanish. Furthermore, when I arrived in Colta there was not an available translation of the Agrarian Reform Law into Quichua. The majority of the peasants had heard of the Law, but had never seen it, or much less read it. <sup>Thus,</sup> their knowledge of all their legal rights within this Law were quite limited.

Because of peasants' illiteracy in Spanish and because of their ignorance of legal procedures, different forms of extra-economic coercion are being used by landowners and lawyers, often in collusion with IERAC officials, to illegally extract surplus from peasants buying land. For <sup>example</sup> ~~instance~~, landowners enter into verbal agreements with the peasants for an initial price; once the latter have paid the first installment, the landowners rise the original price. Having already invested a substantial amount in the transaction and lacking legal receipts as evidence, the peasants are ~~af~~ forced to pay whatever the new price might be. In other instances I followed, the landowners made the peasants paid all the inheritance taxes before selling them the land.

If the peasants decide to protest for any of these abuses through the IERAC offices or through the Courts, the surplus extracted from them could be even larger, because they have to pay all the expenses involved in the procedures. These include lawyers and public notaries' fees, taxes on legal papers, plus the cost of transportation for lawyers and IERAC officials whenever they have to go from

Riobamba to Colta, in order to check in situ some aspects of the cases.

Furthermore, the wheels of modern bureaucracy in this area, still move with the power of semi-feudal social relations. The Indians know that the attention of the officials and lawyers has to be paid with additional "customary gifts" or camari. Eggs, chickens, rabbits, potatoes, etc., are regularly provided by the Indians to lawyers, public authorities, tinterillos, IERAC officials (including the concierge who controls the access to IERAC officials), or to anybody else who is in a situation of holding even minor power of decision making over the peasants' cases. In one land claim I followed closely for three years, the peasant ended up paying twice the price of the land, for a plot of less than one acre.

### The Market

In order to obtain the increasingly needed cash, the Colta peasants participate in the market, mostly selling barley, broad beans, red onions and, occasionally chickens, cuis, rabbits and cattle. In the market, their surplus is extracted by merchant-middlemen who have control over prices, by the State in the form of taxes over market transactions, often by both through the use of extra-economic coercion, including physical force. The market is probably the most obvious place where previous relations of domination of White and Mestizos over Indians ~~are made explicit~~ appeared naked before the eyes of everyone who cares to observe how transactions are conducted.

Because of the small scale of their production, peasants pay higher prices than agricultural entrepreneurs for the transportation of their produce to the market. A group of Colta peasants have



formed a trucking co-op to avoid being abused by Mestizos. However, the "Indian trucks" were ~~harassed~~ <sup>suffering</sup> more than the usual hassle from the local police officials, who demand bribes before a truck enters the ~~market~~ Riobamba market.

Because of the marginality of the land, peasants' yields are poor and their produce are of low quality. In addition, they lack good storage facilities and are forced to sell immediately after the harvest, when prices are low. Profits go to merchants and ~~money~~ <sup>money</sup>-lenders.

Verbal and physical abuse, cheating and other forms of coercion ~~are~~ inflicted on the peasants by Mestizo merchants are still regular incidences in the markets of Riobamba and Cajabamba. The most common mechanism used to obtain extra surplus from the peasants, is the well known system of arranche, by which Mestizo buyers locate themselves at strategic places, such as bus stops or at the entrance of market roads, and literally deprived the peasants of their produce and animals, paying prices much below the current market prices.

Another goal of the Agrarian Reform was to enlarge the internal market for industrially produced consumer goods. All markets frequented by the Colta peasants are now flooded with these commodities with the result that the few <sup>indigenous</sup> manufactures which existed in the area, are ~~now~~ being destroyed by competition with capitalist <sup>Hand-</sup> manufactures. <sup>Hand-</sup>Weaving of bayeta (woolen cloth) for women's dresses and the typical red poncho for men, ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> traditionally ~~done~~ <sup>produced</sup> by men exclusively for household consumption. Now, although women maintain their traditional dress, the material used for the anacos (skirts), and the baitas (shawls) is ~~synthetically~~ industrially produced synthetic cloth. Only older women are seen wearing home-spun woolen

clothes. Most young men are replacing the poncho by Western-style jackets. Since most men leave the area periodically in search of off-farm work, they lack time to weave or to teach their sons how to do it.

Colta was known for the tatora <sup>woven</sup> ~~weaved~~ mats, a handicraft produced for the market. Some families still ~~some families still~~ produce the mats and sell them in the local markets for around 280 sucres (US\$10) a dozen. However, due to the lack of pasture land, tatora is needed for fodder and fuel, and not enough is left to dry in order to weave the mats.

In addition to the structural reasons ~~mentioned above~~ discussed above, significant ideological pressures are now exercised on the peasants to participate in the market for consumer goods. Earlier in this essay, I mentioned the fact that the majority of the Colta Indians ~~are~~ are Evangelical Protestants. Protestantism has drastically eliminated all rituals, ceremonies and fiestas associated with indigenous forms of ~~Latin American~~ Catholicism. The fiesta complex involved different forms of redistribution, and other mechanisms which operated to divert economic surplus from accumulation to unproductive activities such as renting of costumes, hiring of musicians, and consumption of alcohol. All the cash previously spent in these forms of ~~consumption~~ conspicuous consumption is now being released for consumption of industrially produced goods.

This is the type of consumption approved by the new ideology. North American Protestantism has also brought ideas and symbols of "progress" and "modernity", traduced in the construction of concrete block houses with zinc roofs (instead of adobe huts with thatch roofs), and the buying of shoes, watches, bicycles, transistor

radios and cassette tape-recorders.

Transistor radios put the propaganda for consumer goods inside all the peasant households. Children are taught about the "advantages" of these items by Mestizo teachers in the Colta schools, and migrant members of the family return to Colta, not only with ~~the~~ ~~some~~ some cash to buy industrial commodities, but also with the visual images of luxury and consumerism, so obviously displayed in the store windows and billboards of Quito, Guayaquil, and other ~~large~~ cities all over Ecuador. Across from the Colta lake, in an area which lacks electricity, there were two immense billboards advertising electric food-processors and electric sowing machines. Even if the products cannot be bought by the peasants, the ideological message of "progress" and "modernization" are clearly conveyed to them. *As Milliband has correctly pointed out,*

Although Colta has a reputation for being "closed, and hostile" to strangers", ~~xxxxxxx~~ it has suffered, over the last 14 years, the influence of a considerable number of foreign ~~and nation~~ development agencies, European volunteers, AID, Peace Corps, and North American missionaries. All these "good will" agencies have contributed, willingly or not, to smooth the process of capitalist ideological penetration. But they also have helped to increase the level of frustration among the peasants, resulting from the confrontation of the reality of their subsistence economy with the promises made by the ideologues of modernization.

→ one of the characteristics of advertising in capitalist societies is "the intention to manipulate people into buying a 'way of life' as well as goods" (1973: 195).

### 1 The labor market

In the last decade, the decreasing productivity of the land <sup>the accumulated effects of</sup> caused by <sup>erosion and poor technology,</sup> and its further minifundization <sup>as</sup> ~~at~~ the result of <sup>subdivision by</sup> inheritance <sup>- along with</sup> ~~among~~ other external factors, to change the pattern of migration of the Colta peasants out of the area. Although it is difficult to obtain complete and accurate data, the trend seems to be for some members of the peasant household - specially young sons - to migrate permanently to Quito and Guayaquil, to areas of new colonization in the Oriente, and to urban centers in Colombia. In addition, with great reluctance, the poorest families are <sup>a</sup> starting to send their daughters to work in domestic service. Since wages ~~in~~ for these jobs are very low, this family decision can be regarded as a strategy to reduce consumption. Seasonal migration of the household head is still the main recourse by which the peasant family complements its cash income.

However, the participation of the Colta peasants in the labor market is not as full-fledged proletarians. For example, 70% of the migrants from the community of Majipamba work as ambulant vendors, selling fruit, clothing, handicrafts and lottery tickets; 30% work as cargadores (carriers), or performing other occasional minor services; and only 5% work as wage laborers - longshoremen and plantation workers - in the coastal estates. The present industrial labor market in Ecuador cannot absorb all the migrants from the countryside. Wages for those few migrants who find ~~these~~ ~~jobs~~ employment are low. For instance, some young adults from Colta who work in a small toy manufacturing operation in Quito, make 400 sucres (US\$ 15) a month, and are expected to send money home and survive in a city where <sup>a</sup>inflation is rampant.

As Stavenhagen has argued, in the dependent countries of Latin America, most peasant migrants are incorporated into the service

sector of the economy, and contribute <sup>to maintain</sup> ~~in maintaining~~ the artificially high standards of living of the middle classes and the bourgeoisie ~~in comparison with their North American counterparts~~ (1978: 35).

In Ecuador, this is particularly evident in the homes of these classes, where the cheap labor of peasant women working as domestics, relieves the housewives from the most tedious and strenuous aspects of housework and child-rearing allowing them to attend university or to enter the labor force. The ideology of women liberation has reached the Ecuadorian upper and middle classes, along with other ideological aspects of North American capitalism. However, often the social relations between the "now liberated" women and their servants still retain many of the characteristics of condescending paternalism typical of the feudal patron-peon relationship.

On the one hand, the social and economic links which the peasant migrants maintain with their communities, provides them with a cushion from the insecurities of the modern sector of the economy. On the other hand, the flexibility of the social relations displayed by the peasants in the pre-capitalist mode of production <sup>has</sup> prevented up to now, the possibility that -as Bradby argues - surplus populations in the cities become an embarrassment to capital, or a threat to the social stability supported by the bourgeoisie (1975: 150-151).

A situation very similar to that described by Smith for Perú (1979: 274-276) is happening in the case of the Colta migrants in relation to the peasants who remain in the countryside. Both continue to use all kinds of traditional forms of reciprocity arrangements, but within the context of a different articulation of the peasant communities with the national society. Migrants now offer the peasants in Colta a variety of urban services in exchange for agricultural labor and produce. These urban services

~~These urban services~~ consist of lodging for children who ~~want~~ ~~and~~ can afford to attend secondary schools, lodging and storage facilities for the travelling merchants, company for those peasants who occasionally have ~~in~~ some business in the IERAC central offices in Quito and, most importantly, a "support Protestant community" in the "hostile" city, for other "brothers" who migrate. In exchange, the peasants in Colta send cuis, potatoes, barley and other products, and cultivate the plots of those who ~~have~~ now live permanently in the city.

The new pattern of migration and the resulting rural-urban networks of reciprocity, have produced, in turn, ~~rather~~ some changes in the division of labour and in the reciprocal exchanges within the peasant communities. A direct result of the men's prolonged periods of absenteeism, for example, has been the self overexploitation of women's and children's labor for subsistence agriculture.

A few years ago, women were not involved in plowing the land, nor in cutting titora in the cold lake waters, two activities which demand handling of heavy equipment under quite primitive conditions. Now, most women are forced to carry out these physically demanding tasks, in addition to their traditional occupations of rearing children, tending the house, preparing food, feeding and pasturing the animals, washing clothes, and ~~going~~ <sup>going</sup> ~~to the market~~.  
~~xxxAlthough accompanying their husbands~~ to the market.

Although Colta peasant children have always participated in light agricultural activities, and as shepherds of the family flocks, now their labor has become indispensable to their mothers in all the production cycle. In addition, the majority of the children are attending school. They often do their school work by candlelight in the early hours of the morning, and are expected to perform several household tasks before and after attending their morning

classes. The very poor families cannot afford to releas<sup>part of</sup>e their children's time from production, and that is why - despite considerable pressures- a large number of children do not finish primary school. Consequently, as has been pointed out, in general, for children of the subsistence peasant sector in Latin America, when the Colta children later migrate, "their absorption into the urban labor force will be among the ranks of the least qualified" (de Janvry and Gamarrón 1977: 214).~~xx~~

However, not even all the available family labor is enough to complete some agricultural tasks such as harvesting and threshing. This leads women to try to engage other women- usually kin and neighbours- in reciprocal exchanges of labor for harvesting, and of mules and donkeys for threshing and transportation. <sup>Often,</sup> While performing these activities, ~~often~~ other women prepare the food for all, as a time-saving device. Several traditional rituals, ~~now performed~~ under the guise of Protestant practices, are performed in order to ~~strengthen~~ strengthen these ties among women.

In addition, in order to continue to have access <sup>to</sup> other ecological levels, women have retained or renewed sharecropping arrangements with other families living in the high plateau. They share <sup>seeds,</sup> animals for plowing, labor, and the harvest on a fifty-fifty basis. When the people from the páramo come down to the lower communities, they are offered lodging, food and other services. Increasingly, "brothers in Christ" are sought and trusted for these reciprocal exchanges.

All these practices just described, can be regarded as additional internal defense mechanisms of the pre-capitalist mode of production against the advances of capitalism. However, some incipient forms of internal class differentiation are starting to develop in Colta, and cannot be overlooked in the total picture of capitalist penetration in this region.

Internal class differentiation

As I mentioned already, the process of implementation of the Agrarian Reform produced the conditions for some inequalities in access to land, which the present land market has only helped to accentuate. Under these <sup>some</sup> circumstances, ~~xxxxxxx~~ peasants-primarily from the community of San Antonio- were able to accumulate some land but, instead of cultivating it themselves; opted for becoming full-time merchants and have given the land to poor comuneros under share-tenancy contracts. The owner <sup>of</sup> the land extract a form of labor rent from the comuneros, and all the risks remain with the latter.

Unlike the other share-cropping arrangements "between brothers", described above, these contracts with petty-merchants are regarded as highly exploitative by the comuneros. In the area, the San Antonio ~~xxxxxxx~~ owners of land are known as ~~the~~ "los latifundistas" (the large landowners) because they refuse to accept the ideology of sharing and reciprocity, they refuse to "lend a hand".

This is the most clear case of internal class differentiation I know of in this area. Other attempts by some comuneros in Majipamba to exploit the labor of their fellow peasants, have been fiercely opposed by the cabecilla in this community who is, probably, the only "true traditional" leader still remaining <sup>in the region</sup>. He has acquired his prestige through more than thirty years of desinterested service to the community, even at the risk of his own life. ~~Like the old~~ "kuraka" (he who has the voice for all) ~~he is the representative of the community and the guardian of the social norms.~~ He <sup>acts as</sup> is the arbitrator of <sup>most</sup> internal disputes ~~and~~ backs the demands of poorer members of the community, <sup>and</sup> is responsible for enforcing the community obligations with the State, and for the organization of all communal work. In



exchange, the comuneros help him cultivate his land and, occasionally bring him offerings of food. Like the old "kuraka" of pre-Colombian times (see Spalding:1974), he is the representative of the community and the guardian of the social norms. However he has "learned the ropes" of the new-bureaucratic structure very well, and his reputation as "the wise Indian who speaks like a doctor" is feared<sup>even</sup> by lawyers and IERAC officials in the area.

The Colta peasants have been able to retain some access to their means of production, kinship and community obligations -although in a new form - continue to be important both as relations of production and in providing all the social security functions, such as caring for the young, the sick and the old and, finally, despite the individualism fostered by Protestantism, many rituals still operate as forms of redistribution. All these mechanisms have helped to slow down the rate of proletarianization. Capitalism has not yet destroy this peasant economy, not because the Indians are "backward" and "traditional" - as the national version of the ideology of development would make us believe- but because they have shown a refreshing creativity in transforming and adapting their cultural traditions and ideological practices to confront the new challenges of an advancing capitalism.

## NOTES

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2. These stories were checked with the ethnographic information from this region collected in 1965-66 by the Investigating team of Cornell University headed by Eileen Maynard. The hacienda was then still in operation (see Maynard 1966 and Cornell 1966).
3. Similar observations ~~by~~ have been made by Norman E. Whitten Jr. in his extensive work on the Canelos Quichua, where he discusses the relationship of this indigenous group with the bureaucracy which operates in the Ecuadorian Oriente (see specially 1978: 58-59).

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## Uses and misuses of traditional Knowledge

Talk : Dept October 9, 1997

If last week's talk was about political culture, this joint talk to-day is about the politics of culture and about some of the interesting epistemological problems that it raises for all our disciplines: anthropology, sociology and archeology.

First I want to convey what I know is a shared sentiment with Julie and Nancy of the intellectual enjoyment we experienced in collaborating for this talk through which we discover common grounds despite the fact of working in apparently such disparate areas as the Canadian North and the Amazon. If nothing else, the nemesis of globalization certainly does not respect our neat disciplinary and ethnographic boundaries.

For the purposes of this talk I was assigned the task of introducing to you as briefly as possible the framework we developed for our comparative presentations and some of the general issues that each of us will be raising based on our own individual fieldwork.

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1. Indigenous knowledge has become a field of study or at least an issue of international interest and profitability. Social scientists, other scientists, museum specialists, bureaucrats in government agencies (from the Canada Council to the World Bank), school teachers, the mass media, the film industry, environmentalists of all kinds, and not least the indigenous peoples themselves have sometimes similar, but more often contradictory interests in this field of "traditional indigenous knowledge"

2. Why has the interest in this field develop? We can mention at least three areas here

2.1 There are of course global economic and social concerns involved: the environmental crisis, and the management of resources ( herds, fish, forests and mineral

extractive activities), large economic development projects and the land claims related to them, ecotourism, and also the increasing interest in health and in curing through alternative medicines, (some of which are part of an international search for new forms of spirituality).

2.2 Within academia there has been a proliferation of ethno-studies: ethnobotany, ethnoecology, ethnomusicology, ethnomathematics, ethnomedicine, etc, which poses interesting questions of ethno-versus non-ethno and the manipulation of the Other's knowledge to make it "compatible" with Western "truths," as well as the issues raised first within ethnography of multivocality and the meaning of collaborative research.

+and

2.3 From the indigenous peoples point of view traditional knowledge has become part of a strategy of cultural and political empowerment, and no less, a source of local income and of significant amounts of international aid money.

3. The transformation of traditional indigenous knowledge into a field of study has led to its reconceptualization: from animistic religion or primitive thought---to indigenous science; from obstacle to modernization and development---to pillar of sustainable development, from just cultural capital to "real' capital, and finally, as a new moral paradigm( of "salvation") by which non-western cultures may offer us an alternative model for rethinking universality and the issues of moral attitudes towards non-humans.

4. These developments have, of course, very real consequences, among indigenous peoples and in indigenous communities (some of which are very much related to gender differences) and in the relationships of these communities with the global cultural economy. For example, the conflicts produced by the commodification of knowledge, between cultural rights and corporate profits.

5. Finally all these issues raise a broad range of epistemological problems, some of which

are specific to the environmentalist discourse: such as the naturalization of indigenous peoples and the reification and decontextualization of knowledge. Or the depoliticization of knowledge and the silencing of indigenous memories and histories.

And more general ones, which at this stage, of course are best posed as challenging questions than as definite answers: such as the one related to the dualism culture-nature or human-non-human relations. If this paradigm is a historical product of the Renaissance that is even failing to account for developments in modern science (like reproductive technologies, for example), does our social understanding of difference leads us to endless relativisms, or is it possible to find an approximation to a unified analytical framework, an alternative to the dualist paradigm of subject-object relations that goes beyond the universalizing of the scientific paradigm or of a new spirituality. What would be the social consequences of such paradigm ?

After playing the role of trickster and dropping this intellectual bomb I will gracefully give the floor to Julie.



## Traditional Knowledge in the Amazon

More than a systematic field of study, in the Amazon traditional indigenous knowledge has become a field of contention for competing and often contradictory interests, although at this time, superficially they might share the dominant discourse of environmentalism. For obvious reasons the emphasis is on health and curing and ethnobotanists have been working with indigenous peoples for a long time know. But sustainable development with ecotourism as its main solution is a booming industry, while on the other side big oil companies are working with their own ethnobotanists and anthropologists to manage their polluting images, and all environmentalists, of course, are concerned with forest management.

As in other places in the Americas, for Amazonian indigenous peoples their traditional knowledge has become a source of cultural and political empowerment. In Ecuador, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the discourse has shifted from one of solidarity with the indigenous peasant class to a purely ethnic one and to a strategic alliance with the environmentalist discourse in which, as has been noted by many, nature (natives included) becomes the new proletariat to be saved. A traditional class discourse would not invoke international solidarity at this point and much less the support of the environmental movement worldwide.

Neoliberalism has weakened the union movement, while like in other parts of Latin America and elsewhere, political parties have lost popular legitimacy. National indigenous federations are filling in these gaps: there are at least three national deputies in Congress who are indigenous peoples all ex-leaders of indigenous organizations from the Amazon and the Highlands. The prestige and international influence of the environmentalist discourse has brought all of the major environmentalists NGO's into the Ecuadorian Amazon helping to create national ones, often with competing political agendas. They have dramatically changed the flow of aid money into "sustainable development" projects.

## Uses and Misuses of traditional Knowledge

Dept. Talk Oct. 9, 1997

**Outline of Topics. Ethnographic comparisons. Theoretical issues to be developed (background for discussion)**

### I. Traditional Indigenous Knowledge as field of study

I.1 By Whom? Anthropologists, scientists, bureaucrats, environmentalists, indigenous peoples

I.2 Why? Plants, health, curing, management of resources (herds, fish, forests), land claims, large

scale economic development, oil, ecotourism, "new spirituality" interest in alternative medicines.

I.3 Proliferation of ethno-studies: ethnobotany, ethnoarcheology, ethno. <sup>medicine, ethnoecology, ethno-psychiatry, etc</sup> exposes questions of  
ethno-vs non-ethno, manipulation of knowledge to make it compatible with Western "truths". ●

I.4 from indigenous point of view. As strategies of cultural and political empowerment. As

sources of aid money and local income (differences between men and women). [ In Ecuador

political strategy after fall of "second World" from a class to a purely ethnic discourse and ●

incorporation into new hegemonic discourse of environmentalism in which nature ( natives included) is the new proletariat to be saved.]

### II How this knowledge has been conceptualized

from obstacle to modernization and development to pillar of sustainable development.

From animistic religion to indigenous science

from cultural capital to "real" capital (concepts of utility and commodification) ●

within evolutionary models of primitivism to civilized to new "synthesis" (science and tradition)

as new moral paradigm of "salvation": non-western cultures offering alternative models for ●

rethinking universality and the issues of moral attitudes towards non humans.

Going back to edenic paradigm: tradition as purity, modernity as corruption. Re-elaboration ~~of~~

"noble savage" paradigm and indigenous self-identification with it in public discourse (e.g.

discourse (Julie) "respect for elders, and meaning of respect. And in Ecuador indigenous leader in

government denying any violence in indigenous "culture" ●

From monophonic ethnography to multivocality and new bricolage???

### Consequences

Reification of knowledge rather than studied as system of knowledge

what  
Tanner  
Turner  
calls  
ethno-  
ethno-  
history  
to understand  
indigenous  
ethnohistory  
of us

collaborative research?

decontextualization of knowledge

Erradication of knowledge/ erradication of indigenous histories

commodification of knowledge. Problem of cultural rights and corporate profits.(and Western justifications of it, e.g Body Shop gives money for Violence against women in the West) Shamans Incorporated and main pharmaceutical companies. Patent of ayahuasca (hallucinogenic) by US corporation.

Consequences of new prestige of that knowledge: for women in Amazon: new source of income as curers.(fuzzier boundaries between witches, curers, shamans in public eye, not internally) Also source of travel for conferences, small ecotourist industries (see I.4) New pedagogies: problems of "shamanic schools" (*latest news: community killing of a shaman announced by leader of Achuar federation as "community justice"*) Knowledge use to establish hierarchies and inequalities between communities. Knowledge use in official indigenous federations' discourses to deny history to less acculturated groups and women). Problems of authenticity of knowledge and its carriers and consequences when they "fail" to meet those standards. Western insatiable appetite for heroes and for debunking them.(e.g. Huaorani, Kayapo, Yanomami, Rigoberta Menchu)

### III Specifics of Environmentalist Discourse

Native americans as part of nature. Perpetuates dualisms Them and Us

lived in harmony with nature (indigenous women's point of view on these issues)

native americans as "pure" conservationists (different subsistence strategies)

denying history and histories of native peoples and of nature (conceptions of "virgin forests"

versus anthropogenic forests and debate about the conservationist vs the destructive native)

\*\*\*by denying history and in search for authenticity deny problem of deconstruction of native populations and **deconstruction of memories**. Native use of Western paradigms (e.g.

Christianity) to give new meanings to their lives (explains transformations of oral traditions in term of the present) and fact that oral traditions are inscribed in **power relations**

memories essential in individual and collective identity but also as instruments of power to be erased and manipulated. Struggle for domination over remembrance and traditions.

## IV Epistemological Issues

### The character of knowledge

Different expressions of causality . Distinctive paradigms to convert knowledge into everyday practice. (Canadian example song, shamanism, cariboo; example Amazonia: explanations of environmental "disaster" "scarce resources"= lockers are rusted. ●

Do not translate easily cross-culturally.

Classifying, mapping, harvesting, (universalistic paradigm of science) fragmentation human experience. Categories that distance people from lived experience.

Impose paradigm of cabinets of curiosities or museums of natural history to lived culture.

Learning as situated in communities of practice

knowledge embedded in social relations with non-humans Indigenous peoples are likely to raise questions about **whose stories , who identifies events** , how is the meaning of **place** constituted rather than **What** actually happen (Julie 1994's article).

establishing evidence and truth in scientific knowledge and oral tradition

\*\*\*importance of the **body** in transmission knowledge;embodying knowledge (case Kayapo and african slaves in Brazil) (In amazon concept and practice of paju). Knowledge goes beyond linguistic representations

Role of shaman (true shamans vs.younger ones. Assumes one knowledge "shared" under paradigm of universal science. ?

### Dualism nature culture--Human-non-human relations

Dualism does not account for developments in modern science (producing natural events in non-natural ways) It is a historical product of the Renaissance.

Does our understanding of difference leads us to endless relativisms and descriptions of local cosmologies, also embedded in power relations (some knowledges more relative than others) or is it possible to find general trends towards a **unified analytical framework**. (possible alternative models to a dualist paradigm). that goes beyond the universalizing of science (which assumes the dualism, or the universalizing of spirituality (unified native religions with all the consequences of native orientalisms) or economics. (3 attempts Ellen, Palsson, Descola)

What is the role of anthropology in this task. What can we learn from native **perspectivism** (Viveiros de Castro). Or from native historians' conceptions of US (the West).

Do natives have just one conception of nature?

The realm of social relations implies a wider domain than the society of humans. All beings are ontological equals. Relations humans no-humans as relations subject<sup>2</sup>-subject. Affinal charming of game and consanguine mothering of plants.

Societies based on objectifications of self-other projects, <sup>assume</sup> same dichotomy subject-object into relations between persons and the natural world. (If this is an argument for change in social relations, <sup>it</sup> has to be an argument in the opposite direction to bureaucratization and compartmentalization. (No debt to nature, ~~debt~~ is relations between humans in a particular historical context. Concept of debt vs. Reciprocity.

Role of anthropology in understanding this aspect of traditional indigenous knowledge

If environmental determinism is dead why bother with understanding interactions between humans and other living and non-living components of their surroundings?

A) Real consequences and public agenda of environmental crisis both in North and Amazon

B) Globalization, ethics and politics of nature

Julie (1994) demonstrate how all social constructions, including our own, factor into social processes we are trying to understand .

Contextualism denies the capacity of abstract totalizing systems such as science and the market to solve basic problems of human survival. Sober recognition of these limitations but different from mysticism. It is an argument for recontextualization. .

# How to organize

I

• Introductory of topics.

Case Canada E each topic

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II

## Introductory topics

Topic I Field of Study ~~E~~

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Topic II Knowledge conceptualized

B Nancy

Topic III Specifics essential term

Nancy Julie Blanca.

Topic IV Epistemological issues.

Blanca Julie Nancy.

CORRUPTION AND ITS EFFECTS ON SOCIAL AND POLITICAL  
PARTICIPATION IN A BOLIVIAN COMMUNITY

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This paper<sup>+</sup> examines the relationships between administrative corruption and social and political participation in Coroico, a small town in the Nor Yungas province of Bolivia. Coroico is an old colonial capital in the Yungas, an area of semi-tropical valleys on the eastern slopes of the Andean range. The town population is predominantly mestizo; only a small group of families still claim to be of direct Spanish descent. The surrounding countryside is populated mainly by Aymara indians. As a result of the 1953 agrarian reform, which divided the large haciendas among former peons, the indians became freeholding peasants (campesinos). Although since Inca times the Yungas is famous for coca production, the peasants living around Coroico cultivate coffee and citrus fruits as the most important cash crops. Other crops such as bananas, peanuts, potatoes and corn are grown predominantly for household consumption.

Like many other Bolivian campesinos, the Aymaras of the Yungas benefited from the most significant political achievements of the revolution that brought the Nationalist Revolutionary Movement (MNR) to power in 1952. Through universal suffrage and through their own political organizations (sindicatos), the peasants were able to attain a considerable degree of political participation at the national level. However, the small rural communities in which most of the peasants live, administratively depend from provincial governments, in this case the local government in Coroico. Thus, in order to have a better understanding of the social and political participation of the peasants at the local level, it is important to take a closer look at <sup>the</sup> social and political reality of that local government.



Following a tradition established by the functionalists, many studies of corruption and its consequences in developing nations have examined corruption primarily in terms of its integrative functions for the society as a whole (see Smelser, 1969:7) . The perspective taken in this paper is that social class is a more appropriate unit for analyzing the consequences of corruption on social and political participation than the society as a whole. For some members of the Coroico upper classes, corruption may be a convenient alternative mechanism to exercise political influence; for the lower classes, and especially for the peasants, corruption becomes a mechanism for marginalization and discrimination.

The general picture to be drawn from the Coroico data is not one of social integration but of potential or open conflict. The town's <sup>closed</sup> social structure, its partisan and factionalistic politics and its corrupt bureaucracy and justice administration are all crucial factors in hindering the social and political participation of the peasantry, mainly because these factors help the <sup>Town</sup> ~~town's~~ elite in building strongholds of economic and political privileges which are manipulated for the purpose of denying the mass of the population most of the basic rights (i.e., collective organization, access to land and justice) the revolution was supposed to grant them.

#### The town political power elite

In Coroico, before 1952, political activities at all levels ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> monopolized by an elite of large landowners and by a small group of bureaucrats at the unconditional service of that elite.

The landowners held great social power, were well organized economically in the Sociedad de Propietarios de Yungas (Property Owners' Society) and formed a conscious and cohesive political class which was able to prevail against any party changes at the national level. Only the 1952 revolution was able to ~~shake~~ shake the absolute political power of the Coroico landowners. Their main loss was the actual political control of the surrounding countryside where the peasant unions, under the leadership of the MNR, organized the peasants primarily against their former patrons. However, not even at the peak of revolutionary fervor immediately after 1952, were the peasants able to have political control of the provincial ~~capital~~ government in Coroico. This control remained in the hands of an economic and social elite in which the ex-landowners managed to participate.

The new elite is a product of the socio-economic changes brought about by the revolution and the agrarian reform. Its most prominent members are the large coffee dealers, money-lenders and shopkeepers who, through economic exploitation of the "liberated" ~~campesinos~~ campesinos, now hold a large part of the town's wealth. By becoming ~~big~~ big dealers and merchants, some ex-landowners have retained part of their old political ascendancy. Although ancestry and landownership have ceased to be infallible routes to political power, the presence of some prestigious old names in the new elite adds a touch of respectability to the crude power of wealth. This is especially important in a society which has not yet fully internalized the value of money as the main source of prestige. Furthermore, some ex-landowners have managed to maintain their ascendancy in the public bureaucracy by means of personal "contacts", through compadrazgo relations,



Legitimate authority and the problem of corruption

It is almost a truism to note that a government which enjoys ~~xxxx~~ a high degree of legitimacy will be in an optimum position to control, or to prevent corruption altogether. The interesting question to ask is then, why, at no point in time since 1952 did the Corico government enjoy legitimacy from the majority of the population.

Workers, artisans and small merchants were not as directly benefited by the revolutionary changes of 1952 as were the peasants, and therefore showed less willingness to organize themselves politically. Besides, confronted with the closedness of the town governing elite, the lower classes soon became disillusioned ~~xxxx~~ and sceptical about politics and politicians. The peasants granted legitimacy to the MNR national government because it had given them land and freedom from serfdom. The local government, instead, retained too many connections with the old regime for the peasants to grant it their unconditional support. Furthermore, after the military coup of 1964 which ousted the MNR from power, the town officials were replaced with members of the Socialist Falange, a party <sup>h</sup> which the peasants identified with their former patrons.

Legitimacy of an administrative order largely depends on a certain degree of consensus by the majority of the population about the values, attitudes, beliefs and policies that order is trying to implement. This consensus was lacking in Corico. For the campesinos, ~~the government~~ and the nation began to exist as a social reality in 1952 and is identical with their freedom, their fight against the landowners and, in general, with all they have understood to be the values of the revolution. ~~for~~

For the town upper-class, on the contrary, the revolution has produced a significant change in their previous idea of the nation, mainly by curtailing their monopoly of political and social privileges. They have ceased to be the only local representatives of the nation, and this loss is what they resent. The 1964 military coup gave them some hope of recovering that social and political reality which the idea of the nation had represented from them. There are few possibilities of reconciliation between these two contrasting concepts of the nation, specially since most townspeople have consistently denied the legitimacy of the campesinos' right to become members of the ~~town~~ town's political community. The following statement by a member of the upper-class shows how they felt about that issue:

Once the campesinos wanted to appoint an Indian as Mayor. We threatened them with killing any Indian who would dare set a foot in the Townhall. The whole town rose against it, because the Townhall is for the people and not for the campesinos.

The most obvious result of the type of politics prevalent in town is the belief- common among many of the informants- that civic and political rights are not just claims to which everybody is entitled by law but privileges to which only some people are entitled because they have access to or possess other social characteristics, such as the "proper" ethnic or economic background, or the "personal connections that count." Participation in politics is regarded not as a means by which the citizens may organize themselves to assert their rights but rather as the means by which those citizens who are sufficiently interested or ambitious can acquire some privileges. When some social groups define their rights as privileges, and deny the

same rights to members of other groups because of their economic ethnic or social status, no strong consensus can emerge which would legitimize the lawful functioning of local government. Rather, the basis for systematic deviance from the norms through corruption gets solidly established.

FN An elite has managed to remain in control, but the general political atmosphere of the town has changed since 1952. In the past, patronage resembled a kind of "gentlemen's agreement," an obligation towards social equals. The enlargement of political participation, the increase in the number of competing parties, and the expansion of government activities have produced a new type of man of influence who have access to the sources of political patronage. Consequently, new forms of patronage are possible, and political behavior is more open to compromise and corruption between those who have power and those who have the money to buy it. However, personalism is still the decisive factor in political behavior and -as Goldrich argues- this style of politics, because it focuses on the specific and is difficult to predict, retards the institutionalization of any rules of the political game (1965:371). Politics then, loses its "public service" and "public right" qualities to be transformed into a series of private arrangements. Thus, it has been said of the Mayor: "He engages in politics a lot, but does nothing to serve the public." An obvious consequence of this attitude towards politics is that it encourages direct participation in town affairs ~~of~~ by those who have the necessary starting capital in money-and mostly in personal connections- to make of politics a profitable business, but prevents the active participation of workers and peasants who can only have political power if they act collectively through

an organization.

Local government administration: Authority vs. power

When a local government authority cannot count on the willing compliance of his subordinates, and even lacks the backing of other centers of legitimate authority (i.e., police; regional or national government), its administration is likely to be unstable and unpredictable. Consequently, the people's right to use the channels of political participation which the law provides are not always guaranteed.

If we try to describe the system of local government using Weber's framework of modern bureaucratic administration, we have to conclude that nothing approaching such an ideal type of administration functions in the town; but, as the formal apparatus does exist, we must try to discover the mechanisms that make it function.

With reference to the native public officials, for instance, several different factors have to be taken into consideration in order to understand their behavior: their social status in the community; their security in office, and, in general, the political support on which they can count; the conception they have of their roles, and their particular ideas of about what could or should be done in <sup>the</sup> town. These officials will generally remain in town after they have completed their terms in office. Consequently, one principle which tends to determine their policies is "not to rock the boat too much"; if by doing so they are likely to lose prestige, friends or future political supporters. Their policy on taxes is a good example of this principle. Since any kind of taxation is unpopular,

many <sup>public officials</sup> ~~politicians~~ are unwilling to incur animosity by imposing new taxes or even by enforcing those which already exist on the books. From the point of view of the officials, this attitude implies that he relinquishes his responsibility as an authority for his own personal benefit. From the point of view of the citizens, this situation predisposes them to relate to the particular person who is occupying the authority role instead of to the role per se. To impose or not to impose a tax is not regarded as the authority's legitimate duty but as a personal decision based on considerations such as the relative power that person has vis-a-vis those who are going to be affected by his decision.

This attitude is evident when a public official really wants to enforce a tax. Then, his authority alone is not enough. He has to show that he seriously means it, even by a naked display of physical force. Once, when the Mayor wanted to enforce the municipal tax on agricultural produce, he called his secretary and told him, "X, we need some gunmen who are on the side of the administration. We have to enforce the municipal tax... but we need some strong men to do it. People are unaccustomed to it, and some may want to avoid it." When the secretary suggested they borrow a policeman, the Mayor declined, noting that, "The Chief of Police hasn't been particularly cooperative."

Different sectors of the public administration take sides for or against each other, so the Mayor cannot count on the police to back his authority; but he needs a display of power if he is to exercise that authority effectively. His solution is thus to use non-institutional power in the form of two gunmen "who are on the side of the administration"-- obviously not law abiding citizens willing to preserve the integrity of the municipal



treasury but rather either men illegally paid with money from that <sup>same</sup> treasury to do their job, or individuals who owe some personal loyalty to the Mayor.

Enforcing tax laws is a difficult task, therefore, the local officials often resort to fining, which may be exercised arbitrarily, since no higher national authority assumes the responsibility of overseeing the laws concerning local fines. Here again, the personal considerations and status of the local officials provides us with the informal guidelines to understand how authority works. Most likely, those officials are not going to exercise their power to fine against their friends or their powerful political supporters, but rather <sup>a</sup> against those people from whom the officials may expect to suffer less negative social or political consequences if they are fined, i.e., the town lower classes and the peasants when they come into town.

In both instances described above, it is clear that the possibilities for the arbitrary and corrupt use of power results from the lack of legitimacy to exercise authority. On the one hand, there are at least two reasons why the Mayor cannot count on the willing compliance of his subordinates: Firstly, they are not ready to accept a priori, that the role of authority implies the right to command them. Secondly, tax-collecting assumes a degree of confidence in the centralized powers of a "national political community" which the Coroiquios<sup>e</sup>-like many other people in developing nations- still do not have. On the other hand, the Mayor cannot count on other sources of power ~~neither~~ local nor national- to back his authority.

Consequently, the Mayor resorts to arbitrary means to enforce his authority--gunmen, fines, his personal power or influence--and his "authority" becomes almost unlimited and, indeed, quite unpredictable.

According to Weber, one of the most important rules of bureaucratic domination is that: "In the case of legal authority, obedience is owed to the ~~legally established~~ legally established impersonal order. It extends to the persons exercising the authority of office under it by virtue of the formal legality of their command and only within the scope of authority of the office" (1968a, Vol I : 215-216). The disregard for this rule by the administration and the public alike, gives us further clues for understanding the structural conditions which foster the ambiguous and unstable functioning of the local government in Coroico, and the corruption of its officials.

When a ~~person~~ <sup>Coroiqueño</sup> obeys an authority, he is, most often, not obeying "the law" per se but responding to a power situation between himself and a rich merchant, the leader of his party, or his former patron. The fact that they are at the same time authorities, is of secondary importance. There is no established tradition of respect for a body of legal norms (and often not even clear <sup>of</sup> knowledge of its existence among the public) which could serve as the basis to legitimate authority. Consequently, <sup>neither</sup> can it be a clear distinction between domination which has its source in an "interest constellation" and that which emanates from legal authority. In fact, in everyday usage, people do not differentiate between power and authority.

From the point of view of the officials, this confusion is obvious when they have to define the "scope of authority

of the office". Jurisdiction of the local authorities is a matter of internal and public dispute in Coroico. It may be determined by historical precedent, by the official's personal discretion, or it may be the outcome of a power play or compromise among different officials. In fact, the officials pay little attention to the legal definition of their jurisdictions, sometimes because they lack the technical training in public administration which would allow them to know the law, sometimes because they choose to ignore the law at their own convenience. A few examples will serve to illustrate this situation.

Because the Agrarian Judge may count on peasant support, he is able to live in the Townhall at the expense of the Municipality, even when the Subprefect badly needs those offices to carry on his official duties. The Party Judge, who has a powerful compadre in La Paz, also has his private home in the Townhall at no personal cost. Although the Subprefect, as the highest authority in the Province, has jurisdictional authority over the Municipality, he is unwilling to exercise that authority to oust either of the two judges because he fears their power.

As there are no clear definitions of the boundaries of the activities of the public officials, any one of them can expand his duties to cover almost anything he ~~likes~~ likes, and no higher supervision exists to control or limit his jurisdictional powers. Thus, the Agrarian Judge attends divorce cases among campesinos because from that he charges fees; the Party Judge handles cases that belong to higher courts; the Police settles cases which should be taken to court, and the like. In fact, almost all officials are always willing to hear complaints and to enforce decisions in cases where money is involved.

For the common people, important decisions about the jurisdiction of their legal cases or complaints are made in terms of the power possibilities available to the different parties concerned. In these situations, power may mean such different things as: knowledge of the rules, influential friendships, absence of competing officials in town at the moment, knowledge about the willingness of the different officials to accept bribes, in short, such a wide range of alternatives, that it is very difficult for a person to be able to predict the course or the outcome of his case. Since this lack of clear cut delimitation of jurisdictions of authority furthers the confusion between the official activity and the sphere of private life of the officials, the main condition for corruption in public administration is established, and the public often has to resort to corruption in order to get their cases resolved with certain degree of certainty.

#### Other, more local conditions of corruption

In general, the analysis of the effects of corruption for different groups in the society is closely <sup>related to</sup> ~~connected with~~ the types of behavior included in the working definition of corruption which is used to examine those effects. Most social scientists dealing with this problem have focused almost exclusively on one type of corruption, i.e., "the readiness of the officials to accept bribes" (Wertheim, 1968:562) mainly involving a "trade of economic for political rewards" (Smelser, 1969:14).

For the purposes of my analysis I have included other empirical instances of corruption such as, using public facilities for private gain, direct embezzlement of public funds, and demanding fees for the performance of public services, because their consequences on the social and political

participation of various groups in the population are generally quite different from those produced by bribery.

Although their consequences may differ, all forms of corruption already mentioned have one general characteristic in common: they refer to "the conduct of officials who infringe on the principles of keeping their public and private concerns strictly separate" (Wertheim, 1968:563). Therefore, the existence of corruption, in the modern sense, presupposes a society which has, at least formally, accepted the separation between public and private interests of the public officials as a criterion for proper conduct on their part (Wertheim, 1968:563; Smelser, 1969:13-14).

In Bolivia, the law formally requires all public officials to relinquish their former occupations and other sources of income when they take office. Nevertheless, at the local level in Coroico, the salaries paid, even to the highest ranking officials, are so low that they will not maintain a family even at subsistence level. Thus, a structural situation is created by which the officials are forced to supplement their salaries in some other way. Precisely how and by what amounts are important issues left open to the officials' arbitrary decisions.

In defining the position of the bureaucratic officials, Weber observes that, "entrance into an office, including one in the private economy, is considered an acceptance of a specific duty of fealty to the purpose of the office (Amststreue) in return for the grant of a secure existence" (1969a, Vol. III:959).

Since in Coroico, the State does not guarantee a secure

existence to the local officials, faithful management is not likely to ensue. As one local official says, "When a salary is not enough to buy breakfast, you'll always find graft."

The case of the Subprefect is a typical example. He is the highest ranking official in the Province, but he earns Bs. 180.000 per month (US\$ 15), less than the Townhall janitor who gets Bs. 270.000 per month (US\$ 21.60). Even the Subprefect's political enemies are "understanding" about his situation. They comment that, "he has a totally unenviable job, trying to administer justice in the entire Province with no transportation, no budget, and a miserable salary." They agree that it is impossible for him to survive on that salary and that he tries to make a living in his carpentry shop. However, as he does not have much free time left from his official duties, he is obliged to supplement his income by other more expeditious means. An official from the Townhall explain the Subprefect's case as follows:

That's one of the defects of our system. Salaries ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ of the public officials are so impossibly low that they have to accept graft... The Subprefect has to pocket some fines now and then, and occasionally, when people ask for a favor, they are able to help him with a little gift.

The contrast between a meager salary and the actual power and prestige involved in being a public authority creates a situation of status inconsistency for the officials which may also contribute to foster corruption. Because ~~many~~ many of the officials in Coroico belong to the mestizo or "intermediate" group, they find that status inconsistency difficult to accept, since most of them still look at the traditional upper class as their reference group, and that class was always able to maintain a monopoly of the economic, political and social bases of power.

Even if the past social situation does not have a strong appeal for the young local officials, the recently enriched national political elite (largely the product of party patronage and foreign aid) has a demonstration effect at the local level, by which the officials come to regard as "natural" and "deserved" this self-enrichment while in office.

In addition to their poor financial situation, the instability and factionalistic character of the local government in Coroico creates structural conditions favorable to the development of corruption among public officials. In discussing this point for other developing nations, Scott (1969:337-338) finds a positive correlation between political systems ruled by relatively unstable and divided elites, and high levels of corruption. He argues that political instability produces greater insecurity of tenure among the public officials and, consequently, a tendency to profit quickly and as much as possible from their offices in the limited time they have available.

Because it lacked a cohesive ideology and consistent policies, the MNR national administration was afflicted by continuous

of the political spectrum. These conditions obviously fostered the instability and factionalistic character of local governments. This situation did not improve after the military coup of 1964. The political ambiguity of the Junta at the national level and the local power play among the different political groups produced a high turnover of public authorities, thus adding to the already chronic feeling of insecurity which every government official suffers in Bolivia in general. Consequently, <sup>the</sup> conditions which favor the officials' need for quick and large returns remained unchanged.

Social Awareness of Corruption

As I mentioned before, in Coroico there is a formal normative apparatus which determines what is the "public interest" as different from the "<sup>private</sup> public interest" of the officials. What I want to consider now is the relationship between the normative apparatus and the people's awareness, labeling, and tolerance of certain types of behavior as corrupt, because the common sense definition does not often correspond with the legal one.

Smelser argues that the existence of that normative system allows us to determine why a particular act is regarded as corrupt in one society and not corrupt in another (1969:13a); That, of course, is true in a general sense. However, within the same society, the mere existence of the norm does not provide all the necessary evidence to determine what behavior will be considered and branded as corruption by the people. The acceptance or tolerance of norm violation will be conditioned by the type of corruption, by the social context in which it



occurs, by its different social consequences, and even by the individual characteristics of the persons who perform a corrupt act. People may be perfectly aware that legal, ~~or~~ or even moral norms are being violated but nevertheless try to interpret the norm within a variable social context.

In the absence of a clear distinction between private and public office, the dividing line between custom and abuse is difficult to make. Furthermore, in a highly stratified society, "Community standards" do not have the same meaning for all the social groups, and consequently there cannot be an uniform criterion of judgement.

Nevertheless, from the variety of particularistic considerations a general pattern seems to emerge from the Coroico evidence by which the people often tend to see the causes of corruption as structural, rather than as the result of personal moral depravity on the part of the public officials. Thus, it is common for people to mention particular government policies, or lack of policies, as the decisive factor which "lead" the officials into corruption. It seems likely that in a small place, where corruption is so generalized that often friends and immediate relatives are involved, people need to find a rationalization or an explanation for their behavior in the social conditions and to blame the system rather than the persons.

Direct embezzlement of public funds, for instance, is

the form of corruption which arouses more criticism and indignation from the Coroiqueños, especially if the official who commits such an act is rich or if the money he embezzles is needed for an important community project. In those cases, it is more difficult to find a structural rationalization, and besides a reduction in the public treasury affects more people immediately (or, at least, it is more easily visible that it does) than if, for instance, a public official receives graft from a rich merchant in town to let him smuggle some goods.

However, sometimes the Coroiqueños also find "extenuating circumstances" in judging embezzlement of public funds by local officials. The tendency is to blame the system that made it possible. The case of the town physician, who was entrusted by the national government with money for construction of the hospital and spent it all for his own private benefit, provides us with a good example of the people's "temporizing mood" towards corruption. The physician complained to everyone who wanted to listen to him: "What can you do? They sent it to me in small bills; Bs. 5000 (US\$ 40) here, Bs. 5000 there, and pretty soon it was all gone." And the people were all very sympathetic, saying: "You're right. How can the government expect you to watch for small bills? They never should have sent small bills." The physician is an old and benevolent man to whom many Coroiqueños owe personal services and favors which, often, they are unable to repay accordingly. So, <sup>they think</sup> "the system" should pay, by whatever means.

