

## **BOUNDARIES ARE MADE TO BE CROSSED: THE MAGIC AND POLITICS OF THE LONG-LASTING AMAZON/ANDES DIVIDE**

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*The construction of Amazonia as a distinct entity, opposed to the Andes, results from processes associated with the expansion of Andean-centered state formations. Analysis of five short texts on the Amazon region, written in colonial and postcolonial Peru by a diversity of social actors, reveals a pervasive rhetoric of alterity whose content varies according to the particular objectives the authors had in mind. In all cases, however, the aim is the same, namely the imposition of boundaries of differentiation as justification for state integration, expressed in the commodification and symbolic consumption of the Amazonian Other. If the politics of boundary making consist in “peripheralizing” and “othering” the Amazon and its people, the magic of boundary making resides in the discursive sleight of hand through which contemporary agents conceal the fact that the Amazon has long ago been incorporated into the nation-state.*

*Key Words: Amazon, Andes, Peru, boundaries, borderlands, discourse, identity, alterity*

The making of boundaries is a default feature of what has been called “the production of locality” (Appadurai 1998), or the phenomenology of “place making” (Gupta and Ferguson 1997). In this view, locality is a central property of social life, a sine qua non of neighborhoods or situated communities. The reproduction of such communities requires both the localization of times and spaces as well as the production of local subjects with the knowledge to reproduce them. This is achieved through a variety of social and cultural practices, including ceremonial naming of places, imbuing the landscape with historical meaning, regionalizing domestic and public spaces, and ritualizing seasonal changes. Founding a new settlement requires the prior marking-out and appropriation of a given space. It is not until the community thus situated is well settled, however, that the transformation of space into place, and the differentiation of one’s own territory from that of others, is fully accomplished. Such a process always involves the creation and reproduction of emotional links between the people and their land; that is, the production of locality “as a structure of feeling” (Appadurai 1998: 181).

Structures of feeling are strengthened by contrast with other similar communities. Above all, they are reinforced through an opposition to what is perceived to be, and constructed as, a non-social space, namely the forest, the desert, the cold mountain regions, or any other environment thought of as the realm of other, different beings. Characterizing their inhabitants as non-human or barbarian through processes of “othering” reinforces the non-sociality of these spaces. Rituals of place making, including the essentializing of ecological markers, are meant to delimit the contours of what is considered to be a safe space for living, producing, and reproducing, as opposed to the dangers inherent in neighboring, non-socialized settings. At least in its early phases, this process involves the occupation and appropriation of what is perceived as wilderness. In other words, it entails colonization and, with it, a certain amount of violence, even if only symbolic. As Appadurai (1998: 183) reminds us, “the production of a neighborhood is inherently an exercise of power over some sort of hostile or recalcitrant environment, which may take the form of another neighborhood.”

The production of locality, entailing the delineation of spaces of moral solidarity and security, is very much dependent on the need for cooperation in daily interactions, and on common structures of feeling. However, as Gupta and Ferguson (1997: 7) have argued, the affective power of locality and community is derived not only from direct sensory experience and face-to-face relationships, but also from a broader set of social and spatial relations. This is especially true in contexts of centralized state social formations. In such settings, the interconnected processes of community construction, identity building, and boundary-making take place in opposition to, and are affected by, the state’s hegemonic notions of how the imperial or national community must be constituted.

State formations face similar challenges to those of small-scale societies in generating a sense of situated community and local subjects. At this broader and more complex level, however, the production of locality is not based in the contrast with spaces that need to be socialized, but rather in opposition to territories that must be nationalized or imperialized. This requires the construction of such territories as “wild peripheries,” a process that I denote as “peripheralization.”

I argue that the conceptualization of the Amazon and the Andes as distinct culture areas can only be understood as a product of the clash between lowland and highland peoples resulting from processes of expansion of Andean-anchored state formations. Without dismissing the importance of ecological differences, I suggest that the ideological boundaries between the Andes and Amazonia originated in pre-Columbian times with the emergence and expansion of the first centralized Andean sociopolitical formations. Although these ideological boundaries did not preclude the existence of numerous forms of exchange between highland and lowland societies (Renard-Casevitz 1981, 2002; Renard-Casevitz et al. 1988; Saignes 1985), Andean representations of the Amazon and its inhabitants were highly ambivalent. The Amazon was conceived of as a land of fierce warriors, rich resources, and powerful mystical forces, while at the same time as a land of darkness, unfit

for human habitation, and inhabited by uncouth and treacherous peoples (Renard-Casevitz 1988: 81–180; Santos-Granero 1992: 259–278). The negative aspects of these ambivalent perceptions deepened in post-Columbian times with the breaking of the exchange networks that connected the Andean and Amazon regions in pre-Columbian times, and the subsequent expansion of European and Criollo colonial and postcolonial states (Santos-Granero 1985).

In this article, I analyze the processes of construction and reproduction of the Amazon/Andes border in colonial and postcolonial Peru. Rather than examining the embodied practices that have shaped this border, I concentrate on the ideological and discursive means through which the Spanish Crown and, later on, the Peruvian state and its opponents have endeavored to peripheralize the Amazon in order to incorporate it in contexts of unequal power relations. However, to avoid an essentialized, homogeneous, and monolithic vision of the state (cf. Herzfeld 1997: 1), I focus on the discursive practices of a variety of state and nonstate agents in colonial and postcolonial times. I do so with the understanding that states are always constituted as non-systematic ensembles of institutions, ideologies, practices, and power relations; they cannot be understood without considering other, nonstate agents that uphold or contest state strategies, policies, and actions. An analysis of the discourses produced by these different agents reveals a multiplicity of spatial metaphors, fantastic geographies, and imagined sociologies relating to the Amazon and its inhabitants.

This rhetoric of alterity is conveyed through a diversity of tropes revolving around major themes, such as sex, physical appearance, psychology, sociology, religion, economy, ecology, language, and history. These tropes are utilized in the classification and translation of the Other—the objectified, devalued people or peoples—that serve as the main contrasting reference in the construction of a group’s self-identity, in this case, the unconquered or unincorporated inhabitants of a region that is of interest to an expanding state. The common denominator of these discourses, I argue, is the erection of boundaries of differentiation as a justification for undertaking actions of integration and consumption, or both, of the Other. Hence, the title of this article: “boundaries are made to be crossed.” This leitmotif informs the undertakings of a wide variety of social actors, as becomes apparent in the five short documents—real and virtual—that I analyze in the following pages.

When I started writing this article I knew two of the five documents I analyze: those of Father Francisco de Andrade (1750[1662]) and Captain Pedro Bohorquez (Memorial 1986[1663]). I chose to include them, first, because in the mid-seventeenth century missionaries and military adventurers were the main agents through which the Spanish Crown endeavored to subjugate the still unconquered regions of its American possessions, and, second, because these documents were among the first to be produced in this early stage of occupation of the Amazon portion of the Viceroyalty of Peru. The other three documents I found during my research. Given that Peru renewed its efforts to settle its Amazonian territories in the second half of the nineteenth century, I decided that it was important to include a docu-

ment by a state functionary or politician of the time. As I had recently been doing research on Joaquín Capelo, a prominent *Civilista* engineer and politician with professional links to the Amazon, I decided to look more closely at his writings. I found the text I analyze here as an appendix in the first book by him that I revised (Capelo 1895[1892]). To have a broader range of documents, so as to be able to test the persistence of the above-mentioned tropes, I decided to include a text by social actors who contested the established state while at the same time advocating alternative political visions. Given that the Shining Path has been the most influential revolutionary movement in twentieth-century Peru, I made a search of their documents on the Internet. The only Shining Path document I found there that referred extensively to the Amazon was the one I analyze here (Shining Path 1993). Finally, I thought it would be interesting to analyze a text by someone neither linked nor opposed to the state. Because of the great increase of new forms of tourism in Peru during the past decade, I decided to search the Net for tourist agencies. The webpage of El Tigre Journeys was the only one that advertised in detail its tours to the Amazon (El Tigre Journeys 2000). I am sure, however, that had I selected documents by other non-Amazonian state agents and social actors, I would have found similar discourses and tropes.

Although this article focuses on the ways in which the Amazon/Andes divide has been (and is) constructed in Peru, it should be stressed that similar imagery can be found in neighboring countries, as exemplified by Taussig's (1991: 287–335) stimulating study on the “moral topography” of the Colombian Andes. Moreover, similar processes of peripheralization, othering, and consumption of the Other should also be expected to be at work in other contexts of states expanding into territories not under their control (e.g. representations of Northern England during Roman times, of Patagonia in postcolonial Argentina, of Siberia in czarist Russia, or of the Far West in the nineteenth-century United States). Thus, whereas the imagery evoked in the texts cited might be specific to the representation of the Amazon/Andes divide, the rhetoric of alterity on which it is based is much more pervasive.

## CRUSADERS OF THE FAITH

By the mid-seventeenth century, when the Franciscan document that I will analyze was written, the Jesuits and Franciscans were competing among themselves, and with freelance military adventurers, to obtain the Crown's support to conquer the Amazon and its inhabitants. The Jesuits had settled in the Upper Marañón and Lower Huallaga rivers and were expanding into the Amazon River. The Franciscans had managed to subject the native peoples living in the Upper Huallaga and Upper Ucayali rivers and were extending their activities into the Selva Central. In contrast with the Jesuits, the Franciscans, who belonged to a mendicant order, could not own properties or engage in commercial enterprises. Thus, they were almost totally dependent on the Crown for the financing of their evangelical operations.

Franciscan missionaries working in the Amazon received from the King an annual stipend to cover the expenses of their convents, run their missions, and undertake new evangelical expeditions. In exchange, they were expected to support the interests of the Crown and keep the King constantly informed about their progress. Thus, although not part of the State apparatus, Franciscan missionaries acted as state agents in charge of subjecting the Spanish empire's borderlands.

The document I analyze here was written in 1662. It is a four-page report written by Father Francisco de Andrade (1750[1662]: 78–81), an inspector (*visitador*) sent by the general commissar of the Franciscan Order in Peru to inform the King on the progress made by the Franciscans in the Huallaga and Ucayali river basins. Being a report by an interested party, this is not an impartial document. Andrade's main objective was to ensure the King's continuing support to the existing Franciscan missions and permission to evangelize new territories and peoples. To achieve this, he sets out, first, to press the point that many benefits could be gained from incorporating the Amazon into the viceroyalty and second, to make it clear that only the Franciscans are capable of achieving this. The document was considered to be so representative of its kind that it was printed, almost a century later, in a collection of Franciscan documents gathered to underscore the order's achievements before being expelled from the Upper Amazon region in 1742 by an alliance of Amazonian indigenous peoples led by Juan Santos Atahualpa, a charismatic highland mestizo (San Antonio 1750).

Father Andrade presents a view of the Amazon that, although personal, is also the collective product of his fellow missionaries, who considered themselves to be crusaders for the spread of the faith in a land inhabited by infidels. He begins his report by making reference to an ecological imagery that, as we shall see, has occupied, under different guises, a central position in various Andean-centric views of the Amazon. He states that the highland city of Huanuco, where the Franciscans had their headquarters, has "good weather, clear sky, and abundant water (Andrade 1750[1662], translation mine)." In contrast, he describes the neighboring lowland areas of the Huallaga basin as "extremely uneven, rough and muddy," with "large rivers running through impenetrable mountainous forests" (Andrade 1750[1662]:78, translation mine). In the higher areas, temperature is fine, "warm rather than cold," but in the lower areas, where ravines are narrow and enclosed, "it is extremely hot" (Andrade 1750[1662]:78, translation mine). Further to the east, the Ucayali River flows along a broad alluvial plain, with fertile lands and abundant game and fish, but the heat is so unbearable that the Spanish soldiers who accompany the missionaries constantly desert them (Andrade 1750[1662]:81, translation mine).

This image reflects some factual ecological differences, in this case exacerbated by the fact that Father Andrade, as did his Franciscan brothers, came from temperate climates. We shall see, however, that the multiple, and often contradictory, ways in which ecological tropes are used to establish differences between the Amazon and the Andes suggest that these images owe less to actual ecological differences than to the demands of realpolitik. Facticity, or adherence to facts, has

little to do in this highly political text. What Father Andrade wants to underscore by depicting the Amazonian environment as harsh are the sacrifices that he and his fellow missionaries have undergone on behalf of the imperial project of the Spanish Crown, a project that, at the time, was intimately linked to the universalizing evangelical objectives of the Catholic Church. To further press this point, and simultaneously discredit the military, he asserts that whereas Spanish soldiers desert to escape from the unbearable conditions of the Amazon, Franciscan missionaries persevere in their religious endeavors (Andrade 1750[1662]: 81).

To reinforce his argument about the inhospitable conditions existing in the Amazon lowlands, Father Andrade switches to historical referents. Sixteen leagues downriver from the city of Huánuco, he says, are the ruins of several forts and bulwarks marking the maximum expansion of Inka conquests in the Huallaga valley. Andrade asserts that, in spite of their power and wealth, Inka rulers were not able to subjugate “the infinite number of Indians, Provinces, and Nations” inhabiting the Amazon because the region was exceptionally harsh and its inhabitants extremely hostile. Not daring to penetrate further into the jungle, the Inka ruler “contented himself with establishing his frontier there, with Indians he brought from different Provinces” (Andrade 1750[1662]: 78, translation mine). In asserting this, Andrade implies that the Franciscans have ventured where not even the powerful Inka did, that is, beyond the boundaries of civilization into the realm of barbarity.

Father Andrade elaborates this latter argument by providing what could be called a colonial social psychology of the “wild man.” The rivers that flow into the left bank of the Ucayali, he says, are peopled by different “nations.” They speak different languages and cannot communicate with each other. They are isolated and have no dealings between them other than fighting and beheading each other, an activity from which “they derive their greatest happiness” (Andrade 1750[1662]: 78, translation mine). They are so “cruel, barbarian and restless,” that they not only enslave and cut the heads of neighboring peoples, but also of their own people (Andrade 1750[1662]: 80). Those who display the most head trophies in their houses become war leaders and are eagerly sought after by other men as husbands for their daughters (Andrade 1750[1662]: 80). Indians go about naked; their only clothing consists of tattoos and paintings with which they cover their bodies, and the strings of human teeth they wear as necklaces (Andrade 1750[1662]: 80). Indian men are “very prone to sensuality,” having three and even four women. They are not idolaters, but neither do they believe in a higher divinity. Although they acknowledge the existence of the devil, they seek to befriend him through sorcerers and diviners to avoid being harmed by him (Andrade 1750[1662]: 80). Above all, lowland Indians are “treacherous,” an adjective that appears frequently in the psychosociological vocabulary Father Andrade uses to describe them.