Many other informal means by which the public officials supplement their incomes are regarded as "necessary evils" into which the officials are driven because the system does not provide them with any other viable, ~~alternative~~ respectable alternatives. Why the townspeople accept or tolerate behavior which formally, at the verbal level, they would label "corrupt" may be explained, on the one hand, because some forms of corruption are seen as a kind of "compensatory justice" against a system which does not enjoy much legitimacy. There is no sacred character about public institutions, and consequently to cheat the government or the law is not accompanied by severe informal social sanctions. On the other hand, the people may get temporary benefits from some types of corruption perpetrated by the officials. The case of the Mayor's private profit from a difficult situation in town is one example of these beneficial consequences of corruption.

Once there was a flour shortage in town, the Mayor, who while in office, retained his previous occupation as merchant, brought from La Paz more than a thousand pounds of flour which he began selling to the public, using the Townhall as a warehouse. His claim was that as a "public service just charging the freight". The town's comments about his behavior were divided- as in many other issues- along political lines. Of course, the comments of his colleagues and political friends emphasized the beneficial consequences of his action and were

more lenient than those of his political enemies. But nobody was excessively harsh with him or accused him in front of higher authorities .

In this case, by eliminating the flour shortage, the Mayor was able to gain public favor, or at least public tolerance, for his illegal profit. A serious problem, though, with the systematic exercise of this type of behavior by the public officials is its unpredictability. The mass of the governed usually ends up being at the mercy of a privileged few, because most decisions about public welfare depend upon an arbitrary judgement by the officials about their personal benefit or convenience, which may or may not coincide with what the public needs or desires.

#### Corruption and Political influence

Because of the Coroiqueños' generalized distrust in institutions, law and law enforcement are weak weapons to fight corruption. In fact, the law enforcement agencies are one of the institutional areas most frequently hit by corruption. Sometimes one is inclined to think that, in Coroico, the law-abiding citizen is equal to the fool, since it is so easy to get away with crime by corrupting the law enforcement officers. However, one soon finds out that this rule does not equally apply to every citizen.

On different occasions since the 1952 revolution, the legitimate avenues for acquiring and exerting political influence have been curtailed for different social groups and, consequently, influence has been diverted along illegitimate or informal paths. During the MNR period, some members or sympathisers of other political parties were personally harassed or persecuted; others, like the ex-landowners, were not allowed to organize as a political group. Similar things happened to some MNR followers after 1964. These situations obviously closed legitimate avenues of political influence for many individuals, who, whenever necessary, resorted to other channels to obtain desired political or economic ends. Corruption, then, was open to those who had other than political means of exchange, such as prestige, important personal connections or money. The most common instances were those which involved rich merchants or ex-landowners attempting to buy power through corruption of the government bureaucracy or of the most important peasant union leaders. It is evident, that campesinos and lower class townspeople, who do not have those other means of exchange, are less able to exercise influence through corruption. The campesinos at least did not need to do it during the MNR period because they could exercise strong collective influence at the national political level. Even after 1964, when the sindicatos lost effectiveness as a legitimate avenue of political participation for the campesinos, they did not resort to corruption but to other (collective and more violent) illegitimate forms of exerting influence.

The informal means of influence are not equally accessible to the different social groups because their degree of advantage or disadvantage with respect to the political system is closely related to their relative ~~xxxxxx~~ position in the economic and prestige structures in the system. This fact is particularly ~~xxxxxxx~~ evident in countries which-like Bolivia- are heavily dependent on foreign aid and foreign investments. Formally, the political disadvantage of foreign business groups is greater than ~~any~~ that of any indigenous group, but the former's actual economic power to influence government policies in a variety of informal ways is infinitely greater.

In the case of Coroico, not only are the peasants and town's lower classes in great economic and ethnic disadvantage, but they also lack the knowledge which is necessary for an easy access into the political system through informal means. Corruption requires a certain know-how about the system; knowledge about the "right persons," "the proper pulls," in short, knowledge about how the whole system works, which is not easily accessible to the lower classes in the society. For instance, even if both are banned from participation in the political system for ideological reasons, it is much easier for an MNR lawyer to corrupt a member of the new military ~~xxxxxx~~ bureaucracy (they may belong to the same club, have some friends in common) than for an MNR campesino to do the same.

As I mentioned before, these approaches which tend to regard corruption ~~xx~~ in developing countries as a functional and integrative mechanism generally do not take into consideration the distribution of power as an essential variable and therefore fail to analyze the consequences of corruption for the different social classes.

Discussing some of the structural conditions which are conducive to the appearance of corruption, Smelser observes that when tension arises between a national system of authority which is trying to institutionalize itself and local particularistic structures, corruption may serve "as a kind of supplementary system of political accommodation or modus vivendi between the two competing systems" (1969:18). The underlying assumption in Smelser's analysis seems to be that in a society where the <sup>re, are</sup> actual and perceived "discrepancies in the distribution of rewards in the stratification system" (1969:19), corruption—which is regarded as a "trade of economic for political rewards" (1969:14)—becomes a sort of equilibrium mechanism. This assumption suggests that, if those groups who possess the valued rewards of political power and money interchange some among themselves, the system as a whole will become integrated, or, in McMullan's words, corruption becomes an "emollient, softening conflict and reducing friction" (quoted in Smelser, 1969:18).

There are at least two problems involved in this interpretation of corruption. Firstly, it considers both the national and the

local political systems as homogeneous units and does not take into account the fact that "political accommodation" due to corruption generally takes place between specific social groups, and at high social costs for other social groups or classes nationally and locally. Secondly, since corruption per se implies particularism, the "new political coordination" it may produce will always be detrimental for the national, universalistic and impersonal aspects of government.

Precisely because corruption is a specific and particularistic type of <sup>a</sup> transaction, it tends to transform politics into a matter of private negotiations in which only those who have the proper means to negotiate can participate and to discourage collective political organization and participation.

In a society where the power holders <sup>or</sup> ~~and~~ the bureaucrats and those who can afford to corrupt them belong to the same social groups, corruption, instead of re-establishing trust in social relationships, presupposes a kind of social relation between the parties which must exist previous to the act of corruption. Those who do not have the proper relations are excluded from direct informal entrance into the system of interchange. This situation is clear in the case of the Coroico campesinos. The system often obliges them to use the traditional relations of patronage and compadrazgo in order to be able to enter into the new social structure created by corruption. For instance, a local merchant and money-lender explains she often bribes the local authorities



on behalf of "her" campesino clients (many of whom are <sup>her</sup> compadres and ex-peons) whenever they are in trouble, because they lack the money or influential relations to make a "proper" use of the available channels of corruption. The obvious consequence of this use of corruption is that it reinforces the traditional dependency of the campesinos from their ex-patrons and other powerful traditional forces and discourages their collective and political independent participation through the sindicatos.

I do not have the time to discuss here several of the other forms in which corruption, exercised by powerful townspeople at the enforcement level of government ~~policies~~ (i.e., bribing local officials not to enforce certain legislation or to obstruct <sup>the</sup> the judicial process) alter the implementation of national and local policies in order to prevent the full social and political participation of the lower classes. Just suffice to say that, in addition to the economic loss that the agrarian reform brought upon the traditional elites, we must also take into consideration the fact that many members of these elites felt threatened socially by the new possibilities of social participation through education, economic opportunities, and access to justice which the revolution opened to the lower classes. To confront that threat, the local traditional elites resorted to several defensive practices, among them corruption. Used in this ~~same~~ way, corruption amounts to social discrimination against the poorest and least prestigious members of the community, even if these corrupt practices are not always specifically and deliberately designed to produce that effect.

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KNOWLEDGE AS POWER: ETHNICITY AND CLASS AMONG NAPO QUICHUAS  
OF THE ECUADORIAN AMAZON

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper will deal with the problem of ethnic identity and inter-ethnic and class relations among the Napo Quichua Indians of the Ecuadorian Amazon. Since the sixteenth century, missionaries, encomiendas, and various forms of capitalism penetrated this area of the Upper Napo, attempting the ideological incorporation of the Indians into Christian civilization, and the transformation of their subsistence mode of production based on hunting, fishing gathering and swidden horticulture. Throughout this history, indigenous resistance also took different forms, from open rebellion, ideological confrontation, avoidance, and accomodation. All these responses allowed the Napo Quichuas to retain certain degrees of control over the material productive basis of their cultural identity. For centuries, the Amazonian tropical forest has evoked for many, images of forbidding mysteries and dangers. Native peoples have always regarded it as a secure refuge, and as a place of deep spiritual fulfillment and freedom from oppression.

The more decisive process of socio-economic transformation in this area can be traced back to the 1960's. It is in this decade when oil production, massive colonization, and the consolidation of state domination finally managed to turn a large number of Napo Quichuas into peasants, part-time proletarians and salaried service workers. But also in this decade, Amazonian groups started to organize politically into Indigenous Federations (the Shuar in 1964, the Napo Quichuas in 1969),

under the defiant banner of ethnic solidarity based on the re-affirmation of their specific cultural patrimonies. Trying to resist their full proletarianization, the indigenous peoples have followed two main strategies: to oppose the indiscriminate expansion of colonization, and to consolidate the legal titles to their traditional territories. Ironically, because of State Laws (Ley de Tierras Baldias), these same strategies have forced them to utilize that land for cash cropping and cattle raising, thus sharing in the destruction of the tropical forest ecology that constitutes the very basis of their ethnic identity. In this particular historical moment, culture seems to be linked to class in a very complex and contradictory manner. On the one hand, the history of this area of Amazonia calls into question those anthropological approaches that look at cultures as pristine autonomous and bounded systems. On the other hand, present day struggles also challenge those economists' orthodoxies which assume that class identity and solidarity can be based exclusively on the automatic, structurally determined, cultural homogeneity of the dominated classes.

In order to start unravelling this complex problem of the historically specific relations between ethnicity and class, I have chosen to examine some social situations in Napo Quichuas' history mainly using examples from the life experiences of a rucuyaya (meaning grandfather, in Quichua), a man now probably in his late 80's to whom I will refer here as Yaya Alonso.<sup>1</sup> Through his life history, which I collected during a period of three years, and through oral histories obtained in shorter interviews with other rucuyayas, members of his same generation, one can begin to elucidate the changing relations between dominant structures and symbolic meanings, and how Napo Quichua ethnic

identity emerges and is transformed in a process of cultural interdependency and class opposition with other groups, more specifically, I refer here to white or "blanco" dominant groups, highland Indians, and other tropical forest etnias, such as the Huaoranis.

After a summary presentation of the history of contact in this area primarily since the end of the nineteenth century, I will discuss the bases and dynamics of Napo Quichuas' ethnic identity focussing on two periods in Yaya Alonso's life history: the era of patrons from the early 1900's to the 1960's, and the period of oil exploration by the Shell company in the 1940's. Although in historical time these two periods overlap, they are quite distinct in Yaya Alonso's memory.

#### HISTORY OF THE UPPER AMAZON

Napo Quichua speakers, live in the Napo province of the Ecuadorian Oriente and extend eastward down the Napo river to Iquitos in Peru (Mercier 1979). Because of their montana hearth, located between the area of present-day Quijos valley and Archidon, the group I am referring to is also known as Quijos Quichua (Oberem ). There is very little evidence of their original language which became extinct early in the Colonial period. Along with other tropical forest Indians, they were pushed eastward running away from diseases and enslavement, and, in the process, assimilated other groups such as Zaparos (a group of Zaparoans) (Whitten ,139), highland Quichuas and Huaoranis (Yost ). To the south, in Pastaza province, some Napo Quichuas blended into Canelos Quichua culture, when their area became a refuge for many other groups (Whitten ,129). Multiculturalism is present in almost all the

Amazonian groups we now know as "distinct" cultures (Naranjo ). They are the result of the terrible traumas and disruptions unleashed by Spanish expansion into Amazonia. It should be clarified that, the fact of their origin as Quijos does not form part of everyday ethnic consciousness among the Napo Quichuas. They use that form, or Runa (in Quichua "people") to refer to themselves, and I will use these terms throughout my presentation. I am concerned with those Runas living in and around the towns of Tena, (capital of Napo province) Archidona, Pano, Cotundo, Puerto Napo and Puerto Misahualli. The total population of this area (abbreviated here as Tena-Archidona) was estimated at 17,000 in 1976, of which 13,000 or 76% are Napo Quichuas. Runas also make distinctions among themselves, according to their different riverine settlements, such as Panos, Tenas, Talags, etc. Most rucuyayas claim that, at one time or another, they all scattered from Archidona in search of better hunting grounds, although in their consciousness, this history tends to blend with the mythical origin of the first Runas, known as Nanpa Runa (Mercier ). These riverine settlements were populated by a residence-based stem kindred known as muntun whose members got access to demarcated territories (known as illactas) to fish and hunt, and usufruct rights for horticulture. Originally, these muntuns were organized around a powerful shaman, but this is not the case anymore in the Tena-Archidona area.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, Spaniards looking for the Land of Cinnamon, brought Christianity and encomiendas into the Tena-Archidona area. The Jesuits dominated it from the seventeenth to the end of the nineteenth century, when they were expelled from Ecuador by the liberal government of Eloy Alfaro. The image of the Napo

Quichuas as the "civilized" Indians, passive and submissive probably emerges at this time. In the dominant ideology, they become the *Alli Runa*, the perfect white man's Christian subject. Like many other ideologies of domination, this one marks a long history of conflict and resistance by the *Runas*, of which the full scale rebellion of 1578, organized by shamans and led by a powerful cacique by the name of *Jumandi*, is the most well known.

Yaya Alonso was probably born around 1896, because he remembers being told he was baptized by the Jesuits, the last of whom left Tena in 1898 (*Jonanen* 225-27), so our story begins in the first decades of this century, when debt-peonage under white patrons became the main form of exploitation of native labor. In 1906 the Ecuadorian Liberal Constitution declared the separation of Church and State and, until the early 1920's, there were no missionaries in the Upper Napo. Tena and Archidona were tiny hamlets, inhabited by a small number of government officials and by a few but powerful patrons, ex-soldiers and rubber merchants who established haciendas devoted to cattle raising and the cultivation of rice and cotton. (See traveller's accounts .)

Unlike other Amazonian Indians, the *Runas* from the Tena-Archidona area did not experience directly the same abuses and enslavement perpetrated by the barons of the rubber boom, who never reached as far up the Napo river as Puerto Napo, Tena and Archidona (*Macdonald* 205). Many *Runas* travelled far in search of rubber, but they were either accompanying a patron or on their own, commissioned by patrons. They collected rubber and panned gold in exchange for cloth, machetes, shotguns, ammunition and beads for women's necklaces. This system kept them in debt for years. *Runas* do not distinguish between the early



rubber boom that ended in 1913, and the other minor rubber boom connected with the Second World War. A series of decrees and laws (such as the Ley de Oriente 1899), enacted by the Liberal government helped to curtail some of the previous abuses against the Indians, such as the obligatory purchase of goods sold by government officials but, in general, some forms of obligatory labor for the construction of roads, bridges and houses, and the enforced transport of goods and people from Tena to Quito, and back continued under the orders of patrons, at least until better mule trails and roads were opened. Free from the competition of government officials, patrons became the sole suppliers of manufactured goods, easily dictating the terms of exchange, and isolating Indians from other agents of the wider Market economy. Although few Runas actually became permanent resident peons in haciendas, (Macdonald , Spiller ), their ties to the debt-system contributed to reaffirm the dominant image of the Napo Quichuas as fully subordinated Indians, incapable of escaping their oppressive situation (Beghin 1963, Spiller ). However, from foreign travellers' accounts and from the rucuyayas' own stories, other aspects of the patron system emerge that help us to qualify that image. British and American explorers into this area report the strong competition among patrons to secure Runas labor. This allowed Runas certain freedom to choose the less exploitative ones, and they did it through a captain (capitan) who was the leader for a whole muntun, so that the kinship nature of the labour group was kept intact. Whereas debts were incurred individually, in their payment, Runas were able to pan gold and gather rubber in their traditional territories, and to accommodate gardening, fishing and hunting, since land was still available and game

plentiful. When additional labor was required of them, Runas made themselves scarce by hiding in the jungle. Travellers tell of their difficulties in getting Runas' labor as paddlers, cargo bearers or guides, and often, of being left stranded for days with cargo for which they had paid the Indians in advance. Both Catholic Josephine and Evangelical Protestant missionaries, who entered this area in the early 1920's, like to claim the virtues of having liberated Runas from the patrons' oppression. Runas have a different assessment of the situation. I have time here only to discuss some aspects of the Josephine Mission. When they arrived in Ecuador in 1922, they were assigned a Vicariate in the Oriente that covered an area of 70,000 square kilometers. Their strategy of evangelization towards the Runas can be defined as guided paternalistic integration. They regarded Runas as lazy, innocent savages to be liberated from the terror of their own "sorcerers" (as they called Runa shamans) and from white patrons through productive work. The Josephines saw themselves as representing the twentieth century conception of "progress", based on technological change, formal schooling, technical training and modern medicine. As early as 1924, they put the Runas to work building a meteorological station, a hydroelectric power plant, schools, churches and convents, plus a radio station, "La Voz del Napo," still today the most powerful in the province. But, most importantly, the Josephines established agricultural stations in every missionary outpost for subsistence and cash crops as well as for cattle raising on a large scale. They obtained land through donations from Catholic patrons, and through occupation of Runas' traditional territories. When Runas offered the missionaries a small plot for a school and a chapel, the latter expanded

their own chacras and pasture for cattle. Soon enough, the Runas were encircled by the mission, they saw the game and fish partially depleted, and their gardens reduced. They were then forced to search for food farther and farther away into the forest. According to their own published records (see Spiller ), in 1973 the Josephines had more than 1,000 hectares of land devoted to cattle, pasture, and commercial agriculture. Still today, the Josephines, not really touched by the redeeming qualities of Liberation Theology, control a mini-empire in the Tena-Archidona area, including all levels of education, health services, communications and agribusiness. A significant number of Runas are the product of these schools, or work for the mission, as laborers and teachers.

The Leonard Exploration Company, a subsidiary of Standard began exploration for oil in the Oriente in the 1920's, followed by Shell in the early 1940's, and finally by several other companies in the 1960's and 1970's. The relationship between the oil companies, the missionaries and the State, in all these three phases was one of close and harmonious collaboration. They shared roads, maps, transportation, shelter and native labor (Spiller ). Jointly, they provided the necessary infrastructure of roads, Christian civilization, and legal administration that facilitated colonization into the Oriente. Slowly starting in the 1920's several waves of colonos reached the Tena-Archidona area. They received land grants of 40 to 50 hectares from the then Government Agency of Colonization, presently known as IERAC or Ecuadorian Institute of Agrarian Reform and Colonization, which they devoted mainly to pasture and cattle raising. Colonization increased dramatically during the 1960's, and still continues as part of

larger State policies of opening up the Oriente for national development, and to secure their frontiers against threats from Peru.

Encircled by haciendas, missions and colonos, and occasionally driven away by epidemics, many Runas were forced to leave the Tena-Archidona area, which continues to be the main center of out migration to the "oil region" between Lago Agrio and Coca. It has been estimated (see Orstrom ) that by the late 1970's, around 4,500 Runas had migrated permanently to that region, and around 1,000 to populate other areas along the Napo down to Coca. Since the early 1980's, the area between Coca and Rocafuerte is becoming the new center of immigration, due to the renewed efforts of the Ecuadorian government to colonize their frontiers after the last armed conflict with Peru in 1981. Despite all this out migration, the Tena-Archidona area is the second most densely populated area of the province after the "oil region," 43 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. For those Runas who stay, the pressure for land is mounting. Their average land holdings measure 14 hectares, while those of colonos 40, and those of haciendas around Tena, 93 hectares. In the past, Runas approached IERAC for the consolidation of their land titles, and to protest abuses. In 1981, they also confronted the Josephines on the land question. Most of their demands are now channeled through FOIN, the Federation of Napo Indigenous Organizations, founded in 1969, where the new oppositional ideology based on a militant ethnic identity is being developed.

#### RUNA IDENTITY DURING THE ERA OF PATRONS

Runas' ethnic identity is developed and maintained through a series of material and symbolic practices dominated by a process that can be

described as power acquisition. According to my present understanding of Runa culture, "power" means a proper balanced combination of knowledge, verbal and other, technical skills, courage and physical strength. In turn, each one of these components has to be qualified according to specific situational contexts. Courage could mean the power to be brave and dreadless when meeting spirits in the forest darkness, or the power to be unbending and unbowing when confronting white patrons.

Power thus understood may be acquired from a variety of different sources: other Runas, highland Indians (Hahuallactas) other tropical forest groups, whites, and from a great number of supais or spirit people, who live in the forest and rivers. Each of these groups are said to control unique sources of power which they exercise over their own domains and territories. Power acquisition then implies social interaction between people, or between people and Spirits, involving different degrees of intimacy and affection, accommodation, negotiation and conflict. Consequently, the formation and transformation of Runas' ethnic identity, inter-ethnic and class relations have to be understood in the different historical contexts where these "power encounters" take place.

Like in other hunting-gathering and horticultural societies, shamans play a crucial role among the Napo Quichuas. They can best establish contact with the supernatural world, and acquire the necessary knowledge to be used in their role as mediators between the spirit world and native society. Shamans may cure illnesses, obtain game animals and fish from their supernatural masters, and defend or avenge other Runas when necessary. Shamans obtain their power from a hierarchy of spirits, contacted through the use of hallucinogenic drugs, primarily ayahuasca (Banisteriopsis) and huanduj (a Datura). Accordingly, shamans are also ranked in relation to their knowledge and experience. Only those powerful ones, who can call in spirits at will and make them work for them, are known as sinchi yachaj (in Quihua, strong and knowledgeable man), the ideal type of Runa. The strongest among this group is known as bancu, and there are few of those left among the Runa at the present time. This is not the place to discuss at length the characteristics of shamanism in Napo Quichuas' culture, but it is important to examine the role it has played - and in some ways still does - in Runas' ethnic identity, and inter-ethnic and class relations. Because of their privileged position of power in the spirit world, shamans are often approached by other Runas to transfer their samai. The next best thing to being a shaman is to be able to establish a relationship of respect and friendship with a powerful one. It is regarded as a fulfilling intellectual and emotional experience that contributes to the affirmation of Runa identity. This relationship may be explained by using Yaya Alonso's own life history. He had a life-long "ritual friendship" (amigu) with a bancu whom I will call Quisha. Once Yaya Alonso was feeling weak, Quisha decided to take his soul away for a

cure. Quisha called in a powerful spirit by the name of Papatoa, who carried the soul to a spirit town known as Docemundoi. Through Quisha's intercession, Papatoa explained to Yaya Alonso the purpose of this trip:

"Just as the government teaches our children in the schools, in Docemundoi, your soul will learn and become strong." He also explained that this supai town is the center of the world, a place of gold and light, bright as the very sunny days, so that nothing can escape the eye of the student souls. The job of spirits living there is to re-socialize Runa souls. When Quisha died, Yaya Alonso's soul was left in the care of Quisha's son, Pedro, himself now a bancu. Alonso talks about him as "a sun who is just beginning to rise." Shamans are associated with light because they are a source of knowledge, which is obtained only in the course of long training and experience throughout their entire life. (This relation between shamans and the sun's light and fertilizing energy is specifically mentioned by Reichel-Dolmatoff among the Tukanos of the Vaupes region of Colombia [1975: 77-78].) After three years, Alonso asked to have his soul back because, in his own words, "it is difficult to die in peace without a strong Runa soul, I would have had to search for it in the crowd of common souls", and also -- as he whispered to me specially -- "because I did not trust the scattered brain women to be back in time with my soul in case I had an accident."

Shamanism is also involved in several ways in inter-ethnic contacts and class relations. First, Runa shamans themselves acquire knowledge and power from other shamans. Especially sought after are the Tsachela shamans, living in the area of Santo Domingo de los Colorados to the southwest of Quito, the Canelos Quichua just to the south of Napo Runa

territory, and some Highland shamans although, in general, the Oriente shamans enjoy a reputation of being more powerful than Highland ones. This professional exchange which might involve money paid for services, or trade in hallucinogenic visions, songs, and powerful artifacts, is reported from the last century, as well as this one (see Oberem 1974: 351, Langdon 1981 ). It was part of a larger trade Napo Runas had with other Amazonian and Highland groups (at least since the XVI century when we have records) which included items such as coca leaves, gold dust, pita (or twine), salt, cloth, cotton, cinnamon, tropical fruits, feathers, and dart poison (Oberem 1974).

Second, because of the prestigious reputation of Oriente shamans, Highlanders (Serranos) come to the Tena-Archidona area to consult them for curing. Ordinary shamans living in Tena, receive regular visits from these Highlanders known in the area as "Hahuallactas", a term used with derogatory connotations, similar to those implied by the term "auca", used by Highlanders to refer to Oriente natives. An interesting example of the relationship between ethnicity and class can be observed in Tena, between Runas and a group of Colta Indians from Chimborazo, who settled in Tena as merchants, migrating out of a situation of poverty in their own area. They often consult ordinary Runa shamans for curing and divination purposes. In this situation their attitude is a supplicant one, acknowledging the superior symbolic power of the shamans. However, just a few paces away, in the market place, and as merchants, Colta Indians assume a "white" identity and often exploit Napo Runas in commercial transactions. Although still dressed in their unmistakable Colta Indian clothing, they become "white merchants" and behave towards Napo Runas in the same way Chimborazo white merchants behave towards them in the Biobamba markets.



Third, in the relationships of Napo Runas with whites, particularly with both Catholic and Protestant missionaries, shamanism has always been a source of conflict. Missionaries consider shamanism, along with many other aspects of Runas' world view, as an oppressive system that maintains them in a state of constant fear, and as one of the principal causes of their alleged backwardness. Seen from the Runas' point of view, however, other interesting aspects come to light. For instance, as leaders of their muntuns, often shamans were chosen by patrons to be captain's of a labor group. Macdonald, who worked among Arajuno Runas, points out how this fact helped in reinforcing the power and status of those shamans, and allowed them to use the frequent trips to far away places to study with other shamans and to establish marriage arrangements for members of their own muntuns (Macdonald 228). I have not found any evidence, however, that white patrons were considered powerful shamans. The reference to them, in rucuyaya stories is that they were powerful in the sense of possessing brute blind force (they could inflict physical punishment, or they were literally physically heavy to be carried). These characteristics evoke funny or derogatory connotations among Runas, and are contrasted with their own lightness and strength that allowed them to make those difficult trips to Quito on foot; crossing freezing plateaus (paramos), carrying heavy cargoes, including white patrons and missionaries. All missionaries who worked in this area have always battled against shamanism, trying to eradicate it, (see Muratorio ). They are still trying. From the rucuyayas' point of view, only the Jesuits seem to have commanded some respect, and this fact is in itself interesting. Although in general, the Jesuits are remembered as having been more abusive than present-day Josephines,

they were considered to have some powers similar to those of shamans. Several older Runas reported the Jesuits' capacity to kill Runas who did not attend religious services through a ritual that consisted on mentioning the culprit's name when the church candles started to drip. This power, equated to the shaman's magical darts also used to kill enemies -- it was supposed to cause the culprit vomiting, diarrhea and finally, death. The Josephines, on the contrary, are considered weak, a fact which may, in part, explain the relative success of Protestantism in this area. Furthermore, these different Runa reactions to whites have to be seen in the context of class conflict and alliances in the region during the corresponding time periods. The Josephines entered where Runas were already under debt peonage. On the contrary, during the conservative government of Garcia Moreno (1869-1875), the Jesuits were made - for all practical purposes - the representatives of the State in the Napo. Their mandate was "to keep order and good civic and ecclesiastical government" (Jouanen 1977: 33-34). These powers, plus their protectionist non-integrationist evangelization policies, put the Jesuits into direct conflict with merchants and officials who wanted to exploit the Indians' labor. Besides, those policies, plus their insistence on permanent settlement and regular work discipline, was considered by the Runas as a direct attack against their subsistence mode of production. Although as merchants, the resident whites exploited Runas' labor, in their capacity as officials they granted Runas licencias, or permits that legally excused them from attending religious services, for periods of 2 to 3 months, to go into the forest to pan gold or to scrape twine (pita). Runas used that freedom to hunt and cultivate their chacras. It is then understandable why, in the

Indian organized uprising against the Jesuits in Loreto in 1892, the Runas allied themselves with white merchants against the white priests (Lopez San Vicente 1894: 65-75). Although the rebellion was defeated, Oberem reports that, as late as 1955, the Indians from Loreto remembered it as a success (1980: 116). On their part, Rucuyayas say that the Jesuits' expulsion from Tena in 1891 was the direct result of Runas' complaints to the Quito authorities. Myth and history blend here to create a culture of resistance that becomes incorporated into Runa's ethnic identity.

#### RUCUYAYAS AS OIL WORKERS

The period which concerns us here is the early 1940's, when the Shell Oil company started the second period of oil exploration in a large area of the Oriente. North Americans, known as "gringos", along with some Ecuadorian technical personnel and soldiers from the highlands, had to go into areas never before penetrated by whites. Most importantly, in this case, they were conducting their explorations deep into Huaorani territory, in Napo and Pastza provinces. The Huaoranis, were then the least acculturated and least well known group in all of Amazonian Ecuador, and therefore, the most feared. They were referred to as "Aucas," meaning "savage" in Quichua. Only the Shuar (or Jivaros) enjoyed that reputation but, by this time, they had already been "tamed" by the Salesian Mission.

Runas not only went to work voluntarily for Shell but they were even encouraged to do so, especially by the Josephines. And so they went into the forest as they had previously gone to gather rubber and pan gold. The main difference was that now they were paid real wages for their labor. At that time, they started earning 5 sucres for much more than 8 hours of work. What effect did the commodification of labor have in Runas' way of life, and Runa society as a whole? What was the impact of this new class relationship in their ethnic identity and in the inter-ethnic relations in the area? I will attempt to answer some of these questions in what rests of this paper.

I have not been able to conduct research to properly understand the technology used nor the organization and administration of Shell exploring operations at that time. From rucuyayas' accounts it seems clear that, in many ways, they were quite precarious and certainly

different from the productive technology and organization used in the 1960's and 1970's, so my analysis has to be seen in this context. We know Shell used helicopters and some equipment for drilling and to open up trails. Runas entered into three month contracts with the Company, and were hired to carry heavy equipment, open up trails, build helicopter pads, to provide some food in the form of wild game and fish, and last, but not least, because of their knowledge of Huaorani attack tactics. The danger of Huaorani raids was very real, since they had already a long history of pleasant experiences with whites dating from the rubber boom period (see Yost ). According to Yaya Alonso, very often along a trail they would find Huaorani spears crossed, as a warning signal; they could also listen to the whistling voice of the spears at night. In the camps, they would sleep with lighted candles inside and guards outside. The Runas were there to refrain Highlanders from provoking Huaoranis, with their "ignorant and foolish bravery." According to Yaya Alonso, they also prevented pilots from throwing burning objects down from the helicopters to burn Huaorani hamlets. After brief encounters with Huaoranis in which people died on both sides, many soldiers and other serranos would cry asking to be returned home. Considering these working conditions, how did the Runas look at this period of their lives? What were they selling to the Company? If I am correct, in Rucuyayas' understanding they were selling their strength to carry loads, their profound knowledge of the forest, their skills as hunters and fishermen and their courage to confront Huaoranis, and especially their cunning to detect their silent attack tactics in time to avoid the confrontations. Their success in all these tasks re-affirmed, all the positive aspects of Runas' ethnic identity as they

understood it then. It also confirmed Runas on their previous assessment of Haluallactas -- whether soldiers or engineers -- as clumsy to survive in the forest. Both their fear and their foolish courage turned them into the laughing stock of Runa labor crews. Gringo engineers suffered the same fate or even worse. Yaya Alonso, who was made captain of a group of workers from his own Pano muntun, remembers how the gringo engineer begged to be accompanied by him to the camp bathroom every morning. Probably, I could summarize Yaya Alonso's experience of the period with an anecdote having to do with his own understanding of the medical examination given to Runas by the gringo doctors at Shell headquarters in the jungle. With his engaging humour, Yaya Alonso says: "They asked me to remove my pants, but the first thing they did was to weigh my testicles, and they approved. We had to go into Auca hunting grounds, and they said that all those who had good testicles could go. Many others were quite healthy, but they were not chosen. All the members of my muntun were accepted. That's how we bought our first airplane flight." Not only did air travelling allow Runas to "know" the jungle in all its extension for the first time, but it took them to even better hunting and fishing grounds. Many of them went back with the game needed to offer to their future wives' families for the marriage ceremonies.

Since that time, Runa relations with the Huaorani were modified by the latter's own integration into a market economy and, more fully, into "white civilization" through Evangelical Protestant missionaries and formal schooling. It is now a relation that fluctuates between open conflict and the establishment of affinal or fictive kinship ties. Pressed for land, Napo Quichuas enter into Huaorani territory to hunt,

and have also become teachers in Huaorani schools. Huaoranis enter into compadrazgo and marriage arrangements with young Runas as a more secure entrance into the "white" world, but the reciprocities involved in terms of access to land, are straining those relationships to the limit (see Yost 692, 699, 700, 701). Rucuyayas who cannot walk that far any more in search of game, respect the Huaoranis' right to kill in order to defend themselves against those who invade their lands.

What were then the consequences of the partial proletarianization of the Runas' during the Shell Oil Company period? A fuller introduction into the money economy started to create some social differentiation between "rich" and "poor" Runas. Alonso points out that at that time, the term "pugri" (probably an adaptation of the Spanish "polne", or poor) began to be used to refer to some Runas. In Quichua, the equivalent term for poor is "huajcha", meaning orphans, or without kin. It evokes the idea that when this happens, people become sad and lazy, turning soon from "huajcha" into "tzontzo", meaning somebody who is miserable, or totally destitute. Runas had somehow always been involved in a money economy; but working for the company allowed a few a relative degree of capital accumulation in the form of cattle. The fact that later some of their food became a market commodity, certainly transformed their conception of work. The majority of Runa oil workers in that period, bought consumer items with their money, such as clothing, watches, blankets and shotguns. Yaya Alonso used his money to send his eldest son to school, and bought one cow that he never wanted to sell. By the time the period of the rucuyayas is over, there is already a new generation of educated Runas, now in their 40's and 50's, for whom ethnic and class identity are played under other forms of the

penetration of capitalism into their territory. But their situation is outside of the scope of my present analysis, so I would finish with Yaya Alonso's own understanding of the implications of some of these transformations. His comprehension of class relations is quite profound and, if Marx would have understood peasants, he could have written what I regard as Yaya Alonso's own definition of capitalist social relations of production. He says: "The Indian works the land slowly, little by little, he becomes the land. The colono works the land until he finishes it, until it dies. If we go to work for colonos, our work also dies, it is lost. The colono makes the Indian work for him, puts the money in the bank and there it grows and grows, but we never see it again." His assessment of the impact of recent changes on ethnic identity is equally revealing. He regards education and political organization as great assets for young people, but, because they are allowing the whites to undermine their territories, they have lost real knowledge and courage. They know Spanish, but they don't know how to talk back. In his own words: "Men now are like chickens, they have wings, but they cannot fly." The leaders of the Indigenous Organizations would certainly not be very happy with his judgement, but they are redefining their own identity as Runas, and forging a new culture of resistance. Rucuyayas' more than 80 years of resistance should become part of that new cultural history.



## **Religiosidad Popular en el Centro Histórico de Quito 2005**

Blanca Muratorio

Agradezco a Carmen Martínez y a Eduardo Kingman por invitarme a participar en esta presentación de Iconos sobre Religión, Identidad y Poder. No voy a comentar sobre el contenido de la revista porque en su ensayo introductorio Carmen ya ha hecho un excelente análisis crítico de los artículos. Me limitaré a decir que me parece muy positivo que el tema de la religión y la política sea ahora motivo de interés de más investigadores jóvenes. Cuando yo comencé a preocuparme por ese problema por allá por la década de los 70s, sólo el extrañado padre Marco Vinicio Rueda y más tarde el aquí presente Juan Bottasso eran de los pocos interlocutores interesados.

Para la breve presentación de hoy entonces quiero reflexionar críticamente sobre el tema de religiosidad y política haciendo un examen muy preliminar sobre el impacto de las recientes políticas de patrimonio en la religiosidad popular tal cual se expresa en el Centro Histórico. Por un lado estas observaciones le deben mucho al trabajo ya realizado por EK sobre el tema de los cambios culturales y sociales en el Centro Histórico y por otra parte quiero complementar con algún material visual el ensayo fotográfico sobre religiosidad de Francisco Jiménez y Gonzalo Vargas, que aparece en este número de Iconos.

En el 2003, en un ensayo introductorio al catálogo de la exposición sobre religiosidad popular, que realizamos con un grupo de investigadoras ecuatorianas en el Museo de la Ciudad, enfatiqué que la religiosidad popular era una faceta muy importante de la identidad cultural del centro histórico y que en el contexto político que se vivía de autoritarismos neoliberales, esa religiosidad popular podía verse como una forma de empoderamiento, aunque sea

simbólico, frente a la indiferencia del estado, la corrupción de los políticos y la pobreza del sistema asistencial.

Identificándome con esa abogadilla del diablo que tienta a San Benito en esta imagen popular, voy a decir que los cambios autocráticos y burocráticos que han ocurrido y siguen ocurriendo en el centro histórico en términos de lo que se insiste en llamar restauración del patrimonio religioso nacional, es un atentado contra los derechos humanos de libre expresión religiosa. Esto puede parecer exagerado (y tal vez lo sea) pero necesito entonces explicar qué entiendo por religiosidad popular. Esta no es para mí la experiencia religiosa de una determinada clase social sino una forma intelectual y expresiva de acercarse a lo religioso que comparten simbólica y espacialmente miembros de distintas clases sociales y de distintos grupos étnicos. Es una relación espontánea, personal, casi familiar y a menudo lúdica de acercarse a lo sobrenatural. En estas prácticas y expresiones cotidianas los objetos sagrados adquieren sentido y a su vez ayudan a dar sentido a la vida a través de todas las experiencias sensoriales: el oír la música el olor de los cirios y el palo santo, pero sobre todo la visión cercana de la imagen, y la capacidad de tocarla, de incorporarla a la intimidad del cuerpo. Todo esto constituye un sistema de representación, un lenguaje simbólico que incluye la imaginería y los rituales del arte popular.

Mi argumento es que las políticas de restauración de todo el Centro Histórico, y especialmente de las Iglesias, esta contribuyendo espacial y simbólicamente a regimentar, impedir, cortar, controlar y disciplinar esa espontaneidad religiosa creando barreras simbólicas y físicas ---rejas literalmente---, bajo el cuestionable pretexto de restaurar, recuperar y preservar el patrimonio religioso (Permítanme ahora presentarles unas pocas IMÁGENES comparativas)

Al poder expresivo visual de estas imágenes quisiera agregar tres viñetas etnográficas que viví unos pocos días atrás. Una señora, que en el 2002 observamos sentada por horas conversando con un San Antonio de tamaño natural que estaba en la capilla de La Cantuña en San Francisco, nos dijo muy

con actores y folklores pagados. Si por lo menos aprendieran bien el guión y no presentaran cucuruchos penitentes el Domingo de Ramos como ocurrió en el 2002 frente a San Francisco, para el horror de todos los presentes. Usando un concepto del antropólogo Renato Rosaldo, muy popular con los alumnos de mi curso sobre memoria, diría que estos burócratas de la cultura entran en una "nostalgia imperialista," es decir a añorar y tratar de reconstruir con conjuntos folklóricos la misma cultura que se encargaron de destruir.

esto

Como señala Kingman, asistimos a la construcción de una memoria selectiva y excluyente. De hecho toda memoria es necesariamente selectiva y debe estar en relación dialéctica con el olvido, si no, no podríamos pensar. Lo que hay que reclamarle a las prácticas de memoria de estas políticas culturales del Centro Histórico es que, como aquéllas de los regímenes totalitarios, se reservan el privilegio de tener un monopolio sobre qué memorias se van a seleccionar y cuáles se van a excluir. Quiero terminar entonces con una exhortación del historiador francés Jacques Le Goff sobre los usos de la memoria que se relaciona con mi argumento inicial sobre los derechos a la expresión religiosa:

"actuemos, dice Le Goff, de tal forma que la memoria colectiva pueda servir para la liberación y no para la opresión de los seres humanos."

erradicó del centro histórico, esa experiencia se sintió presa en la ciudad que se sacaron las mujeres que vendían las velas, se rompió ese conjunto que era la religiosidad popular, las imágenes que ahora es Made in China y que los imagineros, y por otra parte las iglesias, los monumentos de las iglesias no son nada sin el culto y tendrán esos barrocos maravillosos pero las velas y el culto, se acabaron. Las mujeres, hay una violencia estética a que las mujeres esté en los baños de San Francisco, eso es la misma violencia estética que se realizó cuando se sacó a la gente que tenía sus cajones en la Calle del Algodón, es decir, donde había una estética propia, donde cada cajón parecía un retablo, donde había un arreglo con color, entonces, ¿quién determina que la estética, esa estética que explica la (...) de un mercado, una serie de olores, de sentidos, la relación social, de fiesta, de religiosidad popular, ¿quién determina que esa estética es sucia, que esa estética no vale y que hay imponer otra estética?, hay que crear otra estética de lo limpio. Eso es obviamente relaciones del poder y siempre ha habido aquí en Ecuador, un olvido por el arte popular, no hay un solo museo de arte popular, a diferencia de Perú o Brasil, aquí no hay, es decir, siempre se ha confundido el arte popular y se lo ha tomado desprecio con la palabra artesanía, es decir, algo es arte, por lo tanto es museable, algo es artesanía, por lo tanto no. Yo me pregunto, por qué hay un shamán que ve una figura precolombina y el shamán de la pintura de tigua se considera artesanía y este no, en algún momento histórico esa decisión se tomó, esa decisión se tomó de que lo colonial también, que era de uso, se pone en un museo y otras cosas no, hay siempre decisiones de memorias, de olvidos, en los museos.



Yo lo que quiero, digamos, la idea del patrimonio es una idea que es una construcción, es una invención y que continuamente está en forma de conflicto, eso no lo dudo. Yo no la sacaría del discurso porque la realidad es que ese es el discurso que tenemos que vivir, y ese es el discurso que tenemos que ser críticos y no me ayuda tratar de deshacerme de eso, de ese concepto.

Lo demás que quiero decir para terminar, la idea de, en este momento –como decía Eduardo– ¿qué vamos a hacer con respecto a esa relación entre el intelectual y los que estamos aquí y la realidad de lo que está pasando para mí en Ecuador, ahora con respecto a ciertas (...) y con respecto a ciertas intervenciones? Bueno, trataremos de hacer lo posible por contribuir con lo que tenemos, para mí por ejemplo, es importante ver patrimonio y género, nadie ha hablado aquí de patrimonio y género, ¿quién mantiene el patrimonio religioso? Las monjas y otras mujeres que son las que limpian, el trabajo femenino que está detrás del mantenimiento del patrimonio, así como hay una serie de olvidos, de cuestiones de género, ¿quiénes son los que cuidan el patrimonio?



Significa como yo he visto en el Museo del Alabado, a una mujer indígena limpiando el vidrio de una mujer que estaba atrás, es decir, una pieza, para mí ese gesto, fue algo etnográfico, yo no creo que pase en todos lados. Eso fue fatal, ¿por qué?, porque esta es una sociedad de clases, porque es una sociedad en que todavía esas cosas existen, pero yo creo que existe, por otra parte, esa capacidad de la cultura popular de resignificarse. Siempre se ha resignificado, desde la colonia, los indígenas han resignificado la religión para convertirla en algo de ellos. La gente siempre resignificando la relación con lo sagrado, inventando santos, y sigue esa idea de resignificación como libertad, es creo, es lo que se puede oponer a esa capacidad del capitalismo de apropiarse de todo y resignificarlo en sus propios términos.

EL CAMPESINADO Y LA BUROCRACIA ESTATAL:  
UN CASO EN ECUADOR.<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCCION

En las últimas dos décadas se ha producido en los países andinos un proceso característico que intenta la articulación del campesinado con la sociedad nacional. Se trata de las diversas formas en que a través de programas de reforma agraria se ha tratado de modificar la estructura de propiedad de la tierra y de modernizar el sistema productivo ofreciendo al campesinado una coyuntura de participación. En esta apertura a la participación social, política y económica del campesinado, las agencias que tienen a su cargo la implementación de la reforma agraria cumplen un papel importante. Estas organizaciones deben ser vistas como los nuevos "intermediarios" entre la clase campesina y el Estado. Tal es el caso de los Sindicatos Campesinos en Bolivia, SINAMOS en Perú y el IERAC (Instituto Ecuatoriano de Reforma Agraria y Colonización) en Ecuador. El análisis de la forma en que estas organizaciones cumplen el rol de "intermediarios" ofrece particular interés para el estudio de procesos de articulación. El objetivo de este trabajo es, justamente, explorar algunos aspectos de las relaciones del campesinado con el Estado, analizando para ello el rol de una agencia burocrática de reforma agraria, IERAC, como uno de los nexos conectivos mediante el cual el Estado Ecuatoriano intenta articular al campesinado indígena de la sierra con la sociedad nacional. La discusión se centrará en el carácter de los mecanismos de vinculación que resultan de la acción de esa burocracia y en las consecuencias de los mismos para la dinámica del conflicto y solidaridad de clase en un medio rural en proceso de cambio.

## CAMBIOS EN EL MEDIO RURAL

El campesinado indígena de la Provincia de Chimborazo constituye el 50% de la población total (Junta de Planificación 1973: 15). Hasta hace pocos años, los campesinos vivían incorporados o en las márgenes del sistema de grandes haciendas predominante en la zona. En este sistema, un pequeño grupo de blancos y mestizos monopolizaba no sólo la propiedad de la tierra sino también los medios de intercambio y distribución de la producción y el poder político local. Se trataba de un característico sistema de dominación tradicional en el que el patrón ejercía el rol de articulador del campesinado con el Estado, sea porque a nivel local controlaba a los representantes del Estado, tales como el Teniente Político, el Intendente y la Policía, o porque él mismo era el representante del Estado al ocupar posiciones tales como Prefecto Provincial, Gobernador o legislador. Este rol de articulador entre campesinado y Estado era esencial para el patrón en cuanto le permitía, por una parte, tener el control absoluto del sistema económico de la hacienda y por otra impedir que el campesinado presentase directamente sus demandas al Estado. La ideología correspondiente al sistema de dominación tradicional paternalista de la hacienda legitimaba ese rol de intermediación.

A pesar de todas las limitaciones de la formulación e implementación de la política agraria del Estado Ecuatoriano es indudable que, desde 1964 cuando se promulga la primera Ley de Reforma Agraria hasta el presente, en que se está implementando la nueva Ley de 1973-74, ese sistema de dominación tradicio



nal sufre una transformación. Un aspecto significativo de este cambio, que deseo analizar aquí, es el tipo de articulación del campesinado en el nuevo dominio de poder (Adams 1966) es decir, en la burocracia estatal que implementa la reforma agraria.

Como toda burocracia, el IERAC es el aparato de dominación del sistema de poder que representa el Estado. Como principal organismo ejecutor de la política agraria del Estado, esta burocracia cumple un papel fundamental en la orientación y canalización del conflicto de clases que todo intento de cambio en el sistema de propiedad de la tierra y en el régimen de producción rural, por más lento y tibio que sea, tiende a agudizar.

#### EL IERAC COMO NUEVO INTERMEDIARIO

Las rutinas de la administración burocrática son diferentes de las rutinas de la administración tradicional que el campesino conocía, aceptaba como "naturales" y en las que sabía cuál era su propio rol. Por el contrario, acudir al IERAC significa para el campesino enfrentarse con un universo totalmente desconocido, un universo que no está mediado por la persona del patrón, el mayordomo o el compadre sino por la palabra escrita, el documento, las decisiones técnicas y "racionales", las acciones y reglamentos objetivados en el expediente y más aún expresados en un idioma que, en el mejor de los casos, el campesino indígena apenas domina oralmente <sup>2</sup>, todo lo cual pone al campesino en una situación de incertidumbre e inferioridad. Una consecuencia inmediata de esta situación es facilitar la intervención de otros agentes intermediarios, quienes por su parte están interesados en buscar a los campesinos como clientes: abogados,

tinterillos, partidos políticos, agencias de desarrollo de la comunidad, misioneros católicos y protestantes. Estos agentes se convierten en "puentes" en la relación del campesino con el IERAC. Se establece entonces una nueva forma de dependencia en la que los campesinos se transforman en una "clientela" de estos agentes, siendo a menudo obligados a seguir una determinada orientación ideológica en el proceso de cambio. No es posible, entonces, desconocer la importancia de este tipo de intermediario. En un trabajo anterior he examinado la estrategia de uno de estos agentes (Muratorio 1975). En el presente trabajo presentaré más adelante datos relativos a los casos en que la intervención de estos intermediarios se ve facilitada por fallas o limitaciones en la acción misma del IERAC como articulador.