Many of the features he mentions are meant to contrast with perceptions of what were the main cultural and sociological traits of Andean indigenous peoples. Andean Indians wore clothing, were mainly monogamous, believed in higher di-

vinitias, lived in ordered communities, formed part of a centralized polity, and lived in a kind of *pax incaica*. Andrade paid little attention to the fact that upland and lowland peoples were engaged in dynamic networks of trade and exchange, both prior to and after the Spanish conquest, and shared many cultural practices. This omission had the purpose of constructing a vivid and powerful “elementary structure of alterity” (Mason 1990: 169) that could be evoked as a justification for the evangelical activities of his brethren.

Father Andrade adds force to his arguments by referring to the large number of Indians that the Franciscans had subjugated and baptized. In 1646, he says, the missionaries baptized around 10,000 people in the Province of Payanzos. However, as a result of recurrent epidemics, 16 years later this population decreased to 1,300 (Andrade 1750[1662]: 79, translation mine). What is even more puzzling, he goes on to say, is that in this same period no baby reached adulthood. Most died before they were one year old, and the few that survived lived, at most, until they were three years old. As a result, he concludes, “nowadays there is not a single Indian born in [this province] after its conversion (Andrade 1750[1662]: 79).” Father Andrade is obviously unaware that Indian converts were dying because of the epidemics brought by the Europeans. And he seems to be genuinely concerned with the fate of the Indians. However, in the Franciscan political economy of conversion what counted was not the number of Indians subjugated, but the number of Indians saved through baptism from an afterlife of damnation and hell.

Given that saving souls measured missionary success, Father Andrade’s religious statistics intimate that Franciscans were being enormously successful. However, just in case the authorities were not convinced by his arguments of evangelical success, Andrade makes use of economic arguments, which Spanish authorities were sure to understand. He reports that “with the help of God, the alms of the Faithful, and the aid of His Majesty” the Franciscans will discover many more Indian nations, among them the Ingas, reported to live further to the east (Andrade 1750[1662]: 81). The Ingas, he says, wear multicolor tunics, woven headbands, and sandals; they raise llamas and speak “the general language of the Inka.” Father Andrade speculates that these Ingas might be the descendants of the 10,000 families that fled from the highland province of Vilcas into the Amazon to escape from Inka subjection (Andrade 1750[1662]: 81). But the most important piece of information he offers, and the one that was meant to whet the appetite of colonial authorities, was that the land inhabited by the Ingas was “very rich in gold and silver (Andrade 1750[1662]: 81, translation mine).” In other words, these were not wild Amazonian Indians but civilized and rich Indians of the Andean sort that could be converted into good, hardworking subjects.

In brief, Father Andrade portrays the Amazon and its peoples as being inhospitable, unconquerable, wild, and intractable. At the same time, however, he insists that there is much to be gained from facing up to these difficulties in order to subject the region to the Spanish Crown: souls for the Lord in Heaven and riches for His Majesty. And the only ones that could achieve this were the Franciscans.

## SEEKERS OF EL DORADO

In the mid-seventeenth century, lowland Amazonia attracted the attention not only of zealous missionaries of various orders, but also of a host of military men avid for riches, fame, and glory who were looking for El Dorado. In 1649, at almost the same time that the Franciscans were expanding from Huanuco to the Selva Central, Captain Pedro Bohorquez wrote a petition requesting permission from the Viceroy of Peru to make an expedition into this latter area. A copy of this short document—two and a half folios—appears in a longer petition (*memorial*) printed in 1663 as a short leaflet, and presented to the viceroy by Bohorquez' associate, Captain Andrés Salgado de Araujo. I found this latter document in the Archivo General de Indias (Indiferente del Perú 631), in 1981, and had it republished in 1986 (Memorial 1986[1663]). Petitions to royal authorities were highly formalized documents in which the petitioner presented him or herself under the best possible light, and tried to persuade authorities that granting what was requested was in their best interest. Bohorquez' petition does not stray from this pre-established formula and, like Father Andrade's report, also presents a partial point of view.

Bohorquez explains that he has entered twice into the region: the first time, leading an exploratory expedition without permission from the authorities; the second time, with permission from the preceding viceroy (Memorial 1986[1663]: 137–138). After Bohorquez' return, the viceroy denied him permission to further his explorations. Instead, he entrusted the spiritual conquest of the region to the Franciscan order. The Franciscans, he claims, entered the region several times, but without success, for the Indians they encountered asserted that they would only pay obedience to Captain Bohorquez. Through his petition, Bohorquez aimed at persuading the authorities, first that he had better chances than the Franciscans in conquering the Selva Central; and, second, that this conquest would demand little investment from the Crown while yielding incalculable riches for the King. To achieve his first goal, he sets out to discredit the Franciscans and position himself as the only one with the capacity and charisma to subjugate the Amazon Indians. To achieve his second goal, he asserts that he will assume all the costs of the expedition in exchange for future privileges from the Crown assuming he succeeds in his enterprise (Memorial 1986[1663]: 139–140). In the process, he offers an image of the Amazon that differs profoundly from that of the Franciscans, while at the same resonating with a few common themes and tropes.

Captain Bohorquez begins his description by referring to the natural surroundings. The image he conveys is not that of an inhospitable environment, like the one provided by Father Andrade, but, rather, that of a welcoming land filled with abundance, fertility, and diversity. Clearly, the ecological imagery often used by authors to represent the Amazon/Andes divide was not based on actual ecological differences, but was manipulated to suit their diverse—and sometimes divergent—political objectives. In contrast with the Franciscans who depicted the Amazon as

a harsh environment, Bohorquez represents the Amazon as a land of abundance waiting for the Spanish to conquer it. In so doing, he followed indigenous myths that evoked an earthly paradise, myths that, by then, were widely known among the Spaniards and had given rise to the belief in El Dorado.

Bohorquez' ecological discourse follows standard contemporary European classifications of the natural world (Memorial 1986[1663]: 136). He begins by referring to the mineral kingdom, stressing the abundance of gold and silver, pearls, and precious stones. He then describes the plant kingdom, enumerating the large variety of grains, tubers, fruits, fibers, spices, aromatic, and medicinal plants "of great price and value" (Memorial 1986 [1663]: 136, translation mine). Next, he refers to the animal kingdom, itemizing, firstly, the large number of birds, then the terrestrial animals, and, finally, the fish and shellfish. Rivers are so large, Bohorquez says, that they are navigable by the largest Spanish ships. Their banks are covered with very large trees that could furnish enough timber for the construction of all kinds of buildings and vessels. Absent from his description are the heat and the insects, the wild animals and the impenetrable jungle, elements prominently displayed in Franciscan depictions of the Amazon.

Having illustrated profusely the natural riches of the lowlands, Bohorquez undertakes the description of its inhabitants by means of a schematic psychosociological discourse. He claims that the land is densely populated. Along riverbanks and lakes are found large settlements, measuring two-leagues in length and four or five blocks in width (Memorial 1986[1663]: 136). Indians embark on long-lasting trading expeditions on board large rafts and canoes, and because trading relations result in intense social interaction they are "peaceful and tame." Lowland Indians are clever and ingenious. They are good-looking, strong, and muscular. Their skin color is fairer than that of the average highland Indian, and many are "very white and bearded, with long blonde hair" (Memorial 1986[1663]: 136, translation mine). They are "energetic, noble and generous"; they "very much abhor theft, plundering, adultery and widowhood (Memorial 1986[1663]: 137)." The majority wear color cotton tunics, but the most noble among them wear a variety of cotton textiles covered with color feathers. They adorn themselves with a variety of gold jewelry, and on their arms and shields they display golden figures of animals and birds inlaid with precious stones and a profusion of feathers.