La actual política agraria del Estado es el resultado de dos leyes de Reforma Agraria, la de 1964 y la de 1973. Ambas leyes, promulgadas durante regímenes militares, fueron elaboradas con velada o explícita participación y presiones de los terratenientes. En 1964, las Cámaras de Agricultura, principales organismos representativos de los terratenientes participaron activamente en la comisión encargada de formular la ley. Cuando, en 1973, se promulga la nueva Ley de Reforma Agraria, el desarrollo de la economía exportadora, principalmente el petróleo, ha producido ya un cambio en la dinámica de las clases dominantes. Los nuevos intereses exportadores requirieron una transformación modernizante en la estructura del Estado. Sin embargo, los terratenientes mantienen todavía el necesario poder económico, político e ideológico para obstaculizar el

proceso de implementación de la Reforma Agraria. Esto resulta obvio para quien examine detenidamente los juicios de afectación de los grandes predios, especialmente en la Provincia de la que nos ocupamos. La ley de 1973 refleja las inconsistencias y complejidades de estos compromisos políticos. La intención es desviar la Ley de Reforma Agraria de los objetivos de justicia social hacia objetivos que parecen ser políticamente neutros, tales como "productividad" y "eficiencia", no sólo porque se trata de aumentar la productividad de los campesinos, sino principalmente porque se establece que no se afectarán aquellos grandes predios que se consideren "eficientemente cultivados". Por otra parte, ya sea entregando los huasipungos o permitiendo la compra y venta de pequeños predios, la reforma agraria intensifica el minifundio. Se crea así también un surplus de mano de obra rural, que al no poder ser absorbido en el medio rural migra constantemente hacia centros urbanos y constituye la población urbana marginal de Quito, Guayaquil y algunos centros en Colombia.

La Ley de Reforma Agraria adolece de todos los defectos que posibilitan lo que Feder ha llamado la "contrarreforma", o sea, el mecanismo de defensa que inician los terratenientes cuando sus intereses se ven seriamente amenazados (Feder 1970: 177). Feder presenta las características de este tipo de legislación en términos que describen adecuadamente el carácter de la ley del 73, a saber:

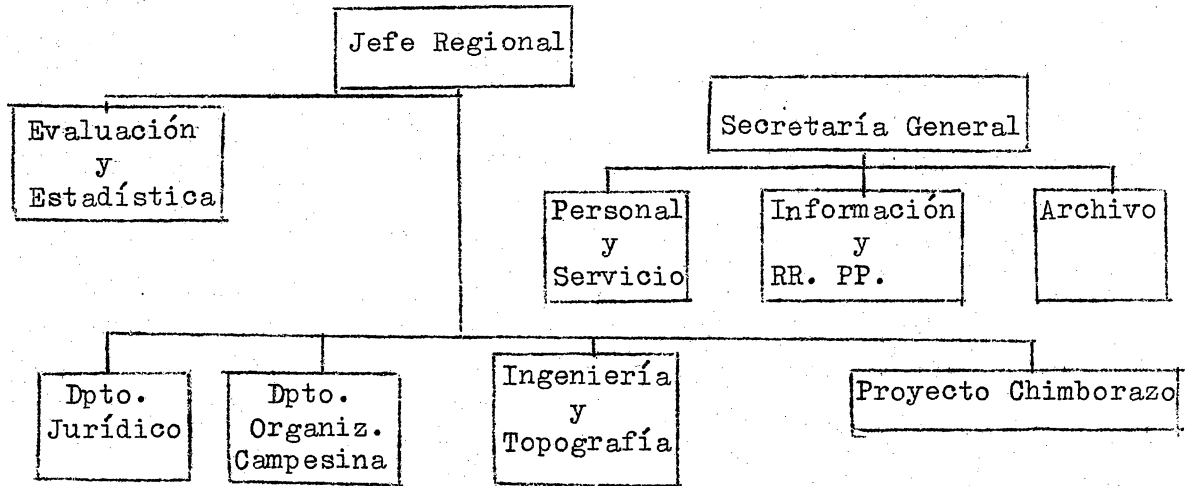
- a) La inclusión en la ley de un sinnúmero de provisiones y de excepciones, expresadas en términos legales que admiten diversas interpretaciones.

- b) Los procesos de reforma agraria se condicionan a requisitos previos cuyo cumplimiento da lugar a grandes demoras en la ejecución de la ley.
- c) Las detalladas regulaciones de todos y cada uno de los aspectos del proceso no permiten que la agencia encargada de la ejecución de la reforma pueda ejercer iniciativas propias para su implementación.
- d) La legislación resulta difícil de implementar y no sienta nunca las bases para un cambio radical o aún para un cambio puramente simbólico.

No es mi intención en este trabajo hacer un análisis detallado y específico de los defectos de la Ley del 73. Se trata aquí simplemente de establecer las características generales que condicionan la acción del IERAC como burocracia implementadora de la Ley. El IERAC tiene su sede central en Quito y está dividido en diversas estructuras regionales, localizadas en los distintos centros agrícolas del país. La jefatura regional Centro-Oriente, que nos interesa, tiene su sede en Riobamba, capital de la Provincia de Chimborazo, aunque su jurisdicción abarca zonas de otras 6 provincias. Riobamba es el centro regional hegemónico que concentra el 73% de la población urbana de toda la Provincia. Es el centro político, administrativo, cultural, comercial, financiero e industrial. Con respecto a las comunidades indígenas de la zona, Riobamba constituye una "metrópolis colonial" y las comunidades indígenas son política, económica y socialmente las "colonias internas" de esa metrópolis".

La organización de la jefatura regional Centro-Oriente se

## ORGANIGRAMA



Nota: En la sección proyectos se incluye sólo Chimborazo

describe en el organigrama. El staff lo integran alrededor de cincuenta empleados permanentes. Aparte de secretarías, choferes, conserjes y personal de servicio, el resto del personal lo constituyen abogados, ingenieros agrónomos, estadísticos, economistas, topógrafos, veterinarios y promotores sociales. El personal es en su totalidad blanco o mestizo, de origen urbano. De acuerdo con el personal de esta jefatura regional, los fondos son insuficientes, el personal escaso y las facilidades inadecuadas.

Las funciones del IERAC están especificadas en la Ley de Reforma Agraria con cierto detalle. El Consejo Superior del organismo, con sede en Quito, reproduce en miniatura la estructura de poder político y económico del Estado. Los campesinos o sus organizaciones no están representados en ningún nivel de

la jeraquía burocrática.<sup>3</sup> La posibilidad de esta representación no es ni siquiera imaginada aún por aquellos que podríamos llamar "los jóvenes turcos" dentro de la organización. En varias entrevistas con estos miembros del staff se pudo comprobar que, aún a nivel especulativo, sus ideas admiten a lo sumo la posibilidad de que intermediarios mestizos, relativamente radicalizados, representasen al campesinado frente al IERAC.

En resumen, la Ley de Reforma Agraria deja abiertas las puertas a las influencias y presiones de los terratenientes, excluye la participación de los campesinos y deja en manos de burócratas mestizos tanto la adoctrinación de los campesinos en los valores de la sociedad nacional como también la decisión - sin especificación de criterios precisos - de determinar cuándo los campesinos están capacitados para asumir los roles prescritos en el nuevo sistema de producción, comercialización y modernización cultural definido "desde arriba".

En cumplimiento de los objetivos principales de la Ley de Reforma Agraria las funciones del IERAC - al menos en Chimborazo donde hicimos nuestra observación - pueden subsumirse en dos tipos de acción de intermediación con el campesinado.

1. Acciones del IERAC como intermediario técnico y legal entre los campesinos y los terratenientes para solucionar conflictos que se presentan como consecuencia de la compra y venta de tierras, abolición de precarismos, juicios de expropiación y reversión de tierras.

2. Acciones del IERAC como patrón provisorio. Casos en que su función consiste, por un lado, en tomar posesión y administrar aquellas haciendas en poder del Estado para entregarlas a los campesinos una vez que éstos "estén listos para asumir la responsabilidad" y, por otro, actuar como intermediario "cultural" y "organizador" asumiendo el rol de promover social y económicamente al campesinado mediante creación de cooperativas, cursos de asesoramiento a las bases, formación de líderes e incorporación al mercado nacional.

Al presentar aquí algunos casos en detalle mi intención es tratar de ilustrar cómo funcionan realmente estos mecanismos de intermediación desde el punto de vista de los campesinos.

#### EL IERAC COMO INTERMEDIARIO ENTRE CAMPESINOS Y TERRATENIENTES

Los primeros dos casos se refieren a aquellas situaciones en que los campesinos se ven obligados a tomar la iniciativa de dirigirse al IERAC a reclamar sus derechos como respuesta a los abusos de los que todavía son objeto por parte de los terratenientes. Ambos campesinos son partidarios, es decir, trabajan una parcela de tierra de un patrón entregando en pago por el uso de la tierra el 50 por ciento de la cosecha. El partidario es lo que la Ley de Reforma Agraria considera un "precarista", es decir todo aquel que trabaja para él una porción de tierra ajena y paga por su uso dinero, productos, trabajo o servicios. Uno de los objetivos explícitos de la Ley es acabar con el precarismo. Los casos de precarismos son

todavía numerosos en la zona de Chimborazo. Lo que me interesa mostrar con estos dos primeros casos son las consecuencias para los campesinos de la falta de iniciativa y empuje del IERAC para solucionar este grave problema.

#### El caso de Juan<sup>4</sup>

Juan ha sido partidario de una patrona por mas de 25 años y antes de que la ley de 1964 eliminara el trabajo gratuito, Juan trabajaba como peón y huasicama para esa patrona como parte del pago por el uso de la tierra, además de entregarle el 50 por ciento de la cosecha. Cuando en marzo de 1976 Juan visita a la patrona para renovar el contrato verbal para la próxima siembra no le lleva el acostumbrado camari ( regalo o agrado, generalmente en productos, que el patrón recibía tradicionalmente de sus campesinos). La patrona reacciona insultando a Juan y amenazándolo con quitarle el usufructo de la tierra. Juan no tiene medios de saber que de acuerdo con los artículos 35 y 36 de la Ley de Reforma Agraria no puede tomar esa decisión. De acuerdo con esos artículos, la patrona puede continuar el arreglo de partidario o venderle la tierra luego de haber pagado salarios, vacaciones y demás obligaciones que le deba a Juan de acuerdo a las leyes laborales. Pero la Ley de Reforma Agraria no está disponible en ninguna institución que Juan conozca o a la cual tenga fácil acceso y, aún si pudiera consultarla Juan no sabe leer, ni habla castellano. Enfrentado así con un serio problema de subsistencia de su familia Juan, como muchos otros campesinos, recurre a aquellos parientes que él sabe tienen relación con alguien que conoce



la Ley. Ese pariente resulta ser su prima Lorenza, que es amiga mía y vive en la comunidad donde estoy haciendo trabajo de campo donde se sabe que me intereso por problemas relacionados con la Reforma Agraria. Juan se presenta en mi casa, le explico la ley y le sugiero acudir al IERAC para buscar una solución a su problema. A la semana siguiente Juan vuelve a verme para informarme que su problema está solucionado. Me cuenta que fué a ver nuevamente a la patrona para notificarle su intención de llevar el caso al IERAC e inmediatamente ésta desistió de su intención de no dejarle sembrar la tierra "al partir" el próximo año. El statu quo se mantiene. La explicación que da Juan es que él no tiene dinero en efectivo para pagar la tierra en caso que la patrona accediese a vendérsela - conforme a las disposiciones de la Ley de Reforma Agraria - ni tiene tampoco las conexiones necesarias para solicitar la ayuda de un abogado que facilite su trámite en el IERAC. Por lo tanto, desiste de presentar sus demandas. La cosecha del año que viene está asegurada, pero la incertidumbre e inseguridad de su situación persisten. No es dueña de la tierra y si quiere mantenerla, aunque sea como "partidario", debe también continuar los lazos de subordinación tradicional con la patrona: el agrado, el camari, el trato deferencial de "amita" y "patroncita", la entrega del 50% de su cosecha y la seguridad de que no presionará por sus derechos en caso de abuso. En este caso, las dificultades del acceso del campesino a la burocracia del IERAC contribuyeron a mantener y reforzar las relaciones tradicionales de explotación.

El caso de Pedro.

En este caso se pone de manifiesto cómo la ineficacia y falta de acción decisiva del IERAC, como también las limitaciones mismas de la ley llevan al campesino, por un lado, a entrar en dependencia de otros intermediarios y, por otro, favorecen el conflicto dentro de la clase campesina misma.

En el caso de Pedro la situación inicial es la misma que en el caso anterior. Pedro ha trabajado durante 25 años como partidario para una patrona, cumpliendo las mismas obligaciones de trabajo gratuito hasta 1964. Hasta hace dos años, Pedro continuaba entregando a la patrona el tradicional camari en el momento de la cosecha. En 1974, varios de los otros partidarios de la misma patrona deciden comprar la tierra sin intervención del IERAC, es decir, ilegalmente. Pedro se ve obligado a hacer lo mismo y lleva a la patrona todo el ahorro que tenía - 5000 Sucres - como primera entrega por su terreno de 3.240 m<sup>2</sup>. La patrona rechaza el dinero de Pedro porque dice tener otro comprador que le ofrece un precio más alto. Ante la protesta de Pedro la patrona lo amenaza con no dejarle cultivar la tierra el próximo año. A diferencia de Juan, Pedro decide reclamar por sus derechos y lleva su caso al IERAC. La patrona es citada por el IERAC en dos oportunidades, pero no se presenta. El expediente del caso de Pedro se extravía. Finalmente un promotor social del IERAC se compadece de Pedro y le aconseja llevar su caso al Ministerio de Trabajo, para tratar de lograr que la patrona le reconozca los salarios por todos los años que trabajó gratis como peón y huasicama. Aquí comienza la real odisea

de Pedro. En el término de dos años que han pasado desde que se inicia la acción en el Ministerio de Trabajo, Pedro ha adquirido una situación de dependencia con un abogado de Riobamba y la enemistad de varios otros campesinos. Cuando Pedro tuvo que presentar testigos ante el Juez de Trabajo para probar que había trabajado como partidario por 25 años, varios campesinos que ya habían comprado tierras y sobre todo aquellos que tenían interés de comprar tierra a ese misma patrona declararon en contra de Pedro, diciendo que había sido partidario por sólo 6 años, lo cual no le daba derecho prioritario para comprar la tierra. El argumento que usaron fué que Pedro tenía la tierra gratis y que "le estaba robando a la patroncita". Se debe tener en cuenta que los procedimientos para compra y venta de tierra sumados a la escasez de tierras en la zona llevan a los campesinos a competir desesperadamente por una parcela. Esta competencia institucionalizada por los organismos estatales, indudablemente, debilita el potencial de solidaridad de clase del campesinado. Por otra parte, como se ha dicho, Pedro tuvo que acudir a un abogado de Riobamba para poder preparar, presentar y llevar su caso adelante. Desde que el caso se inició, Pedro visita regularmente al abogado cada dos semanas llevándole el correspondiente y esperado camari, a pesar de que sabe que el abogado cobrará luego su honorario en efectivo una vez finalizado el procedimiento. Cada una de estas visitas significa gastos de transporte más el valor del camari lo cual suma unos 500 Suces al año, sólo para averiguar el estado del juicio. Después de un año de iniciarse, el caso de Pedro pasó a la Corte Superior

Regional y Pedro siguió visitando regularmente al abogado. En Junio de este año, el abogado decide apresurar el caso para lo cual sugiere a Pedro que el próximo sábado vuelva a Riobamba con un conejo "como agrado" para un funcionario de la Corte. Ese sábado Pedro tiene que trabajar y su mujer, María, debe ir a Riobamba llevando el conejo de regalo. María no habla castellano y tiene poco conocimiento de la ciudad y me pide que la acompañe. Una vez en la oficina del abogado, éste comienza por cerciorarse que tenemos el conejo, nos entrega luego una tarjeta donde ha escrito "de parte de Pedro" y se dirige a mí dándome instrucciones precisas para que una vez que lleguemos a la casa del funcionario yo desaparezca de la escena "para que el funcionario no se avergüence". María me informa luego que el funcionario miró la tarjeta, miró el conejo, lo volvió a poner en la bolsa y se lo devolvió diciéndole "no te preocupes m'hijita, todo se va a arreglar". Lo que realmente importa en esta situación no es decidir si el funcionario era honesto o el conejo no fué suficiente para que lo aceptase como "agrado", si el abogado espera que su cliente le lleve regularmente regalos, si los campesinos llamados a declarar mintieron. Lo que resulta importante y revelador es el hecho de que ninguno de los actores, tal vez excepto yo misma, consideró la situación como algo fuera de lo usual y esperado. El sistema existe y el campesino lo ve como natural. Lo que antes se debía al patrón se debe ahora a los nuevos intermediarios y no existe otra alternativa. Las presiones sobre Pedro continuaron. No sabe si podrá cultivar su tierra en la próxima siembra, algunos campesinos le dicen

que la patrona ya ha vendido esa tierra, ilegalmente, a otro campesino. Por último, su conducta es también criticada por algunos pastores campesinos de su Iglesia Evangélica por ir contra el espíritu de la Biblia "buscando pleitos" <sup>5</sup>. Pedro se ha visto obligado a vender una de sus vacas para poder pagar al abogado 2000 Suces a cuenta de sus honorarios, en un caso que no está definitivamente resuelto. El proceso de reclamar sus derechos ante el IERAC sumado a la ineficiencia y corrupción de los intermediarios han significado gastos enormes para el campesino. El reclamo de sus derechos conforme a la ley le ha traído conflictos con sus propios compañeros de clase y de fé.

Los dos casos que hemos presentado son similares a otros que pudimos observar en varias comunidades de la zona. No debe parecer extraño que los campesinos "resisten el cambio" y desconfíen de quienes les prometen incorporarlos a la sociedad nacional en el proceso de modernización. Este proceso de incorporación es experimentado por el campesino en los términos de Juan y de Pedro.

#### Patrón vs. 7 campesinos.

Un patrón dueño de una mediana propiedad se presenta en la oficina de uno de los promotores sociales del IERAC acompañado de siete campesinos que son partidarios en su hacienda. El patrón se dirige al funcionario y le explica que "estos indios roscas se empeñan en que la tierra les pertenece porque son precaristas". Frente a los campesinos el funcionario asiente y, con solemnidad, lee en voz alta un artículo de la Ley, sobre precarismos. Seguidamente, en un aparte con el patrón,

le sugiere que lo más conveniente sería tratar de arreglar las cosas lo mejor posible "antes de que los campesinos se avisen" y le sigan un juicio por extinción de dominio. El consejo del funcionario es hacer un acta transaccional por la cual el patrón venderá la tierra a los campesinos. Para ello el funcionario requiere la presentación de las escrituras con el objeto de poder ubicar los terrenos en venta. Ante esta exigencia el patrón afirma que él recuerda de memoria los límites exactos de su hacienda y que el asunto se puede finalizar inmediatamente. Ante la insistencia del funcionario sobre la necesidad de presentar las escrituras, el patrón indignado lo increpa diciendo que cómo es posible que se dude de su palabra y que, por otra parte, es inconcebible que él pierda otro día por "estos indios roscas". El funcionario lo mira con actitud comprensiva, pero insiste que sin las escrituras "no se puede hacer nada". El patrón responde con otra mirada comprensiva y saluda diciendo "si no queda otra alternativa traeré las escrituras para hacer pronto el acta".

Este caso demuestra cómo en las situaciones de enfrentamiento que se llevan a resolver en la estructura burocrática presente, el campesino indígena es colocado en una situación social de desventaja con respecto al terrateniente blanco o mestizo ya que el campesino, individualmente o en grupos pequeños está desprovisto de todo poder de influir en las decisiones y procedimientos de la burocracia del IERAC. En la situación de dominación tradicional, el campesino usaba el camari y otras formas de agrado para influir a su favor las decisiones del patrón. Esta acción formaba parte

de un sistema de reciprocidad que era desigual, pero en el que las obligaciones y derechos mutuos estaban gobernados por la costumbre y legitimados por la creencia en la tradición y, por consiguiente, no eran considerados ni por los campesinos ni por la sociedad en general como formas corruptas del ejercicio del poder. Las rebeliones y levantamientos campesinos, numerosos en esta zona de Chimborazo, no eran protestas contra todo el sistema de dominación tradicional sino contra los "abusos" de ese contrato tradicional.

Por el contrario, como señala Weber, el sistema de dominación legal con administración burocrática supone una estructura social que impone como criterio de conducta adecuada de los funcionarios públicos, el requisito de que éstos mantengan sus intereses y contabilidad privadas separadas de los intereses y contabilidad públicas (1968 : 219). En consecuencia, el campesino tiene prohibido ofrecer camari u otras formas de regalos a los empleados del IERAC. Si lo hace, su acción puede recibir acción penal como corrupción de funcionarios públicos. Ante la burocracia, el campesino ha perdido ese mecanismo real o sentido de que disponía ante el patrón. El sistema legal justifica esta nueva relación. en términos racionales como contribuyendo a la eficacia del funcionamiento de la administración. Sin embargo, las situaciones de poder dadas por el sistema de estratificación étnica no han cambiado ni son cuestionadas dentro de la nueva estructura de dominación. En razón de sus respectivas posiciones en esa estratificación tradicional, el burócrata blanco o mestizo y el

terrateniente blanco o mestizo comparten una serie de presupuestos con respecto a la idiosincracia y a los derechos y deberes de los indígenas en la sociedad, que son usados para establecer e interpretar las relaciones de éstos con los blancos y mestizos. Estas perspectivas y experiencias compartidas por las clases y grupos étnicos dominantes generan las ideologías y las formas de acción que mantienen una determinada estructura de poder y que, en el caso del IERAC, hacen innecesaria - aunque no imposible - la corrupción directa del burócrata por el terrateniente mediante el ofrecimiento de dinero o privilegios.

#### EL IERAC COMO PATRON PROVISORIO

Las consecuencias de esta ideología y formas de acción son también evidentes cuando el IERAC cumple su rol de intermediario directo entre el campesinado y la sociedad nacional como patrón provisorio de aquellas ex-haciendas que se encarga de administrar y como intermediario cultural capacitando y organizando al campesinado para aquellos tipos de acción social requeridos por un capitalismo rural en expansión.

Un breve resumen de los objetivos y mecanismos de ejecución de uno de los programas diseñados por economistas y agrónomos para la administración de una de las ex-haciendas de la zona, nos dará una idea de los criterios usados por el IERAC para ejecutar este rol.

Objetivos generales del proyecto : Mejorar el nivel de vida de los campesinos y absorber a toda la masa campesina al proceso desarrollista del país.



Criterios de ejecución : 1) Entrega de tierras y reasentamiento de los campesinos. 2) El organismo ejecutor IERAC se convierte en administrador temporal de la hacienda donde realiza programas agropecuarios específicos con el objeto de mantener la producción nacional y de formar una moderna empresa de producción. 3) Posteriormente, cuando los campesinos estén capacitados para asumir las responsabilidades requeridas para mantener una producción segura y organizada el IERAC les entregará (léase venderá) esas tierras. 4) Los programas de promoción social o de capacitación campesina que se ejecuten deben tener como objetivo la transformación de los campesinos en eficientes y capaces productores. Estos programas deben estar orientados a provocar necesidades en los campesinos y consecuentemente la búsqueda de los medios para satisfacerlas. En otras palabras, deben estar orientados a despertar la iniciativa de los campesinos <sup>6</sup> (énfasis mío).

El paternalismo explícito en la ley de Reforma Agraria convierte al IERAC en una nueva agencia paternalista. La práctica de ese poder administrativo implica implementar una ley que es, como toda forma ideológica, un conjunto de conceptos, conocimientos y fórmulas para la acción, creadas por personas e instituciones que forman parte de la estructura dominante de la sociedad para legitimar y sancionar un orden social. Respaldados por esa legitimidad, los funcionarios del IERAC inician y controlan las formas de cambio en las prácticas de producción y las relaciones sociales en el medio rural. Estas nuevas formas son ahora presentadas al campesino para que entienda lo

que le pasa, solucione sus problemas y entre en nuevas relaciones sociales definidas para él por un Estado que ciertamente no lo representa. Los campesinos indígenas son sistemáticamente excluidos del control de los medios materiales y sociales necesarios para participar en la creación de las formas de pensamiento y acción más relevantes y adecuadas para expresar su propia experiencia y elucidar su propia conciencia como grupo étnico y como clase. Deben entender y actuar su propia transformación a través de formas de interpretación y acción mestizas, orientadas a reemplazar la cultura y formas de organización indígenas.

Con total paternalismo y arrogancia burocrática, el Estado, a través del IERAC justifica sus acciones - como todo sistema colonialista - decidiendo "lo que más le conviene" a los campesinos y cuándo éstos "estarán preparados para asumir las responsabilidades requeridas". El rol de la burocracia modernizante es convertir al campesino de la sierra en "eficiente y capaz productor". El problema es que la nueva burocracia mestiza tiene un total desconocimiento, cuando no un desprecio explícito por los valores y concepción del mundo de aquellos a quienes quiere cambiar. La socialización de esos burócratas en la sociedad nacional urbana ( y el IERAC no hace nada para cambiar esta orientación) lo prepara para relacionarse con el campesino de la sierra en términos de categorías étnicas estereotípicas <sup>7</sup>. En la concepción mestiza, el indígena es extraño, impredecible, miedoso de los riesgos, falta de iniciativa, individualista e irracionalmente apegado a la tradición. Como lo ha señalado Bailey para las correspondientes élites modernizantes en la

India, "estas actitudes refuerzan la moral de la élite modernizante y la convencen de que hace bien en luchar por el bienestar de los campesinos en contra de su propia ignorancia y prejuicios" ( 1971 : 300 ). Esta actitud, sumada en la casi totalidad de los casos a la ignorancia del idioma Quechua, hace que el burócrata del IERAC trate de imponer categorías de cambio y organización sin preocuparse por averiguar, por ejemplo, cuáles son los valores del campesino, sus formas de racionalidad en la producción o en la conducción de sus relaciones sociales. El resultado de la confrontación de estos dos sistemas cognitivos y visiones del mundo es, por supuesto, la frustración mutua o el conflicto abierto.

En una de las ex-haciendas de la zona, ahora administrada por el IERAC, por ejemplo, sólo la huelga y la invasión de tierras por los campesinos obliga finalmente al IERAC, después de varios años de conflicto, a entregar los títulos de los huasipungos en los términos definidos por los campesinos y no en aquellos usados por los ingenieros agrónomos para redefinir los huasipungos en términos de "unidades agrícolas productivas racionalizadas". Según los ingenieros agrónomos, la culpa es de los campesinos quienes se aferran "irracionalmente" a la tradición. Sin embargo, la posible lógica interna de esa tradición no es un problema para los funcionarios del IERAC. No es mi intención decidir aquí si, en este caso particular, las razones de los campesinos eran o no justificadas sino solamente ilustrar algunos de los parámetros dentro de los cuales se generan las confrontaciones entre el campesinado y esta

burocracia. Por otra parte, la mas reciente investigación de etnohistoriadores y antropólogos en el area Andina parece demostrar claramente que la persistencia de formas culturales y de organización económica y social indígenas responden al hecho de que éstas han funcionado como eficientes instrumentos en la adaptación ecológica al medio Andino ( ver Murra 1975), y en la defensa contra el poder de los terratenientes (ver Martinez Alier 1973), o contra la expansión de las fuerzas impersonales del mercado (ver Alberti-Mayer 1974).

Uno de los principales factores generadores de frustración mutua en la relación del IERAC con el campesinado es la formación de cooperativas. Los promotores sociales del IERAC, con la colaboración de funcionarios del Departamento de Desarrollo Rural del Ministerio de Agricultura, tienen como función promover la cooperativización de los campesinos. De acuerdo con uno de estos promotores, la racionalidad de este objetivo es promover el desarrollo económico más rápido de los campesinos permitiéndoles, por un lado, reunir un cierto capital que puedan invertir en la tecnificación de las tareas agrícolas y en mejorar su standard de vida .y, por otro, la comercialización en gran escala de sus productos. En suma, convertirse en "un elemento productivo de la sociedad nacional". El problema es que, con raras excepciones, los campesinos rechazan las cooperativas. El énfasis de la explicación de los funcionarios en estos casos es el "irracional individualismo" de los campesinos.

Sin embargo, distintas formas de cooperación son prac-

ticadas en la mayoría de las comunidades campesinas de la zona. Pero es una cooperación dentro de los límites sociales conocidos por el campesino, generalmente dentro del grupo de parentesco o la comuna donde las expectativas de reciprocidad están bien demarcadas para situaciones concretas. Mientras no se cambien las estructuras de mercado, los sistemas de precios y las organizaciones de crédito rural el campesino no puede ver la racionalidad de embarcarse en nuevas formas de organizar su producción. Los campesinos perciben claramente la inseguridad de la situación en que viven, así como las dificultades de enfrentar un mundo que los discrimina y donde tanto para pedir un crédito como para comprar un tractor se necesita tener una serie de conocimientos, garantías y "palancas" personales que no están a su alcance. Los riesgos implícitos en pedir un préstamo para hacer producir toda una hacienda, aún colectivamente, son demasiado grandes como para que los campesinos, dadas sus experiencias pasadas, puedan considerar esta alternativa como viable. Su racionalidad es la del sentido común. La integración del campesinado al proceso de desarrollo no puede efectuarse si la reforma se limita a cambiar sólo un aspecto de la estructura rural - la de los campesinos - dejando las instituciones de comercialización y las instituciones políticas del gobierno local intactas.

### CONCLUSION

Aunque formalmente la Ley de Reforma Agraria intenta proteger al campesinado frente a los grandes terratenientes, en

su implementación busca articular al campesinado a una sociedad nacional en expansión, sin alterar fundamentalmente las relaciones sociales de poder en el campo. Como toda política paternalista, trata de manipular al campesinado de tal manera de evitar la actualización de la formación del campesinado como "clase para sí", El IERAC contribuye a cumplir este objetivo, al menos en parte, por los tipos de estrategias que sigue en la ejecución de su rol de intermediario: primero, como amortiguador del conflicto entre los campesinos y la clase dominante en el campo. Segundo, intensificando el conflicto interno en la clase campesina a través de la competencia por adquirir tierras y tercero, por la forma en que cumple su rol de intermediario cultural tratando de incorporar al campesino a la sociedad nacional.

La relación tradicional patrón-peón reconocía explícitamente la variable étnica y la incorporaba como justificación de la dominación paternalista. La nueva forma de dominación simplemente la niega y al excluirla, mistifica las relaciones reales donde el indógena es el dominado bajo la ideología de homogeneización mestiza y desarrollismo democrático, cuando en realidad empuja a los campesinos a relaciones similares de dependencia paternalista, obstaculizando así el surgimiento de nuevas formas de conciencia campesina autónomas que cuestionen el sistema de dominación existente.

## NOTAS

1. Este trabajo está basado en diez meses de trabajo etnográfico realizado en la Provincia de Chimborazo durante 1975-76. La investigación recibió fondos del Canada Council (Research Grant No. S 750111) y contó con el apoyo del Departamento de Antropología de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador. En las diversas etapas del proyecto más amplio sobre "Estrategias de Movilización del Campesinado de la Sierra Ecuatoriana", participaron dos asistentes de investigación, Ana María Granja y Fernando García, a quienes agradezco la colaboración en la obtención de parte de los datos usados en este trabajo. La interpretación y conclusiones de este trabajo son, sin embargo, exclusiva responsabilidad de la autora,
2. Para la Provincia de Chimborazo, al menos, el IERAC no tradujo al Quechua el texto de la Ley de Reforma Agraria. Ni aún copias del texto en castellano están disponibles para los campesinos en la oficina regional.
3. Los intentos de organización campesina desde abajo son canalizados por el IERAC, pero principalmente por el Ministerio de Agricultura, hacia la formación de comunas. Aún cuando, en ciertos aspectos, las comunas responden a organizaciones campesinas tradicionales de base, desde 1937 -año de promulgación de la Ley de Comunas- están controladas desde afuera a través de la participación del Teniente Político de la Parroquia en la elección de los líderes y de la supervisión a que están sujetas por diferentes funcionarios del Departamento de Desarrollo Rural del Ministerio de Agricultura.
4. Se han usado nombres supuestos para referirse a las personas identificadas en los casos.
5. Esta es una de las formas en que, al nivel de la iglesia local, la misión Evangélica, a través de los pastores indígenas de orientación más conservadora, contribuye a la depolitización del campesinado, sancionando individualmente a aquellos que deben entrar en juicios para reclamar sus derechos. Sin embargo, los mismos criterios no son aplicados en los casos que conocemos en los cuales toda la comunidad hace un reclamo.
6. Datos obtenidos en el archivo de la oficina regional del IERAC en Riobamba.
7. Ver Whitten para una caracterización de "etnicidad" y su discusión en el contexto de las relaciones económicas y sociales en el Oriente Ecuatoriano (1975). Su más reciente trabajo sugiere interesantes comparaciones con el caso de la Sierra (Whitten 1976).
8. El Estado creó EMPROVIT (Empresa Nacional de Productos Vitales) y ENAC (Empresa Nacional de Almacenamiento y Comercialización) con el objeto de suprimir los intermediarios. Sin embargo, estas instituciones están sujetas a las presiones de las burguesías comerciales que siguen controlando la comercialización. Pudimos constatar, además, varias instancias en que campesinos fueron discriminados en sus tratos con agentes de estas empresas.

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KNOWLEDGE AS POWER: ETHNICITY AND CLASS AMONG NAPO QUICHUAS  
OF THE ECUADORIAN AMAZON

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper will deal with the problem of ethnic identity and inter-ethnic and class relations among the Napo Quichua Indians of the Ecuadorian Amazon. Since the sixteenth century, missionaries, encomiendas, and various forms of capitalism penetrated this area of the Upper Napo, attempting the ideological incorporation of the Indians into Christian civilization, and the transformation of their subsistence mode of production based on hunting, fishing gathering and swidden horticulture. Throughout this history, indigenous resistance also took different forms, from open rebellion, ideological confrontation, avoidance, and accomodation. All these responses allowed the Napo Quichuas to retain certain degree of control over the material productive basis of their cultural identity. For centuries, the Amazonian tropical forest has evoked for many, images of forbidding mysteries and dangers. Native peoples have always regarded it as a secure refuge, and as a place of deep spiritual fulfillment and freedom from oppression.

The more decisive process of socio-economic transformation in this area can be traced back to the 1960's. It is in this decade when oil production, massive colonization, and the consolidation of state domination finally managed to turn a large number of Napo Quichuas into peasants, part-time proletarians and salaried service workers. But also in this decade, Amazonian groups started to organize politically into Indigenous Federations (the Shuar in 1964, the Napo Quichuas in 1969),

under the defiant banner of ethnic solidarity based on the re-affirmation of their specific cultural patrimonies. Trying to resist their full proletarianization, the indigenous peoples have followed two main strategies: to oppose the indiscriminate expansion of colonization, and to consolidate the legal titles to their traditional territories. Ironically, because of State Laws (Ley de Tierras Baldias), these same strategies have forced them to utilize that land for cash cropping and cattle raising, thus sharing in the destruction of the tropical forest ecology that constitutes the very basis of their ethnic identity. In this particular historical moment, culture seems to be linked to class in a very complex and contradictory manner. On the one hand, the history of this area of Amazonia calls into question those anthropological approaches that look at cultures as pristine autonomous and bounded systems. On the other hand, present day struggles also challenge those economists' orthodoxies which assume that class identity and solidarity can be based exclusively on the automatic, structurally determined, cultural homogeneity of the dominated classes.

In order to start unravelling this complex problem of the historically specific relations between ethnicity and class, I have chosen to examine some social situations in Napo Quichuas' history mainly using examples from the life experiences of a rucuyaya (meaning grandfather, in Quichua), a man now probably in his late 80's to whom I will refer here as Yaya Alonso.<sup>1</sup> Through his life history, which I collected during a period of three years, and through oral histories obtained in shorter interviews with other rucuyayas, members of his same generation, one can begin to elucidate the changing relations between dominant structures and symbolic meanings, and how Napo Quichua ethnic

identity emerges and is transformed in a process of cultural interdependency and class opposition with other groups, more specifically, I refer here to white or "blanco" dominant groups, highland Indians, and other tropical forest etnias, such as the Huaoranis.

After a summary presentation of the history of contact in this area primarily since the end of the nineteenth century, I will discuss the bases and dynamics of Napo Quichuas' ethnic identity focussing on two periods in Yaya Alonso's life history: the era of patrons from the early 1900's to the 1960's, and the period of oil exploration by the Shell company in the 1940's. Although in historical time these two periods overlap, they are quite distinct in Yaya Alonso's memory.

#### HISTORY OF THE UPPER AMAZON

Napo Quichua speakers, live in the Napo province of the Ecuadorian Oriente and extend eastward down the Napo river to Iquitos in Peru (Mercier 1979). Because of their montaña hearth, located between the area of present-day Quijos valley and Archidona, the group I am referring to is also known as Quijos Quichua (Oberem ). There is very little evidence of their original language which became extinct early in the Colonial period. Along with other tropical forest Indians, they were pushed eastward running away from diseases and enslavement, and, in the process, assimilated other groups such as Záparos (a group of Zaparoans) (Whitten ,139), highland Quichuas and Huaoranis (Yost). To the south, in Pastaza province, some Napo Quichuas blended into Canelos Quichua culture, when their area became a refuge for many other

groups (Whitten ,129). Multiculturalism is present in almost all the Amazonian groups we now know as "distinct" cultures (Naranjo ). They are the result of the terrible traumas and disruptions unleashed by Spanish expansion into Amazonia. It should be clarified that, the fact of their origin as Quijos does not form part of everyday ethnic consciousness among the Napo Quichuas. They use that form, or Runa (in Quichua "people") to refer to themselves, and I will use these terms throughout my presentation. I am concerned with those Runas living in and around the towns of Tena, (capital of Napo province) Archidona, Pano, Cotundo, Puerto Napo and Puerto Misahuallí. The total population of this area (abbreviated here as Tena-Archidona) was estimated at 17,000 in 1976, of which 13,000 or 76% are Napo Quichuas. Runas also make distinctions among themselves, according to their different riverine settlements, such as Panos, Tenas, Talags, etc. Most rucuyayas claim that, at one time or another, they all scattered from Archidona in search of better hunting grounds, although in their consciousness, this history tends to blend with the mythical origin of the first Runas, known as Naupa Runa (Mercier ). These riverine settlements were populated by a residence-based stem kindred known as muntun whose members got access to demarcated territories (known as llactas) to fish and hunt, and usufruct rights for horticulture. Originally, these muntuns were organized around a powerful shaman, but this is not the case anymore in the Tena-Archidona area.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, Spaniards looking for the Land of Cinnamon, brought Christianity and encomiendas into the Tena-Archidona area. The Jesuits dominated it from the seventeenth to the end of the nineteenth century, when they were expelled from Ecuador

by the liberal government of Eloy Alfaro. The image of the Napo Quichuas as the "civilized" Indians, "passive" and "submissive" probably emerges at this time. In the dominant ideology, they become the "Alli Runa", the perfect white man's Christian subject. Like many other ideologies of domination, this one masks a long history of conflict and resistance by the Runas, of which the full scale rebellion of 1578, organized by shamans and led by a powerful cacique by the name of Jumandi, is the most well known.

Yaya Alonso was probably born around 1896, because he remembers being told he was baptized by the Jesuits, the last of whom left Tena in 1898 (Jouanen 225-27), so our story begins in the first decades of this century, when debt-peonage under white patrons became the main form of exploitation of native labor. In 1906 the Ecuadorian Liberal Constitution declared the separation of Church and State and, until the early 1920's, there were no missionaries in the Upper Napo. Tena and Archidona were tiny hamlets, inhabited by a small number of government officials and by a few but powerful patrons, ex-soldiers and rubber merchants who established haciendas devoted to cattle raising and the cultivation of rice and cotton. (See traveller's accounts .)

Unlike other Amazonian Indians, the Runas from the Tena-Archidona area did not experience directly the same abuses and enslavement perpetrated by the barons of the rubber boom, who never reached as far up the Napo river as Puerto Napo, Tena and Archidona (Macdonald 205). Many Runas travelled far in search of rubber, but they were either accompanying a patron or on their own, commissioned by patrons. They collected rubber and panned gold in exchange for cloth, machetes, shotguns, ammunition and beads for women's necklaces. This system kept

them in debt for years. Runas do not distinguish between the early rubber boom that ended in 1913, and the other minor rubber boom connected with the Second World War. A series of decrees and laws (such as the Ley de Oriente 1899), enacted by the Liberal government helped to curtail some of the previous abuses against the Indians, such as the obligatory purchase of goods sold by government officials but, in general, some forms of obligatory labor for the construction of roads, bridges and houses, and the enforced transport of goods and people from Tena to Quito and back, continued under the orders of patrons, at least until better mule trails and roads were opened. Free from the competition of government officials, patrons became the sole suppliers of manufactured goods, easily dictating the terms of exchange, and isolating Indians from other agents of the wider market economy. Although few Runas actually became permanent resident peons in haciendas, (Macdonald , Spiller ), their ties to the debt-system contributed to reaffirm the dominant image of the Napo Quichuas as fully subordinated Indians, incapable of escaping their oppressive situation (Beghin 1963, Spiller ). However, from foreign travellers' accounts and from the rucuyayas' own stories, other aspects of the patron system emerge that help us to qualify that image. British and American explorers into this area report the strong competition among patrons to secure Runas labor. This allowed Runas certain freedom to choose the less exploitative ones, and they did it through a captain (capitan) who was the leader for a whole muntun, so that the kinship nature of the labour group was kept intact. Whereas debts were incurred individually, in their payment, Runas were able to pan gold and gather rubber in their traditional territories, and to accommodate gardening,

fishing and hunting, since land was still available and game still plentiful. When additional labor was required of them, Runas made themselves scarce by hiding in the jungle. Travellers tell of their difficulties in getting Runas' labor as paddlers, cargo bearers or guides, and often, of being left stranded for days with cargo for which they had paid the Indians in advance. Both Catholic Josephine and Evangelical Protestant missionaries, who entered this area in the early 1920's, like to claim the virtues of having liberated Runas from the patrons' oppression. Runas have a different assessment of the situation. I have time here only to discuss some aspects of the Josephine Mission. When they arrived in Ecuador in 1922, they were assigned a Vicariate in the Oriente that covered an area of 70,000 square kilometers. Their strategy of evangelization towards the Runas can be defined as guided "paternalistic integration". They regarded Runas as lazy, innocent savages to be liberated from the terror of their own "sorcerers" (as they called Runa shamans) and from white patrons through productive work. The Josephines saw themselves as representing the twentieth century conception of "progress", based on technological change, formal schooling, technical training and modern medicine. As early as 1924, they put the Runas to work building a meteorological station, a hydroelectric power plant, schools, churches and convents, plus a radio station, "La Voz del Napo," still today the most powerful in the province. But, most importantly, the Josephines established agricultural stations in every missionary outpost for subsistence and cash crops as well as for cattle raising on a large scale. They obtained land through donations from Catholic patrons, and through occupation of Runas' traditional territories. When Runas offered the



missionaries a small plot for a school and a chapel, the latter expanded their own chacras and pasture for cattle. Soon enough, the Runas were encircled by the mission, they saw the game and fish partially depleted, and their gardens reduced. They were then forced to search for food farther and farther away into the forest. According to their own published records (see Spiller ), in 1973 the Josephines had more than 1,000 hectares of land devoted to cattle, pasture, and commercial agriculture. Still today, the Josephines, not really touched by the redeeming qualities of Liberation Theology, control a mini-empire in the Tena-Archidona area, including all levels of education, health services, communications and agribusiness. A significant number of Runas are the product of these schools, or work for the mission, as laborers and teachers.

The Leonard Exploration Company, a subsidiary of Standard began exploration for oil in the Oriente in the 1920's, followed by Shell in the early 1940's, and finally by several other companies in the 1960's and 1970's. The relationship between the oil companies, the missionaries and the State, in all these three phases was one of close and harmonious collaboration. They shared roads, maps, transportation, shelter and native labor (Spiller ). Jointly, they provided the necessary infrastructure of roads, Christian civilization, and legal administration that facilitated colonization into the Oriente. Slowly starting in the 1920's several waves of colonos reached the Tena-Archidona area. They received land grants of 40 to 50 hectares from the then Government Agency of Colonization, presently known as IERAC or Ecuadorian Institute of Agrarian Reform and Colonization, which they devoted mainly to pasture and cattle raising. Colonization

increased dramatically during the 1960's, and still continues as part of larger State policies of opening up the Oriente for national development, and to secure their frontiers against threats from Peru.

Encircled by haciendas, missions and colonos, and occasionally driven away by epidemics, many Runas were forced to leave the Tena-Archidona area, which continues to be the main center of out migration to the "oil region" between Lago Agrio and Coca. It has been estimated (see Orstrom ) that by the late 1970's, around 4,500 Runas had migrated permanently to that region, and around 1,000 to populate other areas along the Napo down to Coca. Since the early 1980's, the area between Coca and Rocafuerte is becoming the new center of immigration, due to the renewed efforts of the Ecuadorian government to colonize their frontiers after the last armed conflict with Peru in 1981. Despite all this out migration, the Tena-Archidona area is the second most densely populated area of the province after the "oil region," 43 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. For those Runas who stay, the pressure for land is mounting. Their average land holdings measure 14 hectares, while those of colonos 40, and those of haciendas around Tena, 93 hectares. In the past, Runas approached IERAC for the consolidation of their land titles, and to protest abuses. In 1981, they also confronted the Josephines on the land question. Most of their demands are now channeled through FOIN, the Federation of Napo Indigenous Organizations, founded in 1969, where the new oppositional ideology based on a militant ethnic identity is being developed.

#### RUNA IDENTITY DURING THE ERA OF PATRONS

Runas' ethnic identity is developed and maintained through a series of material and symbolic practices dominated by a process that can be described as power acquisition. According to my present understanding of Runa culture, "power" means a proper balanced combination of knowledge, verbal and other technical skills, courage and physical strength. In turn, each one of these components has to be qualified according to specific situational contexts. Courage could mean the power to be brave and dreadless when meeting spirits in the forest darkness, or the power to be unbending and unbowing when confronting white patrons.

Power thus understood may be acquired from a variety of different sources: other Runas, highland Indians (Hahuallactas) other tropical forest groups, whites, and from a great number of supais or spirit people, who live in the forest and rivers. Each of these groups are said to control unique sources of power which they exercise over their own domains and territories. Power acquisition then implies social interaction between people, or between people and spirits, involving different degrees of intimacy and affection, accommodation, negotiation and conflict. Consequently, the formation and transformation of Runas' ethnic identity, inter-ethnic and class relations have to be understood in the different historical contexts where these "power encounters" take place.

The basis of Runa's cultural identity has always been, and continues to be, control over a forest territory for hunting, fishing and shifting agriculture. Acquiring and maintaining power over that territory has meant, as far as Runas can remember, two main forms of

social relations. One, already discussed, involves Runas in class confrontations with white patrons, missionaries, colonists, and state bureaucracies, over access to resources and labor. I will argue that in this context of confrontation, Napo Quichuas' ethnic identity - as defined here - has constituted a source of resistance against their total incorporation into a pre-capitalist or fully capitalist white-dominated world. The second form of social relations, involve Runas in positive and negative interactions with the numerous spirit beings who are the masters of the different species of wild game, fish, and cultivated plants over demarcated territories. Acting on nature to satisfy material needs is conceived as a permanent negotiation with a world dominated by the hierarchy of spirits that have to be seduced, restrained or propitiated through the appropriate techniques. If Runas follow the correct technical and symbolic observances, involving fasting, sexual abstinence and other forms of purification, male and female supais provide with a continuous source of knowledge and power. A man's productivity as a hunter, or a woman's capacity to culturally transform nature through horticulture depend on those relationships. It is this knowledge then that allows Runas to act intelligently over their natural environment and gives them a sense of control over the productive process. In the words of Yaya Alonso: "One walks through the forest for so long that the body becomes accustomed to it. The body acquires the smell of the forest. The man becomes the forest, and then the animals do not run away. That is the life of the hunter".

The proper socialization of both male and female children involves the ritual transfer of part of that power by older, more experienced Runas who are acknowledged to be "strong and powerful". During this

transfer, a portion of the donor's inner strength referred to as samai is forced into the child's body. The donor puts his hands on top of the child's head, and forcefully blows into them. This part of the ritual is often preceded by the donor rubbing the child's eyes with aji (or chili, capsicum), a very painful experience that is regarded more as a test of the child's inner strength than as a punishment for bad behaviour. Finally, the donor gives the child verbal advice that might be general in nature, or quite specific, depending on the donor's particular strength and skills. According to the rucuyayas, knowledge and strength are not seen as separate, and they enter primarily through the head. Samai transfer is to breathe life, to fortify another person's inner self, to "animate", in the literal sense of transferring part of another person's powerful soul.

Strong souls can make other people dream about them. This power is known as muscu (from the Quicha muscuna, to dream). As Yaya Alonso explains: "One night I dreamt of a large and difficult river that I crossed successfully on my own. The first person who came to visit me that morning was my daughter Juanita who has a strong muscu. She is going to live a long life. Strength secures the soul and makes it grow."

Special strong affective and practical bonds develop between donor and recipient <sup>in</sup> ~~and~~ the samai transfer ritual, and these ties serve to establish lifelong relations between Runas, often strengthened later through compadrqzgo or ritual friendship (amigu). According to old Runas then, this double process of gaining control over territory through intimate relations with spirits, and socialization into meaningful social relations provided them with a self and cultural identity. It was the core of what being a Runa meant.

This approach to social relations also affected Runas' contacts with other ethnic groups, specially when these were not mediated by class relationships with whites. Other Indians were considered to have particular powers and skills which could be transferred to Runas. Some highland Indians from Papallacta were known to be good and strong to carry cargo and if they came for a visit, they were asked to give part of their samai to young Runas. Many Rucuyayas remembered to have had similar relations with Huaoranis - who were admired for their hunting skills - in the old days before the whites entered their territory.

In the context of Runas' relationships with white patrons, this power of the inner self meant courage to confront them verbally, and sometimes even physically. As Yaya Alonso explains "My tongue was never tied when time came to confront the white authorities (apus) whether sober or drunk".

As it was already discussed, patron's competition for scarce Runa labor gave the latter certain independence. What we learn from Yaya Alonso is that they were aware of the fact, and could manipulate certain situations. Since the authorities who put them in jail were, at the same time, the merchants who wanted their labor, Yaya Alonso says: "I would be punished one day for talking back to them, and the next day I would be back home satisfied". Knowledge about how the white debt-system worked was acquired through the captains of the muntuns. It allowed them to defend the members of their own labor group in face of patrons' abuses. The way Yaya Alonso refers to those abuses reveals his conception of knowledge as power. He says: "Those abusive patrons were thieves of poor people's minds".

Among older Runas, the power to give verbal advice, of being invincible in ritual conversations was a sign of intelligence, of their capacity to communicate knowledge to others. Those were the men and women whose souls could turn into jaguars after death. The shaman-jaguar complex has been discussed for other Amazonian groups, specially by Richeil-Dolmatoff (1975) but, among Runas, this transformation was not considered the exclusive privilege of shamans. Ordinary but powerful people (like Yaya Alonso's grandmother) could turn into jaguars and the strength of their souls continued to support their relatives and to defend them from attacks by other forest jaguars.

Like in other hunting-gathering and horticultural societies, shamans play a crucial role among the Napo Quichuas. They can best establish contact with the supernatural world, and acquire the necessary knowledge to be used in their role as mediators between the spirit world and native society. Shamans may cure illnesses, obtain game animals and fish from their supernatural masters, and defend or avenge other Runas when necessary. Shamans obtain their power from a hierarchy of spirits, contacted through the use of hallucinogenic drugs, primarily ayahuasca (Banisteriopsis) and huanduj (a Datura). Accordingly, shamans are also ranked in relation to their knowledge and experience. Only those powerful ones, who can call in spirits at will and make them work for them, are known as sinchi yachaj (in Quichua, strong and knowledgeable man), the ideal type of Runa. The strongest among this group is known as bancu, and there are few of those left among the Runa at the present time. This is not the place to discuss at length the characteristics of shamanism in Napo Quichuas' culture, but it is important to examine the role it has played - and in some ways still does - in Runas' ethnic

identity, and inter-ethnic and class relations. Because of their privileged position of power in the spirit world, shamans are often approached by other Runas to transfer their samai. The next best thing to being a shaman is to be able to establish a relationship of respect and friendship with a powerful one. It is regarded as a fulfilling intellectual and emotional experience that contributes to the affirmation of Runa identity. This relationship may be explained by using Yaya Alonso's own life history. He had a life-long "ritual friendship" (amigu) with a bancu whom I will call Quisha. Once Yaya Alonso was feeling weak, Quisha decided to take his soul away for a cure. Quisha called in a powerful spirit by the name of Papatoa, who carried the soul to a spirit town known as Docemundoi. Through Quisha's intercession, Papatoa explained to Yaya Alonso the purpose of this trip: "Just as the government teaches our children in the schools, in Docemundoi, your soul will learn and become strong." He also explained that this supai town is the center of the world, a place of gold and light, bright as the very sunny days, so that nothing can escape the eye of the student souls. The job of spirits living there is to re-socialize Runa souls. When Quisha died, Yaya Alonso's soul was left in the care of Quisha's son, Pedro, himself now a bancu. Alonso talks about him as "a sun who is just beginning to rise." Shamans are associated with light because they are a source of knowledge, which is obtained only in the course of long training and experience throughout their entire life. (This relation between shamans and the sun's light and fertilizing energy is specifically mentioned by Reichel-Dolmatoff among the Tukanos of the Vaupes region of Colombia [1975: 77-78].) After three years, Alonso asked to have his soul back because, in his



own words, "it is difficult to die in peace without a strong Runa soul, I would have had to search for it in the crowd of common souls", and also -- as he whispered to me specially -- "because I did not trust the scattered brain women to be back in time with my soul in case I had an accident."

Shamanism is also involved in several ways in inter-ethnic contacts and class relations. First, Runa shamans themselves acquire knowledge and power from other shamans. Especially sought after are the Tsachela shamans, living in the area of Santo Domingo de los Colorados to the southwest of Quito, the Canelos Quichua just to the south of Napo Runa territory, and some Highland shamans although, in general, the Oriente shamans enjoy a reputation of being more powerful than Highland ones. This professional exchange which might involve money paid for services, or trade in hallucinogenic visions, songs, and powerful artifacts, is reported from the last century, as well as this one (see Oberem 1974: 351, Langdon 1981 ). It was part of a larger trade Napo Runas had with other Amazonian and Highland groups (at least since the XVI century when we have records) which included items such as coca leaves, gold dust, pita (or twine), salt, cloth, cotton, cinnamon, tropical fruits, feathers, and dart poison (Oberem 1974).

Second, because of the prestigious reputation of Oriente shamans, Highlanders (Serranos) come to the Tena-Archidona area to consult them for curing. Ordinary shamans living in Tena, receive regular visits from these Highlanders known in the area as "Hahuallactas", a term used with derogatory connotations, similar to those implied by the term "auca", when used by Highlanders to refer to Oriente natives. An interesting example of the relationship between ethnicity and class can

be observed in Tena, between Runas and a group of Colta Indians from Chimborazo, who settled in Tena as merchants, migrating out of a situation of poverty in their own area. They often consult ordinary Runa shamans for curing and divination purposes. In this situation their attitude is a supplicant one, acknowledging the superior symbolic power of the shamans. However, just a few paces away, in the market place, and as merchants, Colta Indians assume a "white" identity and often exploit Napo Runas in commercial transactions. Although still dressed in their unmistakable Colta Indian clothing, they become "white merchants" and behave towards Napo Runas in the same way Chimborazo white merchants behave towards them in the Riobamba markets.

Third, in the relationships of Napo Runas with whites, particularly with both Catholic and Protestant missionaries, shamanism has always been a source of conflict. Missionaries consider shamanism, along with many other aspects of Runas' world view, as an oppressive system that maintains them in a state of constant fear, and as one of the principal causes of their alleged backwardness. Seen from the Runas' point of view, however, other interesting aspects come to light. For instance, as leaders of their muntuns, often shamans were chosen by patrons to be captains of a labor group. Macdonald, who worked among Arajuno Runas, points out how this fact helped in reinforcing the power and status of those shamans, and allowed them to use the frequent trips to far away places to study with other shamans and to establish marriage arrangements for members of their own muntuns (Macdonald 228). I have not found any evidence, however, that white patrons were considered powerful shamans. The reference to them, in rucuyaya stories is that they were powerful in the sense of possessing brute blind force (they

could inflict physical punishment, or they were literally physically heavy to be carried). These characteristics evoke funny or derogatory connotations among Runas, and are contrasted with their own lightness and strength that allowed them to make those difficult trips to Quito on foot; crossing freezing plateaus (paramos), carrying heavy cargoes, including white patrons and missionaries. All missionaries who worked in this area have always battled against shamanism, trying to eradicate it, (see Muratorio ). They are still trying. From the rucuyayas' point of view, only the Jesuits seem to have commanded some respect, and this fact is in itself interesting. Although in general, the Jesuits are remembered as having been more abusive than present-day Josephines, they were considered to have some powers similar to those of shamans. Several older Runas reported the Jesuits' capacity to kill Runas who did not attend religious services through a ritual that consisted on mentioning the culprit's name when the church candles started to drip. This power, equated to the shaman's magical darts also used to kill enemies, it was supposed to cause the culprit vomiting, diarrhea and finally, death. The Josephines, on the contrary, are considered weak, a fact which may, in part, explain the relative success of Protestantism in this area. Furthermore, these different Runa reactions to whites have to be seen in the context of class conflict and alliances in the region during the corresponding time periods. The Josephines entered when Runas were already under debt peonage. On the contrary, during the conservative government of Garcia Moreno (1869-1875), the Jesuits were made - for all practical purposes - the representatives of the State in the Napo. Their mandate was "to keep order and good civic and ecclesiastical government" (Jouanen 1977: 33-34). These powers, plus

their protectionist non-integrationist evangelization policies, put the Jesuits into direct conflict with merchants and officials who wanted to exploit the Indians' labor. Besides, those policies, plus their insistence on permanent settlement and regular work discipline, was considered by the Runas as a direct attack against their subsistence mode of production. Although as merchants the resident whites exploited Runas' labor, in their capacity as officials they granted Runas licencias, or permits that legally excused them from attending religious services, for periods of 2 to 3 months, to go into the forest to pan gold or to scrape twine (pita). Runas used that freedom to hunt and cultivate their chacras. It is then understandable why, in the Indian organized uprising against the Jesuits in Loreto in 1892, the Runas allied themselves with white merchants against the white priests (Lopez San Vicente 1894: 65-75). Although the rebellion was defeated, Oberem reports that, as late as 1955, the Indians from Loreto remembered it as a success (1980: 116). On their part, rucuyayas say that the Jesuits' expulsion from Tena in 1891 was the direct result of Runas' complaints to the Quito authorities. Myth and history blend here to create a culture of resistance that becomes incorporated into Runa's ethnic identity.

#### RUCUYAYAS AS OIL WORKERS

The period which concerns us here is the early 1940's, when the Shell Oil company started the second period of oil exploration in a large area of the Oriente. North Americans, known as "gringos", along with some Ecuadorian technical personnel and soldiers from the highlands, had to go into areas never before penetrated by whites. Most

importantly, in this case, they were conducting their explorations deep into Huaorani territory, in Napo and Pastaza provinces. The Huaoranis, were then the least acculturated and least well known group in all of Amazonian Ecuador, and therefore, the most feared. They were referred to as "Aucas," meaning "savage" in Quichua. Only the Shuar (or Jivaros) enjoyed that reputation but, by this time, they had already been "tamed" by the Salesian Mission.

Runas not only went to work voluntarily for Shell but they were even encouraged to do so, especially by the Josephines. And so they went into the forest as they had previously gone to gather rubber and pan gold. The main difference was that now they were paid real wages for their labor. At that time, they started earning 5 sucres for much more than 8 hours of work. What effect did the commodification of labor have in Runas' way of life, and Runa society as a whole? What was the impact of this new class relationship in their ethnic identity and in the inter-ethnic relations in the area? I will attempt to answer some of these questions in what rests of this paper.

I have not been able to conduct research to properly understand the technology used nor the organization and administration of Shell exploring operations at that time. From rucuyayas' accounts it seems clear that, in many ways, they were quite precarious and certainly different from the productive technology and organization used in the 1960's and 1970's, so my analysis has to be seen in this context. We know Shell used helicopters and some equipment for drilling and to open up trails. Runas entered into three month contracts with the Company, and were hired to carry heavy equipment, open up trails, build helicopter pads, to provide some food in the form of wild game and fish,

and last, but not least, because of their knowledge of Huaorani attack tactics. The danger of Huaorani raids was very real, since they had already a long history of unpleasant experiences with whites dating from the rubber boom period (see Yost ). According to Yaya Alonso, very often along a trail they would find Huaorani spears crossed as a warning signal; and they could also listen to the whistling voice of the spears at night. In the camps, they would sleep with lighted candles inside and guards outside. The Runas were there to refrain Highlanders from provoking Huaoranis, with their "ignorant and foolish bravery."

According to Yaya Alonso, they also prevented pilots from throwing burning objects down from the helicopters to burn Huaorani hamlets. After brief encounters with Huaoranis in which people died on both sides, many soldiers and other serranos would cry asking to be returned home. Considering these working conditions, how did the Runas look at this period of their lives? What were they selling to the Company? If I am correct, in Rucuyayas' understanding they were selling their strength to carry loads, their profound knowledge of the forest, their skills as hunters and fishermen and their courage to confront Huaoranis, and especially their cunning to detect their silent attack tactics in time to avoid the confrontations. Their success in all these tasks re-affirmed all the positive aspects of Runas' ethnic identity as they understood it then. It also confirmed Runas on their previous assessment of Hahuallactas -- whether soldiers or engineers -- as clumsy to survive in the forest. Both their fear and their foolish courage turned them into the laughing stock of Runa labor crews. Gringo engineers suffered the same fate or even worse. Yaya Alonso, who was made captain of a group of workers from his own Pano muntun, remembers

how the gringo engineer begged to be accompanied by him to the camp bathroom every morning. Probably I could summarize Yaya Alonso's experience of the period with an anecdote having to do with his own understanding of the medical examination given to Runas by the gringo doctors at Shell headquarters in the jungle. With his engaging humour, Yaya Alonso says: "They asked me to remove my pants, but the first thing they did was to weigh my testicles, and they approved. We had to go into Auca hunting grounds, and they said that all those who had good testicles could go. Many others were quite healthy, but they were not chosen. All the members of my muntun were accepted. That's how we bought our first airplane flight." Not only did air travelling allow Runas to "know" the jungle in all its extension for the first time, but it took them to even better hunting and fishing grounds. Many of them went back home with the game needed to offer to their future wives' families for the marriage ceremonies.

Since that time, Runa relations with the Huaorani were modified by the latter's own integration into a market economy and, more fully, into "white civilization" through Evangelical Protestant missionaries and formal schooling. It is now a relation that fluctuates between open conflict and the establishment of affinal or fictive kinship ties. Pressed for land, Napo Quichuas enter into Huaorani territory to hunt, and have also become teachers in Huaorani schools. Huaoranis enter into compadrazgo and marriage arrangements with young Runas as a more secure entrance into the "white" world, but the reciprocities involved in terms of access to land, are straining those relationships to the limit (see Yost 692, 699, 700, 701). Rucuyayas who cannot walk that far any more in search of game, still respect the Huaoranis' right to kill in order to defend themselves against those who invade their lands.

What were then the consequences of the partial proletarianization of the Runas' during the Shell Oil Company period? A fuller introduction into the money economy started to create some social differentiation between "rich" and "poor" Runas. Yaya Alonso points out that at that time, the term "pugri" (probably an adaptation of the Spanish "pobre", or poor) began to be used to refer to some Runas. In Quichua, the equivalent term for poor is "huajcha", meaning orphan, or without kin. It evokes the idea that when this happens, people become sad and lazy turning soon from "huajcha" into "tzontzo", meaning somebody who is miserable, or totally destitute. Runas had somehow always been involved in a money economy, but working for the company allowed a few a relative degree of capital accumulation in the form of cattle. The fact that later some of their food became a market commodity, certainly transformed their conception of work. The majority of Runa oil workers in that period bought consumer items with their money, such as clothing, watches, blankets and shotguns. Yaya Alonso used his money to send his eldest son to school and bought one cow that he never wanted to sell. By the time the period of the rucuyayas is over, there is already a new generation of educated Runas, now in their 40's and 50's, for whom ethnic and class identity are played under other forms of the penetration of capitalism into their territory. But their situation is outside of the scope of my present analysis, so I would finish with Yaya Alonso's own understanding of the implications of some of these transformations. His comprehension of class relations is quite profound and, if Marx would have understood peasants, he could have written what I regard as Yaya Alonso's own definition of capitalist social relations of production. He says: "The Indian works the land



slowly, little by little, he becomes the land. The colono works the land until he finishes it, until it dies. If we go to work for colonos, our work also dies, it is lost. The colono makes the Indian work for him, puts the money in the bank and there it grows and grows, but we never see it again." His assessment of the impact of recent changes on ethnic identity is equally revealing. He regards education and political organization as great assets for young people, but, because they are allowing the whites to undermine their territories, they have lost real knowledge and courage. They know Spanish, but they don't know how to talk back. In his own words: "Men now are like chickens, they have wings, but they cannot fly." The leaders of the Indigenous Organizations would certainly not be very happy with his judgement, but they are redefining their own identity as Runas, and forging a new culture of resistance. Rucuyayas' more than 80 years of resistance should become part of that new cultural history.

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## FORO LATINOAMERICANO HABITAR EL PATRIMONIO

MESA DE DEBATE VIERNES 6, SEPTIEMBRE, 2013

**Mtr. Ana Rodríguez**, Ecuador. "Patrimonio y memoria del presente. Micropolíticas instituyentes en algunos museos de Quito."

**Dr. Arq. Wiley Ludeña**, Perú. "Barrios y casas obreras en Lima. Habitando el olvido."

**Dra. Susana Wappenstein**, Ecuador. "Violencia, post-conflicto y dilemas de la memoria."

**Moderador:** Dr. Eduardo Kingman

**Comentaristas:** Dra. Elizabeth Jelin y Dra. Blanca Muratorio.

### COMENTARISTA: BLANCA MURATORIO

(...) frase o palabra no entendida


Tengo algunas preguntas sí, por ejemplo, con respecto al obrero, a los barrios obreros, ¿qué producen estos barrios obreros de vida cotidiana? Es decir, eso para mí es lo más interesante, cómo se cruzan esos fragmentos de vida que no quieren cambiar. Es decir, si uno hace eso se entiende perfectamente por qué hay un (...) y por qué hay mercado donde todos pueden caminar, porque las casas son tan chiquitas y la gente digamos se va al (...), los hombres, y se va al mercado, en ese sentido me interesó.

Lo demás quisiera relacionar lo de memoria digamos sí, la idea de la apertura del museo hacia la población. Los museos son instituciones (...) que quieren hacerlo, pero ese hacer no es estático, no es una cosa que tiene que estar ahí, hay una forma de hacer el museo que (...) están tratando de hacer, es decir hay un trabajo que podemos no estar de acuerdo en formas, en cómo se hace ese trabajo, podemos tener críticas constructivas con respecto a eso. Obviamente, se está tratando de hacer una construcción de un museo distinto, donde haya cierta, y es un proceso largo, porque la idea realmente de un museo participativo, significa una igualdad de la capital cultural entre las gentes y los que hacen los museos, es decir, ¿cómo puede participar con el mismo capital cultural?, ¿tenemos aquí curadores populares, indígenas? No, en otros museos los hay, pero bueno, ese es un proceso muy largo, este yo lo veo como un comienzo de un proceso que toda su gran construcción, su historia, tendrá contradicciones y ya las puedo ver, y como antropóloga puedo decir, bueno sí, ha habido grandes contradicciones. Yo como antropóloga hablo de las


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cosas más reales, como el hecho de una inversión enorme en una exposición de un artista que es indígena pero, ¿qué le puede decir a la población el hecho de ser indígena?, no significa que tenga un discurso o una forma de representación que llegue a alguien que todavía ni conoce qué son los museos, es decir, alguien con arte conceptual, muchos de nosotros no entendemos el arte conceptual, y no sé si lo quiero entender, pero esa es una relación digamos, que se hace, una especie de contradicción entre lo que se está haciendo afuera y ciertas decisiones, pero bueno, pasa en todos los museos, en todos se cae en esas contradicciones, se saldrán esas contradicciones.

Y, ¿cómo se recogen las memorias?, las memorias no son algo que está allí para ser recogido, las memorias son algo vivido, se resignifican y hay como decía (...), y es un proceso también muy largo. A mí me llevó ocho años hacer la memoria de un viejito cazador de la Amazonía. Bueno, no le pedimos a todos que hagan eso, no, pero lo que entendemos los antropólogos, hay que conseguir una cosa que llamamos consentimiento informado, y ¿qué quiere decir consentimiento informado? No es un concepto fácil, es un concepto en el cual el otro nos ve a nosotros en una situación de reciprocidad, no digo igualdad, porque no creamos igualdad, no vamos a ser todos iguales en algún momento, pero una relación de reciprocidad donde entienden por qué hacemos lo que hacemos. Es decir, en cierto momento eso es lo que se busca, por eso buscamos una cierta participación, que sea constructiva, pero que a la vez sea crítica, es decir, y en algún momento el antropólogo tendrá que decir, bueno, aquí no, hasta aquí llegué; entonces el Estado dice esto, la política dice esto, bueno, pero no se puede decir en general, es decir, en situaciones bien complejas.



Ahora, en términos de esa misma crítica constructiva, quiero, por ejemplo, la introducción, y lo hago con todo respeto, la introducción que hizo el alcalde, dijo que había habido una reubicación pacífica de la población que habitaba el centro histórico y que ha habido un modelo razonable de participación popular de los comerciantes. Yo, a través de mi trabajo de religiosidad popular en el CH, puedo decir que hay distintas formas de violencia y que no fue violencia física, pero que el culto, la religiosidad popular es una forma de (aceptar ser religioso) que implica todos los sentidos, no solamente el tener que hablar con el santo, el tocarlo, el olor del incienso, etc., y en eso quiero incorporar lo que dijo Francisca Márquez sobre la necesidad de la antropología de los sentidos, para entender la experiencia humana, y creo que eso puede ser una contribución a ciertos aspectos de la cultura para entender la cultura popular. Es decir, esa experiencia, se



triste que ya se lo se lo han sacado, que ya no le puede conversar sus penas todos los días. Ese mismo día, pasando por Iglesia de la Compañía a las tres de la tarde pregunté al guardia que se para frente al cartel de los precios a la entrada, a que hora podía ir yo a rezar. Me contestó que había misa a las 6. Le dije : "pero no puedo volver a las seis." Me miró de arriba abajo y me dijo muy serio: "bueno entre, pero haga rápido y no mire." Esa misma tarde, en una radio local la gente se quejaba de que las iglesias no estaban abiertas para rezar por el papa Juan pablo II.

Irónicamente, mientras internacionalmente los museos , considerados templos del patrimonio sagrado nacional, se están cada vez más abriendo a la participación activa de los ciudadanos y tratando de deconstruir la autoridad absoluta de sus expertos, por el contrario, aquí en el Centro Histórico los Templos sagrados se están convirtiendo en museos con un criterio estético excluyente que sólo privilegia los sistemas simbólicos Coloniales barrocos, destruye las expresiones del arte popular y las reemplaza con la imaginaria plástica made in China y las decoraciones y barreras internas para los santos al estilo Miami, sin ninguna vergüenza estética. (Como vimos en esas pocas imágenes.)

Quisiera recordar aquí que la definición de patrimonio cultural de la UNESCO de 1982 incluye también (y cito) "las creaciones anónimas surgidas del alma popular y el conjunto de valores que dan sentido a la vida." Creo que es este valor humano del patrimonio religioso del Centro Histórico lo que se está destruyendo porque el autoritarismo de expertos plantea el acceso a lo religioso como un problema arquitectónico y no social y cultural. Lo que parece escapar a estas políticas de la burocracia cultural reinante es la idea de que, en los ámbitos internacionales, el concepto y la práctica de patrimonio ya han dejado de ser la obsesión de los ricos y poderosos para democratizarse y pertenecer a todos dando un sentido de identidad y memoria colectiva. Mayormente, en el Centro Histórico el patrimonio se considera algo muerto que hay que resucitar

no hay  
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**“I ONLY THOUGHT OF RUNNING AWAY”: AN AMAZONIAN WOMAN’S STORIES  
ABOUT MARRIAGE AND ITS IMAGERY**

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49<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Americanists Quito, Ecuador 7-11 July 1997

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**ABSTRACT**

*Through the life-history narrative of a Napo Quichua woman from the Ecuadorian Amazon, this essay deals with the institution of marriage, primarily through the eyes of women. It focuses on this gifted storyteller’s multiple discourses of identity, and on her memories of colonialism to explore how women have translated and internalized Roman Catholic missionaries’ ideology on marriage and the meanings they derive from its relations with contemporary secular practices.*

[Ecuadorian Amazon, indigenous women’s life histories, marriage, missionaries, women’s identities]

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It is 1941 and the world is at war. Hidden behind a tree in the tropical forest of Amazonian Ecuador, a beautiful ten year old girl is afraid something terrible is going to happen to her, but she still doesn’t know what. She has been sent away from the house, but she doesn’t realize it is because her future in-laws have come to her house to ask for her hand in marriage. Soon she will be forced to leave the comforting world she has known and the refuge of her mother’s love. She

has no understanding of a foreign war or of the search for oil and rubber in her own land that is helping to fuel it. But these large events, however indirectly, played a role in this indigenous girl's life and they appear as shadows and as haunting memories in several of the stories that now, as a mature woman, she tells about her life. The story of her arranged marriage is the one I have chosen to analyze in this paper.

In the period of the many years I have known Francisca,<sup>i</sup> the narrator, she has described to me several times, and always in vivid detail, this crucial event in her life-history. Moreover, in the process of explaining its meaning for her own life in the present, for that of her daughters, and not least for my own intellectual instruction and enjoyment as a listener, Francisca has felt the need to tell many other stories about marriage. Some are based on the rich traditional lore of her culture, on her own dreams and experiences, and others on the equally lustrous imagery of the Roman Catholic tradition, as it was translated to her by her elders, and as she herself reinterprets it with the skills of an accomplished theologian. I will share these stories with the reader at my own pace in the course of this paper, whose main objective is to make sense of the important institution of Napo Quichua marriage, primarily through the eyes of women.<sup>ii</sup>

The version of Francisca's life-history narrative I will present here is the last one she narrated in 1996 while trying to explain to me her feelings of anguish over the ongoing problem of her youngest daughter's extremely abusive husband, and her misgivings about her youngest son's recent marriage to a non-indigenous woman. Both the increasing incidence of domestic violence among young married couples, and the problems created by new forms of inter-ethnic marriages, are just two of the many social changes the Napo Quichua, as well as other indigenous peoples in the Ecuadorian Amazon, are experiencing while they are yet again forced to redefine their own identities as they get incorporated further into the new modernity brought about by a

globalized cultural economy. Although Francisca's story was delivered as one narrative unit, for the purpose of the analysis I will divide it into separate themes and intertwine it with her own "explanatory" tales.

### **Portrait of the storyteller in its larger framework**

The Napo Quichua (who call themselves Napo Runa, or just Runa), belong to a long-established tropical forest culture of the Ecuadorian Amazon that they share in different degrees with thousands of other lowland Quichua. Traditionally all Napo Quichua were hunter-gatherers and swidden horticulturalists. Through the four hundred years of their contacts, first with the Spanish conquistadors, and later with the national society, they have adapted their subsistence strategies to deal with labor tribute, gold panning, and rubber tapping under an exploitative system of debt-peonage controlled by traders and patrons. This system came to an end by the middle of this century, but since then the Runa have accommodated and resisted large scale "modernizing" changes brought about by continued colonization, oil exploration, small-town urban growth, and the consolidation of the power of the state in the whole Amazon region, known as the Oriente. In the 1990s, the international concern with the fate of the Amazon rainforest has brought many foreign environmentalists and ecotourists into this area. Just a few marriages between Napo Quichua women and men to these foreigners have been enough to cause grave concern among indigenous women, and to provide a juicy topic for endless gossip and for more serious discussions about marriage practices.

Although the Napo Quichua had occasional contacts with the different priests that accompanied the Spanish conquistadors since the sixteenth century, and with the Jesuit Order since the seventeenth century, the present indigenous oral tradition about Christianity goes back to the last decades of the nineteenth century when the Jesuits, along with the Good Shepherd

nuns, established a mission in the Tena-Archidona area until 1896, when they were expelled by a Liberal government. In 1922 the Catholic Josephine Order, in collaboration with Dorothean and Murialdin nuns, founded a mission in Napo Quichua territory that remains to this day. Five years later, a few Evangelical Protestants entered the Amazon area and aggressively competed with the Catholic orders. Since then, the number of different Evangelical sects active in this area continues to increase, although their success in making new converts is not highly significant.

Francisca is a woman in her 60s, in her culture already considered a *rucumama*, or respected elder. Her husband is still alive, and of her three married daughters and two married sons she has now more than 22 grandchildren. She identifies herself with the other Quichua speakers from the Pano River area, which includes the small town of the same name located just a few kilometers from Tena, the capital of Napo province. In earlier times, several residential groups composed of a number of overlapping stem kindreds, known as *muntuns*, and usually named after a dominant male figure, would live together in clusters of houses in one settlement. In the last thirty years or so, due to out-migrations, land scarcity, and other factors such as an increasing preference for neolocal post-marital residence, there has been a tendency for atomization of these groups into smaller residential units whose composition varies considerably. By separating themselves into various settlements along the upper Napo River and its tributaries, the different *muntuns* acquired some distinctive cultural and linguistic features, which in time developed into mutual stereotyping and minor competitive rivalries, some of which become particularly accentuated and open in occasions of inter-*muntun* marriages, as was Francisca's, whose husband comes from the area of Archidona, the second most important town in this area.

The Napo Quichua reckon kinship bilaterally and, following Spanish custom, a child inherits both parents' last names. However, women depart from that custom by not changing their



names after marriage. The main kinship unit, the *ayllu*, may be defined as a social category composed of three-generation extended families. All members of the *ayllu* are considered consanguines, but in individual cases, distinctions are made between close or “true” consanguines (*quiquin ayllu* or *ayllu pura*) and distant ones (*caru ayllu*). The *ayllu* is the institution that establishes the boundaries of marriage regulations, which generally prohibit unions with close kin, and specifically, with all those classified in the first cousin class, known by the Spanish term as *primos-hermanos*. The early and persistent influence of Christianity on the Napo Quichua may be the obvious origin of this all inclusive taboo, since the Canelos Quichua, along with many Ecuadorian Amazonian groups, show a preference for cross-cousin marriage (see Whitten 1984, for the Canelos Quichua; Taylor 1983 for the Jivaroan groups; Rival 1996 for the Huaorani). Once a marriage has taken place, the parents of the bride and groom may reciprocally and respectfully refer to each other as *anya* (affines). However, because of the traditional preference for virilocal residence, a woman who becomes a *cachun* (daughter-in-law) is primarily treated as a subordinate Other by her in-laws and is required to show her respect by strict adherence to an asymmetrical kin-address etiquette, while the rules for the son-in-law (*masha*) are considerably more flexible.<sup>iii</sup>

The ethnohistorical sources (Dickey 1924; Jouanen 1977; Orton 1876; Rice 1903; Porras Garcés 1955; Villavicencio 1984; Wavrin 1948.) provide ample evidence to confirm that, even before the Jesuits arrived in the Tena-Archidona area for the second time, the Napo Quichua had been at least nominally Christianized, were monogamous, and had a form of arranged marriage with virilocal residence that was similar in its structure and process to the one described by Francisca. In the oral tradition, these customs were used by the Napo Quichua to distinguish themselves from other Amazonian groups such as the Zaparos, Achuar, and Shuar, considered

“savages” because “they had many wives,” although there is ethnographic and historical evidence of Napo Quichua inter-marriage with Zaparos and Canelos Quichua (see Muratorio 1991; Whitten 1984). The practice of brother-sister exchange marriage may have been quite common three generations ago. Hudelson (1981) reports it as a preferred form of marriage in the regions of Avila and Loreto, also in the Napo province, and there were a few cases in the area of Tena-Archidona around fifteen years ago. Celibacy is still considered an anomaly, although with more frequency now, young unwed mothers are found living with their parents without major conflicts since, unlike national custom, their children are easily incorporated into the family unit.

As in many other Amazonian, and Andean societies, (Shapiro 1984:26; Millones and Pratt 1990:18 ) traditional arranged marriage among the Napo Quichua entailed several stages in a process that could take two to three years to be completed. Its distinctiveness lay in the ritual involved in each of these stages, and especially in the elaborate character and symbolism of its wedding ceremony (*bura*). Even today, when traditionally arranged marriages are rare, and when some of its stages have disappeared altogether, the *bura*, in whatever new clothes, remains a reality for those who can afford its onerous costs.<sup>iv</sup> It also continues to be an ideal couples and their families hope for, even after they may already have several children, and have gone through a civil and a Church ceremony. In an era of increasing inter-ethnic marriages, this outstanding characteristic of Napo Quichua wedding rituals singles them out as highly desirable marriage partners for other indigenous groups such as the Huaorani (Rival 1996:179-180). Paradoxically, very recently, it also has become a source of tension, and conflict, when Napo Quichua women marry otherwise “desirable” partners, such as North Americans or Europeans (locally called “gringos”), who usually remain ignorant or indifferent to the real meaning and importance of Quichua marriage rituals.

It is not my intention here to look for the “true” origin of this ritual which makes the Napo Quichua rather unique among Amazonian cultures, but through Francisca’s stories, seen in the light of other ethnographic and historical evidence, I would like to explore two main sets of questions that have somewhat been overlooked in the studies of marriage practices in Lowland South America ( Shapiro 1984): the actual lived experiences and views of women, and the ideological impact of Christian missionaries as seen from the native point of view. Because of their early situation of contact and Christianization, the Napo Quichua’s oral tradition offers us a privileged vantage point to look at these issues in some detail. How do women feel about being “exchanged” or “sold” in situations of arranged marriage? How do they conform to or resist their culture and what price do they have to pay for these actions? What memories are transmitted in women’s oral tradition that are different from those of men? What do marriages tell us about the tensions and contradictions within Napo Quichua culture, or about its relationship with the dominant culture? More specifically, how have women translated and internalized into their own cosmology the Christian teachings on marriage and what meanings do they derive from its relations with “secular” practices?.

In dealing with Francisca’s life-history one is poignantly reminded of the already well researched and accepted fact in oral history studies and in cultural psychology, that the “sense of self is an essentially narrative phenomenon” (Stivers 1993:412) and that we construct a meaningful reality by telling stories about ourselves and listening to the stories others make about us. As Clifford Geertz has more elegantly put it, “from birth on we are all active, impassioned ‘meaning makers’ in search of plausible stories...” (1997:24). In the narrative about her arranged marriage, her escape from her affines’ residence group, and her final desirable arrangement to live, with her husband, in her parents’ house, Francisca shapes her memories of those particular

events to forge them into a central element of her sense of identity. She carefully selects characters, scenes, images, and particular moments and emotions to dramatically construct herself as a rebellious persona. Like other more famous romantic heroines, she defies the ordinary, makes difficult cultural choices between forking paths, paying an onerous price for her decision, to finally emerge victorious from her ordeal as a protagonist of her own history. The power of Francisca's uniquely gifted personality shines through the meaning of her words and the tone of her speech, but her story, like those of other storytellers in her own culture, is literally filled with the voices -and silences-<sup>v</sup> of significant others, giving us insights into the fundamental sociality of the self, its situation into multiple discourses of identity (Smith 1993: 396; Moore 1994:140-144.), and its immersion into the affectivity of social relations. But Francisca's voice also engages both past and present discourses of dominant others, thus requiring us to contextualize her subjectivity into the larger sociocultural structures and processes that affected her life.

**Francisca's story: Of painful discoveries and betrayal.**

*When they see a girl who likes to carry firewood, to plant gardens, the parents of a man come and say: "This girl is good, I want her for my son." This is how they chose me. My husband's mother chose me. She said I was intelligent, that my parents were from a good muntun, intelligent and hard-working. So must the daughter be. They chose me when my breasts were very small. I lost my wisdom teeth when I was already with husband. I was away with my parents near the river Ansu. There they [her future in-laws] saw me and there my father made the pledge(**maquipalabra**). They ask him not to give me to anybody else, but my father told them to come to the house for the formal asking, not to make it in a strange place.*

*That is how they came to the house for the **tapuna** (request), when I was very young. They insisted they wanted a woman from Pano and said they were going to take good care of me. They brought a big roasted monkey and some roasted fish. But my mother said I was still very young and they decided to wait. They kept bringing some food occasionally for a year. When I heard they were coming I always went to hide in the forest until they left. I refused to eat the food. I was afraid they would give me a nickname or make fun of me. I was looking down towards my house hidden behind a tree, and even then, I was thinking of running away. I knew they were talking about me but I didn't know what was going to happen to me.*

*After some time, when I was a bit older, they came to announce they were going to make the **pactachina** (ceremony for the fulfillment of obligations). The **versiaru** (drummer and singer) and the **tucaru** (violin player) came and all of them were dressed for dancing. Women and men came to the door dancing. I looked from my hiding place in the forest. I could see and hear them from there. They asked for permission (**licencia**) in the name of God. They entered the house and danced there. They shook hands with all the women and men and offered liquor from the big pots (**quisas**). They drank all night and the next day they left.*

*Then, after a while they came again, with food, to say they were going to make the **bura**. They brought fish and game meat. They said: "We will start preparing the wedding; our son is already grown up and we want to give him a woman. We think we can find even a weed in the forest. This is what we came to tell you so you can call your people." Then my*

*father said : "It is fine if you say so, but take into account we are not asking for a wedding. If you think your son needs a girl, we only have what we are given to eat and drink." And my mother said: "If you are going to love her, if it is true that your son is not going to beat her, if you are going to teach her well all the things she needs to know to be a woman, then I will give her to you. They [future in-laws] went hunting, and when they had the meat, they said they were ready to have the wedding, even if didn't know what food and drink they were going to offer. They also promised to go to the godparents' house with a bag (**shigra**) of meat. My father said to bring **asua** (manioc beer) and liquor. They said the place to go was in the Ansu . I wondered why they were taking me there. I did not understand anything of what they were doing. I thought that after the wedding they would bring me back home to live with my mother. Then is when my grandmother, who was called Mariquita, and my grandfather, who was called Domingo, gave me advice saying: "Look little daughter, you are not old, you are just beginning to think a little, your breasts have not begun to show yet. They are giving you to a husband, you have to go with him as your mother asks you. Remember what your mother taught you: There you have to work, cook huayusa tea, clean the house even if you are a child. You have to wake up at night to prepare the huayusa tea, and once you have given it to drink to everyone, you should start cooking the manioc. If there is no food you should give them manioc with chili. You have to look for firewood, for leaves to cover the pots, for reeds to tie the leaves around the pots. You should look for these things everywhere you can. Don't even think you are going to come back home my child. In that far away place you are going to bury your bones, there you are going to die. Now you are released from my hands. I am not young to see you again, I am old my child. When you leave my side I am going to die*

crying. They are taking you to leave you there.” I was very, very afraid. I thought I was going to live with my mother. I said in my heart: “I am not going to stay.” While my grandmother was giving me advice, I was thinking: “How do I come back? How can I hide from them and return?” When we left home, knowing I wanted to come back, my mother gave me a basket and a baby to carry, so I could not escape on the way. It was very far away. We had to spend the night on the road. Early in the morning we crossed a river and pasture grounds. I said to myself: “Where are they taking me?” and could not stop thinking how to sneak away. I was carefully looking at the road, every detail of it to learn how to return. It was a very wide road built by the [oil] company, full of footprints, of shoes, of cows; all trampled by cattle, full of cattle shoes. The whites used to take out cattle through that road. They used to show me the shoes telling me that those were the ones used by soldiers, so I could recognize the footprints and be afraid of that road. When we were near my mother said: “Do not cry my child, do not be sad; I have brought you this far away; as we *runa* [people] say, I am “selling you,” do not try to return because it is very far away. You see this road my child; it is like this because whites and blacks walk through here. It is the soldiers’ road. They are going to take you to Quito, to the Coast. If you come back through this road they are going to kidnap you. They are going to give you onions to eat and stinking milk from the cows to drink. Do not try to run away. On the other road the rivers are very strong. You are going to die if you attempt to cross them.” When I heard that I tremble with fear. She gave me this kind of advice all the way, but I cried and cried; I was shaking all over. I thought she was going to stay with me as she had promised; I was too young to understand. When I learned they were going to leave me there until my death, I was desperate and then I decided I was not going to stay.

*They made the bura, and three days later, all the guests left. Only my parents remained for two weeks. My father-in-law brought a fat monkey, but I refused to eat. My husband's sisters took me to the river to bathe. My parents said: "She is getting used to it," but it was not true. They [the in-laws] promised to take me to visit my mother but they lied to me. After a month they had not taken me home. My mother-in-law was fierce. She threw my basket and my machete away so I could not follow her to the garden. She must be burning somewhere, now that she is dead. My father-in-law was good, he must be sitting next to God; he shared his own food with me. He would say to his wife: "You think this girl is old? What did Mariacu [Francisca's mother] told you when she gave her to you? Did you not have brains in your head? Where were your ears then?"*

Francisca starts her story by establishing her flawless kinship credentials and by certifying her meticulous socialization as an ideal Napo Quichua woman by her mother and grandmother (Muratorio 1997). She identifies herself as a woman from Pano, taking for granted that the listener "knows" this muntun as one who "naturally" produces desirable marriage partners. But most importantly, she claims to have inherited from her parents the two character traits most valued in her culture at that time: the reputation of a hardworking woman from her mother, and a critical intelligence and fighting spirit from her father. These two second character traits are not particularly valued by men as attributes of women, nor is it expected of them to be so endowed. By emphasizing these qualities from the start and claiming them as her own, Francisca is already sketching her portrait as a unique individual. She is also setting the scene for explaining, later on in her story, why her resistance to her marriage enabled her to be socialized also by her father, which is rare for women in her culture, but a memory that Francisca treasures.

At the same time she specifically mentions that her husband's mother is the one who



chose her, thus questioning established assumptions about the primary role of men in arranged marriage exchanges. Pano women may be “given away” by fathers or brothers, but they are certainly “assessed” and chosen by women. Napo Quichua women’s reputations and sense of selfhood are primarily acquired through work (see Muratorio 1997). Consequently, only a woman is regarded as able to judge accurately and intelligently the subtleties involved in another woman’s tasks, especially if she is going to be her daughter-in-law. Ideally, and particularly in cases of arranged marriages when the girl was very young, it was expected that she would be given a piece of land to start her own garden, and tenderly socialized by her mother-in-law in all aspects of women’s work, through a smooth transition into her new life as a wife and mother. The reality, of course, is that the relationship between daughters and mothers-in-law is always quite conflictual, especially when the latter sides with her son in cases of marital violence, as it is usually the case. It is precisely because her mother-in-law did not live-up to those expectations as an ideal “affinal mother” to her that Francisca feels so bitter and betrayed about her decisive first few weeks as a new cachun. Not only did she have to confront unreasonable violence against her from a mother figure for the first time, but her mother-in-law’s lack of generosity and indifference to her duties violated all the teachings of Francisca’s mother, and even brought about the criticism of her mother-in-law’s own husband, whose very words she remembers so vividly at the end of this section of her story.

Francisca’s main regret about her marriage, however, is not about her “villainous” mother-in-law, whom she has conveniently sent to Hell not to see her again, but to have been given away when she was too young to understand or to have a say in the choice of husband. She has often commented how her early marriage prevented her from going to school and learning to speak and write Spanish. “Otherwise I could have been a lawyer or a doctor,” she has said to me

many times. This is a complaint I have heard from several other women of Francisca's generation. Rather than having to do with their early marriages, the parents' attitudes about educating their daughters was directly related to their very realistic fear that, if they were sent to the nuns' boarding schools, they could be put to work as domestics in local white households, or even worse sent to Quito to work for whites and be totally lost to their parents. (Goetschel 1996; several documents in AGN). The same fear existed about the possibility that indigenous boys in missionary schools would be conscripted into the army and sent to fight poorly understood wars.<sup>vi</sup> Although now primary schooling is compulsory, high school education for girls continues to be a contentious issue between women of different generations, and it still focuses around questions of sexuality and marriage.

The road Francisca and her mother traveled to reach her future husband's house is full of her haunting memories of white colonialism, in the images of the soldiers' and the cattle's footprints, as well as in the foreign and "disgusting" smells and tastes of onions and milk, which then, and even now, evoke the culture of whites. It is the road to violent acculturation that then figures prominently in Francisca's path to resistance. Against the richness of details in each stage of the process leading to her wedding, Francisca's silence about the three days of her wedding ceremony is even more poignant. It signifies her total rejection of her being physically and emotionally transferred into her husband's group and sets the stage for her escape. This is how the core of Francisca's story unfolds:

*I always had my clothes and my blanket in a bag ready to leave. I used to sneak silently behind the house to plan my escape. I only thought of running away. I believed then that I could run like a gazelle, and I did. One day when my mother-in-law was firing some pots, I was going back and forth to the river taking my things one by one to escape. When she*

*asked why I was going up and down I told her I had diarrhea and I needed to go. First I hid the machete and then a basket my father had given me. There I put my blanket, a bit of salt, the little gourd for the **huayusa** tea and the bowl my mother had given me when I was going to marry. I was of two minds: to escape through the company's road, but I remembered about the soldiers and the blacks and I was very afraid. The other road, had very high hills and many rivers to cross, but I decided to take it. Next morning, when all of them were fast asleep, I started to walk away through the difficult road and run faster and faster. A man helped me to cross the river. I had the basket on my head and the machete in my hand. I was running all the time. I did not stop, only once to see if anybody was following me. I went down a hill and climbed another. I stopped at the Huayusa hill to drink some water and then, after a long, long, walk, I entered my grandfather's land. My grandfather embraced me and cried: "Why have they given my granddaughter like this, so far away? Where are you coming from? How have you done this my child. Weren't you afraid of the puma, of the **supais** (spirits)?" A road that took three days I had run in only one. When I arrived home my father cried and regretted he had given me so young and so far away. I stayed home for some time, but my in-laws came again to look for me. They brought liquor, fish, and tapir meat, and they took me away. I escaped three times this way. Every time I run away. Up to then I had not slept with my husband.*

It is, of course, common and even expected that a girl who is married very young would cry in protest and try to run away to her mother at least once before she finally conforms and returns to her husband's group (e.g. see Dole 1974:19-29; Århem 1987:134). It is also the case that, despite the preference for virilocal post-marital residence, among the Napo Quichua, uxorilocality existed then as it does now.<sup>vii</sup> However, I have not encountered another case in

which this form of residence was brought about by a young girl's ultimate defiance of both her affines' and her parents' wishes and social pressures. Francisca simply wore them down by her stubborn resistance to conform to a cultural rule that, most often, puts in-marrying young women, even if temporarily, into the lowest social position in her society. Instead, Francisca forced her own husband to assume a subordinate status in her parents' house, since there was never a chance he would successfully compete for respect, affection, or status with her father, who was a well recognized leader.<sup>viii</sup>

Although this crucial section of Francisca's story is full of feelings of bitterness about her lack of choice in controlling these early years of her life, now on hindsight, she sees her choice of resistance as a source of personal and cultural identity. Escaping through the "wild" difficult road rather than walking away more easily along the soldiers' one, symbolizes her determination to remain a Pano woman, even if a rebellious one, and her rejection of the forced path into white acculturation. This is a choice that she reiterates more explicitly when she refuses to go away and be tempted by whites into marriage infidelity. But before we follow Francisca's steps into that adventure, we need to explain the imagery surrounding the importance of arranged marriage in Napo Quichua culture.

### **The importance of marriage: the impossible paradigm**

The regulation and moralizing of the "uncivilized" nature of native sexuality was the primary concern of all missionaries, and interfering in native marriage practices was one of their preferred strategies to accomplish this end. In the 1870s, Jouanen (1977:90-91) mentions a letter from a local Jesuit priest stating his firm goal of getting rid of the *pactachiscas*, described as a ceremony by which the marriage was arranged by the parents when their children were very young. Force, such as putting the father of the groom in jail in chains for a day, was used to deter

parents from arranging marriages, but the Jesuits were also encouraging indigenous students in their boarding schools to marry “of their own choice” by assigning land to the new couples so that they will form a Christian village, part of the unsuccessful Jesuit strategy of agricultural sedentarization of the Napo Quichua. A Dominican missionary who visited this area in 1899 (1899:48) points out that the early marriage ages of 14 for boys and 12 for girls had been prescribed by the missionaries to increase the population and to curtail pre-marital sex. The white patrons also actively encouraged this practice of young marriages to increase the number of their own debtors. Later on, missionaries also strongly opposed the marriage of their parishioners to Protestant converts. Of the different stages of the indigenous marriage practice, both Catholic and Protestant missionaries expressed their strongest objections against the native wedding ceremony: the Catholics because it successfully competed with their own Church ceremony, and the Protestants primarily because of the drinking and dancing involved.<sup>ix</sup>

But what was the impact of Christianity on the Napo Quichua arranged marriage practices? The fact that half a century ago, this form of marriage was still the norm, that some of its stages persist to this day, and that the *bura* continues to be the ideal expectation for most couples, would lead us to think that Christianity had little effect in this important institution. However, probing deeper into ideology and imagery we start to discover the intricate ways in which the Napo Quichua have accommodated to, and transformed the meanings of Catholic dogma concerning marriage, and it is in this respect where Francisca’s theological thinking is at its best.