According to Captain Bohorquez, lowland Indians are obedient and humble towards their elders and lords, governing themselves by their laws and showing "some manner of civility" (Memorial 1986[1663]: 137). He also reports the existence of powerful lords who rule over four and even five large provinces and have numerous vassals. To put extra icing on the cake, Bohorquez asserts that these, and other powerful lords, recognize a single sovereign, who lives further inland. The author does not elaborate on the identity of this sovereign. In fact, he ends his description abruptly, leaving the reader with a sense of mystery and expectation. This is a dramatic rhetorical device; the motif of the Inka taking refuge in the Amazon lowlands—already popular before the Spanish conquest (cf. Renard-

Casevitz et al. 1988, 1: 49–51)—had been firmly implanted in the minds of the Spanish since Manco Inka rebelled against Hernando Pizarro and fled into the “montaña” in 1536 (Betanzos 1987: 301). Clearly, Bohorquez’ intention here is to suggest that the enigmatic lowland sovereign might be a descendant of the Inka, and that his empire might be the famous El Dorado—also known as Gran Paititi or Enim.

Bohorquez’ representation of native Amazonian social psychology is in stark contrast with that of the Franciscans. Gone are the depictions of the naked, sensual, isolated, warlike, and cruel Indians. Gone, too, is the image of the barbarous Indians having neither God, Law, or Order (“ni Dios, ni ley, ni policía” Memorial 1986 [1663]:137). Bohorquez’ Amazonian Indians dress in tunic, reject adultery, communicate profusely, make trade rather than war, and are benevolent and generous. Both imagined sociologies, nevertheless, share a common feature: they are meant to contrast with that of Andean Indians. Whereas Father Andrade represented lowland Indians as being a perverted, lesser version of highland Indians, Bohorquez presents them as a sort of improved, better version. Lowland Indians are whiter and handsomer, more intelligent, generous, and moral; but above all they are more peaceful and docile, and, as Bohorquez stresses repeatedly, they are extremely eager to embrace the Catholic faith (Memorial 1986[1663]: 137).

Once he had established the clear advantages that the geography and sociology of the tropical lowlands have over the Andean highlands, Bohorquez goes on to complain that he was deprived of the right to conquer the lands he had discovered by malicious accusations against him. He lists the various unsuccessful expeditions that the Franciscans made after his, and attributes their failure to the fact that local Indians would deal only with him (Memorial 1986[1663]: 138–139). He claims that Indians trust and obey him because they have come to consider him as a relative, as a result of his having learnt their mother tongue and dressed like them. Bohorquez concludes his petition by requesting permission to embark on a new expedition. He argues, as the Franciscans had done before and would do after, that his only aspiration is “to bring to the faith and excellency of the Holy Scripture innumerable souls, and to his King and Lord vast kingdoms and numerous vassals and riches (Memorial 1986 [1663] 138–139).” The image he created of a superabundance in natural and human resources, his appeal to the King’s religious conscience and worldly ambitions, and his self-positioning as the only person that could subjugate the Indians did the trick. A year later Captain Bohorquez was granted the permission he had asked for.

## **EMISSARIES OF PROGRESS**

After its Independence from Spain in 1821, Peru entered a period of political and economic chaos during which the government was mainly in the hands of military dictators. Decades of ill government and military upheavals, together with Peru’s defeat in the 1879 war against Chile, left the country devastated. Strong anti-mili-

taristic feelings surged and civilian-led political parties were strengthened. Between 1879 and 1914, members of the Civil, Constitutional, and Democratic parties—known collectively as *Civilistas*—governed Peru, alternating peacefully in power. The *Civilistas* shared a liberal ideology that emphasized the advantages of progress, democracy, and free trade, advocating minimum state intervention in economic affairs. In addition, they called for the integration of rural areas and the modernization of the country—which in their minds meant the Pacific Coast and the Andes—by the construction of roads and railroads, the importation of European immigrants, the promotion of agriculture, and the “civilization” of indigenous populations.

The author of the document I analyze below is Joaquín Capelo, a member of the Democrat Party and a prominent *Civilista*. The document was first published in 1892, under the title “The Wealth of the Forests,” as a short article in *El Comercio*, one of Peru’s oldest and most important newspapers. Capelo was a civil engineer, who worked in the Amazon on several occasions during his distinguished career in public service. In 1891, the government entrusted him with the construction of the Pichis Trail, a mule path connecting the highland city of Tarma with the Selva Central. Capelo must have been very fond of the above-mentioned article and the ideas he postulated in it, for he republished it as an appendix in a two-volume work titled *La Vía Central del Perú*, where he presents a detailed report of the construction of this trail (Capelo 1895[1892]: 149–154).

In 1899, Capelo was appointed Prefect of Loreto, Peru’s largest Amazonian department. In this role, he passed important measures in defense of Indian peons, who provided much of the labor force utilized in rubber extraction, by then the region’s most important economic activity. His indignation at the exploitation and dreadful social conditions experienced by indigenous peoples throughout Peru led him to join, together with other illustrious intellectuals, the Pro-Indian Association. He was also an outstanding member of the Geographic Society of Lima, which together with the Pro-Indian Association, were the most liberal, progressive, and modernizing institutions of his time. In brief, although born in Lima and a member of Peru’s elite, Capelo was not ignorant of things Amazonian or unsympathetic to the plight of its native inhabitants.

In his short, six-page article, Capelo presents an image of the Amazon lowlands that, making use of old and new tropes, expresses the hopes of a generation of professionals and intellectuals who saw themselves as emissaries of progress. The article belongs to the genre of political commentary. Although it is less biased than Andrade’s report or Bohorquez’ petition in that the personal interest of the author is less apparent it also responds to a political agenda. As we shall see, Capelo’s main objective was to garner support for governmental plans to colonize the Amazon on the grounds that it should benefit Peruvian colonists rather than European immigrants as the government intended.

Capelo (1895[1892]: 149) starts his article by stating that there is something “attractive and fascinating” in the contrast between the “grandiose and exuberant

vegetation” of the tropics, and the solitude and silence that reigns in the forest. Then he launches into a description of the Amazonian environment in terms of an ecological discourse that differs little from that used in the accounts of colonial missionaries. “Innumerable rivers” flow amidst “mountain chains” that crisscross the region, forming a “broken topography” covered by “gigantic vegetation” that acts as an “insurmountable barrier” for the “daring traveler (Capelo 1895 [1892]:150, translation mine).” All in all, the author concludes, Amazonia is an “inhospitable environment for man.”

Capelo goes on to say that, whereas the tourist can only feel “a secret feeling of admiration” in the face of the “grandiosity and inhospitality” of tropical nature, the man of science perceives “a world beyond.” The high mountains are there to induce the precipitation of “fertilizing rain” (Capelo 1895[1892]: 150). The rushing currents are “endless reservoirs of live force” that science has learnt to transform into heat, light, and electricity; that is, into “*useful work*” that brings “richness and welfare for man” and “greatness and power for nations” (Capelo 1895[1892]: 150; author’s emphasis). The “capricious distribution” of mountain chains facilitated the formation of fertile valleys suitable for all kinds of plantations. And, in between those steep mountains, there exist natural passes that would allow the construction of railroads bringing “movement and life” to those remote regions. Tall trees act as natural lightning rods; they help the clouds discharge their benefic waters over fertile lands “that only require the sowing of seed to produce, without further labor, many and abundant fruit.” Finally, the large rivers with their serene currents are “natural means of communication” that allow the transportation of “valuable forest raw materials” to remote lands, where “industry and capital will transform them into the most varied products.”

Capelo’s hyperbolic discourse is aimed at countering the prejudices against the Amazon prevalent among his contemporaries, for whom the country stopped on the eastern slopes of the Andes. The chaos and inauspiciousness of the tropical forest, he argues, is only apparent. With the aid of science and technology, the Amazon region can surrender its riches for the benefit of man and nation. Capelo’s view of the Amazon, however, is very much an economic one. He sees the Amazon as a vast and abundant reservoir of resources waiting to be tapped by men of science, with the support of progressive governments. In contrast, his view of native Amazonians is rather bleak. He argues that nature may have done its part in the Amazon, but man has not. His own social psychology of native Amazonians shares many elements with those of Father Andrade and Bohorquez, only he takes a more economic turn.

The Amazon lowlands, Capelo claims, are sparsely populated. One can find only a “few dispersed savages,” living far away from each other and engaged in constant mutual raiding (Capelo 1895[1892]: 151). They live in “rustic and meager” huts surrounded by small gardens planted with various products; “everything in such small proportion that it only satisfies the yearly needs of a family.” Their only tools are machetes, knives and axes, all of them of European manufacture.

Their only dress is a cotton tunic, which they wear day and night. Their bed is a wooden platform, and their only source of warmth at night is a bonfire that they light by striking a stone against blade from an old machete. A few earthen pots, gourds, mats, and wooden trays and troughs are all the utensils they own. Bows and arrows with which they hunt and fish, and a few trinkets they carry around in a cotton bag, complete their material possessions.

Capelo's negative image of Amazonian indigenous peoples—also constructed in opposition to Andean peoples—differs little from that of Father Andrade. However, whereas Andrade rated lowland Indians lower than their highland counterparts, Capelo discerns in them moral resources that he considers are lacking among native Andeans. Amazonian Indians, he says, are peaceful, welcoming, and respectful of private property. But, above all, they “love their liberty” and defend with “virile firmness” their rights (Capelo 1895 [1892]:153). In an unmistakable reference to Andean Indians, whom he views as a crushed, exploited, and demoralized “race,” Capelo asserts that the traits of Amazonian Indians could do much to “raise the level of human dignity . . . in the diseased portion of our indigenous population, among whom the abuses and injustice of three centuries have left deep marks” (Capelo 1895[1892]: 153).

Having depicted the tropical forest as a region with immense natural potential, and having stated that it is under-exploited by its native inhabitants who are ignorant and lack technology, Capelo goes on to advocate, using straightforward economic arguments, the colonization of the Amazon by “civilized man.” He starts by claiming that the construction of a hut and the clearing and planting of a garden cannot take more than one hundred man-days of work. Then he asks rhetorically “If the unfortunate savage, who ignores and lacks so many things, can ensure his subsistence, and that of his family, with *only a few days of work*, what could not the civilized man do; for he owns from his cradle the countless benefits with which civilization shows us the great law of universal solidarity”(sic) (Capelo 1895[1892]: 152; author's emphasis). This leads him to contrast the psychosociological state of native Amazonians with that of “civilized man.”

Civilized man, he says, is heir to what mankind has accumulated for centuries through “morality, science and industry.” Amassing wealth requires a dose of “virtue” to stand the hardship of living in a tropical environment, a dose of “will and character” to work one hundred days a year, and a few tools, provisions, and seeds (Capelo 1895[1892]: 152). But this can only be achieved when “the higher spheres of power” provide “effective protection and intelligent direction to the social forces” (Capelo 1895[1892]: 153). Making reference to bodily metaphors of society, Capelo asserts that when this protection is lacking an “anemia of virtue and work invades the social body.” People become “degraded;” they “lose faith in their destiny,” leaving the way open to foreign domination.

It is only then that Capelo's political objective in writing this particular article becomes apparent. In open criticism to *Civilista* proposals for importing European immigrants to colonize the Amazon, Capelo concludes his article by reminding

the government that foreign immigration is not the only source of wealth. Government should provide its own people with the necessary resources to settle in the best regions, as did the Inkas in the past. Only then, he argues, will Peruvians be able to say that the forest region belongs to them (Capelo 1895[1892]: 154). In a strange twist of arguments and metaphors, Capelo refers to Inka state-sponsored colonization programs—which Father Andrade used to emphasize past failures in occupying the Amazon—as the model to follow by the Peruvian government. Amazonia, he argues, is rich, under-populated and under-exploited and it should be colonized; but its rich resources should be granted to Peruvians and not to foreign immigrants. Capelo's arguments must have been persuasive. Four years after writing his article, he was able to put his ideas into practice when he was appointed Minister of Development (Ministro de Fomento) in charge, among other things, of promoting colonization of the Amazon.

## ADVOCATES OF REVOLUTION

Headed by President Gonzalo—nom de guerre of Abimael Guzmán—the Communist Party of Peru (CPP) launched what they branded the “Maoist People's War” in 1980. Better known as Sendero Luminoso, or Shining Path, the CPP began its operations in the Andean highlands, where they had strong popular support. Pressed by the police and the Army, by 1983 the CPP took refuge in the Amazon lowlands, which from then onwards became a strategic region for resting, training, and provisioning. First, they entered into the Huallaga valley (where Father Andrade had labored as a missionary), then, into the Selva Central (the scene of many of Captain Bohorquez' exploits and the area in which Capelo built the first modern trail connecting the Andes to the Amazon). In this latter region, the Shining Path established relations with the Asháninka, Peru's largest Amazonian indigenous group.

At the beginning, many Asháninka from the Ene, Tambo, and Pangoa rivers joined the guerrillas. They were attracted by a revolutionary discourse that called for the destruction of the exploitative old order and announced the advent of a more just new order in which the Asháninka were to become “millionaires” (Rodríguez Vargas 1993: 53). However, with the passage of time, relations between the Asháninka and the Shining Path soured as a result of the insurgents' authoritarian tactics (Benavides 1992). By 1989, the Shining Path escalated the forced recruitment of Asháninka men and boys, and the suppression of those communities that were reluctant to cooperate. This, plus the killing in 1990 of various leaders of the local Asháninka organization, prompted a general uprising in the Tambo River, followed by the subsequent organization of Self-defense Committees in many Asháninka communities within and without this area.

On August 21, 1993, the CPP's People's Liberation Army was accused of massacring 62 Asháninka in the area of Mazamari (Satipo) in the context of intense confrontations with Asháninka self-defense forces. On September 26, the CPP published an article in English in the weekly *Revolutionary Worker*, the voice of

the Revolutionary Communist Party of the United States, rejecting this accusation. Later on they posted this article in one of their web pages ([www.csrp.org/rw/rwash.htm#famous](http://www.csrp.org/rw/rwash.htm#famous), accessed October 2000). Entitled "Anatomy of a Government Lie. The True Story of the Shining Path and the Ashaninka Indians" (Shining Path 1993), this official party document clearly falls into the genre of partisan propaganda. Its principal objective was to ensure the continuing support—moral, political, and financial—of its international sympathizers. To achieve this, the CPP endeavored to discredit the accusation, and to reassure its international supporters that the members of the Shining Path were not bloodthirsty terrorists as the Peruvian government claimed. Because international supporters of revolutionary groups often sympathize with the cause of indigenous peoples, and to avoid the kind of negative propaganda that the Miskito affair had on the Sandinista movement, the document provides a positive image of the Asháninka, as well as a eulogy of the Shining Path's revolutionary actions in their favor (Shining Path 1993: 7–9). Their image of the Amazon and its inhabitants appears to differ substantially from previous ones, but when analyzed at a closer range it does not seem so radically different.