Her explanation regarding her arranged marriage is a story told to her by her father about the Virgin Mary’s marriage to Joseph.<sup>x</sup> She offered this narrative as a kind of “excuse” or “apology” for what she still considers to have been an “unreasonable” and “muddled” decision on

his father's part, but her retelling of the story is also revealing about her own ambiguities towards arranged marriage and its consequences for women. This is her story:

My father said that the Virgin was a very lovely young girl. During a festival, old men were looking for the best girls. But several young men were already courting Mary and wanted to ask for her hand in marriage. Because her parents did not want her to marry that old man Joseph, they asked all the young men to dress in nice clothing and to say loudly: "I want her, I want her." At this moment, a dove flew in holding a flower on its beak and started to circle around. Mary and the young men said: "Let it fall on me, let it fall on me". But it did not fall on any of them; both the dove and the flower landed on the shoulder of the old man who was sitting quietly in a corner of the room. This is why Mary had to marry Joseph and why now our sons go to ask for a girl's hand when the flower has fallen. Since the time the pactachina is made, the flower has fallen. In the old days, if we did not comply with that duty we did not have flower [child]. My father said that as the flower fell for the Virgin and she had to marry that old man, so we have to marry when we are told and not abandon our husbands, otherwise we will not have flower. When Joseph found out she was already pregnant, he was furious and told Mary: "From whom have you become pregnant? You have been with another man!" and he left, but an angel explained to him in a dream and brought him back. That is why now when married women get pregnant, some husbands like to say that the child is not theirs, but there is no angel now to tell them otherwise and save us from a beating. If a woman has a dream about her future [arranged] marriage, and in the dream she refuses to marry the man chosen by her parents, she may become very sick.<sup>xi</sup> In a dream, if a dove comes and lands on your shoulder, it means you have to live well and not go around with other men.

The accepted Roman Catholic story about the Virgin's marriage to Joseph<sup>xiii</sup> does not only require a big leap of faith about God's incarnation, but in Napo Quichua's thinking, this version of the story also poses some questionable assumptions, such as Joseph's chastity and a woman's virginal conception, as well as other more credible ones, like the importance of dreams for future action and the episode of a powerful spirit who transforms itself into a bird. But in general, the main plot in this drama of the Virgin's marriage is alien to Quichua cultural norm. According to these norms it is inconceivable that a woman like Mary -always represented as young, beautiful and virtuous- could have been pressured into marrying Joseph whose image is always that of an old man. Among the Napo Quichua, only young women who had sexual affairs with several men and have refused to marry any of them, or those who disobeyed their parents' wishes regarding the choice of husband, might be punished by their parents by marrying her to an old man, usually a widower.

The Christian version of Mary's marriage to Saint Joseph was then reformulated as a normative model of Napo Quichua's arranged marriage in the framework of compliance with the more familiar cultural model of respect and obedience to the highest authorities in the kinship hierarchy. This norm is now a matter of contention of which Francisca is well aware of, as it will become clearer later on in her narratives. Although she doesn't know this, following accepted contemporary Roman Catholic thinking, Francisca does not readily admit the direct intervention of angels in peoples' daily lives, especially to save women from husbands' jealous rages. Her thinking on this matter, as well as on the issue of women's barrenness or other misfortunes in motherhood, follows the orthodoxy of Napo Quichua ideology on shamanic powers over human destinies.

### **Of eschatology and marriage: the Napo Quichua view**

This area of personal continuation of life after death and related matters, has posed serious questions for philosophers of religion, no less that of the continuation of marriage in other worlds (Benz 1973:507-508 ), a question I have no competence to discuss. But theologians also recognize the mythological character of most of the imagery of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory (Mckencie 1973:995-996 ). This has allowed the imagination of indigenous peoples in the all the Americas to elaborate on this mythology to enrich their own native ones.

The Napo Quichua think about the cosmos as being organized on three levels: *ahuapacha* (or upper world), *caipacha* (this world), and *ucupacha* (the underworld). They conceive caipacha as being populated, not only by human beings, but by spirit beings (generically called *supais*) who can move at will through forest, water, and domestic spaces by acquiring human or animal representations. They also have kinship relations (including marriage) similar to those of humans and actively interact with them through the latter's dreams, visions induced with hallucinogenics, or through experiences that the Napo Quichua describe as "encounters," which may happen in everyday life situations and may be either positive or negative. Depending on the context and content of the situations being experienced and explained, these cosmological levels are translated into the Christian ones: Heaven (*Diuspallacta* or God's land), Earth, and Hell, to which Limbo is added as a kind of "liminal" level.<sup>xiii</sup> The functions of each level in relation to human conduct are also those associated with Christian teachings, although the meanings have been transformed in significant ways, as I will show later on. The Christian devil is considered a *supai*, but he does coexist with a host of other *supais*, despite the missionaries' Manichaeistic attempts to reduce all of them into one evil character as the main antagonist to Jesus Christ. The devil-*supai*'s image is similar to the popular versions of this character in medieval folklore, represented as having a long tail and as being able to transform himself into a black dog.



Incestuous relations between close kin are believed to produce “deformed children,” similar to those offspring (*supaihuahua*) who are the result of a woman becoming impregnated by a supai. Those who engage in incestuous relations are certain to be punished by being sent to Hell. Along with unbaptized children, unmarried people go to Limbo, which of course confirms the principle that both men and women only become full adults after marriage. On a lighter note, those who marry “well” go to Heaven. Because of the decisive importance of the wedding ceremony, marrying “well” means, not only following the marriage rules about choosing partners, but performing that ceremony according to all its elaborate rules of exchange and reciprocity. The punishments that may ensue for defying this custom seem to be more onerous than those for not having a church wedding, a matter that Francisca thinks can always be negotiated.

The responsibility for the marriage and the wedding rests heavily with the parents of the couple. Francisca, whose youngest daughter has not yet performed the marriage ceremony, explains this situation as a “burden.” Either if their daughters grow old without having been asked in marriage, or if the groom’s family does not perform the bura, the mothers are believed to suffer an uncomfortable punishment, a situation that creates a continuous source of tension and conflict among in-laws. Until the bura takes place, the bride’s mother’s and the groom’s father’s hands are “tied up in shackles and their arms hurt.” This is the reason why, according to Francisca, when the bura is finally celebrated, one has to look for a good drummer and singer who “ask God’s permission (*licencia*)” to liberate everybody’s hands from that punishment. Only when the bride and the groom dance, and the bura is over, the parents are saved. This belief may also be the source of a serious ideological and psychological dilemma for Napo Quicua parents: between the desire to quickly liberate themselves from that punishment, and the guilt that may ensue, as in Francisca’s case, of having made the decision too soon or of having made the wrong one.

Like other Amazonian groups, (see Cipoletti 1987) the Napo Quichua tell stories about people who, while suffering under a severe illness, have gone to heaven and come back with vivid memories of the experience. Usually these stories are retold to reinforce the norms about a specific kind of cultural behavior and to provide further explanations about its meanings. In relation to marriage customs, Francisca related to me the case of a man who had died two days before our conversation took place. During his illness, this man had gone to Heaven where God had shown him “all those who were swimming in blue flames because their children had not been properly married in church.” Mercifully, He had then send the man back to earth to properly finish his job of marrying his own sons. Francisca explained that this was an easier and quicker procedure than carrying out a bura, because the man did come back, had everybody baptized and married by the priest in three days, said he was “free of guilt,” and died in complete peace.

### **Memories of colonialism and resistance**

If through a long period of time the Napo Quichua were able to translate Christian theological scripts while imprinting on them their own cultural meanings, they strongly resisted the missionaries’ personal interference in their daily lives (Muratorio 1991). This was especially true in situations when the missionaries questioned or attempted to bypass the authority structure of close kin relations, such as those pertaining to marriage arrangements. The parents particularly resisted the missionaries’ stipulation that a young couple should spend some time in the mission before consummating the marriage to be properly indoctrinated. Considering the misgivings most indigenous people still have about the priests’ vows of celibacy, it is understandable that they feared their daughters would be abused. The concern for their sons was that they would be overworked.

The nuns were assigned the duties of indoctrinating indigenous women to turn them into

“proper Christian wives and mothers,” although they always had difficulties in getting indigenous girls to stay at the convent for long periods of time and to renounce the teachings of their mothers. Indigenous women regarded the convents primarily as temporary places of refuge to escape abusive patrons or abusive husbands (several documents in AGN). Still today, the nuns encourage indigenous women to stay and work at the convent, rather than to resort to the proper authorities in cases of domestic abuse, but very few follow this advice.

Since the times when the Evangelical Protestants came to this area, the ultimate indigenous defiance to the Catholic missionaries was “converting” to the rival religion. It should not be a surprise to learn that, true to her own spirit, Francisca took this drastic route of resistance. The narrative of her conversion to the “Evangelicals,” as all the Protestant sects are locally known, refers to the attempted intrusion by a priest and the nuns in her youngest sister’s arranged marriage. Like Francisca, her sister resisted her arranged marriage by returning home to her mother. Once, when her parents had to go away on a fishing trip, they left her in the convent in the care of the nuns for a few days. There the nuns advised her to leave her husband because he was “an Evangelical and the devil himself.” When Francisca’s mother returned for her daughter, the priest told her he was “going to cut her ears and give them to the dogs,” and threatened to keep the daughter in the convent indefinitely. Even many years later, Francisca still vividly remembers her mother’s and her own reaction to this outrageous statement by the priest. In her own words:

Then we were very angry and my mother told the priest: “ Is it God who sent you to cut peoples’ ears? You want to treat us like animals! Is she by any chance your daughter? The mother is the one who gives her daughter away in marriage, and if she doesn’t want her husband, she has to serve her mother, not you. That’s how you repay for all the times I

come to church and hear mass?” Then I told him: “Was it you who changed my sister’s diapers or the one who fed her? You can send me to jail, but there is no law that says that I cannot claim my own sister. I am Basilio’s daughter. My mother and father built Tena, not you. He brought the first priest here on his back. You instead did nothing, and all of you are going to go to Hell and will not see God’s face. I am a Catholic and you treat me like this; but from now on I am going to go to the Evangelicals. They preach in Quichua, you only preach for yourself and for a few *señoras* (white women).” When we went to Pano, I saw Guamundi and Gilberto Tapuy [indigenous Evangelical pastors] singing, and I became an Evangelical. I did it to defy the priests, just to annoy them.

This was not Francisca’s last religious conversion. She reconverted to Catholicism, ironically for two reasons that have to do with gender equality. First, she took offense at the Protestants for the lack of opportunities they offer women to become pastors which, of course, she thought she was qualified to be. And secondly, she strongly resented the “poor opinion” the Evangelicals allegedly have of the Virgin Mary, who Francisca, like other women in her culture, considers to be a powerful shaman (see Muratorio 1995).

### **Of love, conjugal relations, and violence**

Even in cases of arranged marriages when the young woman had no say in the matter, there is a time when the marriage has to be made to work. Romantic love may not have been the initial motive for marriage, but love and affection, like all emotions, are not just “natural” and personal, but culturally and socially constructed in all aspects of peoples lives, and marriage is not an exception.<sup>xiv</sup> Conflictual compromises are always being made between the ideal and prescribed cultural paradigms people seek to live out, and the realities of their personal wills and

desires which, of course, change as people age and settle down in whatever their marriage arrangements have been. We must hear the last part of Francisca's story to understand how she resolved these issues in her own life, and within the constraints of her own historical times and culture. This is her story.

*They wanted me to sleep with my husband, but I refused, I rolled on the floor. For three years at least I did not sleep with him. When my husband attempted to touch me, nothing. When I was tired I went to sleep near the hearth. One day they took me near Puyo [capital of Pastaza province] to make me sleep with my husband. They put me between an old woman, and my husband, but I wrapped myself tightly with a blanket. There I didn't sleep with him either. My husband was furious and jealous. He threw the manioc beer at my face, then he spilt it on the blanket and on the mud. He hit me as if I had already slept with him. He would come home drunk and complain to his parents that they did not make me sleep with him. Hearing that I would run to the forest. All the women recriminated him: "Why do you beat her? Have you slept with her already? If you treat her like this she is not going to stay." He kept saying: "You have given me a child, look how she treats me." Once they left me with some white people in Puyo for a while. If I had been like the girls nowadays, I would have left with one of those white men then. But where would I be living now? I would be sad. Instead, I continued to escape.*

*My husband said he wanted to kill me with the shotgun, that he was going to cut me into pieces with the machete. It just made it worse. I did not want to sleep with him. Was Huagra [her husband] **gente** (human) by any chance? Now he is all right, but then he shot me with a shotgun. That's why everyday I remind him. Only when I get into my coffin*

*I will forget the things he did to me. I used to tell him: “Archiruna, Archiruna, descendent of Archirunas, eater of snakes, return to Archidona.” Now if he insults me I can denounce him to the authorities, then I didn’t know. I have everything he did to me engraved in my mind as if it were written on paper. That’s why I think maybe Juanita’s [her daughter’s] husband is not going to mend. Those who are intelligent, listen and mend their ways with advice, but my son in law does not listen. I used to say: “He beats me, I’m leaving,” but my daughter stays with him.*

*Finally I returned because my father in law was a **yachaj** (shaman) and he could have killed me and my parents. The third time I escaped I never returned to my in-laws. Then my father said: “I will not send my daughter back. Let the husband come and live with me like a son, I will give him land . I had made her suffer; she almost died,” and my in-laws agreed. My husband came from the [oil] company sick with malaria, very pale. I could have spitted on him and left him, right there. My mother then advised me to sleep with him and I had to. She would say that if I refused to sleep with him she would give me to a widower, to an old man called Laticu. This is what used to happen to girls who abandoned their husbands. They were shaved and given to an old man. I slept with him after my third menstruation and started to behave like a woman.*

*Since then I did not return to his house, not even when I had my first child. I lost five sons before that. The elders said I could not have children for some time because I was bewitched by my in-laws. I was not serving them and I had broken the law. But my father-in-law denied it and said he loved me, that I was his **huayusamama** (one who serves the huayusa tea, here used as term of endearment)and that he missed me. Then we started to visit them more often and helped*

*with the house. They took me to tap rubber with them very far away, and we gave the balls to a patron who sold them to the gringos. My father-in-law gave a piece of land to my husband in Pasourco, the land we have now. It is good land and I have given pieces of it to my daughters. But I also work in my father's land and that's where I live now, that's where he wanted me to live and where I am going to die. I learned from him many of the things I have told you [the author].*

In the old days, the consummation of the marital union did not take place on the day of the wedding, which was celebrated in the groom parents' house. In some cases, depending on distance between households, the girl was sent back to her parents' house for a few weeks, or was made to sleep with her mother-in-law until her initial fears subsided. It was the duty of the marriage godparents to attend to the ritual coupling of the young bride and groom, an occasion that was accompanied by prolonged advice on the future of the marital relation. According to Francisca, and judging from her own experience at least, there was much crying involved by both members of the couple in going through that "ordeal" for the first time.<sup>xv</sup> But she also thinks that playing "hard to get," and refusing to sleep with the husband, was also a strategy that "enhanced" the value of women by increasing men's desire, and their consequent frustration. In her opinion, if women slept too soon with their husbands they were criticized, and this is one reason why women now have become "cheap," since they "give in" too easily and do not receive the proper ritualized advice. This applies also to men who, without the proper coaching, are more prone to beat their wives even in the first week of marriage. Older men also share that sentiment about this aspect of marriage, but they phrase it rather differently in terms of the "sufferings" and "humiliations" they had to go through in order to ask for the girl in the first place, to be confronted with her "silly" refusal to have sex after they had gone to all that trouble. Since it is believed, at least by the men,

that they will “tame” women through sex, their own power to “control” them is being questioned by the women’s refusal. Besides, the men’s self-image in relation to the important issue of their own virility was at stake. If they did not perform promptly, and produced a child by the first year of marriage, their reputations suffered greatly, leaving them exposed to the unrelentless and ruthless teasing of men and women alike (see Muratorio 1991:63).

It is understood as common sense, however, that sex has to be seen as just one important aspect of marriage, but not necessarily tied to affection and respect for the partner, which is based primarily on the ideal cultural images of male and female. Francisca’s conception of her husband is better summarized in the few verses she dedicated to him in an autobiographical song (see Muratorio 1994) which, like most poetry, is the preferred vessel women use for the expression of true sentiments. These are the words in her song:

I don’t know why when I was so young  
they gave me this good-for-nothing husband.

He doesn’t know how to talk.

If I want I will go  
so that my voice can be heard in the wind.

My husband I will leave.

He is a simple man,  
he doesn’t know how to read or write.

Wherever he is taken,  
he quietly goes.

If I could start,  
to Heaven I would arrive.



I am Andi woman,  
daughter of the one who founded this town.

In Francisca's opinion her husband obviously does not measure up to the image of her powerful and outspoken father. Moreover, as a man from the Archidona muntun (Archiruna), whom the Panos regard as "poor fishermen," her husband "does not live up" to the expectations of a Pano woman, who demands men to be good providers of fish. The only time I have heard Francisca talk with some degree of positive enthusiasm about her husband, is when she remembers how he took her to far-way places in the Highlands and the Coast, where she was able to further her knowledge of different spaces and enhanced her curing powers by learning new things from other curers. When she mentioned that on a few occasions she "tenderly played" the *trompa* (a native one string musical instrument) to her husband when he was sick, it was to nostalgically remind him about their trips together to those distant lands. In contrast, she remembers all the love songs her mother used to sing when her father was away, and these certainly express a different quality of sentiments, closer to those associated with romantic poetry. (cf. Harrison 1989).

Francisca, like many other Napo Quichua women, regards men's marital violence as "irrational." Any violence denies the wisdom of the word, signified in calm and thoughtful advice, and confounds the gift of eloquent speech, which is the sign of a powerful soul. This is the main reason why Francisca thinks her brutal son-in-law, who is deft to advise and only speaks with blows, is hopeless and is not going to mend his ways. I am unable to discuss fully here the issue of violence, but in Francisca's case, her husband's violence, even before she became a "thinking" and forceful adult woman, was the main contributing factor in not granting him the intellectual respect other women may grant to men. Her angry resentment continues, as she

dramatically exaggerates it in her rhetoric on marital fights, although she acknowledges that, unlike her son-in-law, her husband finally improved his ways after listening to the elders' advice. From a woman's point of view, both in her autobiographical song and in the story of her marriage, Francisca sets down very clearly that there are limits to the violence women should suffer quietly, and that they should have the choice to leave their husbands if that violence is excessive. On the contrary, men think it is their "God-given" right to beat wives who in any, even minor, way "annoy" them.<sup>xvi</sup> This idea was confirmed by an old man who had been a famous drummer and singer (*versiador*) in many weddings. The following two verses in one of his songs totally contradict Francisca's and several, although not all, other women's views on this issue:

If my husband beats me,  
I have to stay with him.  
Even if he lets me go hungry,  
I must stay with him.

According to the Catholic church, the indissolubility of the marriage contract is guaranteed by natural and divine right, and adultery is condemned under the same law (Donoso, quoted in Moscoso 1996:25). The Napo Quichua have translated this obligation as "the carrying of the cross." They refer to both the situation of one of the spouses abandoning the other or engaging in an adulterous affair as "the braking of the cross." In cases of traditional arranged marriages, their indissolubility is strengthened by the fact that in Napo Quichua culture the parents' wishes have to be respected almost at any cost. Francisca sadly reflected on the current paradox of that traditional norm when talking about the problem of her youngest daughter being abused by her husband:

Before we were given a husband and with him we had to die. We could not brake

the cross. But now they mix with whites and think like them and this is a problem.

All our kin advice her [Francisca's daughter] to abandon her husband, but she refuses. She has learned well the lessons of the elders. Maybe too well. She says her mother and father gave her that husband and in his hands she has to die. Her parents wanted it that way. If I had known he was going to be such a brute!

If this is the main reason the daughter stays with the husband is, of course, difficult to say. This is a complex case that involves many other factors, such as her fear of having been bewitched by the husband. But it interesting that she still feels she can use a traditional cultural norm as justification for her conduct, while at the same time this justification starts to sound as a rationalization, or just hollow, for the elders themselves. Although in this case Francisca arranged the marriage with her daughter's enthusiastic consent, like her father, she nevertheless feels the guilt of having made the wrong decision.

The prescriptive rule of monogamy is known to foster unfaithfulness in marital relations. In recent times, there have been more cases reported of Napo Quichua women's marriage infidelities, but they have always been more common among men. This may be an important contributing factor in their "poor reputations" among other polygynous indigenous groups such as the Achuar and the Shuar (see Descola 1996:253). Sexual jealousy, for real or imagined infidelities is, at the moment, the main cause of violence against women and a prevalent reason for marriage breakups. Marriage separation is common. However, most couples avoid a legal divorce, not because of religious reasons, but due to the time and costs involved in hiring a lawyer and going through the long bureaucratic procedures.

**Of risky temptations, devil-dogs, and marriage infidelities**

In Christian theology, sexual activity is the special temptational sphere of the devil, and his enticements in this respect are particularly directed towards women ( Benz 1973:479-480). In impeccable Napo Quichua intellectual tradition, Francisca used the narrative of a personal dream to comment on this aspect of Christian thought regarding sexual misconduct in marriage. In this dream she describes her own encounter with the Evil One in his incarnation as a black dog and explains how, as the result of that dream, and with a little help from the Virgin, she was able to avoid the many temptations she had to confront from the very real white devils who accosted her during the first years of her marriage.

This was a dream I had when I was still childless. I saw a beautiful young lady, very clearly, just like in the pictures. She showed me a very large, very black dog with a long tail who was lying in my bed and told me: “ If you do not believe, if you misbehave in your marriage, this one will wrap you with his tail and will take you directly to Hell. Go and look on your bed.” I was frightened and begged her to take me in her arms and save me from the dog. Then she said: “Devil, go away from here” and ordered me to go to my bed. I asked her to “clean” [like shamans do] my bed, but she said it was not necessary; that from then on I had to live well. In those times I was fat and pretty, my hair was shining black and very long. Even the whites almost made me fall into temptation. They used to tell me: “Why have you chosen an Indian for a husband?” And I started to think how could I get rid of my husband; but I also thought I did not know Spanish, nor to read and write, and that I was better off with an Indian. That was a big temptation and I almost lost my heart, but after this dream where the Virgin visited me, I promised not to listen to bad advice from anybody and abandoned living with the devil in my thoughts. The Evil One is not the only dog who appears in Napo Quichua’s imagery in relation to

persistent marriage infidelity. As Francisca explained, both married women and men who copulate like dogs, turn into dogs, and when they die, their spirits wander around crying. The generic term for these beings is *supaiallcu* (spirit dog) and the specific unfaithful spirit is known locally as *andacusupai* or *cajonsupai*. In the old days, the elder women use to tear a piece of the additional skirt they used when menstruating and hung it on a tree or dressed a stick with it. Then when the *andacusupai* appeared, he smelled it and run away fast. A red sunset is the sign for these supais to come out, and only an experienced and strong shaman can stop them for good. Although the Josephine missionaries still practice ritual exorcisms of demons,<sup>xvii</sup> the Runa are quite sceptical about the effectiveness of these practices against native spirits.

Married women also run greater risks from other supais who want to turn them into shamans by getting them pregnant with a *supaihuahua* (spirit-child). These supais only seek married women, and, like most lovers, they usually make their appearance when the husband is absent. In special danger are the wives of young shamans, whose husbands have to maintain abstinence from sexual relations for at least a year. Then the young wives look for other men, or they are easy prey for the supais. To understand these supais' particular preferences in women, we have to remember the belief that only married people may have the privilege of going to Heaven. Deprived of that privilege, these supais try to steal the souls of married women as their effortless and furtive entrance to paradise. As has been explained of Satan in Christian theology ( Benz 1973:479-480), this spirit has an "insatiable hunger for reality," and lacking the possibility of incarnation and salvation, is left to rob others to attain for himself, not only the substantial pleasures of these life, but also of the more intangible ones in the afterlife. On doing this, however, as Francisca explained to me, "he leaves women empty of their souls and unable to climb to Heaven." As in most cultures, among the Napo Quichua, women often have to pay a

heavier price than men to reconcile their reputations with their desires.

### **The final path to cultural and personal identity**

In the last sections of Francisca's narrative we learn the "real" reasons why she finally slept with her husband, and the onerous price she paid for her resistance to the marriage rules of residence and service due to her in-laws. But, most importantly, in terms of understanding Francisca's sense of self and ethnic identity, she also gives a final evaluation of what she perceives to be the positive outcomes of this most crucial decision in her life.

Judging from Francisca's account, physical attraction was not the decisive factor in consummating her marriage, but fear did play an important role. Fear for herself of the even more unappealing scenario of being betrothed to an older man, and of having her beautiful long hair cut; and fear for her family, who could have been grievously affected by the avenging shamanic powers of her father-in-law. Either because of positive or negative reasons, the power granted to shamans in Napo Quichua culture, turns them into respected or feared marriage brokers (cf. Macdonald 1979: 110; Hudelson 1981:131), and in most circumstances, they are considered directly responsible for whatever are the consequences of that intervention. Francisca sees her loss of five sons in the first years of her marriage as the result of witchcraft exercised by her affines for not conforming to her duties as a daughter-in-law. By emphasizing the traditional influence of witchcraft in determining human fate, she disregards the admonition in the paradigm of the Virgin Mary's marriage about the penalty of infertility (not having flowers) for disobeying the elders' wishes.

The power of shamans in controlling women's sexuality is an issue hardly mentioned in the literature on Amerindian shamanism, but it continues to be extremely important, even today, in relation to marriage and domestic violence, an issue I briefly mentioned in relation to

Francisca's daughter. In spite of this painful experience that Francisca tried to ameliorate by adopting and raising two male children, she finishes the story of her marriage with a positive note. Her reluctant reconciliation with her in-laws brought her the land that was due to her as an in-marrying woman, but her resistance settled her in her father's land, a piece of which was granted to her husband when her father adopted him as a son. According to her, the fact that through her father's samai she "inherited" his fighting spirit, is what contributed to her success in winning the argument against her brothers to retain that piece of land after her parents' death. Traditionally among the Napo Quichua, women do not inherit land in this way, but she was able to make use of the Ecuadorian law of bilateral inheritance to retain this most precious piece of land where she wants to be buried.

Most importantly for Francisca's sense of self as a woman in her own culture, she feels that her uniqueness lies in her ability to incorporate in herself, not only all the valued qualities of an ideal Napo Quichua woman that she learned from her mother, but also that special quality that grants prestige, status, and respect to men: the power of the rational word to fight for what is right. As she told me in another occasion:

When my father gave me his samai he advised me that after his death I should not fear any white person. "Live like me -he said- act like me, who all my life fought abusive patrons."

If I only knew Spanish, I would have been just like him, but I inherited his thoughts and you will put down my own on paper.

As a humble scribe I have always felt overwhelmed by the difficult task of transcribing the words of the powerful orators I have encountered in other cultures. In Francisca's case, I think I can understand quite well how inadequate Tiro must have felt trying to transcribe Cicero's speeches in shorthand.

### Notes

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1. The fieldwork on which this paper is based was conducted over a period of several years in the Tena-Archidona area of the Ecuadorian Upper Amazon. I have known Francisca since 1981. Since then I have worked with her almost every year, during my summer months, recording her life history and talking to her alone, or in conversations with other Napo Quichua women, about many other aspects of her culture.

ii. There are several detailed descriptions and analysis of Napo Quichua marriage and the wedding ritual, primarily from the point of view of men (see Macdonald 1979; Hudelson 1981; Muratorio 1991; Palacio 1992).

iii. See Macdonald 1979: 86-97 for a full discussion of “*masha*” as term of address.

iv. I know of several cases of young men who, in the last few years, have gone to work in the oil companies just to pay for the costs of the pactachina. According to Francisca, the costs of the wedding would involved at least three seasons of work for the companies.

v. Notably, the voice that is missing is that of her husband, for reasons I hope will become clear in the course of this paper, especially in the section on marital relations.

vi. In 1941-42, the whole of the Ecuadorian Oriente became engulfed in a war with Peru. In addition to the border problems between Ecuador and Peru dating from the Colonial period and still standing, this particular war is considered to have been fueled by the competition between the two oil giants at that time, Standard Oil and Shell Oil for oil resources in the Amazon region.



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Indigenous peoples had good reasons to fear the poorly equipped and worst fed soldiers preying on them, and particularly on their women.

vii. Macdonal (1979: 91-93) also mentions cases of uxori-locality among the Napo Quichua now living in the Arajuno river area, but who originally came from the Tena-Archidona area.

8. Francisca's father, Basilio, was a *varayuj*, a man who carried the staff (*vara*). He was a type of indigenous authority created in this area by white colonialism. Like many others, he led a group of men in forced labor for the whites. He was also a mail runner and cargo bearer for the government. For evidence of Basilio's resistance to arbitrary abuses from these patrons and authorities see Muratorio (1991:sp.pp. 160-161).

9. Among Protestant denominations, marriage is a rite rather than a sacrament as in Roman Catholicism. Consequently, the Evangelicals do not attribute much importance to the wedding ceremony *per se*, at least not according to Napo Quichua standards.

x. Similar indigenous versions of this story of the Virgin Mary's marriage are found among the Napo Quichua living down the Napo, around the area of the Aguarico river, (see Ortíz de Villalba 1976:140-141, 1989:133-134) and among those living even further down in Peru (see Mercier 1979:175-177).

xi. Macdonald (1979:183) reports the case of an adolescent girl who refused to marry a shaman's son, became ill several times, and finally died. During her illness she reported having a dream in which the boy's father had appeared and attacked her with different kinds of weapons.

xii. According to the Christian story, Mary was in the Temple until she was 14 years old, at which time, having had a revelation from an angel, the priests told her she had to marry. Ferguson

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(1961: 73) continues with the story: “Marriageable men each had to bring to the temple his rod or staff. These were to be left in the temple overnight when, it was promised, a sign would be given to indicate which of the suitors for Mary’s hand was favored by the Lord. All was done according to the directions of the angel, and in the morning it was found that the staff of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth, had blossomed. He was, therefore, chosen as the husband of Mary.” Another angel appears to reassure Joseph and to restrain his anger: “After marrying Mary, he found her already pregnant and ‘being a man of honor’ wished to divorce her, but an angel told him that the child was the son of God and was conceived by the Holy Ghost. Obeying the angel Joseph took Mary as a wife (Matt.1:19). The dove representing the Holy Ghost is said to have flown out to Heaven from Joseph’s staff. Joseph’s image as an old man comes from apocryphal narratives from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century portraying him as a widower with children and one who lived to be 111 years old (Encyclopædia Britannica, Micropædia V:610). The dove, as it is clear in Francisca’s dream stories, is also a symbol of purity. Goody (1993:154-157) notes that during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries the Church started to use flowers for instructional purposes in many rituals, especially those dedicated to the Virgin Mary. She was equally represented as a rose, a lily, and a violet. Flowers themselves started to be named after her but, as Goody also notes, during the Reformation “their names were classed as ‘Poppish nonsense’ and stripped of their religious significance.”

13. The Roman Catholic Church has never officially endorsed the doctrine of Limbo as an existing state or place, so it remains an unsettled question (Encyclopædia Britannica,

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Micropædia. VI:225). . It is considered a “liminal” space, a kind of “border” area between Heaven and Hell. For my purposes here, the relevant section of Limbo is that named “*limbus infantum*” or “*puerum*,” (“the children’s Limbo), the abode of small children who have died without sin, but whose original sin has not been washed away by Baptism. According to Francisca, in Limbo unmarried people regularly go under a waterfall in order “to cool themselves because they burn a little.” The other, less well known section of Limbo, called “*Limbus patrum*,” is considered to be the transitory resting place of the Old Testament Saints until liberated by Christ, and resembles the Napo Quichua “*Docemundoi*,” a place originating in the center of the earth where dead shamans and apprentice souls are said to reside (see Muratorio 1991). In the Roman Catholic theological controversy about the fate of an individual person in the period between her death and Judgement Day, the notion of Purgatory was developed in a sort of compromise, as an intermediate space and state where the person is still given the chance to ameliorate her evil condition (Benz 1973:508). Although the doctrine of Purgatory is derived from 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> century-BC Jewish concepts of God’s judgment of people according to their deeds, it only became doctrine after two medieval Councils and the Council of Trent in the Reformation period. The matter of the place, duration, and nature of the punishments in Purgatory have not been definitely answered in Roman Catholic doctrine, and the Protestant churches deny the existence of Purgatory as “unbiblical” (Encyclopædia Britannica, Micropædia. VIII:307). The Napo Quichua do not usually speak of Purgatory, probably due to their different, more social, conception of sin; and because of their indifference to prayer as a way of redeeming sinful individual actions. When I asked Francisca about Purgatory she, otherwise so eloquent, gave only this succinct definition: “A place- I think- where we may burn

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just a little.”

xiv. For a comparative discussion of love in arranged marriage among the Achuar see Descola 1996; among people in a Sri Lankan Muslim community see de Munck 1996. The recent works on the anthropology of emotions are too long to cite here. For the purposes of this paper I have primarily consulted Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990; Myers 1979; Levitt 1996; and Trawick 1990).

xv. It may be that in older times, the myth of the *vagina dentata*, or the association of female genitalia with injury and danger, existed among the Napo Quichua in a version similar to that reported for other Amazonian groups (e.g. see Gregor 1985:71). The only evidence I could find came from Francisca trying to explain the fear young men had of sleeping with a virgin woman. She said: “They were afraid because they thought that, if they received a virgin, she would have a crab (*pangora*) who would bite his penis. So the old men used to tell the boy: ‘Lend her to me, I will cut the edge of that animal.’” Among the Napo Quichua of Loreto (see Hudelson 1981:151) and the Aguarico (Palacio 1992:53-54), the ritual of coupling the bride and groom included a baby doll (*cari huahua chaucha* [strong male child] or *chaucha huahua* [strong child]) symbolizing the fertility of the young couple. According to Francisca, this part of the ritual was not practiced among the Napo Quichua of the Tena-Archidona area. Nowadays, in this area, the symbolism of the doll has been turned on its head. Many women have reported to me that they put their real babies between themselves and their husbands when they do not want to have sexual intercourse.

xvi. For a comparative discussion of marital violence among the Achuar see Taylor 1979 and

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Descola 1996. For the Andean people in Peru see sp. Harvey 1994.

xvii. Just a few years ago I witnessed a Roman Catholic exorcism performed by a Josephine priest in the house of an old white woman in Tena. The woman claimed she was being visited every night by a man dressed in a formal black suit and wearing a black bowler hat. The indigenous people who were also present, let me know that they considered this ritual most ineffective for that type of “supai.”

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## **An Amazonian Woman's Ways of Knowledge: Intersections of Autobiography, Ethnography, and History**

Paper for Situating "Hispanic" Knowledge, an interdisciplinary conference at the University of British Columbia April 16-18, 1998

I would like to thank the organizers of this conference for inviting me to speak here tonight. It provides me with the opportunity to partially fulfill a promise I made to Francisca Andi, a gifted Napo Quichua indigenous storyteller from the Ecuadorian Amazon, whom I have had the privilege to know for more than fifteen years now. This promise was to reciprocate the gift she so generously gave me of her stories by sharing them with others, or in Francisca's own words: "I give them to you so that my words will be carried in the wind" The story I will share with you tonight is a very special one she gave me just a few summers ago in the form of an autobiographical song. But I would like to begin by trying to tie her story to the larger issues that, as I understand it, will be addressed in this conference.

When Rita and Jennifer first approached me with their invitation to participate by talking about my own research, I was confronted with a challenging paradox: How to convey the ways of knowing and the voice of Francisca, a monolingual Quichua woman, in English, in the context of a conference entitled "Situating "Hispanic" Knowledge. How to transform the gift of an oral narrative which reflects a long and close personal relationship, into one addressed to an undetermined and multiple audience, like the one here tonight.

These problems are, of course, not new to anthropologists nor to all of us who are engaged in the complexities of translating oral or written words from one culture to another. Each of us have different ways of coping with the predicament posed by this difficult and tantalizing task, as I hope to learn in the interdisciplinary dialogue that this conference will provide for us in the next two days. My contribution has then to be situated in my own work and ways of knowing as an anthropologist of Argentinian- Italian descent, who every year struggles to live in three different worlds, English-Canadian, Ecuadorean Spanish, and Lowland Quichua, in all of which I feel equally comfortable although certainly not equally competent. It is from the teachings and stories of a late elder Amazonian man, Alonso Andi, with whom I begun my work of doing life histories and researching oral tradition, and now from the patient coaching of Francisca and other elder women with whom I continue to work, that I have really started to learn to live the larger intellectual dilemmas theorized in a university cultural world. The second part of the title of my talk, the intersections of autobiography, ethnography, and history, is intended as a reflection on some of these understandings to which I now wish to turn..

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Like many other ethnographers who write stories about non-literate peoples, I view my work as participating in a process of cultural decolonization, through which indigenous people, still subjugated by the dominant literate world of a colonial power, are given a chance to tell their own stories to a larger audience and to write their own histories. Unlike most historians and literature scholars,

however, as anthropologists we deal with the performance of oral narrative memories of the past and the cultural identities of living people who dictate their culture to us because those narratives matter to them in the present and for their future. No matter what our own agendas are when we enter the field, the research is from the start a “negotiated reality” and not only, as some postmodernists have argued, when it becomes an ethnographic text. Native informants always provides us with theories and explanations that give coherence to their lives. Consequently, the social, personal, and intellectual relationship between the two speaking subjects plays a definite role, like..... Francisca’s and mine, where my sense of self, my cultural assumptions, my intellectual background, in sum... my own autobiography intersects with hers. The striving that is necessary to understand and find our shared humanity with a person from another culture, inevitably leads to self-reflection and, in my case, to a historically situated personal biography in order to imagine and represent otherness, since I have chosen to make the cultural politics of the subjects of my research part of my own everyday experience. In many different ways then, we end up constructing multilayer and collaborative cultural discourses where Self and Other are always crossing delicate boundaries of power, respect, and understanding.

Furthermore, as Julie Cruikshank has so rightly noted in her work with storytellers in the Yukon, their stories and our texts acquire a social life of their own in the present, They continuously generate new meanings in the process of retelling, and now also in the reading by the younger literate generations for which they are primarily intended. So presently, many anthropologists have to assume

the added responsibility of searching for a voice that translates across the ethnic divide to speak meaningfully to both academic and native audiences. This is not an easy task, as many others have noted : it implies, among many other things, a delicate balance between our own technical language and a more narrative one which better retains the orality of the sources.

But most importantly, as Gerald Sider and Gavin Smith have recently reminded us, for anthropologists the issue is not only the commitment to re-presenting those voices as truthfully and forcefully as we can, but how do we participate in the social endeavor of making those voices matter against the silence of the dominant society and, in the case of women, I would add, even against the silence of their own.

This seems to me is the crucial choice to make for anthropologists and oral historians confronted with the post-modernist intellectual search for a dangerously narcissistic self-reflectivity that is increasingly leading towards a divorce between our intellectual practices and the political and moral complexities of the present world outside. I have argued elsewhere that if we confine ourselves to this form of self-reflexivity we run the risk of erasing the Other from our discourse and of defeating its primary purpose of adequate and responsible representation. As in any good conversation, in doing fieldwork, learning to listen, including paying close attention to the silences, implies, in good measure, a surrendering of ego, which does not mean to become an impartial objective observer, but just the opposite:... a good listener is always a sympathetic one. The .....center of our self-reflexivity should lie in our interpretations, in the dialogue between what we hear and what

we write. It is here where our work varies widely....and enriches our different intellectual pursuits.

The strategy I have followed when confronting these dilemmas about the presentation of voices in my own research, has been to intertwine individual indigenous life stories with the voices of those others who matter to the subjects more than myself. Often writing against official history, these life-history projects represent an interplay between the ethnographic and the archival historical records in which each one interrogates the other. My main objective has been to explore the often paradoxical and contradictory character of these historically situated dialogues between subordinate and dominant voices, and I still think they reveal, better than a self-centered dialogue between ethnographer and subject, the structures of power that have real social consequences for the lives of the people involved. Like other committed oral historians and anthropologists of oral tradition, I think the best way for us to reciprocate the subjects of our research, those who usually go unheard, is by allowing their voices to reach other people in those parts of the world we are able to reach. Tonight, then I also offer this approach as my response to the dilemma of how hispanic voices can be heard in my presentation of an autobiographical song by an indigenous monolingual Quichua woman to which I now turn.

I will intercalate Francisca's voice with my own interpretative one because, unlike storytellers in small-scale societies, I cannot safely assume this audience shares the cultural knowledge, nor the wealth of past experiences conveyed in her song.



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One of those Amazonian afternoons when heavy rain dissuades a woman from attending her garden plot, Francisca came with her youngest daughter to my house for a visit. She brought a musical instrument [*trompa*] made by her of a thin branch and a piece of agave string and expressed her desire to sing for the two of us. In the course of the several years I have worked with her, Francisca has sung quite a few songs. Some, which she learned from her mother, others she had composed for different occasions, such as working in the garden plot, for weddings, or as farewells to kin who would be traveling afar. The song she sang that afternoon, however, was intended to be different: it was the legacy of her autobiography for her daughter and me to remember and cherish and, as she challenged me: “so that you may understand and interpret my past and present sufferings.”

The first verses of Francisca’s song provide a forceful to herself and to the beauty of her natural and cultural landscape:

I have traveled eating the pips  
the *spider* monkey eats,  
I have walked  
to the headwaters of the large rivers  
5 traveling woman.  
Wanting to find gold nuggets,  
I will get there,

I will bring two grams of gold.  
 I will walk to pan gold,  
 10 like a tourist I will hop from beach to beach.  
 I don't need my husband to earn money  
     so long as I can walk.  
 I will look for gold.  
 I wander like a leaf,  
 15     carried by a strong wind,  
 I make a noise heard,  
     like a hurricane.  
 I have climbed high hills,  
 I have sat whistling with the leaves.  
 20 I have walked all the hills,  
     like the *bubunero* bird, [black big bird with raising feathers in  
     head]vocabulario  
 I am the *bubunero*,  
 I am toucan woman.  
 In the tree canopies, in each branch,  
 25 I move from place to place.  
 I am a woman who sings in the hills.  
 I am like the *capuchin* monkey  
 I am *capuchin* woman,  
     traveling woman,

30 I am the *capuchin* woman.

I am the woman

whose name is Francisca.

I had known Francisca as a gifted storyteller, a superb potter, and a powerful curer. In this song she also revealed herself as a wise and creative raconteur of her life, her culture and society. Through her poetic imagination Francisca provides a highly individualized autobiography in the Western tradition of the genre, in which self-revelation and self-interpretation give shape to her own life experience. This proves, as two Italian oral historians, Luisa Passerini and Alessandro Portelli have argued, that the one of the main lessons we learn from doing oral histories is the equal rights and importance of every individual. In Portelli's own words: "It isn't only the saints, the heroes, the tyrants-or the victims, the sinners, the artists-who are uniquely resonant." But, by recounting some of her experiences as "moral texts," she incorporates the signs and symbols of her ethnic group identity. Thus her song also expresses a form of collective memory of the experiences that were shared by the Napo Quichua women of her generation. Through her memories Francisca provides the terms to explore how the wider forces of history -such as frontier capitalism, settlers' colonialism, a liberal state, and conservative missionaries- were brought to bear on indigenous consciousness and how particular aspects of colonial history were appropriated or rejected, reconceptualized or even reinvented by indigenous women to be used in the present. When she evaluates this present, Francisca furthers our understanding not only of how her world was constructed, but also how it is being transformed.

Throughout her singing Francisca wove the meanings of her song as an implicit dialogue, both with the audience she selected for that particular performance (her youngest daughter and myself), and with the past and present colonial voices who shaped and constrained her life experiences. By including me in the dialogue and by deliberately asking me to tape the song, Francisca intended it to be translated into Spanish (and eventually, English) and to be shared with others. Through several years of Francisca's collaboration with my research and because of our friendship, I partly helped in creating the historical context and meanings of the song.

Indigenous oral performers are very particular about their audiences, and she would not have given this song in the same way just to anyone. On her part, Francisca was well aware that I would interpret it "in my own way," as she implied in her challenge. For her daughter, instead, the song in Quichua was part of a strong oral tradition shared between women, specially between mother and daughter. By asking me to provide a copy of the tape to her daughter, Francisca was also making sure that, "in these changing times," the young woman will keep it as a cherished memory to be

sang at her mother's death. Here I can only attempt to give a very partial answer to Francisca's challenge to "interpret her past and present sufferings."

The images and metaphors Francisca uses to present herself are representative of other autobiographical songs of the Ecuadorean lowlands. Visual images of birds, monkeys, trees, and rivers sensitize the listener to the singer's richness of experience of the tropical forest, and the height of the hills and the power of the wind help to amplify the singer's voice and to carry her words afar. The empowering nature of that experience is heightened by Francisca's identification with all the spirit helpers - bubunero bird, capuchin monkey and toucan - that guide her knowledge of the forest environment. Walking through the forest she does not only "see" those significant animals, but acquires their power. She becomes the spirit master of the birds, thus asserting her cultural rights to that environment - a theme she repeats throughout the song. The contrast Francisca makes so powerfully is not between Nature and Culture, but between two different forms of knowing and productively using the Amazonian forest space,

between two different forms of being and making history. The stereotype of the "natural" Indian was constructed by the dominators. The Spaniards classified the Indians as "*naturales*," a complex bureaucratic term whose main connotation was "without reasoning." This stereotype, as well as the more recent one of the Indians' alleged mystical communion with nature, conceals the basis of their resistance that resides in their social relations and in the culture that grows out of those relations.

There is a wealth of ethnographic evidence that links travel with the desire for knowledge and with the need to affirm individuality and sedentariness with group conformity. Against the spaces of organized repression such as the convent and domestic service, Francisca treats the forest as a space of social creativity or, as to borrow De Certeau's words as a "space of enunciation."

The guiding trope in this particular song is that of walking and traveling, expressed in Quichua with the verb *purina* (to walk, travel). Besides defining notions of activity, motion, and sexuality, *purina* is a strong metaphor for existence and outlines the very cultural ideal of a female self.

*In this ideal, I will suggest, Francisca also emphasizes a model of excellence for female work. When she represents herself as a woman who "walks beautifully," she is not only making a statement about aesthetics, but also about a woman who works hard, rises early, has the huayusa (tea) ready before dawn, knows the songs to please the female master spirit of gold in order to find it, and moves as lightly as the pichi small bird in all of her activities.*

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Mythic and historical modes of social consciousness are incorporated and expressed not only in narrative themes, but also in poetry, song, political rhetoric, and other forms of non-narrative discourse. In lowland Ecuadorean Quichua societies, where discursive speech is still today the public domain of men, women have other privileged symbolic languages—such as ceramics, songs, ritual wailing, and the interpretation of dreams and visions—which they use to create a strong sense of themselves, to structure their worlds, to interpret their past and present experiences of violent social change, and to create a sense of their own history as indigenous women. These are the preferred idioms of expression, the "hidden transcripts" (Scott 1990) used by women in their homes, in their garden plots, by the riverbanks when they pan gold, or in the privacy of their forest spaces. However, these are not the only ones used. The generation of elder Napo Quichua women with whom I worked are monolingual in Quichua, but they have lived all their lives in a society where Spanish has been the language of domination and hence accorded higher status in daily interaction. This colonialism of language has not "muted" these women who, either through intermediaries or by delivering whole speeches directly in Quichua in public occasions, have made their voices heard. They, Francisca included, refer to themselves and to

their mothers -but not to their daughters- as *pitalalashimi huarmiguna*, that is, women who, just as the *pitalala* or poisonous Equis snake, are always ready to counterattack by verbally protesting perceived injustices in government offices, the market place or, more often, the gold merchants' "capricious" scales. These are women who have always been immersed in the larger historically structured colonial project. Like their male counterparts, in order to survive they accommodated to, used, and finally incorporated many of its practices. They also resisted the many agents of hegemony, distanced themselves from them and, whenever possible, challenged them by creating the cultural and political contexts to say what they wanted to say. This capacity to move in more than one expressive world helps to explain why Francisca was able to take a traditional aesthetic form widely used by women in lowland Quichua culture, and transform it into a more "narrative" historical discourse and a dialogue with her audience. In the song, Francisca creates a sense of the past and the future through the power of social relations.

I am a woman who gives my spirit power  
through my hands.

To you my dear daughter,  
my power I will give.

65 From the Highlands they call me,  
Highlanders call me to cure,  
knowing mountains I will go.

Like my father did with me,  
I will give you my knowledge.

70 My father said:  
I will show you the mountains I crossed,  
I will show you the snow I stepped on,  
I will make you feel the cold,  
I will show you my sufferings



75 when I carried the whites.  
I will show you all.  
Once you see, you may know;  
once you know, you may cry.  
When I go there I see his footsteps,  
80 I hear his flute,  
I remember his words.  
Now we travel by car,  
and we do not see.  
He went on foot, swift as a deer.  
I am Andi woman,  
daughter of the one who founded this town.  
We came here first,  
100 we are this town.  
I am the last who remembers.  
Where the whites built the police station,  
my father hunted;  
when I see that  
105 my heart breaks.  
Where they put the government house  
is where we had the change of staffs,  
where women offer *chicha* (manioc beer),  
where the men beat the drums.  
110 The whites have just arrived,  
they pushed us to the hills.  
They are newcomers,

but they act like owners.  
 They tell me I'm worthless,  
 115 but my thinking is bright light,  
 Whites call me "little woman,"  
 but I can walk where I want.