The anonymous author begins by establishing a contrast between the Andes and the Amazon by referring to its ecological aspects. The Andean highlands, the author says, "run north and south through the middle of Peru." To the east "mountains drop off sharply in steep cliffs and ravines that give way to the dense Amazon jungle which stretches for thousands of miles to the Atlantic Ocean" (Shining Path 1993: 7). After this brief introduction, the author switches to a historical discourse. The Amazon, he says, is a region inhabited by natives who were indomitable warriors, but are nevertheless exploited by foreign agents. Echoing Father Andrade's claim that the Inkas never succeeded in incorporating the Amazon into their empire, the author states that even though the Spaniards conquered the Inka, they were less successful in subjugating the peoples of the eastern jungles. This, he adds, was particularly true of the Asháninka, who, with the help of "runaway slaves," expelled the Franciscan missionaries and Spanish soldiers from the region in 1742 for a period of almost 100 years (Shining Path 1993: 7).

In the mid-nineteenth century, the author goes on to say, the "feudal Peruvian ruling classes" reasserted their rule over the jungle region, this time with the support of "the new North American capitalist power" (Shining Path 1993: 7). By the end of the nineteenth century "the rising power of world capitalism" had penetrated Peru's Amazon region, as "massive coffee plantations," "rubber plantations," and "vast timbering operations" were established. The Peruvian state treated native Amazonians "like animals," encouraging "capitalists of all kinds to rob and enslave them" (Shining Path 1993: 8). Amazonian Indians were engaged under a debt-peonage system and put to work under coercive conditions (Shining Path 1993: 8). Traders and capitalists provided corrupt Indian leaders with firearms to "kidnap Indian women and children and sell them into slavery." They also bribed them to sign papers "giving Indian jungle lands to land speculators" (Shining Path

1993: 8).

Having depicted the history of oppression and resistance among Amazonian indigenous peoples, the author examines their present situation. He does this by constructing a contemporary Asháninka sociology that, in many respects, is as imagined as that of Andrade, Bohorquez, or Capelo. The Asháninka, the author states, are “famous warriors.” Today, however, they live at “the margins of a class society,” suffering “extreme poverty and exploitation,” “forced labor,” and “de-spoiling of their lands” (Shining Path 1993: 8). This kind of discourse is characteristic of the political rhetoric of all radical Left organizations, but here it is put at the service of a particularly biased vision of Amazonian indigenous peoples. Thus, the author of the CPP document explains that when not enslaved in plantations, the Asháninka “live a social life characterized by primitive communism—finding food by hunting, gathering and some limited cultivation.” As a result of capitalist oppression and primitive living conditions, 70% of Asháninka children suffer from malnutrition, and over 95% of Asháninka adults are illiterate. Absent from this picture, however, are the more than 200 hundred Asháninka communities recognized by the government since 1974, the thousands of hectares titled on behalf of these communities, the thousands of Asháninka families involved in independent cash crop production, and the hundreds of schools and health centers built in the past 40 years. But the most significant omission is the absence of references to the various Asháninka ethnopolitical organizations that have been struggling in defense of their rights since at least the 1950s (Casanto Shingari 1984; Santos-Granero and Barclay 1998: 280–295).

Ignoring these positive developments helps construct a single-minded image of the Asháninka as oppressed, defenseless peoples in need of assistance. In order to put forward the Shining Path as the only organization capable of providing the required assistance, the author goes on to discredit other social actors working with the Asháninka. Anthropologists, development agents, and missionaries who “claim to be doing humanitarian work” are really “pimping off the native peoples” (Shining Path 1993: 8). All these agents, the author says, are “tied to foreign imperialist interests through a thousand threads” they aim to persuade the Indians to accept their miseries with “Christian fatalism,” or to “seek progress by selling themselves and their lands to capitalism” (Shining Path 1993: 8).

Having criticized other diverse social actors involved, the anonymous author goes on to recount the Shining Path’s activities among the Asháninka. This narration echoes closely events narrated in the previous, stereotyped recount of the 1742 uprising. The author explains that the People’s War began in 1980 in the Andean department of Ayacucho. In 1983, guerrilla fighters moved into the Amazon, very much as the “runaway slaves” had done in the eighteenth century. There, the movement took “root among the most impoverished classes and sectors of the people.” These included poor Andean settlers and the 50,000-strong Asháninka, who “because of their isolation and level of social development, are even poorer than the peasantry and other oppressed classes” (Shining Path 1993: 8). To ad-

vance the People's War, the CPP supported the historical demands of the Asháninka: "defense of the land, the forests and the rivers," and inclusion "as part of the Peruvian state and nation," a demand attended to by creating "a New State that defends the rights of the oppressed classes and nationalities of Peru" (Shining Path 1993: 8). These rights, the author stresses, "are not confined to questions of culture and language"—which, from his point of view, seem to be secondary—but involve issues of land, labor, education, health, and nutrition.

Joint armed struggle, and the building of a new society, the author goes on, generated a deep unity between the CPP and the "Asháninka masses." The Shining Path "organized the Asháninka, linked them with the countrywide People's War, and trained them politically" (Shining Path 1993: 9). In addition to organizing "the people to defend themselves against the many abuses," the Shining Path launched "an intensive project of educational instruction, starting schools and establishing new forms of production and food distribution" (Shining Path 1993: 9). As a result of these activities, in 1986 the CPP established the first Open People's Committee among the Asháninka. By 1989, the anonymous author concludes, "the revolution had reached all of the Asháninka communities," and arrangements were made "to elect civilian and military authorities for the New State" (Shining Path 1993: 9). The appeal to, and evocation of, the accomplishments of the 1742 epic is implicit: in alliance with poor Andean colonists, and under the guidance of the Shining Path, the Asháninka expel the oppressors, liberating themselves and inaugurating a period of autonomy and self-government.

Despite having very different political objectives, the Shining Path's imagined sociology of the Asháninka, and the role that it assigns itself in relation to them, echoes the imagery found in previous documents. In Andrade's report, Amazonian Indians appear as barbarous infidels waiting to be redeemed by the Franciscans through adoption of the Catholic faith. In Bohorquez' petition, the Asháninka are represented as friendly Indians waiting for a charismatic leader that would gently persuade them to convert to Catholicism and subject them to the Spanish Crown. In Capelo's article, they are portrayed as proud but ignorant and unskilled savages waiting to be illuminated by Western science, morality, and technology. Replicating the old image of an all-knowing savior, the Shining Path represents the Asháninka as a primitive, oppressed people waiting to be liberated by President Gonzalo, the self-proclaimed "Fifth Sword"—after Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao.

## **DEALERS IN MYSTICISM**

Increased concern with environmental issues has led peoples from the rich postindustrial countries, as well as affluent, educated peoples from developing countries, to become interested in the Amazon and its native inhabitants. A host of tourist agencies having a broad spectrum of orientations has bloomed, catering to this growing market. Particularly important among them are a series of agencies that can be characterized well as dealers in mysticism. El Tigre Journeys was

founded in 1997 by a U. S. ethnobotanist and a Peruvian partner—depicted as a “veteran Amazon explorer”—with the explicit aim of “developing ecological and cultural tourism in the Peruvian Amazon” ([www.biopark.org/mission-statement](http://www.biopark.org/mission-statement)). Because its web page is written in English and Spanish, I assume that it is addressed to both an international and a Peruvian public. Under the motto “Experiencing real Amazonia since 1997,” El Tigre Journeys offers a variety of tours within their SpiritQuest program. When I visited its webpage, the most important of their tours was “2001, An Ayahuasca Odyssey.” Publicized as “Ten days of shamanic celebration, healing and renewal amidst the spiritual power of western Amazonia,” the central event of this tour is the shamanic drinking of *ayahuasca*, a hallucinogenic vine (El Tigre Journeys 2000: 1).

The multimedia text announcing the tour falls clearly into the category of advertisement. Insofar as it aims at selling a service, it is as partial as the texts discussed above. As in all ads, the advertisers strive to demonstrate that the services they provide are the best and that their company is a serious one. To underscore this, they assert that they have in-depth, first-hand knowledge of the Amazon and its native inhabitants, that the people they work with are recognized native specialists, that the experiences they offer are authentic, and that they are respectful of native cultures. They assert that the tour offered is aimed at the type of tourist who wants to experience directly, and in a highly personal way, the spirituality of native Amazonian peoples, intimating that it is not meant for mass tourists.

The text begins with a brief, combined reference to the ecology and sociology of Peruvian Amazonia: the tour, the advertisers say, is “an educational, personal growth experiential retreat which introduces you to the unique environment, diverse cultures and people of the Peruvian Amazon” (El Tigre Journeys 2000: 1). The emphasis, however, is not on the harshness of the Amazonian environment or the wildness of its people, as in previous documents, but rather on the spiritual richness of its nature and culture. Nature, culture, and spirit are the key words of this text, the idea being that through the Ayahuasca Odyssey participants will “experience the oneness of Humanity, Nature and Spirit” (El Tigre Journeys 2000: 5).

The ecological and sociological tropes of previous texts are here transformed and blended together with reference to the notion of “culture” into a kind of cultural ecology of the Amazon and its peoples. Seen through the prism of culture, Amazonian ecology and sociology are not independent but interdependent factors. The “culturized” and “amalgamated” tropes also differ from previous ones in that they are encompassed by a mystical discourse; at least at first glance, it appears as the first real innovation affecting the mode of conceiving Amazonia since colonial times. From this point of view, the Amazonian environment is not valuable because of its rich resources or natural potential, as in previous texts, but because of the spiritual secrets it hides. Native Amazonians are valuable, not as souls to be saved, laborers to be put to work, or oppressed peoples to be won for the revolution, but as guardians of spiritual secrets they have learned from the forest. This spiritual wealth, the advertisers state, has been created through centuries of mind-

ful and harmonic interaction between the people and the forest they occupy. It is this (intrinsically cultural) interaction that makes the Amazon “one of the most spiritually powerful places on Earth” (El Tigre Journeys 2000: 2).

The advertisers go on to affirm that participants will become “fully immersed in the authentic grassroots shamanic culture.” They will be guided by “truly gifted traditional Amazonian *curanderos* [healers].” This experience will enable participants to gain a deeper understanding “of self, Spirit, and the unique plant healing practices for which the upper Amazon is renowned” (El Tigre Journeys 2000: 2). Their “perspectives on life, death, nature, plants, wildlife, people, culture, medicine, healing, Spirit, the spirit world and their intrinsic interrelationship” will be greatly enriched. The secrets of the forest will be revealed to them, and thus participants will come to share the cosmovision of the native peoples.

Throughout the text, the advertisers of El Tigre Journeys place great emphasis on the notion of authenticity (cf. Root 1996: 69–70, 78–81). They assert that participants will experience “real Amazonia,” taste “authentic culture,” and get acquainted with the “time-honored traditions of the Peruvian Amazon.” They will learn from “true practitioners,” “honest-to-goodness *maestro curanderos*,” and “genuine master shamans,” who have an impressive knowledge of Amazonian healing plants and are characterized by an “uncorrupted integrity” (El Tigre Journeys 2000: 5). Implicit in this overselling of their services are two interconnected messages. First, the promise of a direct, pristine, wholesome, and unblemished experience for people who live in a counterfeit, “Xeroxed” world characterized by simulation, simulacra, and multiple copies that cannot be distinguished from the original (Baudrillard 1999). Second, the assurance that the agency is honest and therefore different from other enterprises that deceive their customers by presenting spurious practices as if they were authentic. To reinforce the idea that their agency is serious, the advertisers state that Ayahuasca Odyssey “is *not* a tourist entertainment experience. It is a shamanic workshop retreat” (El Tigre Journeys 2000: 4; author’s emphasis).

Because El Tigre Journeys undertakes its SpiritQuest program seriously, it demands a similar commitment from its customers. Potential clients are warned that Ayahuasca Odyssey is designed for “the mature, sincere, and respectful seeker of cultural knowledge, spiritual enlightenment, and personal healing” (El Tigre Journeys 2000: 4). They are cautioned that, “some sacrifice is required to produce the most positive results possible;” “serious advance preparation and diet” is required because the ingestion of ayahuasca is often “challenging and . . . briefly uncomfortable” (El Tigre Journeys 2000: 5). For all these reasons, and to ensure the best individual attention, “enrollment is limited to twelve participants.” True to the formulas of mystical discourses—modeled on the archetypical search for the Holy Grail—many are called but few are chosen.

Repeating the same formulas, participants are told that Ayahuasca Odyssey is not only a serious mission but also “a joyous undertaking.” The advertisers claim that the ayahuasca ceremony is “a rite of holistic purification with lasting benefits,

outweighing the temporary discomforts.” The experience will lead to “great personal discovery, healing, rejuvenation, new knowledge, and renewed vigor for life” (El Tigre Journeys 2000: 5). Participants will have the opportunity to discover their “personal power and the wisdom to use it to its greatest positive potential” (El Tigre Journeys 2000: 6). This leads the advertisers to conclude wholeheartedly that the Ayahuasca Odyssey “could well be the best investment in yourself you’ve ever made” (El Tigre Journeys 2000: 6).

The final statement shows how pervasive are capitalist metaphors and perspectives. The advertisers—like many practitioners of New Age spirituality (Brown 1997)—conceive of the SpiritQuest experience as an investment; that is, as something that will produce a profit. Evidently, for all its apparent novelty, the spiritual discourse does not differ substantially from the economic and political discourses found in previous documents. Andrade, Bohorquez, and Capelo attempted to persuade the governments of their day that investment in the conquest of the Amazon (through financing of missionary activities, granting of privileges to successful conquistadors, or the construction of roads and railways) would produce ample riches for the empire or the nation. The Shining Path attempts to persuade their supporters that investment in the People’s War (through donations, but also through actions of political support) will lead to the liberation of exploited Amazonian indigenous peoples and, thus, to a more just and better world. In a similar vein, the organizers of the Ayahuasca Odyssey attempt to persuade potential patrons by assuring them that investment in their Amazonian tour will enhance their spiritual capital and personal power.