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Like other indigenous biographical expressions, Francisca's song shows a sense of history that does not develop primarily within a lineal time frame. On the one hand, it selects those historical episodes of contact that were particularly critical for her own people. This characteristic of indigenous consciousness that understands history in relation to a few peaks of rapid or painful social change has already been noted and analysed for other Amazonian societies. Through her symbolic interpretation of those events, Francisca shows why they became memorable. On the other hand, she emphasizes certain significant events and crises of her life but without the beginning and the closure typical of conventional Western autobiographies

Her claims to the space of the tropical forest are not only culturally but also historically grounded. She clearly mentions the entitlement of her own kin group when she defines herself as "Andi woman," and their historically specific rights of occupation of the territory in the town of Tena now usurped by the whites. This is the space where her father hunted, and where in the not so distant past, indigenous authorities could at least symbolically occupy the main plaza for their drinking and dancing. This space is now physically surrounded by what Francisca regards as the symbols of regulation, repression, and confinement: the government house, the police station, and the mission. The construction of ethnic identity is one that claims moral attachments to specific territories and posits time-honoured ties between peoples and territories. The administrative occupation of the space where ancestors were buried has broken down the time continuity of indigenous history and claims to land.

Visually, geographical spaces become historical markers when they are remembered through the love and pain of social relations. Whenever Francisca crosses the Mount Huamaní and its freezing *páramo* (high plateau) she recalls that period in the history of her father and others like him when they had to carry the whites on their backs in the hazardous journey from Quito to Tena. Her father made her see and feel the cold and the oppression so that she would know and cry (lines 70-84). And in the retelling of the experience to her daughter, new cultural history is made. As Harvey (1989:218) suggests: "[And] if it is true that time is always memorialised not as flow, but as memories of experienced places and spaces, then history must indeed give way to poetry, time to space, as the fundamental material of social expression."

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Once in control of the best lands around the administrative centres, the white patrons were able to get easier access to the labor of the Napo Quichua living near or inside the territories of the haciendas and to consolidate a system of indebtedness by which the Indians purchased manufactured goods at highly inflated prices, primarily in exchange for gold and occasional agricultural labor. Indigenous women did the same tasks as men, except for clearing the forest, but usually got paid in cloth and necklace beads through their husbands. In addition, women were preferred as domestic servants, performing all the heavy household tasks.

Once the nearby forests had been destroyed for agriculture, the patrons considered they had tamed the "savagery" of those Indians under their control. They became the true "*indiecitos*", the domesticated little Indians, almost household objects to be incorporated or discarded at will.

In the discourse of domination, the infantilization of the Indian was marked by the demeaning use of the diminutive, a mannerism of speech that the missionaries utilized with insulting frequency. This is obvious in a section of the following document addressed to the provincial governor by the Vicar in 1925: "To congregate the Indians and to achieve for them our desired improvements, we have distributed one hundred *botoncitos* (little buttons) to the *indiecitos* and long cotton tunics. During the celebration of Holy Week, those *indiecitos* who

attended services regularly were given fishhooks, *espejitos* (little mirrors) and matches, and the *indiecitas* needles and *medallitas* (little religious medallions)" (Tena, June 15, 1925, AGN).

Although a more settled way of life in towns and haciendas brought Indians and whites physically closer, this proximity increased the social distance between the two groups. In the eyes of the whites the Indians became nonpersons, the nameless "*longos*" of everyday parlance. The definition of Indians as objects meant a denial of their privacy and their personal space. For indigenous women working as domestic servants, almost invariably this also meant sexual abuse by the male patrons, usually with the indifferent consent of the wives who did not even consider such acts marriage infidelities, as testified in several cases that were brought to trial by Napo Quichua women (AGN). In one of those cases, for instance, an indigenous woman complains, through a male intermediary who translates her testimony from Quichua into Spanish, not only of the sexual abuse she suffered from the male patron, but also of the beatings she received from his wife, only after she realized "her idiotic domestic servant" had gone to the proper authorities to put a complaint. (Tena, August 22, 1943, AGN).

Putting her hand over mine as a special giving gesture, Francisca continued with her song.

I like when you talk [author],  
 your words like seeds I keep in my heart.  
 And you will carry mine in the wind.  
 Unlike your books, my word is free,  
 45 the lawyer wanted to tie it down,  
 but I am *pitalalashimi* woman.  
 I won my father's land,  
 I will die in that land.  
 Spanish I don't know,  
 but I'm Picher woman,

strong like the Picher guns  
 the rubber traders sold us.  
 My dear son I will leave,  
 50 talking like a white man  
 to protest when I die.

The name “Picher woman” Francisca gives to herself in the song is a metaphor for the ideal of womanhood represented by a generation of women who, like Francisca's mother and Francisca herself as a young girl, worked alongside the men tapping rubber to meet new demands during the Second World War. As before, they brought the rubber to the local patrons in exchange for manufactured goods. The preferred item was a type of gun imported from Peru that did not explode as easily as others. By calling themselves Picher *women*, these women incorporated that source of white power as a metaphor for their strength and endurance, a form of symbolic empowerment that allowed them to protest the fact that their labor remained unrecognized.

Unlike the women of her mother's generation, Francisca has come to realize the power of literacy and to resent the fact that her early marriage, her parent's resistance, and the condescending attitude of the nuns prevented her from learning how to read and write. This is how she explains it now: "Let the whites be grateful that my parents did not teach me to read and write, otherwise I would have become a lawyer or a doctor. They [her parents] thought that women who learned to read would be taken away by white men. But nowadays, when I want to protest and I don't know Spanish, I get furious. Leaving the old beliefs behind, I have sent my daughters to school. But when I teach them the old ways I want them to listen clearly." At the same time that Francisca values literacy, she perceives it as the spatialization and freezing of oral knowledge and tradition, as when she tells me: "unlike your books, my word is free." In the end her freedom has been limited because the acceptance of universal schooling for children has

meant, de facto, the partial sedentarization of their mothers.

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Until quite recently, Ecuadorean state policies of all political denominations never questioned the opposition between white civilization and Indian savagery, the "childlike" character of the Indians, or the need to christianize them. When the Italian Catholic congregation of Josephine missionaries was assigned the Vicariate of Napo in 1922, the state delegated to them the task of civilizing the Indians through evangelization, education, the moral reorganization of their time and space, and the domestication of their bodies in order to create the "proper" Christian subjects. Their image of the Indians reflected the same duality typical of European representations since the beginning of the Conquest: an image that shifted from the noble to the ignoble savage according to the Europeans' needs for self-affirmation. For the Josephines, the Napo Quichua oscillated without reason between the innocent child and the *auca* (savage, in Quichua) and therefore had to be treated with either condescending paternalism or with the harsh moral controls considered necessary to restrain natural wild instincts.

Thus, colonists, state agents, and missionaries colluded to selectively manipulate gender and ethnicity in order to maintain their dominant class positions and to perform their "civilizing mission" over what they called "the savage lot." Aided by the nuns, white women colonists played a crucial role in attempting to shape their own ideal of the female Indian Christian subject. Moral discipline could only be enforced within the missionaries' own time and space. They assumed that away from white surveillance in their own cultural and symbolic spaces, the Napo Quichua did not enjoy "liberty," but "libertinism," and they spent their time in orgies, debauchery, and all kinds of alcoholic self-indulgence. This other side of the dual nature of the Indians in the missionaries' discourse justified their encouragement and promotion of very early marriages for women in order "to avoid the natural immorality of the Indians" (Tena, April 15, 1929, AGN). To create a civilized and Christian Indian female, the Josephines relied on the Dorothean Sisters. The role of the nuns is explained by a male missionary as follows: "Jointly

with us, the Dorothean Sisters evangelize, instruct, and educate the indigenous woman of these jungles in order to snatch her away from the slavery in which she lives, and to transform her into a civilized wife and mother of the future generations that will constitute the foundation of progress in this area, and of the complete restoration of Ecuadorean territorial rights in the Oriente" (Tena, April 11, 1931, AGN). The Josephines had taken upon themselves the patriotic duty of supporting the Ecuadorean state's defence of its Amazonian frontiers, but had passed on to the indigenous women the task of bearing the children who would go to fight the wars. Several Napo Quichua elderly women often explained their reluctance to send their sons to boarding school because of their fear that the missionaries would draft them for war.

The convent was also used by both the state and the patrons as a sort of temporary "refuge" to tame the most recalcitrant women rebels who consistently ran away from oppressive domestic service or from other forms of white guardianship. The Dorothean Sisters administered a school for white boys with a separate section for indigenous girls where, "in addition to religious and civic instruction, they were taught the handiwork suited to their domestic duties and according to their abilities" (Tena, April 9, 1931, AGN). This gendered model of domestic confinement for indigenous women was to be symbolized by the spiritual virtues of the Virgin Mary and, more mundanely, by the general comportment and devotion of the nuns. I have shown elsewhere (Muratorio n/d) how, on the one hand, Napo Quichua women perfunctorily ignored the single and motherless nuns dismissing them as "women-fathers." On the other hand, they transformed the Virgin Mary into a powerful figure in her own right, a female shaman, representing the most valued cultural characteristics of Napo Quichua femininity. The last verses of her song represent Francisca's answer to the nuns and a strong, if paradoxical affirmation of her own self and cultural identity.

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From the hill I will see you my love [daughter].

If they come for me to go to the Mass,

tell them I am a woman who travels far,  
 55 tell them I did not hear the bell.  
 I will come with the air,  
 lifting the river mist.  
 I arrive to a dark town,  
 that's the woman  
 60 whose name is Francisca.  
 To the nuns I say:  
 130 I walk like the *aucas*, (savages, Huaorani Indians)  
 I dress like the *aucas*,  
 I smell like the *aucas*,  
 I am toucan woman,  
 I am the woman  
 135 whose name is Francisca.

Francisca concludes her song not only by rejecting the missionaries' ideal of a female indigenous subject, but she compares herself with the *aucas*, using the double connotation of this term in Ecuadorean lowland Quichua to refer to "savages" and to the group of Huaorani indigenous peoples, some of whom still avoid white contact. By this comparison she turns on its head an important aspect of her own people's myth of origin, which states that the Napo Quichua became *runa*, *that is* people, human beings, by accepting baptism and salt to differentiate themselves from the *aucas* or savages. In challenging the nuns' hegemonic ideal of Indian Christian femininity, Francisca ultimately questions many of the old false oppositions between savagery and civilization that were so important in the constitution of the Western -colonial- self: The Other's other.

Furthermore, she identifies herself with the Huaorani people, the Quichua's traditional enemies, of whom in the past she had told me several stories about their alleged cannibalism, and



of the many killings they perpetrated on Quichua people. Puzzled by her sudden change of heart, I asked Francisca about it and her answer may serve both to understand that historical truth often lies in the beauty of metaphors and feelings rather than in bare facts, and as a final closure to the main theme of contrasts and ambiguities in the colonial encounter of voices I have tried to explore here tonight. These were Francisca's words: "What I told you before is true, but the *aucas* still walk naked through the forest and they are free."



(No citar ni publicar sin permiso de la autora)

## **“Sólo pensaba en escapar”: Historias de una mujer Amazónica sobre el matrimonio y su imaginario**

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Es el año 1941 y el mundo está en guerra. Escondida detrás de un árbol en la floresta tropical de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana, una hermosa niña de diez años siente miedo de que algo terrible le va a pasar, pero todavía no sabe qué es. La han mandado afuera de su casa, pero ella no se dá cuenta de que es porque sus futuros suegros han venido a su casa para pedir su mano en matrimonio. Pronto se va a ver forzada a dejar el mundo acogedor donde nació y el refugio del amor de su madre. Ella no comprende de guerras extranjeras o de la búsqueda de petróleo y caucho que sirven para alimentarlas. Sin embargo, estos acontecimientos, aunque sea indirectamente, jugaron un papel en la vida de esta niña indígena y aparecen como sombras y persistentes recuerdos en varias de las historias que ahora, ya como mujer madura, ella cuenta sobre su vida. La historia de su matrimonio arreglado es la que he elegido para analizar en este ensayo.

En el período de varios años en que he conocido a Francisca,<sup>i</sup> la narradora, ella me ha contado este evento crucial en la historia de su vida varias veces y siempre en vivos detalles. Aún más, en el proceso de tratar de explicar el significado de ese evento para su vida presente, para la vida de sus hijas, y también para mi propia instrucción y placer intelectual, Francisca ha visto la necesidad de contar otras historias sobre el matrimonio. Algunas de estas historias están basadas en el rico acervo tradicional de su cultura, en sus propios sueños y experiencias, y otras en la igualmente brillante imaginaria de la tradición Católica Romana, tal como le fue traducida por sus antepasados y reinterpretada por ella con la habilidad intelectual de una teóloga consumada.

En este trabajo, cuyo principal objetivo es comprender la importante institución del matrimonio Napo Quichua principalmente a través de la visión de las mujeres,<sup>ii</sup> voy a compartir estas historias de Francisca con el lector a mi propio paso.

La versión de la narrativa de la historia de vida de Francisca que voy a presentar aquí es la última que contó en 1996 mientras trataba de explicarme sus sentimientos de angustia por el problema que su hija menor tiene actualmente con un marido extremadamente abusivo, y su preocupación por el reciente matrimonio de su hijo menor con una mujer no indígena. Tanto la creciente incidencia de violencia doméstica entre parejas jóvenes, como los problemas creados por los matrimonios inter-étnicos, constituyen sólo dos de los muchos cambios sociales que los Napo Quichua, al igual que otros indígenas de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana, están experimentando mientras son, una vez mas, incorporados a la nueva modernidad que se origina en la economía cultural globalizante. Aunque Francisca contó su historia como una sola narrativa continua, para su análisis voy a dividirla en unidades temáticas y entretjerla con sus otras historias “explicativas.”

### **Retrato de la narradora en un marco mas amplio**

Los Napo Quichua (que se llaman a sí mismos Napo Runa, o simplemente Runa), pertenecen a una bien establecida cultura de la floresta tropical Ecuatoriana que comparten, en diferente grado, con miles de otros Quichua de las Tierras Bajas. Tradicionalmente, todos los Napo Quichua fueron cazadores, recolectores, y agricultores de roza. A través de cuatrocientos años de contacto, primero con los conquistadores Españoles, y luego con la sociedad nacional, han adaptado sus estrategias de subsistencia al tributo en trabajo, al lavado de oro, y a la extracción de caucho bajo un sistema de peonaje por deudas controlado por comerciantes y patronos. Este sistema se acaba a mediados de este siglo, y desde entonces los Runa se han acomodado y resistido grandes cambios “modernizantes” originados por la colonización, la explotación de petróleo, la urbanización, y la consolidación del poder del estado en toda la región Amazónica, conocida como el Oriente. En la década de 1990, la preocupación internacional por el destino del bosque tropical ha atraído a muchos ambientalistas y ecoturistas a esta área. Han bastado unos pocos matrimonios entre hombres y mujeres Napo Quichua con

estos extranjeros para causar considerable preocupación entre las mujeres indígenas, y para ser el objeto de sabrosos chismes y de más serias conversaciones sobre las prácticas matrimoniales.

Aunque los Napo Quichua tuvieron contactos ocasionales con los diferentes sacerdotes que acompañaron a los conquistadores españoles desde el siglo dieciseis, y con los Jesuitas desde el siglo diecisiete, la presente tradición oral indígena acerca del Cristianismo se remonta al siglo diecinueve cuando los Jesuitas, junto con las religiosas del Buen Pastor, volvieron para establecer una misión en la zona de Tena-Archidona hasta 1896, año en que fueron expulsados por el gobierno Liberal de Eloy Alfaro. En 1922, la Orden de los Josefinos, en colaboración con las Hermanas Doroteas y Murialdinas fundó una misión en el territorio de los Napo Quichua que continúa hasta hoy día. Cinco años más tarde, un pequeño grupo de Protestantes Evangélicos entró al área Amazónica y comenzó a competir agresivamente con las órdenes Católicas. Desde entonces, el número de sectas Evangélicas que operan en esta área se han multiplicado, aunque su éxito en crear nuevos conversos no es relativamente muy significativo.

Francisca es una mujer de unos 60 años. En su cultura se la considera una *rucumama*, es decir, una respetada anciana. Su marido vive todavía y de sus tres hijas mujeres y dos hijos varones casados, Francisca tiene 22 nietos. Ella se autoidentifica como Quichua hablante del área del río Pano, que incluye el pequeño pueblo del mismo nombre, ubicado a unos pocos kilómetros de Tena, la Capital de la Provincia del Napo. En tiempos pasados, varios grupos residenciales compuestos de un número de grupos de parentesco, conocidos como *mntuns*, y generalmente dominados por una figura masculina, vivían todos en un conjunto de casas en un asentamiento. En los últimos treinta años, más o menos, debido a migraciones, escasez de tierras, y otros factores como la creciente preferencia por la residencia matrimonial neolocal, ha habido una tendencia a la atomización de estos grupos en unidades residenciales más pequeñas, cuya composición varía considerablemente. Al separarse en varios asentamientos a lo largo del río Napo y sus tributarios, los diferentes *mntuns* adquirieron características lingüísticas y culturales distintivas que con el tiempo se transformaron en estereotipos mutuos y en pequeñas rivalidades, algunas de las cuales se asentúan y se actualizan en las ocasiones de matrimonios entre hombres y mujeres de diferentes *mntuns*, como fue el caso de Francisca, cuyo marido proviene de uno de los *mntuns* del área de Archidona, la segunda ciudad más importante de esta región.

Los Napo Quichua tienen un sistema de parentesco bilateral y, siguiendo la costumbre Española, los niños heredan los apellidos del padre y de la madre. Sin embargo, las mujeres se apartan de esa costumbre porque no cambian su nombre después de casadas. El *ayllu*, la principal unidad de parentesco, puede ser definida como una categoría social compuesta de tres generaciones de familias extensas. Todos los miembros del *ayllu* son considerados parientes consanguíneos, pero en casos individuales se hacen distinciones entre parientes consanguíneos “cercaños” o “verdaderos” (*quiquin ayllu* o *ayllu pura*), y parientes distantes (*caru ayllu*). El *ayllu* es la institución que establece los límites de las regulaciones matrimoniales, que generalmente prohíben las uniones con parientes cercaños, y especialmente con todos aquellos clasificados como primos hermanos. El origen de este tabú inclusivo puede residir en la temprana y persistente influencia del Cristianismo entre los Napo Quichua, ya que los Canelos Quichua, lo mismo que otros grupos indígenas de la Amazonía Ecuatoriana, muestran una preferencia por los matrimonios entre primos cruzados (Véase Whitten 1984 para los Canelos Quichua; Taylor 1983 para los grupos Jivaro; Rival 1996 para los Huaorani). Una vez que se ha realizado un matrimonio, los padres del novio y de la novia pueden referirse respetuosamente y recíprocamente como *auya* (parientes afines). Sin embargo, dada la preferencia tradicional por la residencia virilocal, una mujer que se convierte en *cachun* (nuera) es tratada primordialmente como un Otro subordinado por sus suegros y debe demostrar su respeto a través de la adherencia estricta a una etiqueta asimétrica de términos de parentesco, mientras que las reglas para el yerno (*masha*) son considerablemente más flexibles.<sup>iii</sup>

Las fuentes etnohistóricas (Dickey 1924, Jouanen 1977; Orton 1876; Rice 1903; Porras Garcés 1955; Villavicencio 1984; Wavrin 1948) proveen una amplia evidencia para confirmar que, aún antes de la segunda llegada de los Jesuitas a la zona de Tena-Archidona, los Napo Quichua habían sido ya Cristianizados, al menos nominalmente, eran monógamos, y tenían una forma de matrimonio arreglado con residencia virilocal que era similar en estructura y proceso al que describe Francisca. En la tradición oral, estas costumbres eran usadas por los Napo Quichua para distinguirse de otros grupos Amazónicos tales como los Záparos, los Achuar, y los Shuar, quienes eran considerados “salvajes” porque “tenían muchas mujeres,” aunque existe evidencia etnográfica de matrimonios inter-étnicos de Napo Quichua con Záparos y Canelos Quichua (Ver

Muratorio 1991; Whitten 1984). La práctica de matrimonios de intercambio entre hermanos y hermanas puede haber sido común hace unas tres generaciones. Hudelson (1981) los menciona como la forma preferida de matrimonio en las regiones de Avila y Loreto, en la provincia del Napo, y había algunos casos en el área de Tena-Archidona hace unos quince años. El status de soltero es considerado una anomalía, aunque ahora con mayor frecuencia, jóvenes madres solteras se encuentran viviendo con sus padres sin mayores conflictos ya que, a diferencia de esos casos en la sociedad nacional, sus hijos son fácilmente incorporados en la unidad familiar de los padres de la mujer.

Como en muchas otras sociedades Amazónicas y Andinas (Shapiro 1984:26; Millones y Pratt 1990:18), entre los Napo Quichua, el matrimonio arreglado tradicional supone varias etapas en un proceso que puede llevar dos o tres años para completarse. Su característica distintiva reside en el ritual que se lleva a cabo en cada una de sus etapas, y especialmente en el elaborado simbolismo de su ceremonia de boda (*bura*). Aún hoy día, cuando los matrimonios arreglados tradicionales son raros, y cuando algunas de sus etapas han desaparecido totalmente, la boda, si bien modificada, sigue siendo una realidad para todos aquellos que pueden costear los onerosos gastos.<sup>iv</sup> También sigue siendo un ideal a alcanzar para las parejas y sus familias, aún después que han tenido varios hijos y que han realizado el matrimonio civil y eclesiástico. En un período de crecientes matrimonios enter-étnicos, esta sobresaliente característica de los rituales de matrimonio de los Napo Quichua, los distingue como cónyuges potenciales muy deseables para otros grupos indígenas tales como los Huaorani (Rival 1996:179-180). Paradójicamente, recientemente esta característica se ha convertido también en una fuente de tensión y conflicto cuando las mujeres Napo Quichua se casan con Norteamericanos o Europeos (localmente conocidos como “gringos”), quienes pueden ser cónyuges “deseables,” pero generalmente permanecen indiferentes o ignorantes del significado real y de la importancia de los rituales del matrimonio Napo Quichua.

No es mi intención aquí buscar el “verdadero” origen de este ritual Napo Quichua del matrimonio que es casi único entre las culturas Amazónicas, pero a través de las historias de Francisca, vistas a la luz de otra evidencia etnográfica e histórica, quiero explorar dos conjuntos de preguntas que han sido poco examinadas en los estudios de prácticas matrimoniales en la

Tierras Bajas de América del Sur (Shapiro 1984): las experiencias vividas de las mujeres, y el impacto ideológico de los misioneros Cristianos vistos desde el punto de vista indígena. Debido a su temprana situación de contacto y Cristianización, la tradición oral Napo Quichua nos ofrece un punto de vista privilegiado para explorar estos hechos en detalle. ¿Cómo se sienten las mujeres cuando son “cambiadas” o “vendidas” en situaciones de matrimonios arreglados? ¿Cómo se conforman o resisten su propia cultura y qué precio pagan por esas acciones? ¿Qué memorias se transmiten en la tradición oral de las mujeres que son distintas de las de los hombres? ¿Qué nos dicen los matrimonios de las tensiones y contradicciones dentro de la cultura Napo Quichua, o acerca de sus relaciones con la cultura dominante? ¿Más específicamente, cómo han traducido e internalizado las mujeres en su propia cosmología las enseñanzas Cristianas sobre el matrimonio y qué significados derivan de sus relaciones con prácticas “seculares”?

Al tratar con la historia de vida de Francisca se nos hace evidente el hecho, ya aceptado y bien investigado en estudios de historia oral y en psicología cultural, de que “el sentido del ser es un fenómeno esencialmente narrativo” (Stivers 1993:412) y que construimos una realidad significativa contando historias sobre nosotros mismos y escuchando las historias que otros cuentan sobre nosotros. Como lo expresa Clifford Geertz, “desde que nacemos todos nos convertimos en activos y apasionados ‘constructores de significado’ en búsqueda de historias creíbles...(1997:24). En la narrativa acerca de su matrimonio arreglado, su huida de la casa de sus suegros, y su deseado arreglo final de vivir con su marido en la casa de sus padres en contravención de establecidas normas culturales, Francisca moldea sus memorias de estos hechos para fraguarlas en un elemento central de su sentido de identidad. Ella selecciona cuidadosamente los personajes, las escenas, las imágenes, y particularmente los momentos y emociones más significativas para forjarse dramáticamente como una persona rebelde. Como otras famosas heroínas románticas, desafía lo ordinario, hace difíciles elecciones entre caminos bifurcantes, pagando un precio oneroso por su decisión, para surgir finalmente victoriosa de su experiencia como protagonista de su propia historia. El poder de la particularmente dotada personalidad de Francisca brilla a través del significado de sus palabras y del tono de su discurso, pero su historia, como la de muchos otros narradores de historias en su propia cultura, está



literalmente llena de las voces -y los silencios-<sup>v</sup> de otras personas significativas en su vida, proporcionándonos así profundas intuiciones sobre la sociabilidad fundamental del ser, su situación en múltiples discursos de identidad (Smith 1993:396; Moore 1994:140-144), y su inmersión en la afectividad de las relaciones sociales. Pero la voz de Francisca también entra en diálogo con discursos dominantes pasados y presentes, obligándonos así a contextualizar su subjetividad en las estructuras y procesos más amplios que afectaron su vida.

### **La historia de Francisca: sobre penosos escudrimientos y primera traición**

*Cuando ven a una niña que le gusta acarrear leña y hacer chacra, vienen los padres de un hombre y le dicen: “Esta niña es buena, la quiero para mi hijo.” Así es como me escogieron a mí. La madre de mi marido me escogió. Dijo que era inteligente, que mi mamá y mi papá eran de un buen muntun, inteligentes, y trabajadores. Así ha de ser la hija. Se pusieron de acuerdo para venir a pedirme a mi papá. Fui pedida cuando tenía los senos muy pequeñitos. Perdí mi muela del juicio cuando ya estaba con marido. Estaba lejos con mis padres en el río Ansu. Allí ellos [sus futuros suegros] me vieron y allí mi padre dió la palabra (maquipalabra). Le pidieron que no me dieran a ningún otro hombre, pero mi padre les dijo que vinieran a la casa para el pedido, que no lo hicieran en un lugar extraño.*

*Así es como vinieron a la casa para la tapuna (pedido) cuando yo era muy niña. Insistieron que querían una mujer de Pano y dijeron que me iban a cuidar bien. Trajeron un mono asado y también pescado. Pero mi mamá dijo que yo todavía era muy joven y decidieron esperar. Siguieron trayendo comida de vez en cuando por un año. Cuando yo oía que venían me iba a esconder en el monte hasta que se iban. No quería comer la comida que traían, tenía miedo de que me iban a poner un sobrenombre (burla) o iban a burlarse de mí. Yo miraba hacia la casa desde mi escondite detrás de un árbol grande, y aún entonces pensaba en escaparme. Yo sabía que estaban hablando de mí pero no sabía lo que me iba a pasar.*

*Después de un tiempo, cuando ya había crecido un poquito, ellos vinieron a anunciar que iban a hacer la pactachina (compromiso). El versiaru (cantor y tamborilero) y el tucaru (el que toca el violín) vinieron y todos estaban vestidos para bailar. Las mujeres y los hombres vinieron hasta la puerta bailando. Yo busqué*

*mi escondite en el monte desde donde podía ver y oír todo. Pidieron licencia en nombre de Dios, entraron a la casa y allí bailaron. Se saludaron con todos los hombres y mujeres y ofrecieron trago sacando de las **quisas (recipientes de barro)**. Tomaron toda la noche y al otro día se fueron.*

*Luego, pasando un tiempo vinieron de nuevo con comida para decir que iban a hacer la **bura**. Trajeron pescado y carne de monte. Dijeron: “Vamos a empezar a preparar la boda; nuestro hijo ya está grande y queremos darle mujer. Pensamos que podemos encontrar aunque sea hierba en el monte. Esto es lo que venimos a decirle para que pueda avisar a su gente.” Y mi papá dijo: “Está bien que usted diga eso, pero tome en cuenta que nosotros no estamos pidiendo una boda. Si usted piensa que su hijo necesita mujer, nosotros tenemos sólo lo que nos dan para comer y beber.” Y mi mamá dijo: “Si la van a querer, si es verdad que su hijo no le va a pegar, si usted le va a enseñar bien todas las cosas que tiene que saber para ser una mujer, entonces sí se la daré.” Ellos [los futuros suegros] se fueron de cacería, y cuando tuvieron bastante carne dijeron que estaban listos para hacer la boda, aunque no sabían qué bebida y comida iban a ofrecer. También prometieron ir a casa de los padrinos con una **shigra (bolsa)** de carne. Mi papá les dijo que trajeran chicha y trago. Ellos dijeron que la boda iba a ser en el Ansu. Yo me preguntaba entonces por qué me llevaban allá. No entendía nada de lo que estaban haciendo. Yo creía que después de la boda me iban a traer de vuelta a mi casa a vivir con mi mamá. Entonces mi abuelita que se llamaba Mariquita y mi abuelito que se llamaba Domingo me aconsejaron diciendo: “Mira hijita, tú no eres mayor, sólo estás empezando a pensar un poquito, tus senos recién empiezan a aparecer. Te están dando a un marido, debes irte con él como tu mamá te lo pide. Recuerda lo que te enseñó tu mamá: allí tienes que trabajar, cocinar la huayusa y una vez que les has dado de tomar a todos debes empezar a cocinar la yuca. Si no hay comida debes darles yuca con ají. Debes buscar leña, hojas para tapar las ollas, y paja toquilla para amarrar las hojas; debes buscar todas estas cosas por donde puedas. Ni pienses que vas a volver a tu casa mi hijita. En ese lugar lejano vas a enterrar tus huesos, allí vas a morir. Ahora te vas de mis manos. Yo ya no soy joven para verte de nuevo. Yo soy vieja mi hijita. Cuando te vayas de mi lado me voy a morir llorando. Te están llevando para dejarte allí.” Yo tenía mucho, mucho miedo;*

*pensaba que siempre iba a vivir con mi mamá. Yo decía en mi corazón: “No me voy a quedar.” Cuando mi abuelita me aconsejaba, yo ya estaba pensando: “¿Cómo puedo regresar? ¿Cómo me puedo esconder de ellos y regresar a casa?”*

*Cuando salimos de mi casa para ir al Ansu, sabiendo que yo quería volverme, mi mamá me dió una canasta y un huahua (niño) para cargar para que no pudiera escaparme en el camino. Era muy lejos; tuvimos que pasar la noche en el camino. Temprano en la mañana cruzamos un río y los potreros. Yo me dije: “¿Dónde me están llevando?” y no podía dejar de pensar cómo escaparme. Miraba muy bien el camino para recordar todos los detalles de mi regreso. Era un camino muy ancho, construido por la compañía [de petróleo], lleno de huellas, de zapatos de vacas; lleno de huellas de ganado. Los blancos sabían sacar el ganado por ese camino. Mi mamá me mostraba las huellas diciendo que eran de los zapatos de los soldados para que yo pudiera reconocerlas y tuviera miedo de ese camino. Cuando estábamos cerca de llegar mi mamá me dijo: “No llores mi hijita, no estés triste; yo te he traído aquí tan lejos; como decimos los runa (gente), te estoy “vendiendo,” no trates de volver porque es muy lejos. ¿Ves este camino mi hijita? Es así porque por aquí caminan los blancos y los negros. Es el camino de los soldados; ellos te van a llevar a Quito, a la Costa, si vuelves por este camino te van a secuestrar, te van a dar comida hedionda, cebolla de comer y leche de vaca de tomar. No trates de escaparte. En el otro camino, en cambio, los ríos son muy correntosos, vas a morir si tratas de cruzarlos.” Cuando yo oía eso temblaba de miedo. Mi mamá me dió estos consejos durante todo el camino, pero yo lloraba y lloraba, y temblaba toda. Yo creía que ella se iba a quedar conmigo como me había prometido; yo era todavía muy niña para comprender. Cuando entendí que me iban a dejar allí con mis suegros hasta la muerte, me desesperé y allí mismo decidí que no me iba a quedar.*

*Hicieron la boda, y tres días después todos los invitados se fueron. Sólo mis padres se quedaron por dos semanas. Mi suegro trajo un mono gordo, pero yo no quería comer. Las hermanas de mi marido me llevaron al río a bañarme. Mis padres decían: “Ya se está acostumbrando,” pero no era verdad. Mis suegros me prometieron que me iban a llevar a visitar a mi mamá, pero me mintieron. Pasó un mes y no me habían llevado. Mi suegra era brava. Me botó mi machete y mi canasta para que no pudiera seguirla a la chacra. Debe estar quemándose en algún lado. Mi suegro era bueno;*

*debe estar sentado cerca de Dios. El compartía su comida conmigo. Le sabía decir a su mujer: “¿Tú piensas que esta niña es vieja? ¿Qué te dijo Mariacu [la madre de Francisca] cuando te la dió? ¿No tenías sesos en tu cabeza? ¿Dónde estaban tus oídos entonces?”*

Francisca comienza su historia estableciendo sus impecables credenciales de parentesco y certificando su meticulosa socialización en manos de su madre y abuela como una perfecta mujer Napo Quichua (Muratorio 1997). Se identifica como una mujer de Pano, dando por descontado que quien la que escucha “sabe” que este muntun “naturalmente” produce potenciales cónyuges muy deseables. Pero aún más significativamente, Francisca afirma haber heredado de sus padres los dos rasgos de carácter considerados más valiosos en su cultura en ese tiempo: la reputación de ser una mujer trabajadora heredada de su madre, y la inteligencia crítica y el espíritu de lucha de su padre. Estos dos últimos rasgos no son particularmente considerados valiosos por los hombres como atributos de las mujeres, ni se espera que ellas estén así dotadas. Al enfatizar estas cualidades como suyas desde el comienzo, Francisca está ya bosquejando su retrato singular como persona, pero está también montando el escenario para explicar más adelante porqué su resistencia a su matrimonio arreglado le permitió ser socializada por su padre, un hecho no común en su cultura, pero un recuerdo que ella atesora.

Al mismo tiempo, Francisca menciona que la madre de su marido es la que la eligió como mujer para su hijo, cuestionando así supuestos bien establecidos acerca del rol principal de los hombres en los intercambios matrimoniales. Puede ser que las mujeres Pano sean “dadas” por sus padres o hermanos en matrimonio, pero son ciertamente “evaluadas” y elegidas por otras mujeres. La reputación y el sentido de identidad Napo Quichua se adquieren principalmente a través del trabajo (Muratorio 1997). En consecuencia, se considera que sólo una mujer puede juzgar adecuada e inteligentemente las sutilezas que las tareas de una mujer implican, especialmente si ésta va a convertirse en su nuera. Idealmente, y particularmente en casos de matrimonios arreglados cuando la mujer era muy niña, se esperaba que ésta iba a recibir una parcela de tierra para hacer su propia chacra y que debía ser cariñosamente socializada por su suegra en todos los aspectos del trabajo femenino que la llevaría, en una fluída transición, hacia su nueva vida como esposa y madre. La realidad, por supuesto, es que la relación entre suegras y

nueras es considerablemente conflictiva, especialmente cuando las suegras se ponen del lado de sus hijos en casos de peleas matrimoniales, como ocurre con frecuencia. Es precisamente porque su suegra no cumplió con estas expectativas ideales de su rol de suegra, que Francisca se siente todavía amarga y traicionada en ese primer período tan importante de su vida como nueva nuera. No sólo tuvo que confrontar por primera vez una violencia irracional de parte de una figura maternal, sino que además, la indiferencia de su suegra acerca de sus propias obligaciones, y su falta de generosidad, violaron todas las enseñanzas de la madre de Francisca, de tal manera que causaron la propia crítica de su suegro, cuyas palabras Francisca recuerda tan vívidamente al final de esta sección de su historia.

Sin embargo, la principal queja de Francisca acerca de su matrimonio no se refiere a su “malvada” suegra, a quien a conveniencamente ha mandado al Infierno para no volverla a ver, sino a haber sido dada en matrimonio cuando todavía era muy niña para entender y para tener la posibilidad de elegir a su marido. Frecuentemente me ha comentado cómo su matrimonio temprano le impidió ir a la escuela y aprender a hablar y escribir el Castellano. “De lo contrario podría haber sido abogada o doctora,” me ha repetido varias veces. Esta es una queja que he oído de varias otras mujeres de la generación de Francisca. Más que ser la causa de los matrimonios tempranos, esta actitud de los padres acerca de la educación de sus hijas estaba directamente relacionada con un temor muy realista de que si ellas eran mandadas a los internados de las religiosas, éstas las iban a colocar como empleadas domésticas localmente en casa de los blancos o, peor aún, las iban a mandar a Quito a trabajar para blancos, y de este modo los padres no las iban a ver nunca más (Goetschel 1996; varios documentos en AGN). El mismo temor existía entre los padres indígenas, de que si sus hijos varones entraban a la escuela de la misión, iban a ser reclutados en el ejército y mandados a luchar en guerras cuyo significado nunca se les explicaba.<sup>vi</sup> Aunque ahora la escuela primaria es obligatoria, la educación secundaria para las niñas sigue siendo un tema de conflicto entre las mujeres de distintas generaciones, y este conflicto todavía se centra alrededor de los problemas de la sexualidad y el matrimonio.

El camino que Francisca y su madre atravesaron para llegar a la casa de sus futuros suegros está preñado de memorias de colonialismo en las imágenes de las huellas del ganado y de los soldados, así como en los extraños gustos y “repugnantes” olores a cebolla y leche de

vaca que antes como ahora evocan la cultura de los blancos. Es ese sendero de la aculturación violenta el que figura tan prominentemente en la trayectoria de resistencia de Francisca. En contraste con el lujo de detalles que ella nos proporciona con respecto a cada una de las etapas que conducen a su matrimonio, el silencio de Francisca acerca de los tres días de su ceremonia de boda es aún más revelador. Significa su total rechazo a ser transferida, física y emocionalmente, al grupo de su marido y prepara el escenario para su huída. Este es el núcleo central de su historia:

*Yo siempre tenía mi ropa y mi frazada en una shigra listas para escaparme. Sabía irme a hurtadillas detrás de la casa para planear mi huída. Sólo pensaba en escaparme. Por aquel entonces yo pensaba que podía huir como una gacela y así lo hice. Un día mi suegra estaba haciendo ollas;, ella me dijo que se había levantado muy de madrugada, pero ya cantaba el grillo. Mi suegra me preguntó que porqué andaba para arriba y para abajo al río. Yo le dije que me dolía la barriga con diarrea y que por eso tenía que ir así. Lo que pasaba es que poco a poco llevaba las cosas al río para huirme. Primero escondí el machete, después llevé la canasta que me había dado mi papá. Allí puse mi frazada, un poco de sal, el pilche para la huayusa y el otro pilche que mi mamá me había dado cuando me iba a casar. Tenía dos pensamientos: venirme por el camino de la compañía, pero me acordaba que me iban a llevar los soldados y los negros y me daba mucho miedo. El otro era el camino de Pitua con un cerro bien alto y ríos que cruzar, pero decidí ir por allí. Al día siguiente, cuando todos estaban dormidos empecé a caminar por ese camino y luego a correr tan rápido como podía. Un hombre me ayudó a cruzar el río, como era verano no estaba profundo. Me puse la canasta en la cabeza y cruzé por las piedras. En una mano tenía un machete y en la otra un bastón. Vine corriendo todo el tiempo, no paré para nada, sólo una vez para mirar si alguien me seguía. Bajaba un cerro y subía otro, corriendo todo el tiempo. En el cerro que se llama Huayusa tomé agua y luego de una larga caminata llegué a la tierra de mi abuelito. El me abrazó y lloró diciendo: “¿Porqué han dado a mi nietita así tan lejos? Yo ni teniendo diez hijas hubiera dado así.” Me sobaba la cabeza y me decía: “Mamita porqué te has venido así, no has tenido miedo de los pumas y de los supais (espíritus)?” Un camino que se hacía en tres*

*días yo lo había hecho en un solo día. Cuando llegué a mi casa mi papá se arrepintió de haberme dado tan niña y tan lejos. Me quedé en mi casa por un tiempo, pero mis suegros vinieron de nuevo a buscarme. Trajeron trago, pescado, y carne de danta y me llevaron de nuevo. Yo me escapé tres veces de esta misma manera. Cada vez que me llevaron me escapé. Hasta entonces no había dormido con mi marido.*

Es por supuesto un hecho común y aún esperado, que una niña que es casada muy pequeña va a llorar o tratar de escaparse a casa de su madre por lo menos una vez antes de conformarse finalmente a retornar a la casa de su marido (por ejemplo véase Dole 1974:19-29; Århem 1987:134). Se dá también el caso de que, a pesar de la preferencia por la residencia post-matrimonial virilocal, entre los Napo Quichua la residencia uxorilocal existió entonces como ahora.<sup>vii</sup> Sin embargo, no he encontrado ningún otro caso en que esta forma de residencia fuese ocasionada por el desafío de una niña a los deseos y presiones sociales tanto de sus padres como de sus suegros. Francisca simplemente los rindió con su obstinada resistencia a conformarse a una regla cultural que casi siempre coloca a las mujeres recién casadas, aún si temporalmente, en la posición social mas baja. Por el contrario, Francisca forzó a su propio marido a asumir esa posición subordinada en la casa de sus padres, ya que allí no tenía ni la más mínima posibilidad de competir con éxito por el respeto, el afecto, o el prestigio social con el padre de Francisca, quien era un líder reconocido.<sup>viii</sup>

Aunque este importante segmento de la historia de Francisca está lleno de amargura por su falta de poder de decisión en controlar esos años tempranos de su vida, ahora en retrospectiva, ella considera su elección de resistencia como fuente de identidad personal y cultural. El escaparse por la difícil ruta “salvaje,” en vez de por el camino más fácil por donde transitaban los soldados, significa su determinación de permanecer siendo una mujer Pano, si bien rebelde, y su rechazo al camino forzado de la aculturación blanca. Esta es una elección que Francisca reitera más explícitamente cuando se niega a ser tentada a la infidelidad matrimonial por los blancos. Pero antes de seguir los pasos de Francisca en esta aventura, necesitamos explicar el imaginario implícito en la importancia del matrimonio arreglado en la cultura Napo Quichua.

### **La importancia del matrimonio: un paradigma imposible**

La regulación y moralización de la naturaleza supuestamente “incivilizada” de la sexualidad indígena fue la preocupación principal de los misioneros, e interferir en las prácticas nativas de matrimonio se convirtió en una de las estrategias preferidas para obtener este objetivo. En la década de 1870, Jouanen (1977:90-91) menciona una carta de un Jesuita donde establece su firme decisión de acabar con las *pactachiscas*, descritas como ceremonias en que el matrimonio era arreglado por los padres cuando sus hijos eran muy pequeños. La fuerza, tal como poner al padre del novio en la cárcel en cadenas por un día, fue una estrategia usada por los misioneros para tratar de impedir los matrimonios arreglados, pero los Jesuitas también trataron de promover los matrimonios tempranos “voluntarios” entre los pupilos de sus internados, asignando un pedazo de terreno a las nuevas parejas para que fueran formando un asentamiento Cristiano; como parte de una estrategia fracasada de estos misioneros de lograr la sedentarización de los Napo Quichua. Un misionero Dominicano que visitó esta área en 1899 (1899:48) señala que los matrimonios tempranos, a la edad de 14 años para los hombres y de 12 años para las mujeres, habían sido impuestos por los misioneros para tratar de aumentar la población y de reducir la incidencia de relaciones sexuales pre-maritales. Los patrones blancos también apoyaban esta práctica matrimonial muy activamente como una forma fácil de incrementar el número de sus indígenas deudores. Más adelante, los misioneros también se opusieron con vehemencia al matrimonio de sus acólitos con conversos Protestantes. De las diferentes etapas del matrimonio indígena, tanto los misioneros Católicos como los Protestantes, ponían las mayores objeciones en contra de la ceremonia de boda: los Católicos porque ésta competía con éxito frente a la ceremonia eclesiástica, y los Protestantes principalmente por el hecho de que la fiesta de boda implicaba beber y bailar.<sup>ix</sup>

¿Pero cuál fue el impacto del Cristianismo en las prácticas de matrimonio arreglado de los Napo Quichua? El hecho de que medio siglo atrás esta forma de matrimonio todavía era la norma, que algunos de sus etapas todavía persisten, y que la boda continúa siendo la expectativa ideal de la mayoría de las parejas, nos llevarían a pensar que el Cristianismo casi no tuvo impacto en esta importante institución. Sin embargo, indagando más a fondo en la ideología y el imaginario comenzamos a descubrir la complejidad con que los Napo Quichua se han



acomodado y transformado los significados del dogma Católico acerca del matrimonio y, en este respecto, es que reluce el pensamiento teológico de Francisca.

Su explicación de su matrimonio arreglado es una historia que le narró su padre acerca del matrimonio de la Virgen María con San José.<sup>x</sup> Francisca ofreció esta narrativa como una forma de “excusa” o “disculpa” por la decisión de su padre de casarla, decisión que ella todavía considera que fue “poco razonable” y “equivocada” por parte de su padre. Pero al recontar esta historia, Francisca también revela su propia ambigüedad acerca del matrimonio arreglado y de sus consecuencias para las mujeres. Esta es su versión de la historia:

Mi padre contaba que la Virgen era una niña muy bonita. Durante una fiesta, los viejos estaban buscando las mejores mujercitas. Pero varios jóvenes estaban ya enamorando a la Virgen y querían pedir su mano en matrimonio. Sus papás no querían que se case con el viejo José; entonces les dijeron a los jóvenes que se vistieran bonito y que gritaran fuerte: “Yo la quiero, yo la quiero.” En este mismo momento llegó una paloma con una flor en el pico y comenzó a volar alrededor del salón. María y los jóvenes dijeron: “Que la flor me caiga a mí, que me caiga a mí.” Pero no cayó en ninguno de ellos; la flor y la paloma se posaron en el hombro del viejo que estaba sentado muy quietito en un rincón del salón. Esta es la razón por la cual María se tuvo que casar con José y nuestros hijos tienen que ir a pedir la mano de una niña cuando cae la flor. En tiempos antiguos cuando no cumplíamos con este deber no teníamos flor [hijos]. Mi padre decía que así como la flor cayó para la Virgen y ella tuvo que casarse con ese viejo, así también nosotras tenemos que casarnos cuando nuestros padres dicen y no abandonar a nuestros maridos, de lo contrario no tendremos flor. Cuando José se dió cuenta que María ya estaba embarazada se puso bravo y le dijo: “¿De quién te has quedado embarazada? Tú has estado con otro hombre!” y se fue, pero un ángel le explicó todo en un sueño y lo trajo de vuelta a la casa. Por eso ahora cuando una mujer casada se queda embarazada, a algunos maridos les gusta decir que el hijo no es de ellos, pero ya no hay un ángel que les diga lo contrario y que nos libre a las mujeres de ser golpeadas. Si una mujer tiene un sueño acerca de su futuro matrimonio [arreglado], y en ese sueño ella no quiere casarse con el hombre que sus padres le han elegido, se puede poner muy enferma.<sup>xi</sup> Si en un sueño una paloma se asienta en tu hombro tienes que vivir bien y no andar riéndote con otros hombres.

En el pensamiento Napo Quichua, la versión Católica aceptada de la historia del casamiento de la Virgen <sup>xiii</sup> no sólo requiere tener fé en la encarnación de Dios, sino que también supone aceptar ciertos presupuestos cuestionables tales como la castidad de José y la concepción virginal, así como otros más creíbles, como la importancia de los sueños para la acción futura y el episodio de un espíritu poderoso que se transforma en pájaro. Pero, en general, la trama del matrimonio de la Virgen es extraño a las normas culturales Quichua. De acuerdo a éstas, es inconcebible que que una mujer como María -siempre representada como jóven, hermosa, y virtuosa- pueda haber sido presionada a casarse con José, cuya imágen es siempre la de un viejo. Entre los Napo Quichua, sólo las jóvenes que han tenido relaciones sexuales con varios hombres y han rehusado casarse con ninguno de ellos, o áquellas que desobedecen los deseos de sus padres en la elección de marido, pueden ser castigadas por sus padres casándolas con un hombre viejo, generalmente un viudo.

Entre los Napo Quichua, la versión Cristiana del matrimonio de la Virgen María con San José, ha sido entonces reformulada como el paradigma normativo del matrimonio arreglado en el marco de sumisión al modelo cultural más familiar de respeto y obediencia a las más altas autoridades en la jerarquía de parentesco. En la actualidad esta norma es asunto de controversia, hecho del cual Francisca es consciente, como se aclarará mas adelante en el curso de su propia narración. Aunque ella no lo “sabe,” siguiendo las normas del pensamiento Católico contemporáneo, Francisca no admite la intervención directa de los ángeles en la vida cotidiana de los humanos, especialmente si es para salvar a las mujeres de las furias celosas de sus maridos. Su pensamiento en esta materia, así como en relación a la infertilidad de las mujeres y otras desgracias de la maternidad, sigue la ortodoxia de la ideología Napo Quichua acerca del poder chamánico sobre el destino de los humanos.

### **Sobre la escatología y el matrimonio: el punto de vista Napo Quichua**

Esta área de la continuación de la vida después de la muerte y tros asuntos relacionados, ha presentado serios problemas a los filósofos de la religión, especialmente el de la continuación del matrimonio en otros mundos (Benz 1973:507-508), un asunto que está fuera de mi

competencia. Pero los teólogos también reconocen el carácter mitológico de la imaginería sobre el Cielo, el Infierno y el Purgatorio (Mckencie 1973:995-996). Este hecho ha permitido que la imaginación de los pueblos indígenas de todas las Américas elabore esta mitología en distintas formas para enriquecer las ya existentes mitologías nativas.

Los Napo Quichua conciben el cosmos organizado en tres niveles: *ahuapacha* (o el mundo de arriba), *caipacha* (este mundo), y *ucupacha* (el mundo de abajo). Consideran que “este mundo” está poblado, no sólo por seres humanos sino por otros espíritus (genéricamente llamados *supais*) que pueden moverse a su voluntad en el bosque, en el agua, y en espacios domésticos, adquiriendo formas humanas o animales. También tienen relaciones de parentesco entre ellos similares a las de los humanos (incluyendo el matrimonio), e interactúan activamente con éstos a través de sus sueños, sus visiones inducidas por alucinógenos, o a través de experiencias que los Napo Quichua describen como “encuentros,” positivos o negativos, y que pueden tener lugar en situaciones totalmente cotidianas. Dependiendo del contexto y del contenido de las situaciones que son experimentadas y explicadas, estos niveles cosmológicos son traducidos a los estratos Cristianos: Cielo (*Diuspallacta* o Tierra de Dios), Tierra, e Infierno, a los cuales se agrega el Limbo como un nivel “liminal.”<sup>xiii</sup> Las funciones de cada nivel en relación a la conducta humana también son aquellas asociadas con las enseñanzas Cristianas, aunque sus significados han sido transformados significativamente, como demostraré más adelante. El diablo Cristiano es considerado un *supai*, pero coexiste con otras variedades de *supais*, a pesar de los intentos Maniqueístas de los misioneros de reducir todos estos *supais* a un sólo personaje representando al Mal como el principal antagonista de Jesucristo. La imagen del “diablo-*supai*” es similar a las versiones populares de este personaje en el folklore medieval, representado con una larga cola y siendo capaz de transformarse en un perro negro.

Entre los Napo Quichua se cree que las relaciones incestuosas entre los parientes cercanos producen “niños deformes,” parecidos a aquellos vástagos (*supaihualhuas*) que resultan cuando una mujer es impregnada por un *supai*. Los que tienen relaciones incestuosas son ciertamente castigados siendo mandados al Infierno. Así como los niños que no han sido bautizados, los solteros van al Limbo, lo cual confirma el principio que tanto los hombres como las mujeres se convierten en adultos sólo después del matrimonio. En una nota más optimista, los

que se casan “bien” van al Cielo. A causa de la importancia decisiva de la ceremonia de boda, casarse “bien” significa no sólo seguir las reglas matrimoniales acerca de la selección de cónyuge, sino también celebrar esta ceremonia de acuerdo con las complejas reglas de intercambio y reciprocidad. Los castigos que pueden resultar por desafiar estas últimas costumbres parecen ser más onerosos que aquellos que resultan de no llevar a cabo el matrimonio eclesiástico, un asunto que Francisca cree puede ser siempre negociado.

La pesada responsabilidad por el matrimonio y la boda resta con los padres de la pareja. Francisca, cuya hija menor no ha realizado todavía la ceremonia de boda, explica esta situación como una “carga.” Bien si las hijas crecen sin haber sido pedidas en matrimonio, o si la familia del novio no hace la bura, se cree que las madres sufren un castigo poco comfortable, situación que crea una continua fuente de tensión y conflicto entre consuegros. Hasta que la bura tiene lugar, las manos de la madre de la novia y del padre del novio “permanecen atadas con grillos y sus brazos les duelen.” Esta es la razón por la cual, de acuerdo a Francisca, cuando finalmente se celebra la bura, uno tiene que buscar un buen tamborilero y cantor que “le pide licencia a Dios” para liberar las manos de todos de ese castigo. Sólo cuando los novios bailan y la bura está terminada, los padres se salvan. Esta creencia puede ser también la fuente de un serio dilema ideológico y psicológico para los padres Napo Quichua: entre el deseo de liberarse de ese castigo y la culpa que puede resultar, como en el caso de Francisca, de haber tomado muy pronto la decisión de casar a sus hijos o de haber hecho la decisión errada.

Como otros grupos Amazónicos (Véase Cipoletti 1987), los Napo Quichua cuentan historias de personas que, cuando han sufrido una severa enfermedad, han ido al Cielo y vuelto con vívidas memorias de sus experiencias. Usualmente estas historias son contadas para reforzar las normas de un comportamiento cultural específico y para proveer explicaciones adicionales de sus significados. En relación a las costumbres matrimoniales, Francisca me contó el caso de un hombre que había muerto dos días antes de que ocurriera nuestra conversación. Durante su enfermedad este hombre se había ido al Cielo donde Dios le había mostrado “a todos aquellos que estaban nadando en las llamas azules porque sus hijos no se habían casado apropiadamente por la Iglesia.” Luego, “misericordiosamente,” Dios había mandado a este hombre de vuelta a la tierra para que terminara bien su trabajo de casar a sus propios hijos. Francisca explicó que

éste fue un procedimiento mucho más fácil y más rápido que llevar a cabo una bura, porque el hombre volvió, hizo bautizar y casar a todos sus hijos por un cura en tres días, dijo que estaba ya “libre de culpa,” y se murió en completa paz.

### **Memorias de colonialismo y resistencia**

Si bien por una parte, a través de un largo período de tiempo, los Napo Quichuas lograron traducir los guiones teológicos Cristianos imprimiéndoles sus propios significados culturales, por la otra resistieron firmemente la interferencia personal de los misioneros en su vida cotidiana (Muratorio 1991). Esto fue cierto especialmente en aquellas situaciones en que los misioneros cuestionaron o trataron de desvirtuar la estructura de autoridad de la unidad de parentesco, como en los casos de arreglos matrimoniales. Los padres indígenas resistieron particularmente aquellas estipulaciones de los misioneros de que una pareja joven debía pasar un tiempo viviendo en la misión con el objeto de ser indocinados por los misioneros antes de consumir su matrimonio. Considerando los recelos que la mayoría de la gente indígena todavía siente acerca de los votos de castidad de los misioneros, se entiende que tuvieron miedo de que en esa situación en la misión, sus hijas pudieran ser sexualmente abusadas. La preocupación por sus hijos varones era principalmente de que iban a ser explotados con demasiado trabajo.

Las religiosas tenían la tarea de indocininar a las jóvenes indígenas para convertirlas en “ideales madres y esposas Cristianas,” aunque siempre tuvieron dificultad en conseguir que las niñas se quedaran en el convento por largos períodos de tiempo o de que renunciaran a las enseñanzas de sus madres. Las mujeres indígenas consideraron el convento como un lugar de refugio temporal donde podían escapar de patronos o de esposos abusivos. Aún hoy día, las religiosas presionan a las mujeres indígenas que han sido objeto de abuso doméstico por sus esposos para que se queden y trabajen en el convento, en vez de ayudarles a recurrir a las autoridades pertinentes, pero muy pocas siguen este consejo.

Desde los tiempos en que los Protestantes Evangélicos llegaron a esta área, el último desafío de los indígenas a los misioneros Católicos fue “convertirse” a la nueva religión. No es entonces una sorpresa descubrir que, fiel a su propio espíritu, Francisca siguió esta drástica ruta de resistencia. La narrativa de su conversión al Evangelismo, nombre genérico de todas las sectas

Protestantes, se refiere al intento de un sacerdote Católico y de unas religiosas de entrometerse en el matrimonio arreglado de su hermana. Como Francisca, su hermana resistió su matrimonio arreglado por sus padres retornando a la casa de su madre. Una vez, cuando los padres se fueron en un viaje de pesca, la dejaron en el convento por unos días al cuidado de las religiosas. Allí ellas le aconsejaron que deje a su marido porque éste era “un Evangélico y el mismo diablo.” Cuando la madre de Francisca retornó por su hija, el cura le dijo que “le iba a cortar las orejas para dárselas a los perros” y la amenazó con retener a la hija en el convento indefinidamente. Aún varios años más tarde, Francisca todavía recuerda vívidamente las reacciones suya y de su madre ante las injuriosas palabras del sacerdote. En sus propias palabras:

Nos pusimos muy bravas y mi mamá le dijo al cura: ”¿Es Dios que te mandó a cortar las orejas de la gente? Quieres tratarnos como animales! ¿Es ella acaso tu hija? La madre es la que dá a su hija en matrimonio, y si ella no quiere el marido que le dan, tiene que servir a su mamá, no a vos.¿Así es como me pagas por todas las veces que vine a la iglesia a escuchar misa?” Luego yo misma le dije: “¿Fuiste tú el que cambiaste los pañales de mi hermana o el que le diste de comer? Puedes mandarme a la cárcel, pero no hay ley que diga que no puedo reclamar a mi propia hermana. Yo soy hija de Basilio. Mi papá y mi mamá construyeron Tena, no vos. Mi papá trajo al primer cura cargado en su espalda. Tu, en cambio no hiciste nada, y todos ustedes se van a ir al Infierno y no van a ver la cara de Dios. Yo soy Católica y me tratas así, pero desde ahora me voy a ir a los Evangélicos. Ellos predicán en Quichua, vos sólo predicás para vos y para algunas señoras.” Cuando fui a Pano ví a Guamundi y a Gilberto Tapuy (dos pastores Evangélicos indígenas) cantando y me hice Evangélica. Lo hice para desafiar a los Padres, sólo para molestarlos.

Esta no fue la última “conversión” de Francisca. Unos años después de este episodio se reconvirtió al Catolicismo, irónicamente por dos razones que se refieren a la equidad de género. Primeramente se ofendió con los Protestantes porque éstos no ofrecían ninguna oportunidad a las mujeres para poder ser pastores para lo cual, por supuesto, Francisca se consideraba calificada. Y segundo, ella se resintió mucho por la “pobre opinión” que supuestamente los Evangélicos tenían sobre la Virgen María, a quien Francisca, como otras mujeres en su cultura, considera un poderoso chamán.

### **Sobre el amor, las relaciones conyugales, y la violencia**

Aún en casos de matrimonios arreglados cuando la joven no tiene nada que decir en el asunto, llega un momento en que hay que enfrentar la difícil realidad de las relaciones matrimoniales. El amor romántico puede no haber sido el motivo original para el matrimonio, pero el amor y el afecto, como todas las emociones, no son solamente “naturales” y personales, sino también cultural y socialmente construidas en todos los aspectos de la vida humana, y el matrimonio no es una excepción.<sup>xiv</sup> Siempre se están haciendo conflictivos compromisos entre los paradigmas culturales ideales y prescritos que la gente busca vivir, y las realidades de sus deseos y voluntades personales que, por supuesto, cambian cuando la gente madura y se acomoda a cualquiera haya sido el arreglo matrimonial que realizó. Debemos oír la última parte de la historia de Francisca para entender cómo ella logró resolver esos problemas en su propia vida, y dentro de las restricciones impuestas por su propia cultura y tiempo histórico. Esta es su historia:

*Querían que durmiera con mi marido pero yo me negaba. Por tres años por lo menos no dormí con él. Cuando quería tocarme, nada. Cuando estaba cansada me iba a dormir cerca de la candela. Un día me llevaron a Puyo para hacerme dormir con mi marido. Me pusieron a dormir entre una vieja y mi marido, pero yo me envolví bien apretada con una frazada. Allí tampoco dormí con él. Mi marido estaba bravo y celoso. Me botó la chicha en la cara, luego la derramó en la frazada y en el lodo. Venía a la casa borracho y se quejaba a sus padres de que no me hacían dormir con él. Oyendo esto me escapaba al monte. Todas las mujeres le recriminaban diciendo: ¿"Porqué le pegas? Acaso ya has dormido con ella? Si la tratas así no se va a quedar." El seguía diciendo: "Ustedes me han dado una niña, mira cómo me trata." Una vez me dejaron un tiempo con una gente blanca en Puyo. Si hubiera sido como las niñas de ahora, me hubiera ido con uno de esos hombres blancos. ¿Pero dónde estaría viviendo ahora? Estaría muy triste. En vez de hacer eso, continúe escapándome.*

*Mi marido decía que me iba a matar con la escopeta, que me iba a cortar en pedazos con el machete. Y eso era peor; menos quería yo dormir con él. ¿Acaso Huagra [su marido] era gente? Ahora es más o menos, pero antes quería dispararme con la escopeta. Por eso es que todos los días le hago acuerdo. Sólo cuando me pongan en el ataúd voy a olvidarme de las cosas que me hizo. Sabía decirle: "Archiruna, Archiruna, comedor de culebras, regresa a Archidona." Ahora si me insulta lo puedo denunciar a las autoridades, antes no sabía nada. Tengo todo lo que me hizo grabado en mi mente como si estuviera escrito en papel. Por eso pienso que tal vez el marido de Juanita [su hija menor] no se va a arreglar. Sólo áquellos que son inteligentes y escuchan consejos,*

*se componen. Yo sabía decir: “Me pega y me voy,” pero mi hija se queda con él a pesar de que casi la mata a palos.*

*Finalmente retorné a la casa de mi marido porque mi suegro era **yachaj (chamán)** y podría haber matado a mis padres y a mí. La tercera vez que me escapé ya no volví donde mis suegros. Entoces mi padre dijo: “No voy a mandar a mi hija de vuelta. Que el marido venga y viva conmigo como un hijo, le voy a dar tierra. La he hecho sufrir, casi se murió por escaparse,” y mis suegros estuvieron de acuerdo. Mi marido volvió de la compañía [**de petróleo**] enfermo de malaria y muy pálido. Lo podría haber escupido y dejado ahí mismo. Pero después mi madre me aconsejó que debía dormir con él y tuve que hacerlo. Ella me decía que si yo me seguía negando me iba a dar a un viudo, a un viejo que se llamaba Laticu. Esto es lo que le pasaba a la jóvenes que abandonaban a sus maridos . Les pelaban la cabeza y las daban a un viejo. Yo dormí con él después de mi tercera menstruación y comencé a portarme como una mujer.*

*Desde entonces no regresé a su casa, ni aún cuando tuve mi primer hijo. Antes de eso perdí cinco hijos. Los mayores decían que yo no pude tener niños por bastante tiempo porque estaba embrujada por mis suegros. No los estaba sirviendo y había quebrado la ley. Pero mi suegro lo negaba y decía que me quería, que yo era su **huayusamama (la mujer que sirve la huayusa, aquí usado como término de cariño)**, que me extrañaba. Luego comenzamos a visitarlos más seguido y a ayudar en la casa. Me llevaron con ellos muy lejos a sacar caucho y les dimos las bolas al patrón que las vendía a los gringos. Mi suegro le dió un pedazo de terreno a mi marido en Pasourcu, la tierra que tenemos ahora. Es buena tierra y yo la he repartido entre mis hijas. Pero yo también trabajo la tierra de mi padre y ahí es donde vivo ahora, ahí es donde él quería que viviera y donde voy a morir. Yo aprendí de él muchas de las cosas que te he contado.*

En tiempos pasados la consumación del matrimonio no tenía lugar en el día de la boda, que se celebraba en la casa de los padres del novio. En algunos casos, dependiendo de la distancia entre los distintos asentamientos, la jóven era mandada de vuelta con sus padres por unas pocas semanas, o dormía con su suegra hasta que se le pasara el miedo inicial. La ceremonia ritual de hacer dormir a los novios era la obligación de los padrinos, una ocasión que iba acompañada de prolongados consejos sobre el futuro de la relación matrimonial. De acuerdo a Francisca, y juzgando por su propia experiencia al menos, los dos novios lloraban al tener que sobrellevar esa “penosa experiencia” por primera vez.<sup>xv</sup> Pero ella piensa que jugar a “hacerse la difícil” y rehusar dormir con el marido eran también estrategias que “realzaban” el valor de las



mujeres al incrementar el deseo de los hombres y su consecuente frustración. En su opinión, si las mujeres dormían muy rápido con sus maridos eran criticadas, y ésta es una razón por la cual las mujeres de ahora se han vuelto “baratas,” ya que ceden fácilmente y no reciben los consejos rituales apropiados. Esto también se aplica a los hombres, quienes al no recibir esas enseñanzas, son más propensos a pegar a sus mujeres, aún en la primera semana del matrimonio. Los hombres mayores también comparten esta opinión acerca de este aspecto del matrimonio, pero la expresan de diferente manera en términos de los “sufrimientos” y las “humillaciones” que tenían que pasar para pedir a la joven en primer lugar, para luego, después de todo ese trabajo, tener que enfrentar su “tonto” rechazo a tener relaciones sexuales. Como es una creencia, al menos por parte de los hombres, que ellos van a “domesticar” a las mujeres a través del sexo, su propio poder de control está siendo cuestionado por el rechazo de las mujeres. Además, la auto-imagen de los hombres en relación a la importante cuestión de su propia identidad está en juego. Si no “actúan” con prontitud, y “producen” un hijo al final del primer año de matrimonio, sus reputaciones sufren considerablemente, dejándolos expuestos a las inexorables e implacables burlas de tanto hombres como mujeres (Véase Muratorio 1991:63).

Se entiende como sentido común, sin embargo, que el sexo debe verse como uno de los aspectos importantes del matrimonio, pero no necesariamente ligado al afecto y al respeto por el cónyuge, que están basados principalmente en las imágenes culturales ideales del hombre y la mujer. La imagen que Francisca tiene de su marido se puede resumir mejor en los pocos versos que ella le dedica en un canto autobiográfico (Véase Muratorio 1994) que, como la mayoría de la poesía, es el medio preferido por las mujeres para la expresión de verdaderos sentimientos. Estos son los versos de su canción:

Yo no sé porqué cuando era tan niña  
me dieron este marido inútil.  
No sabe cómo hablar.  
Si yo quiero me voy,  
para que mi voz se oiga en el viento.  
A mi marido puedo dejar,  
él es un hombre simple, no sabe leer ni escribir.  
A donde lo llevan,  
vá sin protestar.

Si yo puedo partir,  
al Cielo voy a llegar.  
Soy una mujer Andi,  
hija del que fundó este pueblo.

Obviamente, en la opinión de Francisca, su marido no está a la altura de la imagen de su poderoso y rebelde padre. Más aún, como un hombre proveniente del muntun de los Archidonas (Archiruna), a quienes los Panos consideran como “malos pescadores,” su marido no puede cumplir con las expectativas de una mujer Pano, quien demanda que los hombres sean buenos proveedores de pescado. La única vez que he oído a Francisca un comentario positivo y entusiasta acerca de su marido, ha sido cuando recordó cómo él la llevaba a viajar a lugares lejanos en la Sierra o en la Costa, donde ella pudo acrecentar sus poderes de curación aprendiendo nuevas cosas de otros curanderos. Cando ella mencionó que en algunas ocasiones había “tocado con ternura” la “trompa” (instrumento musical nativo de una cuerda) a su marido cuando estaba enfermo, lo hizo también para recordarle con nostalgia los viajes a esas tierras distantes. Por el contrario, ella recuerda muy bien todas las canciones que su madre sabía cantar cuando su padre viajaba a Quito, y éstas ciertamente expresan una calidad diferente de sentimiento, más cercana a aquella asociada con la poesía romántica (cf. Harrison 1989).

Como muchas otras mujeres Napo Quichua, Francisca considera “irracional” la violencia marital de parte de los hombres. Cualquier tipo de violencia niega la sabiduría de la palabra, expresada en la calma y consideración de los consejos, y confunde el don del discurso elocuente, que es el signo de un alma poderosa. Esta es la razón principal por la cual Francisca piensa que su brutal yerno, quien es sordo a los consejos y sólo habla con golpes, no tiene remedio y no se vá a corregir. No puedo aquí discutir en detalle el problema de la violencia, pero en el caso de Francisca al menos, la violencia de su marido, aún antes de que ella se convirtiera en una poderosa y “pensante” mujer adulta, fué el principal factor que contribuyó a que ella no le tuviera el respeto intelectual que otras mujeres otorgan a los hombres. Su encolerizado resentimiento continúa, como lo exagera dramáticamente en su retórica acerca de sus peleas matrimoniales, aunque reconoce que, a diferencia de su yerno, su marido finalmente mejoró su conducta porque escuchó los consejos de los mayores. Desde el punto de vista de una mujer,

tanto en su canción autobiográfica como en la historia de su matrimonio, Francisca deja bien claro que hay límites a la violencia que las mujeres deben sufrir silenciosamente, y que éstas deben tener la capacidad de elegir abandonar a sus maridos en casos de violencia excesiva. Por el contrario, la mayoría de los hombres piensa que ellos poseen un derecho “dado por Dios” de pegar a sus mujeres si éstas los “fastidian,” aunque sea por un asunto trivial.<sup>xvi</sup> Esta idea es confirmada por un anciano que fue un famoso tamborilero y cantor (*versidor*) en muchas bodas. Los dos siguientes versos en una de sus canciones totalmente contradicen la opinión de Francisca y de otras mujeres, aunque no de todas, en este asunto:

Si mi marido me pega,  
debo quedarme con él.  
Aún me haga tener hambre,  
debo quedarme con él.

De acuerdo a la iglesia Católica, la indisolubilidad del contrato matrimonial es garantizada por el derecho natural y divino, y el adulterio es condenado bajo esas mismas leyes (Donoso, citado en Moscoso 1996:25). Los Napo Quichua han traducido esta obligación como el “llevar la cruz.” En casos de matrimonios tradicionales arreglados, su indisolubilidad estaba reforzada por el hecho de que en la cultura Napo Quichua los deseos de los padres tienen que ser respetados casi a cualquier costo. Francisca reflexionó con tristeza en la presente paradoja de esta norma tradicional cuando me habló del problema de su hija menor que está siendo abusada por su marido:

Antes nos daban un marido y con él teníamos que morir. No podíamos romper la cruz. Pero ahora nuestros hijos se juntan con los blancos y piensan como ellos, y esto es un problema. Todos nuestros parientes la aconsejan [a la hija de Francisca] que abandone a su marido, pero ella se niega. Ha aprendido bien las lecciones de los mayores. Tal vez demasiado bien. Ella dice que su papá y su mamá le dieron ese marido y que en sus manos tiene que morir. Sus padres así lo quisieron. Si yo hubiera sabido que iba a ser tan bruto!

Si esta es la razón principal por la cual su hija no abandona a su marido es, por supuesto difícil de decir. Este es un caso complejo que involucra varios otros factores, tales como el miedo de la mujer de haber sido embrujada por su marido. Pero, sin embargo, es interesante que ella

todavía siente que puede hacer uso de una norma tradicional como justificación de su conducta, mientras que al mismo tiempo esta justificación comienza a sonar irracional, o simplemente vacía, para sus mismos padres. A pesar de que en este caso Francisca arregló el matrimonio con el entusiasta consentimiento de su hija, como su padre, Francisca siente la culpa de haber tomado una decisión equivocada.

Se dá por supuesto que la norma prescriptiva de monogamia fomenta la infidelidad en las relaciones matrimoniales. En tiempos recientes ha habido más casos declarados de infidelidad por parte de mujeres Napo Quichua, pero la infidelidad ha sido siempre más común entre los hombres. Este puede ser uno de los factores que contribuyen a la “mala reputación” de la que gozan los hombres Napo Quichua entre otros grupos indígenas polígamos tales como los Achuar y los Shuar (Véase Descola 1996:253). Los celos sexuales por infidelidades reales o imaginadas son, en la actualidad, la principal causa de violencia contra las mujeres y una de las razones preponderantes de fracasos matrimoniales. La separación en estos casos es común, pero la mayoría de las parejas evitan un divorcio legal debido a los costos y al tiempo que lleva contratar a un abogado y seguir los prolongados procedimientos burocráticos.

### **Sobre arriesgadas tentaciones, perros diabólicos, e infidelidades matrimoniales**

En la teología Cristiana, la actividad sexual es el espacio de tentación preferido del demonio, y sus seducciones en este respecto están dirigidas particularmente a las mujeres (Benz 1973:479-480). En impecable tradición intelectual Napo Quichua, Francisca usa la narrativa de un sueño personal para comentar sobre este aspecto del pensamiento Cristiano acerca del adulterio. En este sueño ella describe su propio encuentro con el Diablo en su encarnación como un perro negro, y explica que, como resultado de este sueño y con una pequeña ayuda de la Virgen, ella logró evitar las tentaciones que le tocó enfrentar cuando muy reales diablos blancos trataban de seducirla durante los primeros años de su matrimonio:

Este fue un sueño que tuve cuando estaba todavía sin hijos. Ví a una señorita muy linda, la ví muy claramente, como en las pinturas. Me mostró un perro negro muy grande, con una cola muy larga, que estaba acostado en mi cama y me dijo: “Si no crees, si te portas mal en tu matrimonio, este perro te va a envolver con su cola y te vá a llevar directamente al Infierno. Vé y mira en tu cama.” Yo me asusté y le rogué que me tomara en sus brazos y me salvara del perro. Entonces ella dijo: “Diablo, vete de aquí” y me ordenó que fuera a

mi cama . Yo le pedí que “limpiara”[como hacen los chamanes] mi cama, pero ella dijo que no era necesario, que desde ahora yo tenía que vivir bien, En esos tiempos yo era gorda y bonita, mi pelo era negro, brillante, y muy largo. Aún los blancos casi me hicieron caer en la tentación. Sabían decirme: “¿Porqué has elegido a un Indio para marido?” Y yo comencé a pensar cómo deshacerme de mi marido; pero también pensé que yo no sabía Castellano ni leer ni escribir y que estaba mejor con un Indio. Esta fue una tentación muy grande, pero luego de este sueño cuando la Virgen me visitó, prometí no escuchar más malos consejos y abandoné el vivir con el demonio en mis pensamientos.

El Demonio no es el único perro que aparece en el imaginero Napo Quichua en relación a la infidelidad matrimonial persistente. Como Francisca me explicó, tanto hombre como mujeres casadas que copulan como perros, se transforman en perros, y cuando se mueren, sus espíritus deambulan gritando. El término genérico para referirse a esos seres es *suapai* (perro-espíritu) y al espíritu infiel específico se lo conoce localmente como *andacosupai* o *cajónsupai*. En tiempos antiguos, las mujeres mayores sabían romper un pedazo de la pollera adicional que usaban cuando menstruaban y lo colgaban en un árbol, o vestían con él a un palo. Cuando el *andacosupai* aparecía, olía eso y se escapaba rápidamente corriendo. Una puesta de sol roja era el signo para que salieran estos supais, y sólo un chamán muy experimentado los podía hacer desaparecer definitivamente. Aunque los misioneros Josefinos todavía practican el exorcismo de demonios,<sup>xvii</sup> los Napo Quichua son bastante escépticos acerca de la efectividad de esas prácticas contra los espíritus nativos.

Las mujeres casadas también sufren riesgos causados por otros supais que quieren enseñarles a ser chamanes dejándolas embarazadas con un *suapihuahua* (niño-espíritu). Estos supais sólo buscan a mujeres casadas, y como la mayoría de los amantes, usualmente aparecen cuando los maridos están ausentes. Las mujeres de los chamanes jóvenes corren mayor peligro porque sus maridos tienen que hacer abstinencia sexual por lo menos por un año. Entonces, las jóvenes esposas pueden buscar a otros hombres, y son presa fácil para los supais. Para entender la particular preferencia en mujeres de estos supais debemos recordar la creencia de que sólo las mujeres casadas pueden tener el privilegio de ir al Cielo. Privados de ese privilegio, los supais tratan de robar las almas de las mujeres casadas como una forma furtiva y fácil de entrar al Paraíso. Como se ha explicado de Satanás en la teología Cristiana (Benz 1973:479-480), este

espíritu tiene “un hambre insaciable de realidad,” y careciendo de la posibilidad de encarnación y de salvación, sólo le queda la posibilidad de robar a otros para obtener para él no sólo los placeres substantivos de esta vida, sino también los menos tangibles de la vida en el más allá. Al hacer esto, como Francisca me explicó, “deja a las mujeres vacías de sus almas e imposibilitadas de volar al Cielo.” Como en la mayoría de otras culturas, entre los Napo Quichua, las mujeres pagan un precio mayor que los hombres para poder reconciliar sus reputaciones con sus deseos.

### **La última senda hacia la identidad personal y cultural**

En la última parte de la narrativa de Francisca nos damos cuenta de las “verdaderas” razones por las cuales finalmente se resignó a dormir con su marido, y el alto precio que tuvo que pagar por su resistencia a las normas de residencia post-maritales y al servicio debido a sus suegros. Pero, aún más significativamente en términos de entender su sentido de identidad personal y étnica, Francisca nos ofrece una evaluación final de lo que ella considera los resultados positivos de esta crucial decisión en su vida.

Juzgando por el relato de Francisca, la atracción física no fue el factor decisivo en consumir su matrimonio, sino el temor. Temor por sí misma del escenario aún menos atrayente de ser casada con un viejo y de que le corten su hermoso cabello; y miedo por su familia, que hubiera podido ser gravemente afectada por los poderes chamánicos vengativos de su suegro. Ya sea por razones positivas o negativas, el poder otorgado a los chamanes en la cultura Napo Quichua los transforma en respetados o temidos intermediarios matrimoniales (cf. Macdonald 1979:110; Hudelson 1981:131), y en la mayoría de los casos son considerados directamente responsables por cualesquiera sean las consecuencias de esa intervención. Francisca vé el hecho de haber perdido cinco hijos en los primeros años de su matrimonio como el resultado de la brujería ejercida por sus suegros por su resistencia a cumplir con sus obligaciones de nuera. Al enfatizar la influencia tradicional de la brujería en el destino humano, ella no hace caso de la admonición implícita en el paradigma del matrimonio de la Virgen María acerca del castigo de infertilidad (no tener flor) por desobedecer los deseos de los mayores.

El poder de los chamanes en controlar la sexualidad de las mujeres es un asunto que casi no se menciona en la literatura sobre el chamanismo Amerindio, pero todavía continúa siendo extremadamente importante en relación al matrimonio y a la violencia doméstica, asunto que

mencioné brevemente en relación a la hija menor de Francisca. A pesar de esta penosa experiencia de la pérdida de sus hijos, que Francisca trató de remediar adoptando y criando a dos niños varones, ella termina la historia de su matrimonio con una nota positiva. La reacia reconciliación con sus suegros le permitió poseer la tierra a la que tenía derecho como nuera, pero su resistencia la llevó a vivir en la tierra de su padre, un pedazo de la cual fue otorgado a su marido cuando su padre lo adoptó como si fuera un hijo propio. De acuerdo a Francisca, el hecho de que a través del samai de su padre ella “heredó” su espíritu de lucha, es el factor que contribuyó a su éxito en ganar el argumento contra sus hermanos para retener ese pedazo de terreno después de la muerte de su padre. Entre los Napo Quichua, tradicionalmente las mujeres no heredan tierra de esta forma, pero ella pudo hacer uso de la ley Ecuatoriana de herencia bilateral para retener este tan preciado terreno donde quiere que la entierren.

Mas significativo para el sentido de identidad de Francisca en su propia cultura, ella siente que su individualidad reside en su habilidad de incorporar en sí misma, no sólo todas las valiosas cualidades de una mujer Napo Quichua ideal que aprendió de su madre, sino también aquella cualidad especial que dá prestigio, status, y respeto a los hombres: el poder de la palabra racional para luchar por lo que es justo. Como me dijo en otra ocasión:

Cuando mi padre me dió su samai me aconsejó que después de su muerte yo no debería temer a ningún blanco. “Vive como yo -me dijo- actúa como yo, que toda mi vida luché contra patrones abusivos.” Si sólo supiera Castellano, hubiera sido como él, pero heredé sus pensamientos y tú vas a poner los míos en papel.

Como una modesta escriba, siempre me he sentido abrumada por la difícil tarea de transcribir las palabras de los poderosos oradores que he encontrado en otras culturas. En el caso de Francisca, creo que puedo entender muy bien cómo se debe haber sentido Tiro tratando de transcribir los discursos de Cicerón en taquigrafía.

b. muratorio30



b. muratorio31

b. muratorio32

b. muratorio33

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### Notas

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i. El trabajo de campo en que se basa este ensayo tuvo lugar durante un período de varios años en la zona Tena-Archidona de la Alta Amazonía Ecuatoriana. Conozco a Francisca desde 1981. Desde entonces he trabajado con ella casi todos los años durante los meses del verano Canadiense, recogiendo su historia de vida y conversando con ella sola, o en grupo con otras mujeres Napo-Quichua, acerca de muchos otros aspectos de su cultura.

ii. Existen varias descripciones y análisis detallados del matrimonio Napo Quichua y de su ritual de boda, principalmente desde el punto de vista masculino (Véase Macdonald 1979; Muratorio 1991; Palacio 1992).

iii. Véase Macdonald (1979:86-97) para una discusión detallada de “*masha*” como término de parentesco.

iv. Conozco varios casos de jóvenes que en estos últimos años han ido a trabajar a las compañías petroleras sólo para pagar los costos de la *pactachina*. Según Francisca, los costos de la boda significarían por lo menos tres temporadas de trabajo en las compañías para reunir el dinero necesario.

v. Notablemente, la voz que falta en la narrativa de Francisca es la de su marido, por razones que espero se tornarán claras en el curso de este ensayo, especialmente en la sección sobre relaciones matrimoniales.

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vi. En 1941-42, todo el Oriente Ecuatoriano estuvo envuelto en una guerra con el Perú. Además de los problemas de fronteras entre estos dos países que se remontan a la época Colonial, se considera que esta guerra en particular fue ocasionada por la competencia entre dos gigantes del petróleo, Standard Oil y Shell Oil, por los recursos petroleros de la región Amazónica. Los pueblos indígenas tenían buenas razones para temer a los soldados, quienes mal equipados y peor alimentados, se abusaban de ellos, especialmente de las mujeres (Varios documentos en AGN).

vii. Macdonald (1979:91-93) menciona casos de residencia uxoriocal entre los Napo Quichua que ahora viven en el área del río Arajuno, pero que originalmente provienen del área de Tena-Archidona.

viii. Basilio, el padre de Francisca era un *varayuj*, un líder que portaba la vara de mando; es decir un tipo de autoridad indígena creada en esta área por el colonialismo de los blancos. Como muchos otros, lideraba un grupo de hombres que trabajaban para los blancos. Trabajaba también llevando el correo y carga a Quito para el gobierno. Para evidencia de la resistencia ofrecida por Basilio a los arbitrarios abusos de los patrones y autoridades véase Muratorio (1991: esp. Pp. 160-161).

ix. Entre las distintas denominaciones Protestantes, el matrimonio es un rito y no un sacramento como entre los Católicos. En consecuencia, los Protestantes no asignan demasiada importancia a la ceremonia de boda por sí misma, al menos no de acuerdo a los estándares de los Napo Quichua.

x. Existen otras versiones similares de esta historia del casamiento de la Virgen María entre los Napo Quichua que viven en el Bajo Napo, alrededor del área del río Aguarico (Véase Ortíz de Villalba 1976:140-141, 1989:133-134), y entre los que viven aún más abajo en Perú (Véase Mercier 1979:175-177).

xi. Macdonald (1979:183) anota el caso de una niña adolescente que rehusó casarse con el hijo de un chamán, se enfermó varias veces, y finalmente se murió. Durante su enfermedad contó que había tenido un sueño en el cual el padre del novio se le había aparecido y la había atacado con una variedad de armas.

xii. De acuerdo a la historia Cristiana, María permaneció en el Templo hasta que tenía 14 años cuando, después de haber recibido la revelación de un ángel, los sacerdotes le dijeron que debía casarse. Ferguson (1961:73) continúa con la historia: "Los hombres que estaban en edad de casarse tuvieron que traer al Templo su vara. Estas fueron dejadas en el Templo toda la noche cuando se había pronosticado que un signo iba a indicar cual de los pretendientes de María iba a ser favorecido por el Señor. Todo se hizo de acuerdo a las directivas del ángel, y en la mañana se descubrió que la vara de José, el carpintero de Nazareth, había florecido. Entonces él fue el elegido como esposo de María." Otro ángel aparece para tranquilizar a José y para contener su ira: "Después de casarse con María descubrió que ya estaba embarazada y 'como era un hombre de honor' quiso divorciarse, pero un ángel le dijo que el niño era el hijo de Dios y que había sido



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concebido por el Espíritu Santo. Obedeciendo al ángel, José tomó a María como esposa (Matt.1:19). Se dice que la paloma que representa al Espíritu Santo salió de la vara de José y voló al Cielo. La imagen de José como un hombre muy viejo proviene de narrativas apócrifas del segundo y cuarto siglo que lo representan como un viudo con hijos que vivió hasta los 111 años (Enciclopedia Británica, Micropedia V:610). La paloma, como es obvio en las narrativas de sueños de Francisca, es también un símbolo de pureza. Goody (1993:154-157) anota que durante los siglos doce y trece, la Iglesia comenzó a usar flores con propósitos educacionales en varios rituales, especialmente en aquellos dedicados a la Virgen María. Ella era representada como una rosa, un lirio, o una violeta. Las mismas flores comenzaron a recibir los distintos nombres de la Virgen pero, como también anota Goody, durante la Reforma “sus nombres fueron decretados ser ‘tontería Papal’ y despojados de su significado religioso.”

xiii. La Iglesia Católica nunca ha endosado oficialmente la doctrina del Limbo como un estado o espacio existente, por lo que ésta permanece como una cuestión no resuelta (Enciclopedia Británica, Micropedia VI:225). El Limbo es considerado un espacio “liminal,” una especie de área “límite” entre el Cielo y el Infierno. Para mi propósito aquí, la sección relevante del Limbo es la llamada “*limbus infantum*” o “*puerum*,” (el Limbo de los niños), la morada de los niños pequeños que han muerto sin pecado, pero cuyo pecado original no ha sido lavado por el Bautismo. De acuerdo a Francisca, en el Limbo las personas solteras regularmente deben bañarse debajo de una cascada para “refrescarse porque se están quemando un poquito.” La otra menos conocida sección del Limbo, llamada “*Limbus patrum*,” es considerada como un lugar de descanso transitorio para los Santos del Viejo Testamento hasta que fueran liberados por Jesucristo, y se asemeja al “*Docemundoi*” Napo Quichua, un lugar que se origina en el centro de la tierra donde se dice que residen los chamanes después de la muerte y las almas de aquellos que están aprendiendo (Véase Muratorio 1991). En la controversia teológica Católica Apostólica Romana sobre el destino de una persona en el período entre su muerte y el Juicio Final, la noción de Purgatorio se desarrolló como una suerte de compromiso, un espacio y estado intermedios donde a la persona todavía se le dá la oportunidad de mejorar su pecadora condición (Benz 1973:508). Aunque la doctrina del Purgatorio se deriva de los conceptos Judíos que datan de los siglos segundo y primero AC, acerca del juicio de Dios a las personas de acuerdo a sus obras, sólo se convirtió en doctrina después de dos concilios medievales y del Concilio de Trento durante el período de la Reforma. Las preguntas sobre el lugar, la duración, y la naturaleza de los castigos del Purgatorio no han sido contestadas definitivamente en la doctrina Católica, y las iglesias Protestantes niegan la existencia del Purgatorio como “no-Bíblico” (Enciclopedia Británica, Micropedia VIII:307). Los Napo Quichua generalmente no mencionan el Purgatorio, probablemente debido a su diferente, más social, concepción del pecado, y debido a su indiferencia acerca de la oración para redimir las acciones pecaminosas individuales. Cuando le pregunté a Francisca sobre el Purgatorio ella, de otra manera siempre tan elocuente, me dió sólo esta sucinta definición: “Es un lugar -yo creo- donde uno se va a quemar sólo un poquito.”

xiv. Para una discusión comparativa del amor en casos de matrimonios arreglados entre los Achuar, véase Descola 1996; entre la gente de una comunidad Musulmana de Sri Lanka, véase Munck 1996. Los trabajos recientes sobre la antropología de las emociones son muy numerosos

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para poder citarlos aquí. Para el propósito de este ensayo he consultado principalmente Lutz y Abu-Lughod 1990; Myers 1979; Levitt 1996; y Trawick 1990).

xv. Puede ser que en tiempos antiguos el mito de la *vagina dentata*, o la asociación de los genitales femeninos con heridas y peligro, existió entre los Napo Quichua en versiones similares a aquellas que se han encontrado entre otros grupos Amazónicos (Véase, por ejemplo, Gregor 1985:71). La única evidencia que pude encontrar proviene de Francisca tratando de explicarme el poqué del miedo que los hombres jóvenes sentían de tener relaciones sexuales con una mujer virgen. Ella dijo: “Tenían miedo porque pensaban que si recibían a una virgen, ella iba a tener una *pangora* (cangrejo) que iba a morderles el pene. Por eso los viejos solían decir al joven: “Préstamela, yo le voy a cortar el filo a ese animal.” Entre los Napo Quichua de Loreto (Véase Hudelson 1981:151) y del Aguarico (Palacio 1992:53-54), el ritual de hacer dormir a la pareja de novios incluía un muñeco en forma de bebé (*cari huahua chaucha* [varoncito fuerte] o *chaucha huahua* [niño fuerte]) simbolizando la futura fertilidad de la nueva pareja. De acuerdo a Francisca, esta parte del ritual de boda no se practicaba entre los Napo Quichua de la región de Tena-Archidona. Hoy día, en esta área, el simbolismo del muñeco ha sido tornado al revés. Muchas mujeres me han contado que ponen a sus verdaderos bebés entre ellas y sus maridos cuando no desean tener relaciones sexuales.

xvi. Para una discusión comparativa de la violencia marital entre los Achuar, véase Taylor 1979 y Descola 1996. Para la gente indígena de Perú, véase esp. Harvey 1994.

xvii. Hace sólo unos pocos años presencié un exorcismo Católico llevado a cabo por un sacerdote Josefino en la casa de una vieja mujer blanca en Tena. La mujer afirmaba que estaba siendo visitada todas las noches por un hombre vestido con un terno negro y usando un sombrero negro. Las personas indígenas que también estaban presentes en la casa me aseguraron que ellos consideraban el ritual perpetrado por el sacerdote como muy poco efectivo para tratar con este tipo de “supai.”

**Uses and Misuses of traditional Knowledge**  
**Dept. Talk Oct. 9, 1997**

**Summary of Topics and ethnographic examples**

(interests of anthropologists, sociologists, archeologists)

**I. Traditional Indigenous Knowledge as field of study**

**I.1 By Whom?** Anthropologists, scientists, bureaucrats, environmentalists, indigenous peoples

**I.2 Why?**

**1.2.1 Because of Global economic, social, concerns:**

Plants, health, curing, management of resources (herds, fish, forests), land claims, large scale economic development, oil, ecotourism, “new spirituality” interest in alternative medicines.

**1.2.2 Because of Academic concerns, interests, specialization**

Proliferation of ethno-studies :ethnobotany, ethnoarcheology, ethno...etc. poses questions of ethno-vs non-ethno, manipulation of knowledge to make it compatible with Western “truths”. What is less developed is what Terence Turner called **ethno-ethnohistory.: to understand indigenous ethnohistories of us and indigenous Orientalisms.**

**Internal critique of ethnography :** from monophonic ethnography to multivocality and new bricolage. Problem of collaborative research and its meaning could be discussed here..

**1.2.3 Because of Indigenous Peoples concerns..**

from indigenous point of view. As strategies of cultural and political empowerment. As sources of aid money and local income (differences between men and women).[ In Ecuador political strategy after fall of “second World” **from a class to a purely ethnic discourse** and incorporation into new hegemonic discourse of environmentalism in which nature ( natives included) is the new proletariat to be saved.]Which brings the question of why the Inuit reject “environmentalist discourse” of one type and groups in the Amazon are embracing it. (Cf Julie’s account of Inuiot casepp. 107-109)

**II How this knowledge has been conceptualized**

from obstacle to modernization and development to pillar of sustainable development.

From animistic religion and primitive thought to indigenous science

**from just cultural capital to “real” capital (concepts of utility and commodification)**

within evolutionary models of primitivism to civilized to new “synthesis” (science and tradition)

**as new moral paradigm of “salvation”: non-western cultures offering alternative models for rethinking universality and the issues of moral attitudes towards non humans.**

Going back to edenic paradigm: tradition as purity, modernity as corruption.

Re-elaboration of “**noble savage**” paradigm and **indigenous self-identification with it in public discourse** (e.g. discourse (Julie) “respect for elders, and meaning of respect. And in Ecuador indigenous leader in government denying any violence in indigenous “culture”

## Consequences

### A. For and Among Indigenous peoples and in indigenous communities

**Consequences of new prestige of that knowledge: for women in Amazon: new source of income as curers.(fuzzier boundaries between witches, curers, shamans in public eye, not internally)** Indigenous peoples distinguish different kinds of shamanism (preventive, curative, protective or regenerative and destructive, this last one usually ignored by environmentalist discourse) and are related to native theories about illness and curing. (E.g. disease as punishment for failed reciprocity, and Francisca wants to be “paid in advance” for the curing since she can become infected in curing, because she is recovering soul of patient from the spirits) tied to reciprocity not to debt or commodification). (disease as nature’s revenge. Cf Montezuma’s revenge). These conceptions of shamanism and consequences for social relations as they are being transformed within the larger national and international knowledge paradigms and in the context of peoples distrust for national system of justice has led, for instance, to recent case among Achuar in Ecuador : a shaman was killed after being accused of killing another person. Not unusual among the Achuar and other native groups in Amazonia, except that now the killing was announced by the leader of the Achuar Indigenous Federation as “community cultural justice”.

Also source of travel for conferences, small ecotourist industries (see I.4)New pedagogies: problems of “shamanic schools.”Role of shaman (true shamans vs.younger ones. Assumes one

knowledge “shared” under paradigm of universal science.

Also implications for universal spirituality and “one native religion” (shamanic conferences on the paradigm of scientific conferences or congresses. Some traditional knowledge is private (e.g. women’s songs or shamans’ songs). They become gibberish in ecotourist shows.

Knowledge use to establish hierarchies and inequalities between communities. **Knowledge use in official indigenous federations’ discourses to deny history to less acculturated groups and women).**(see *Are We the world*)

B. In relationships indigenous peoples and global economy  
**commodification of knowledge. Problem of cultural rights and corporate profits.(and Western justifications of it, e.g Body Shop gives money for Violence against women in the West) Shamans Incorporated and main pharmaceutical companies. Patent of ayahuasca (hallucinogenic) by US corporation.**

**Problems of authenticity of knowledge and its carriers and consequences when they “fail” to meet those standards. Western insatiable appetite for heroes and for debunking them.(e.g. Huaorani, Kayapo, Yanomami, Rigoberta Menchu)**

### **III Epistemological Issues: Specifics of Environmentalist Discourse**

Native americans as part of nature. Perpetuates dualisms Them and Us

lived in harmony with nature (indigenous women’s point of view on these issues)

native americans as “pure” conservationists (different subsistence strategies)

denying history and histories of native peoples and of nature (conceptions of “virgin forests” versus anthropogenic forests and debate about the conservationist vs the destructive native)

**depoliticization of knowledge: \*\*\*by denying history and in search for authenticity deny problem of deconstruction of native populations and deconstruction of memories. Native use of Western paradigms (e.g. Christianity) to give new meanings to their lives (explains transformations of oral traditions in term of the present) and fact that oral traditions are inscribed in power relations**

**memories essential in individual and collective identity but also as instruments of power to**

**be erased and manipulated. Struggle for domination over remembrance and traditions. (Cf Gavin Lucas in anthropology to-day “forgetting the Past) remembering the past as appropriating it as our past. relates it to “collecting”, identity and alterity.**

#### **IV More general Epistemological Issues**

##### **The character of knowledge**

Reification of knowledge rather than studied as system of knowledge

decontextualization of knowledge

Erradication of knowledge/ erradication of indigenous histories

**Different expressions of causality . Distinctive paradigms to convert knowledge into everyday practice. (Canadian example song, shamanism, cariboo; example Amazonia: explanations of environmental “disaster” “scarce resources”= lockers are rusted.**

**Do not translate easily cross-culturally.**

Classifying, mapping, harvesting, (universalistic paradigm of science) fragmentation human experience. Categories that distance people from lived experience.

Impose paradigm of cabinets of curiosities or museums of natural history to lived culture.

Learning as situated in communities of practice

knowledge embedded in social relations with non-humans Indigenous peoples are likely to raise questions about **whose stories , who identifies events** , how is the meaning of **place** contituted rather than **What** actually happen (Julie 1994's article).

establishing evidence and truth in scientific knowledge and oral tradition

**\*\*\*importance of the body in transmission knowledge;embodying knowledge (case Kayapo and african slaves in Brazil) (In amazon concept and practice of paju). Knowledge goes beyond linguistic representations**

##### **Dualism nature culture--Human-non-human relations**

Dualism does not account for developmens in modern science (producing natural events in non-natural ways. It is a historical product of the Renaissance.

**Does our understanding of difference leads us to endless relativisms and descriptions of local cosmologies (also embedded in power relations[some knowledges more relative than others])**

**or is it possible to find general trends towards a unified analytical framework.(possible alternative models to a dualist paradigm).that goes beyond the universalizing of science (which assumes the dualism, or the universalizing of spirituality (unified native religions with all the consequences of native orientalisms) or economics.(3 attempts Ellen, Palsson, Descola)**

What is the role of anthropology in this task. What can we learn from native **perspectivism** (Viveiros de Castro). Or from native historians' conceptions of US (the West).

Do natives have just one conception of nature?

The realm of social relations implies a wider domain than the society of humans.All beings are ontological equals.Relations humans no-humans as relations subject-subject. Affinal charming of game and consanguine mothering of plants.

**Societies based on objectifications of self-other project same dichotomy subject-object into relations between persons and the natural world. (If this is an argument for change in social relations has to be an argument in the opposite direction to bureaucratization and compartamentalization. (No debt to nature, debt is relations between humans in a particular historical context. Concept of debt vs. Reciprocity.**

Role of anthropology in understanding this aspect of traditional indigenous knowledge

If environmental determinism is dead why bother with understanding interactions between humans and other living and non-living components of their surroundings?

A)Real consequences and public agenda of environmental crisis both in North and Amazon

B) Globalization, ethics and politics of nature

Julie (1994) demonstrate how all social constructions, including our own, factor into social processes we are trying to understand .

Contextualism denies the capacity of abstract totalizing systems such as science and the market to solve basic problems of human survival. Sober recognition of these limitations but different from mysticism. It is an argument for recontextualization. .

The expedient mirror: Images of the Indians  
in the politics of Ecuadorean Identity

Blanca Muratorio

Paper presented at the CASCA Annual Meeting  
Vancouver, May 5-8, 1994

Western selves seem to have an endless fascination -both intellectual and existential- for appropriating difference and Otherness in the constitution or redemption of their self- identities and in the search for authenticity and legitimacy in their own enterprises, whichever those may be.

Recently, and after Said's work on Orientalism, the politics of representation and the controversial issue of ethnographic authority have become an integral part of the anthropological discourse. In this paper I am concerned with what, for lack of a better term, I will call "Indigenism"<sup>i</sup>, the symbolic appropriation of images of the Indians in the discourse of domination in the context of expanding neo-colonial states. It may also be argued that a similar device is at work in the academic world of anthropology, in the art world, as Clifford (1988) has convincingly argued (see also Price 1993), and in the more mundane world of daily politics as recent developments in the ecological controversy over the rainforests -both in the Amazon and in British Columbia- can



testify.<sup>ii</sup>

In his analysis of the 1984-85 MOMA exhibit "Affinities of the Tribal and the Modern," Clifford underlines what he calls "the disquieting quality of modernism, its taste for appropriating or redeeming otherness, for constituting non-Western art in its own image, for discovering universal, ahistorical 'human' capacities," and in the process, suppressing the creativity of contemporary native cultures and artists (1988:193,200). The Other Clifford refers to here is the West encompassing category of "the primitive" in all its different cultural manifestations. More specifically, in a recent article, Randall McGuire (1992) accuses archeological imagemaking of appropriating Native American pasts and incorporating them as "Savage Others" or as "Vanishing Americans" into larger notions of national "heritage," while at the same time hiding the real political struggles of Native Americans to recover and control their pasts.

This contradictory and ambiguous process of using Indian images as expedient mirrors to redeem the Western self while silencing the realities of the Indians' experience is as old as Columbus. Its contemporary interest resides in what it can tell us about social relations of domination and cultural assimilation in the context of the historically changing encounter between the nation-states and its surviving indigenous cultures. The past self-confident iconographic monopoly of the West is being challenged by those being

represented. The collapse of the hierarchical order of identities that Friedman (1991) attributes to the desintegration of Western hegemony is being accompanied by the resurgence of a plurality of Indian identities claiming to have an active voice and a political space within a single nation.

In Ecuador, as in other Latin American countries, the symbolism of 1992 served as a catalyst for interesting iconographic battles. I will start examining some relevant events in that ethnographic present and go back in history to demonstrate the persistence and change of that mechanism of appropriation that I have labelled Indigenism.

In Ecuador, 1992 was marked by a successful march of Amazonian Indians from the province of Pastaza to the center of government in Quito in demand of their land titles, their cultural autonomy, and their recognition as distinct nationalities. This march was preceded and made politically possible by a national Indian movement which took place in 1990, and managed to paralyze the whole highland region of the country for several days. Banners, T-shirts, and slogans about "500 years of resistance" were gloriously displayed and chanted in both events. For the first time in history, the Indians made the front pages of the main newspapers for almost two weeks.

The polemic about the quincentenary has also rekindle an older

debate on the nature of cultural and national identity that, unlike previous ones, is now multivocal and multiethnic. Newspaper articles with titles such as "Indigenism vs. hispanicism" (*El Comercio*, March 29, 1992), "Latin America or Hispanic America?", (*El Comercio*, July 19, 1992), or "Our roots" (*El Comercio*, July 12, 1992) discuss important issues of cultural identity in relation to very pressing *international* problems such as Andean economic integration, as well as to the question of "ethnicity", and *internal* individual and national identity. One of those articles shows a picture of Durán Ballén, the newly elected President of the Republic, standing next to the statue of Sebastián de Benalcázar, founder of the city of Quito. The President is declared to be a direct descendant of this Spanish Conquistador and an (unnamed) indigenous woman. (see Fig.1) In the same page, there is another picture of an Ecuadorean, a graduate in economics from Yale University, and currently a high executive for the United Fruit Company in Honduras, dressed in the inevitable poncho and indian hat, who claims to be the direct descendant of Atahualpa and therefore, the current "King of the Tahuantinsuyo" (see Fig.2).

As others (see König 1984; Espinoza Fernández 1989; Lomme 1989) have demonstrated, this search by an European or creole elite for indigenous legitimation of their domination starts early on with

the Spanish conquistadors using Inca leaders in their power rituals; it is evident during the Independence period with Bolívar and Sucre being heroically crowned by aristocratic Quiteño ladies dressed as Sun Virgins, and continues throughout the XIX century to the present, as I will try to show in this paper. As König (1989) argues, the problems of identity and legitimation represent the most fundamental challenges in the process of formation of the nation-state. In part, these are the issues underlying the statements of the current President of Ecuador when, through the authority of his self-representation, he raised again the ghost of "inclusive mestizaje" as the key to national identity, and when in his inaugural speech to Congress on August 10, 1992, he clearly warned against what he called "the dangerous fostering of distinct nationalities that seek to destroy national unity, the one and only common identity in need of consolidation" (*Hoy*, August 11, 1992).

But furthermore, it is evident that the collapse of the hierarchical order of identities that Friedman (1991) identifies at the world level as the result of the desintegration of Western hegemony, also manifests itself in Ecuador at the national level. Here, the most significant internal Others -the Indians- reject the dominant identification by white-mestizo society and try to open up the social and political spaces that would allow them a more

autonomous definition of identity. The reaction of the present group in power seems to be to search for its roots in an individual and collective mestizo identity. However, unlike the civilized and modern European selfhood, constituted primarily as distancing and in opposition to a primitive and savage Other, the Andean white-mestizo population has always, by definition, been forced to incorporate that savage or primitive Other -the Indian alter ego- in its own self-identification. The particular "Indians" evoked, internalized or rejected in the individual and collective representations of identity adopted by the blanco-mestizos take diverse forms in different historical periods, eventhough -as Abercrombie (1991:120) argues- the general shape of the colonial discourse seems to remain the same. My objective in this article is to analyze this process in a critical period of changing hegemonies in the history of Ecuador.

Trying to make sense of these contemporary political "battles of representations" from the perspective of historical anthropology, I started asking about what happened in Ecuador in 1892, for the celebration of the Fourth Centenary of the Discovery of America. The search for an answer led me to the examination of a period in Ecuadorean history known as "Progresismo" (1884-1895), covering the last two decades of the XIX century, during which the society was

going through a process of social, economic, and political transformation that would finally bring about the consolidation of radical Liberalism and the demise of a Conservative, Church dominated hegemony.

During this period, the intellectual and political debate involved many of the images and concepts of "Indianness," "mestizaje," "nation," and "ecuatorianness" present in 1992. The former, however, is a monologue within the white and mestizo elite, where the voice of the Indian as a historical actor is conspicuously absent. In the XIX century, the Indians used other cultural and political forms to express their interpretations and protest about their own reality (see, e.g. Platt s/f, Stern 1991, Muratorio 1991). In this article I am not concerned with the Indians' self-image, but with their imagemakers, their ideologies, and their culture. The Conquest, and the exploitation of the Indians that continued during the Republican period, gave the white and mestizo (here sometimes also referred to as "creoles") imagemakers the monopoly of what Goldie (1989:5) calls "semiotic control," that is the power to imagine and represent the Indians outside of their own symbolic world. The quincentenary has simply provided the indigenous organizations with a dramatic international stage to demonstrate the erosion of that semiotic power. As I mentioned already, this

relative loss of semiotic power by the creole elites in Ecuador is part of a larger issue of power and representation; of that process by which, as Friedman (1991) argues, the West is loosing its ability to represent the rest. In anthropology, the healthy epistemological questioning of post-modernism has, in some cases, lead to extreme intellectual attitudes of "autistic contemplation" (Friedman 1991:333) of the ethnographic text or to narcissistic reflexions on the anthropologists' identity. Similarly, in Ecuador, threatened by the different forms of indigenous self-identification, and in an attempt to recover their representational authority, the elites now in power have tried to recuperate a mestizo individual and national identity through a discourse that again leaves aside the living Indian and enters into a dialogue with a textual, semiotically constructed one. The success of this self-defensive reaction will depend on the social conditions and the agency of the new speakers they have to confront. In this paper I will limit myself to the less controversial monologue of the XIX century.

During the period of Progresismo, the dominant groups of creoles had access to several international stages to display their ideology and to legitimize their power: the American Historical Exposition of Madrid in 1892, the Columbian Universal Exposition of Chicago

in 1893, both in celebration of the Fourth hundred anniversary of the Discovery of America, as well as the controversial 1889 Paris Universal Exposition in commemoration of the centenary of the French Revolution. The analysis proposed here of these three exhibitions, primarily through the gazes and the voices of the Ecuadoreans participants, is an attempt to link histories of power with anthropologies of culture (Cohen 1988:227) through the study of cultural conceptions of "ethnicity" and "nationalism" in relation to the history of the constitution of the Ecuadorean nation-state.

#### **The imagemakers' cultural and social universe**

Since the Crystal Palace in 1851, the International Exhibitions became transnational stages to celebrate the global competition for commodities, the successes of imperialism, as well as the emergence of modernism as a cultural form (Breckenbridge 1989:196; Harvey 1989:265). By organizing and classifying the world as an exhibition, world fairs created and reified difference turning cultures into objects displayed in glass cases in the evolutionary order that reflected Western cultural hegemony. By the turn of the XIX century, these dominant ideas established a close relationship between technological progress, evolutionism and scientific racism (Rydell 1984:3). These world fairs then constituted coherent symbolic universes that embodied those ideas in architectural space,



objects, events, and the ritual display of subordinate Others. Furthermore, these displays of hegemonic power were legitimated by a scientific discourse provided by the most prestigious anthropologists of the time working from powerful academic institutions both in North America and in Europe.

The coastal Ecuadorean elite that contributed to the organization and textual justification of the three International exhibitions already mentioned, had social and economic access to the ideologies and practices of that globalizing modernism and was looking for Ecuador's participation in the new "imagined ecumenity" (Breckenridge 1989:196) created by the market, eventhough, politically, Ecuador was struggling to achieve the "imagined community" (Anderson 1983) that allows for the constitution of the nation-state.

### **The imagemakers' kaleidoscope**

In the narrative texts just mentioned, it is evident that the organizers of the exhibit (mainly Antonio Flores and Pallares Arteta), carefully orchestrated an *economic* representation of the country to promote the already dominant interests of a specific class: the Coastal merchant and landowning bourgeoisie. In that picture which portrays the present, the image of the Indian is conveniently left out. The imagemakers had direct experience of the

deplorable situation of the landless *montuvio* (mestizo) workers in the cacao plantations, and close familiarity with the highland Indians concerted in the haciendas. However, their wretched reality is artfully inverted and hidden under the general image of an alleged prosperous and well remunerated Coastal population, product of the cacao boom. Iconographic silences are often more eloquent than explicit representations in revealing the ideology and practices of the dominant creoles vis a vis the Indians.

### **The aristocratic past**

When dealing with "cultural progress", the other term in the nineteenth century equation of economic success with advanced civilization, the imagemakers engage in a very selective use of the images of Indians current at the time, emphasizing the *past* and the *future* rather than the present. The past is brought to life in the images of the "Incas" and the mythical "Caras". Their history cannot be denied (since their artifacts were obviously being excavated), but it can be adequately touched up and re-invented to demonstrate historical continuity and to legitimize the origins of all Ecuadoreans. They are not to be considered second class Europeans, but the descendants of a "noble" and "aristocratic" race. Not liberal democracy, nor the Enlightenment, but "aristocratic racism" (Muratorio

1980) that traces the ancestry of Ecuadoreans to the historic Indian aristocracy -real or mythical- constituted an important pillar in the social construction of national identity. No mestizo then, or now, ever traced his or her ancestry to a poor Indian peasant or to a "savage" from the Amazonian tropical forest.

This aristocratic image of the "Incas" also catered to a European public who, by mid-nineteenth century had already seen representations of the Incas that compared them to the great civilizations of the Egyptians and the Romans, or to the great Sun monarch Louis XIV (see Fig.4 from the Encyclopedia Londinensis, found in a shop in Quito). It is in the context of this universe of discourse that the imagemakers compared the archeological pieces excavated in Ecuador with Egyptian mummies. Honour points out that while at the great international exhibitions of the mid-nineteenth century, the Latin American states were "represented almost exclusively by natural products", an exception was made regarding the Incas and the Aztecs. All this reflected the European public's fascination with the exotic and the primitive, cultivating that attitude of modernism that Harvey so adequately calls "the spatialization of alterity" (1989:273).

This invented tradition that appropriates not only the cultural glories of pre-Columbian civilizations, but also their historical

past to incorporate it as myth of origin and as an integral part of the collective Self, seems to be the classical case of creole ideology that Minguet calls "archeological patriotism" (quoted in Favre 1986: n.12, 284). According to Favre (ibid.), this ideology "implies the valorization and exaltation of the old Mexican and Andean civilizations as well as the appropriation of their corresponding pasts and the identification with the history that produced them." But the coastal commercial bourgeoisie was also searching for a place in the global market created by modernism. The symbol that best expresses this ideological ambiguity of the social group is "the Inca palace" built by a famous French architect as the Ecuadorean pavillion in the 1889 Paris Exhibition, and located at the foot of the then recently built Eiffel Tower, the quintessential symbol of modernity and progress at the turn of the XIX century.

#### **Exhibition nationalism/Internal Other**

In the World Fairs of the XIX century, political iconographies celebrated ideologies of nationalism and imperialism with the conspicuous display of internal and external Others. All the mentors and organizers of the three exhibits discussed here, considered Ecuador's participation in them as a patriotic act, because it concerned the good name and future well being of the nation. The

nationalist symbols displayed at those fairs for the external consumption of other states, reflected an iconographic consensus that consistently excluded the real Indians since, allegedly, they were citizens of the republic and, as such, already invisibly absorbed into the corporate Self. Internally in the country, however, the heated semiotic struggles between an ultraconservative Church and the moderate Progresista leaders, reveal for us now the subtle contradictions of this myth of assimilation that exploded with the triumph of the radical Liberal Revolution in 1895. An iconographic battle over the statue of Ecuador's Independence hero could serve as an example

The Indian woman as a symbol of America or Freedom carrying an asta and the gorro frigio appears very early in the iconography of the Independence period in shields, flags, medals, coins, monuments, and in the Bolivarian political rituals. Very soon, that Indian becomes blond, changes her appearance garbed in Greek clothing or is displaced by the goddess Minerva or other icons equally inspired on the pantheon of the French Revolution (Lomn  1989:58-59; K nig 1984:394-398). However, the trope of America represented by the "gentilmente savage" and "indefensa" India

maiden, awoken to civilization or liberated from oppression by masculine creole heroism (see also Platt 1993:169-70) reappears in

the political and literary scenario of the Republic and , later on, in the paternalism of the indigenista movement.

### **Sucre, the Indian and the Lion**

As a journalist and a politician, Juan León Mera was the most prominent organic intellectual of the ultramontane, clerical, trend within the Conservative movement. He declared his work to be inspired by an alleged pre-Columbian past populated by Virgins of the Sun and by heroic and villainous Incas and Shyris, claiming a type of nationalism that Hobsbawm adequately calls "literary and folkloric" (1990:12). One of Mera's least well known literary pieces, however, concerns a debate originated in the 1880's by a statue of Sucre, one of the Fathers of Independence. According to Mera, the maquette for the statue, to be erected in the Sucre theatre, represented "the Heroe in the attitude of liberating and protecting a young Indian woman who symbolized the Motherland." The heroe had his right foot on top of a lion representing the defeated Spanish empire. A furious Spanish ambassador protested about the statue and the Municipality agreed to remove the lion, replacing it with a neutral piece of stone (Sucre's foot is still standing there). Several years after the event, Mera's indignation was provoked by the fact that the "antipatriotic, humiliating, and shameful mutilation," had turned the statue into an erotic representation

of -according to Mera- a "vulgar and ridiculous Sucre [as] a very embroidered and decorated soldier embracing a bashful and intimidated Indian woman." "Once the symbols disappear, Mera argues, there is no history" (see Fig.15).

Despite the obvious white facial features of the Indian woman, what seems to embarrass Mera is not the abstract disappearance of history, but the mere intimation of a very real crossbreeding between a creole, heroe of the Motherland, and an Indian woman stripped of her symbolic clothings. This representation of the Indian as a passive feminine presence or, according to Mera, " a bashful and intimidated Indian woman," is a common trope in XIX century iconography of the Indian in the Americas and Europe. Among the Ecuadorean imagemakers, the romantic and even eroticized image of the warrior Jívaro is, of course, always masculine. By contrast, indigenous women were never represented in erotic images, but rather simententalized as inocent receptors of Christian morality and civilization. This was also true, for instance of North American XIX sculpture of Indian women, eventhough there, mestizaje never consituted an identity problem for the dominant group.

The symbolic mantle of "Patria" that worried Mera so much in Sucre's statue, was useful to hide the feminine sexuality of the Indian, always the most problematic aspect of self-recognition in

mestizo identity. Precisely, the prolonged debate about this statue, was really about the cultural and ethnic identity of that mestizo middle class of intellectuals to which Mera himself belonged. He is torned appart between an "Hispanicism" to which he claims to be "irresistably attracted" because of "blood, language, and love for heroism and glory," and his need to assert what he calls "americanism," if and when it is not seen as "contaminated" by the incorporation of the real Indians. Mera and others like him, fall then in the same contradiction that Sider considers central in the Colonial encounter between Europeans and Indians; that between "the [Europeans'] impossibility and the necessity of creating the other as the other -the different, the alien- and incorporating the other within a single social and cultural system of domination" (1987:7). It is the negation of this contradiction, or the incapacity to resolve it, that compels the intellectuals and powerful imagemakeres of the XIX century, and of contemporary Ecuador, to invent an hegemonic national identity that incorporates unnamed or mythical Indians, preferably if they belong to the aristocracy, or to the male sex.

From the Colonial political rituals to the logotype of the Rumiñahui bank established just a few years ago, the iconography of the Indian -preferably the archetypical image of the aristocratic or warrior Indian- has been used by whites and mestizos in Ecuador



and in other Latin American countries to legitimize their power over an ethnically divided population and in their constant search for an evasive self-identity. In the contemporary social and political scenario of Latin America, the monopoly of that power of representation is being challenged by the represented who, tired of playing a secondary role in an image of the past created by others, retake the political scenario to become their own imagemakers. Their self-imaging is a subject of much internal political and cultural controversy, specially within indigenous organizations, and the object of equally controversial ethnographic imaging. In this article, ..... European, criollos and white and mestizo imagemakers . The reference is not the indigenous reality of a specific historical period but the narrative and visual texts that, with their enunciados and silences create images of the Indians and of the role these images play in the construction that the dominant groups make of the Ecuadorean "nation" in different historical contexts. The Other is the imagined Indian, not the Indian as historical subject. The emphasis is on the imagemakers and on the historical and cultural circumstances in which the images were produced. The image of the Indian reflects in different mirrors in different historical contexts. A historically situated study of white and mestizo imagemakers assumes that we should make problematic the concept of

an static and homogeneous dominant culture (Stern 1992) and question an idea of colonialism as a coherent and monolithic process (cf Comaroff 1989). A historical anthropology that wants to understand ethnic and class relations in a colonial situation has to contextualize not only the history of subordinate groups in larger worlds of power and meaning , but also avoid an essentialist and a-historical analysis of the dominant group that does not take into account the fact that dominant and subordiante cultures se confroman mutuamente (Thompson 1978; Hall 1981; Stoler 1989; Stern 1992). (see from Vidal 3 things to do).

I argue that the polivalentes images of the Inidans created by the different imagemakers under the influence of European intellectional ideas are trnsformed into cultural capital that in different historical periods serve the interests of the imagemakers, ethnographers, missionaries, foreign travellers, artists, polititians, or other representatives of the nation-State.

Images are considered not only as final culturalproducts in the form of coins, medals, flags, monuments, paintaings, state civic and politicals rituals, but also as symbols of the historically contextualized social interaction that produced them, focussing on the raw materials with wich they were constructed, in the process of their construction, and on the use to which they are put, not

only by its creators but also the spectators and even the same people who are being represented. Through time, the white and mestizo imagination imaginativa has forged images of the Indian Other that have been assumed\_ accepted or rejected- as principles of self-identity by the different indigenous groups represented.

Through the analysis of the representation of the indigenous Other as a principle of self-identity, this paper attempts to question the generally accepted idea in Latin American ethnography and historiography, that from the XIX century onwards, the criollos and blanco-mestizos did not develop a local sense of cultural and ethnic identity, but only search for it in external European or Northamerican sources.

The problem here is, on the contrary, the incorporation of difference, of the Indian Other -aristocrat, barbarain or idealized noble savage- in the constitution of the blanco mestizo individual self-identity and in the construction of that invented community, the alleged collective Self that we call nation state (König 1984; Hobsbawm 1990).

Andean ethnography and ethnohistory have been primarily interested in demonstrated the persistence of the Inca archetypical figure in the indigenous memory. However, some authors (e.g. Espinoza Fernández 1989; Platt 1993; König 1984; Favre 1986; Flores Galindo

1987, 1988) have also been concerned with demonstrating the appropriation of the image of the Indian by Spaniards, criollos and mestizos during the Colonial, Independence and Republican periods, not only as a redemptive or messianic figure, but also as a symbol in the constitution of self-identity and in the legitimation of local and imperial power relations.

In his analysis of the representation of the Inca in Colonial political theatre, Espinosa Fernández (1989) argues that the Spaniards used real or fictitious descendants of the Incas, as well as the pictorial and theatrical iconography of the Inca and the Coya crowning the King of Spain, as an integral part of royal celebrations and other political rituals common on the colonies.

This strategy served both to legitimize the power relations between the Crown and the Indian Nation and to consolidate the local power of Andean caciques. Flores Galindo argues that already at the beginnings of the XVII century, nativism and historical memory were used as principles of identity by the mestizos, for whom "identity was a problema demasiado angustiante" (1988: 49) SEEEE If after 1780, primarily as a consequence of the defeat of Tupac Amaru's the II rebellion, the Inca aristocracy and its iconography disappears from the Colonial political scenery and discourse (Flores Galindo 1988:63), the intellectual inquietudes that predate (presagian

Independence at the end of the XVIII century and the political rituals that celebrate it in the XIX, reintroduce the image and the symbolism of the Indian with renewed meanings in order to incorporate them as an integral part of the creole and mestizo discourse on identity as well as in the ideological practices that in the ambitos politicos etnicos and culturales would be used to construct the new nations.

The "real" hispanic identity of the creoles had been questioned since the XVII century by the European theories of climatic determinism. Climate had envilecido the character of the mestizos, primarily due to the tropical climate that turned "barbarian" and "irrational" all the inhabitants of tropical regions. From the point of view of peninsular Spaniards, America corrupted and slowly but surely caused the degeneration of the creoles turning them into creatures more and more similar to the Indians (Lavallé 1990). In Quito, the reaction of the creoles in front of that eurocentric arrogance was ambiguous. On the one hand, European contempt provoked a process of affirmation of creole self-identity (Roig [1984] quoted in Paladines 1989:187), of historical or invented self consciousness (as manifested in la historia del reino de Quito de Velasco SEEEEE or in an auto valoración of the American Patria, defending the "humanity" of an abstract Indian using the indian to denounce creole oppression by the Spaniards. On the other, it caused the reaction

that Paladines calls "mechanism of olvido-represion" (1989:198-99) that led the colonial intellectuals to ignore the exploited humanity of the real Indian because they wanted to establish the difference and the distance with the "barbarism" of the indian rebellions which expanded on the Highlands throughout the XVIII century.

In Bolivar's political thinking and action we can also detect that ambiguity of the blanco mestizos that oscillates between a kind of "imperialist nostalgia" (Rosaldo 1989) that idealizes the historic Indian already gone *desaparecido* and the denigration of the olvido of the real Indian as historical agent. While in Cuzco, Bolivar evoca the figure of the Inca as rhetorical figure among the ruins of an already dead past. Manco Capac, in his role of "adam of the Indians" is transformed by Bolivar in the king of a lost paradise (Bolivar, letter to Olmedo [June 27, 1825] 1986). But, confronted with the rebellious indians as historical agents Bolivar signed decrees abolishing *cacicazgos*, orders the elimination of the "barbarous" Indians from Pasto whose rebellion represents an obstacle for the triumph of the revolution, abolish the communal property of land and finally, hides the real Indians under the republican category of citizens.

In both attitudes towards the Indian personified by Bolivar, the creoles and mestizos declared themselves liberators of the

oppressed indigenous race to justify their own struggle against Spain (Ayala 1986:113; Platt 1993:169). Bolivar himself refers to Sucre as the Incas' avenger" (Carta a sucre (Mayo 15, 1825] cited in Favre 1986:283). From the beginning they appropriate of the glorious and aristocratic image of the Inca, selectively inventing a common historic tradition (König 1984:396-97) to construct their own "american" identity in front of an European world and when in control of the republican state, use "universal citizenship" to hide the internal contradictions of an ethnically and socially profoundly divided society. In what rest of the XIX century, as Flores Galindo observes (1988:195), the utopia of the legitimizing Inca becomes a purely peasant utopia. The influence of modernism in creole liberalism marginalizes the real Indians relegating them to the savage space or to the claustrofobic vigilance of the haciendas, while the blanco mestizos of Quito and Guayaquil compete in the construction of a "civilized" nation in accordance with European models. But it is in the context of that nationalism in front of Europe, and occasionally as a form of internal legitimation, that the images of the invented Indians, as well as the silences over indigenous reality appear sporadically in all their polyvalencia to serve the interests of the social and political dominant groups up to the present.

## Conclusions

Adopting a historical perspective, this article has focused attention on the Self as the main speaker in the dialogue between dominated Indianness and dominant nation-state. As dominant imagemaker at the turn of the XIX century, the Coastal bourgeoisie used the indians as "semiotic pawns" (Goldie 1989:10) for its own semiotic interests and to legitimize its own very real economic achievements. In the process, it also started to construct a new image of Ecuador as a corporate Self. In this dominant representation, the image of "mestizaje" emerges as a "master fiction" (Geertz 1985) constructed in a historical dialectical process of exclusion and inclusion of the Other. As pseudo-europeans, the creoles pretend to hide the dialogue of domination (Sider 1989) by turning it into a monologue of the Self who has finally assimilated the Other into the familiar Self, or is in the process of doing so. It is possible to say, borrowing a concept from Mason (1990:163), that this is the quintessential "ego-centric strategy" of structuring alterity. However, in this process, the familiar Indian is obliterated from consciousness to be selectively assimilated as the historical and, if possible, the



archeological exotic Other. Besides, this strategy also creates the illusion that the indigenous Other, as forged by the dominator, can be brought into the "imagined community" through the doorway of invented "natural" ties.

Times have changed, however, and the Ecuadorean indigenous peoples are increasingly becoming their own imagemakers both in the national and the international arena. But the new creoles are fighting back by reinventing their own and the nation's cultural and ethnic identity. In addition to the newly elected President of the Republic turning again "mestizaje" into a fashionable commodity, the Ecuadorean pavillion at Seville Expo 92 adopted the diplomatic, and for a long time chic attitude among the upper middle classes, of the aesthetization of the Indian, the Indian that can be owned in archeological private collections, or displayed in institutional museums. The pavillion showed, "with dramatic illumination," the Giants of the Bahía pre-Columbian culture from the Coast (see fig.16) in our times described, of course, as "shamanistic idols from 2000 years ago, while the "exotics in costume" all the visitors wanted to photograph with (see fig.17), were only manequins of the famous Corpus Christi dancers from the Highlands (Diario Hoy, August 21, 1992). As Foster argues, the myth of the Other as the exotic is perpetuated by its appropriation as an *objet d'art*, a commodity, a

focus of wonder and contemplation (1982:30). This postmodern appropriation of the archeological Indian as an *objet d'art*, however, is significantly different than the "archeological patriotism" I mentioned as characteristic of the creole elite at the turn of the XIX century. To-day, the *real* Indians -unlike the *mythical* ones- have assumed their political roles as historical agents claiming for themselves the reevaluation or invention of their past to redefine their present, thus questioning, as we argued, the historical and iconographic monopoly of the creoles that archeological patriotism assumed as given.

Besides, the folkloric Indian at the Seville Exposition was turned into a tourist attraction and into an ambassador of an alleged unified nation, which in fact is being forced to go through the process of redefining the imagined community by its contemporary, and very real, indigenous citizens. One of them, a corageus young woman from Otavalo and a museum professional with a degree from Leeds, was the only indigenous person in a position of relative authority at the Ecuadorean pavillion and at Expo as a whole (with the exception of a Cree RCMP officer at the Canadian pavillion). Defying the ideological position of the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador to boicot Expo, she insisted on going as a professional curator and was working as a guide. I do not have

the time here to examine the analysis she made of her quite dramatic experiences at Expo 92, but one of her statements remains in my mind as a summary: "I'm glad I came, she said, to remind a European public not more enlightened than Columbus that we Indians are still alive." En el lenguaje popular, la expresión idiomática "me salió el indio" para justificar un súbito arranque de ira o irracionalidad, es la que mejor ilustra esta ambigüedad del indio interno reprimido entre los blanco-mestizos. Platt (1993:171) menciona esta misma expresión tal cual es usada en Bolivia para referirse de manera semejante a la internalización del "indio salvaje" por parte de "los blancos civilizados," en un proceso que él llama "mestizaje ideológico." (cf. el análisis que hace Abercrombie [1991:119-120] de este "indio reprimido" que es externalizado por algunos sectores de la población urbana de Bolivia en danzas de carnaval y otros rituales semejantes).

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clarification that this is a translation of Indigenismo a movement that has similar characteristics

I am thinking here about the use of the image of the Kayapo of the Brazilian Amazon by different ecological organizations, both in Europe and in North America, and the recent tripp to Europe by the Premier of British Columbia accompanied by a First Nation's leader to legitimate his government's conception of adequate logging practices in BC forests.

## Uses and misuses of traditional Knowledge

Talk : Dept October 9, 1997

If last week's talk was about political culture, this joint talk to-day is about the politics of culture and about some of the interesting epistemological problems that it raises for all our disciplines: anthropology, sociology and archeology.

First I want to convey what I know is a shared sentiment with Julie and Nancy of the intellectual enjoyment we experienced in collaborating for this talk through which we discover common grounds despite the fact of working in apparently such disparate areas as the Canadian North, Siberia, and the Amazon. If nothing else, the nemesis of globalization certainly does not respect our neat disciplinary and ethnographic boundaries.

For the purposes of this talk I was assigned the task of introducing to you as briefly as possible the framework we developed for our comparative presentations and some of the general issues that each of us will be raising based on our own individual fieldwork.

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1. Indigenous knowledge has become a field of study or at least an issue of international interest and profitability. Social scientists, other scientists, museum specialists, bureaucrats in government agencies (from the Canada Council to the World Bank), school teachers, the mass media, the film industry, environmentalists of all kinds, and not least the indigenous peoples themselves have sometimes similar, but more often contradictory interests in this field of "traditional indigenous knowledge"

2. Why has the interest in this field develop? We can mention at least three areas here

2.1 There are of course global economic and social concerns involved: the environmental crisis, and the management of resources ( herds, fish, forests and mineral extractive activities), large economic development projects and the land claims related to

them, ecotourism, and also the increasing interest in health and in curing through alternative medicines, (some of which are part of an international search for new forms of spirituality).

2.2 Within academia there has been a proliferation of ethno-studies: ethnobotany, ethnoecology, ethnomusicology, ethnomathematics, ethnomedicine, etc, which poses interesting questions of ethno-versus non-ethno and the manipulation of the Other's knowledge to make it "compatible" with Western "truths," as well as the issues raised first within ethnography of multivocality and the meaning of collaborative research.

+and

2.3 From the indigenous peoples point of view traditional knowledge has become part of a strategy of cultural and political empowerment, and no less, a source of local income and of significant amounts of international aid money.

3. The transformation of traditional indigenous knowledge into a field of study has led to its reconceptualization: from animistic religion or primitive thought---to indigenous science; from obstacle to modernization and development---to pillar of sustainable development, from just cultural capital to "real" capital, and finally, as a new moral paradigm( of "salvation") by which non-western cultures may offer us an alternative model for rethinking universality and the issues of moral attitudes towards non-humans.

4. These developments have, of course, very real consequences, among indigenous peoples and in indigenous communities (some of which are very much related to gender differences) and in the relationships of these communities with the global cultural economy. For example, the conflicts produced by the commodification of knowledge, between cultural rights and corporate profits.

5. Finally all these issues raise a broad range of epistemological problems, some of which are specific to the environmentalist discourse: such as the naturalization of indigenous peoples and the reification and decontextualization of knowledge. Or the depoliticization of

knowledge and the silencing of indigenous memories and histories.

And more general ones, which at this stage, of course are best posed as challenging questions than as definite answers: such as the one related to the dualism culture-nature or human-non-human relations. If this paradigm is a historical product of the Renaissance that is even failing to account for developments in modern science (like reproductive technologies, for example), does our social understanding of difference leads us to endless relativisms, or is it possible to find an approximation to a unified analytical framework, an alternative to the dualist paradigm of subject-object relations that goes beyond the universalizing of the scientific paradigm or of a new spirituality. What would be the social consequences of such paradigm ?

After playing the role of trickster and dropping this intellectual bomb I will gracefully give the floor to Julie.

### **Traditional Knowledge in the Amazon**

**More than a systematic field of study, in the Amazon traditional indigenous**

knowledge has become a field of contention for competing and often contradictory interests, although at this time, superficially they might share the dominant discourse of environmentalism. For obvious reasons the emphasis is on health and curing and ethnobotanists have been working with indigenous peoples for a long time know. But sustainable development with ecotourism as its main solution is a booming industry, while on the other side big oil companies are working with their own ethnobotanists and anthropologists to manage their polluting images, and all environmentalists, of course, are concerned with forest management.

As in other places in the Americas, for Amazonian indigenous peoples their traditional knowledge has become a source of cultural and political empowerment. In Ecuador, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the discourse has shifted from one of solidarity with the indigenous peasant class to a purely ethnic one and to a strategic alliance with the environmentalist discourse in which, as has been noted by many, nature (natives included) becomes the new proletariat to be saved. A traditional class discourse would not invoke international solidarity at this point and much less the support of the environmental movement worldwide.

Neoliberalism has weakened the union movement, while like in other parts of Latin America and elsewhere, political parties have lost popular legitimacy. National indigenous federations are filling in these gaps: there are at least three national deputies in Congress who are indigenous peoples all ex-leaders of indigenous organizations from the Amazon and the Highlands. The prestige and international influence of the environmentalist discourse has brought all of the major environmentalists NGO's into the Ecuadorian Amazon helping to create national ones, often with competing political agendas. They have dramatically changed the flow of aid money into "sustainable development" projects.

Having set the larger framework I will now proceed to talk about some examples of the uses and misuses of traditional knowledge at the local, ethnographic level. For the sake

of brevity I will concentrate on the issue of curing with plants and in indigenous peoples relationships with animals, which, of course, relate to indigenous conceptions of health and shamanism.

Let me start with some field notes from last summer which I will summarize here as a puzzle or a parody: a young man from the US, a student of ethnobotany with a notepad full of questions asked me, and my local friend and research assistant, to help him with “translation” (literally understood, of course) in an interview he wanted to do with Francisca, the indigenous woman I have been working with for several years. We reluctantly agree. The interview was a fiasco. Francisca, who thoroughly enjoys these situations, immediately answered his first question, after which he decided to terminate the interview. The question was: “What do you see as the main causes of the environmental crisis in your area?”. The answer was: “The lockers are rusted and I don’t have the key.” How he codified this answer is anybody’s guess.

Here, what epistemological issues it raises;

Different expressions of causality . Distinctive paradigms to convert knowledge into everyday practice. Raises issues similar to (Canadian example song, shamanism, cariboo; Do not translate easily cross-culturally.

Classifying, mapping, harvesting, (universalistic paradigm of science) fragmentation human experience. Categories that distance people from lived experience.

Impose paradigm of cabinets of curiosities or museums of natural history to lived culture.

Knowledge is situated in communities of practice

**Our research is done in societies where we are trying to make sense of non-western realities, where our own dichotomy nature-society is meaningless. Most plants and animals are considered as persons, living in societies of their own and entering into relations with humans according to strict rules of social behavior. All beings are ontological equals. Representations of non-humans are not usually based on a coherent systematic corpus of ideas, but contextually in daily actions and interactions. Nature is not considered an autonomous domain (e.g. totemism uses discontinuities in natural species to organize society and assumes to separate domains of non-humans, while animism endows natural beings with human dispositions). Animals have to be deprived of humanity to become food.**



**One population, regarding on the circumstances may generate conceptions of nature that are often inconsistent and contradictory and the variability may show itself at the individual or collective level or both.**

**Consequences of new prestige of the knowledge of traditional medicine: for women in Amazon: new source of income as curers.(fuzzier boundaries between witches, curers, shamans in public eye, not internally)** Indigenous peoples distinguish different kinds of shamanism (preventive, curative, protective or regenerative and destructive, this last one usually ignored by environmentalist discourse) and are related to native theories about illness and curing. (E.g. disease as punishment for failed reciprocity, and Francisca wants to be “paid in advance” for the curing since she can become infected in curing, because she is recovering soul of patient from the spirits). Conception of disease as a disasocition between soul and body. tied to reciprocity not to debt or commodification). (disease as nature’s revenge).

B. In relationships indigenous peoples and global economy

**commodification of knowledge. Problem of cultural rights and corporate profits.(and Western justifications of it, e.g Body Shop gives money for Violence against women in the West) Kayapo sued Body Shop for misusing his image in advertising. Shamans Incorporated and main pharmaceutical companies. Patent of ayahuasca (hallucinogenic) by US corporation called International Plant medicine Corporation. Violates the Convention of Biological Diversity signed in the Rio Summit in 1992, which US did not sign. It is being fought by the Inter-American Development Bank, EC-Science and CARE ecuador with a pilot project to “transform traditional knowledge into commercial secrets” and the most important policy issue is that amazonian communities should not disseminate their knowledge and that ethnobotanist not publish what they already know because if they do is in the public domain can be used by anyone. Problem: Ayahuasca is utilized by several groups in the Amazon and its patent may foment a price war among communities who share that knowledge with the consequence of the falling of prices.**

**Problems of authenticity of knowledge and its carriers and consequences when they “fail” to**

**meet those standards. Western insatiable appetite for heroes and for debunking them.(e.g. Huaorani, Kayapo, Yanomami, Rigoberta Menchu)**

### **Consequences in indigenous communities**

These conceptions of shamanism and consequences for social relations as they are being transformed within the larger national and international knowledge paradigms and in the context of peoples distrust for national system of justice has led, for instance, to recent case among Achuar in Ecuador : a shaman was killed after being accused of killing another person. Not unusual among the Achuar and other native groups in Amazonia, except that now the killing was announced by the leader of the Achuar Indigenous Federation as “community cultural justice”.

### **Theories about learning**

New pedagogies: problems of “shamanic schools.” Role of shaman (true shamans vs. younger ones. Assumes one knowledge “shared” under paradigm of universal science.

Also implications for universal spirituality and “one native religion” (shamanic conferences to coincide with the 49<sup>th</sup> Congress of Americanist on the paradigm of scientific conferences or congresses. Some traditional knowledge is private (e.g. womens’ songs or shamans’ songs). They become gibberish in ecotourist shows.

### **Importance of the body in the transmission of knowledge**

knowledge embedded in social relations with non-humans Indigenous peoples are likely to raise questions about **whose stories , who identifies events** , how is the meaning of **place** constituted rather than **What** actually happen (Julie 1994's article).

establishing evidence and truth in scientific knowledge and oral tradition

**\*\*\*importance of the body in transmission knowledge;embodying knowledge (case Kayapo and african slaves in Brazil) (In amazon concept and practice of paju). Knowledge goes beyond linguistic representations (March Bloch)**

### **III Epistemological Issues: Specifics of Environmentalist Discourse Depolitization,**

### **de-historization of knowledge.**

Native americans as part of nature. Perpetuates dualisms Them and Us

lived in harmony with nature (indigenous women's point of view on these issues)

native americans as "pure" conservationists (different subsistence strategies)

denying history and histories of native peoples and of nature (conceptions of "virgin forests"

versus anthropogenic forests and debate about the conservationist vs the destructive native)

**depoliticization of knowledge: \*\*\*by denying history and in search for authenticity deny**

**problem of destructure of native populations and destructure of memories. Native**

**use of Western paradigms (e.g. Christianity) to give new meanings to their lives (explains**

**transformations of oral traditions in term of the present) and fact that oral traditions are**

**inscribed in power relations**

**memories essential in individual and collective identity but also as instruments of power to**

**be erased and manipulated. Struggle for domination over remembrance and traditions.**

## **IV More general Epistemological Issues**

### **The character of knowledge**

#### **Dualism nature culture--Human-non-human relations**

The realm of social relations implies a wider domain than the society of humans. All beings are ontological equals. Relations humans no-humans as relations subject-subject. Affinal charming of game and consanguine mothering of plants.

**Societies based on objectifications of self-other project same dichotomy subject-object into relations between persons and the natural world. (If this is an argument for change in social relations has to be an argument in the opposite direction to bureaucratization and compartmentalization. (No debt to nature, debt is relations between humans in a particular historical context. Concept of debt vs. Reciprocity.**

## **Uses and Misuses of traditional Knowledge**

**Dept. Talk Oct. 9, 1997 Outline**

**Outline of Topics. Ethnographic comparisons. Theoretical issues to be developed (background for discussion)**

### **I. Traditional Indigenous Knowledge as field of study**

I.1 By Whom? Anthropologists, scientists, bureaucrats, environmentalists, indigenous peoples

I.2 Why? Plants, health, curing, management of resources (herds, fish, forests), land claims, large scale economic development, oil, ecotourism, “new spirituality” interest in alternative medicines.

I.3 Proliferation of ethno-studies :ethnobotany, ethnoarcheology, ethno...etcposes questions of ethno-vs non-ethno ,manipulation of knowledge to make it compatible with Western “truths”.

I.4 from indigenous point of view. As strategies of cultural and political empowerment. As sources of aid money and local income (differences between men and women).[ In Ecuador political strategy after fall of “second World” from a class to a purely ethnic discourse and incorporation into new hegemonic discourse of environmentalism in which nature ( natives included) is the new proletariat to be saved.]

### **II How this knowledge has been conceptualized**

from obstacle to modernization and development to pillar of sustainable development.

From animistic religion to indigenous science

from cultural capital to “real” capital (concepts of utility and commodification)

within evolutionary models of primitivism to civilized to new “synthesis” (science and tradition)

as new moral paradigm of “salvation”: non-western cultures offering alternative models for rethinking universality and the issues of moral attitudes towards non humans.

Going back to edenic paradigm: tradition as purity, modernity as corruption.Re-elaboration fo “noble savage” paradigm and indigenous self-identification with it in public discourse (e.g. discourse (Julie) “respect for elders, and meaning of respect. And in Ecuador indigenous leader in government denying any violence in indigenous “culture”

From monophonic ethnography to multivocality and new bricolage???

### **Consequences**

Reification of knowledge rather than studied as system of knowledge

decontextualization of knowledge

Eradication of knowledge/ eradication of indigenous histories

commodification of knowledge. Problem of cultural rights and corporate profits.(and Western justifications of it, e.g Body Shop gives money for Violence against women in the West)Shamans Incorporated and main pharmaceutical companies. Patent of ayahuasca (hallucinogenic) by US corporation.

Consequences of new prestige of that knowledge: for women in Amazon: new source of income as curers.(fuzzier boundaries between witches, curers, shamans in public eye, not internally)

Also source of travel for conferences, small ecotourist industries (see I.4)New pedagogies: problems of “shamanic schools”

Knowledge use to establish hierarchies and inequalities between communities. Knowledge use in official indigenous federations’ discourses to deny history to less acculturated groups and women).

Problems of authenticity of knowledge and its carriers and consequences when they “fail” to meet those standards. Western insatiable appetite for heroes and for debunking them.(e.g. Huaoranis, Kayapo, Yanomami, Rigoberta Menchu)

### **III Specifics of Environmentalist Discourse**

Native americans as part of nature. Perpetuates dualisms Them and Us

lived in harmony with nature (indigenous women’s point of view on these issues)

native americans as “pure” conservationists (different subsistence strategies)

denying history and histories of native peoples and of nature (conceptions of “virgin forests” versus anthropogenic forests and debate about the conservationist vs the destructive native)

\*\*\*by denying history and in search for authenticity deny problem of destructuration of native populations and **destructuration of memories**. Native use of Western paradigms (e.g.

Christianity) to give new meanings to their lives (explains transformations of oral traditions in term of the present) and fact that oral traditions are inscribed in **power relations**

memories essential in individual and collective identity but also as instruments of power to be erased and manipulated. Struggle for domination over remembrance and traditions.

## IV Epistemological Issues

### The character of knowledge

Different expressions of causality . Distinctive paradigms to convert knowledge into everyday practice. (Canadian example song, shamanism, cariboo; example Amazonia: explanations of environmental “disaster” “scarce resources”= lockers are rusted.

Do not translate easily cross-culturally.

Classifying, mapping, harvesting, (universalistic paradigm of science) fragmentation human experience. Categories that distance people from lived experience.

Impose paradigm of cabinets of curiosities or museums of natural history to lived culture.

Learning as situated in communities of practice

knowledge embedded in social relations with non-humans Indigenous peoples are likely to raise questions about **whose stories , who identifies events** , how is the meaning of **place** constituted rather than **What** actually happen (Julie 1994's article).

establishing evidence and truth in scientific knowledge and oral tradition

\*\*\*importance of the **body** in transmission knowledge;embodying knowledge (case Kayapo and african slaves in Brazil) (In amazon concept and practice of paju). Knowledge goes beyond linguistic representations

Role of shaman (true shamans vs.younger ones. Assumes one knowledge “shared” under paradigm of universal science.

### Dualism nature culture--Human-non-human relations

Dualism does not account for developments in modern science (producing natural events in non-natural ways. It is a historical product of the Renaissance.

Does our understanding of difference leads us to endless relativisms and descriptions of local cosmologies (also embedded in power relations[some knowledges more relative than others) or is it possible to find general trends towards **a unified analytical framework**.(possible alternative models to a dualist paradigm).that goes beyond the universalizing of science (which assumes the dualism, or the universalizing of spirituality (unified native religions with all the consequences of native orientalisms) or economics.(3 attempts Ellen, Palsson, Descola)

What is the role of anthropology in this task. What can we learn from native **perspectivism**

(Viveiros de Castro). Or from native historians' conceptions of US (the West).

Do natives have just one conception of nature?

The realm of social relations implies a wider domain than the society of humans. All beings are ontological equals. Relations humans no-humans as relations subject-subject. Affinal charming of game and consanguine mothering of plants.

Societies based on objectifications of self-other projects same dichotomy subject-object into relations between persons and the natural world. (If this is an argument for change in social relations has to be an argument in the opposite direction to bureaucratization and compartmentalization. (No debt to nature, debt is relations between humans in a particular historical context. Concept of debt vs. Reciprocity.

Role of anthropology in understanding this aspect of traditional indigenous knowledge

If environmental determinism is dead why bother with understanding interactions between humans and other living and non-living components of their surroundings?

A) Real consequences and public agenda of environmental crisis both in North and Amazon

B) Globalization, ethics and politics of nature

Julie (1994) demonstrate how all social constructions, including our own, factor into social processes we are trying to understand .

Contextualism denies the capacity of abstract totalizing systems such as science and the market to solve basic problems of human survival. Sober recognition of these limitations but different from mysticism. It is an argument for recontextualization. .