In what seems an odd inversion of the old political economy of conversion, in the rhetoric of the advertisers of El Tigre Journeys, nonindigenous peoples are invited to come to the Amazon, not with the aim of converting the natives, but to give the natives the opportunity of converting them. Already in possession of material riches, but devoid of soul, ecotourists and cultural tourists—the new adventurers of postmodern times—are attracted to the Amazon, not to search for El Dorado but to search for Nirvana.

## **THE CONSUMPTION OF THE OTHER**

The above texts have been produced over a period of 350 years. As we have seen, the social and political contexts in which they were written differed substantially. Their authors have very different social, political, and intellectual backgrounds. Their relationship with the state is also diverse. The texts they wrote belong to different literary genres and, thus, present important epistemological and rhetorical differences. Moreover, the texts were written with very different personal, political, and economic objectives in mind. Despite these many differences, however, all share a common, tripartite schema (cf. Ortner 1990). The authors begin by alluding to the uniqueness and alienness of Amazonia. They compare it implicitly with the Andes by referring to ecological, psychosociological, and historical tropes

whose content, however, varies markedly from author to author according to the particular objectives each pursued.

The Amazonian environment is alternatively represented as wild, harsh, and unfit for human habitation; as magnificent, generous, and abundant in valuable resources, or mystical secrets; or as exuberant and chaotic, but with great economic, or strategic potential. In all cases, however, it is presented as radically different from the Andes. In turn, Amazonian peoples are alternatively represented as primitive, treacherous, and hostile savages; as noble, docile, and welcoming persons; as ignorant but virile and dignified peoples; as oppressed, disorganized, but indomitable warriors; or as wise guardians of ancestral spiritual wisdom. To further underscore their uniqueness with respect to Andean peoples, most authors add force to their imagined sociologies by resorting to historical arguments. Some say that Amazonian peoples are so hostile that the Inkas were never able to conquer them; others that they were so welcoming that they gave refuge to Inka groups escaping from Spanish conquistadors; and still others that they are so indomitable that they managed to shake off Spanish domination through heroic uprisings.

Once the otherness and peripherality of the Amazon and its peoples has been well established, and a clear boundary has been traced between both regions, the authors go on to provide the reasons and justifications for why this boundary must be crossed. Saving souls, gaining riches, disseminating progress, liberating the oppressed, or achieving spiritual fulfillment are among the powerful moral, political, or personal reasons adduced. Finally, they establish in no unclear way that the only ones who can cross this boundary are themselves, or the institutions, governments, political parties, and companies they represent.

The recurrence of this tripartite schema, I suggest, is due not only to the fact that the authors of these texts share common cultural patterns, but also because, without exception, they all appear as selling an idea (or ideal) that, in their discourse, acquires the characteristics of a commodity. Franciscan missionaries were selling redemption and the assurance of salvation, not to the natives—who could not read anyway—but to the King and those in power who could advance the evangelical cause. Spanish swashbucklers, such as Bohorquez, endeavored to sell to the Spanish Crown the certainty of El Dorado, and with it the possibility of attaining more glory, riches, and a greater empire. Capelo, like his fellow *Civilistas*, promoted the notions of progress and civilization. But, above all, he was selling to the government the hope for national integration, greater prosperity for its citizens, and a stronger nation-state. The Shining Path was marketing revolution and the promise of liberation, not to the Asháninka—most of whom are literate, but do not know English—but to its international supporters. Finally, El Tigre Journeys sells (literally) its tours, but it also sells (metaphorically) the promise of spiritual empowerment, rejuvenation, and a new sense of purpose in a world that, for many, is devoid of meaning.

Reading these texts, as well as many other texts describing Peru and its regions by a variety of non-Amazonian social actors, I found that, with the exception of

hard-core scientific papers, Amazonia is either ignored altogether, or advertised as if it was a commodity. This indifference is also present among social scientists. In the studies of many Peruvian and Peruvianist historians, sociologists, archaeologists, and anthropologists, the term Andes is frequently used metonymically to stand for Peru. However, whereas connections with the Pacific coast are acknowledged and examined, relations with the Amazon are generally ignored. As a result, the task of highlighting the ancient social and cultural links that existed (and exists) between the Amazon and the Andes has fallen to social scientists working in the Amazon, or in the Amazon/Andes borderlands (e.g., Gnecco 2001; Hill 1988; Rappaport 1990; Renard-Casevitz et al. 1988; Taussig 1991; Whitten 1981). It has also devolved on the hands of indigenous peoples from both regions. As they struggle in defense of their rights they have realized that their cultural commonalities are stronger than their differences.

Between the Scylla of indifference and the Charybdis of commodification there seems to be no center ground for portraying Amazonia. I suggest that this is so because the boundary between the Amazon and the Andes does not merely mark the limit between two ecologically different regions; it also separates an expanding state sphere from a sphere where the state was not (or is not) firmly implanted.

In contexts where the state expands into regions over which it has no, or very little control, the production of locality requires the representation of these lands as peripheral, and of their inhabitants as wild Others. Moreover, it requires that these peripheral lands and wild Others be represented as commodities to be used and consumed. Central to this process is what Root (1996) has called “the commodification of difference” (xi). As conceived of by Root, this process entails the valorization of difference (whether expressed in material objects or immaterial entities) in terms of money and its transformation into commodities to be sold and purchased at the marketplace—as is the case of the esoteric knowledge offered by SpiritQuest tours. But it could also be seen as entailing the valorization and symbolic consumption of alien lands and peoples as a justification for what their authors conceive of as higher moral and political objectives, to wit, the imperialization (Andrade and Bohorquez), nationalization (Capelo), neonationalization (the Shining Path’s “New State”), or globalization (El Tigre Journeys) of the Other through conquest, integration, liberation, or adoption.

The incorporation of the Amazonian Other, whether into the empire, the nation, the Maoist New State, or a New Age, Star Trek–like world order, requires eliminating existing boundaries by domesticating difference, and symbolically consuming the Other. This is why the authors of these texts underscore their contributions to the taming of Amazonian lands and peoples, or call for some sort of disciplining of land and people (cf. Root 1996: 151). Father Andrade (1750[1662]: 78) claims that the Provinces of Panatahuas and Payanzos—by which he means both the land and its inhabitants—“have been subjected to Our Holy Faith, and Christianity is well rooted.” Bohorquez (Memorial 1986[1663]: 137) reports that the natives have manifested their desire to convert to Christianity, and have asked him to “bring

priests and preachers to teach them the law of God.” Capelo (1895[1892]: 150) argues in favor of transforming the unruly Amazonian environment through the building of dams, roads and railways. *The Shining Path* (1993: 9) informs with militant pride that they have “organized the Asháninka” and “trained them politically.” Finally, the representatives of *El Tigre Journeys* (2000: 5) advertise that they “are richly experienced in the facilitation, assimilation and integration of these [shamanic] experiences for visiting participants.” In brief, the dangers implicit in difference have to be eliminated through the disciplining and sanitized consumption of the Others, who are thus transformed into a safe—diminished or eulogized—version of ourselves.

In areas where state and nonstate formations encounter each other, and where social actors are engaged in asymmetrical power relations often involving domination, discrimination, and exploitation, non-Amazonian state agents, their associates, and opponents seem to be able to produce only imagined geographies, sociologies, and histories of the wild Other, or to produce no representation at all. This seems certainly to be the case of the borderlands between the Amazon and the Andes. At first sight, the imagery produced by non-Amazonian social actors is all about the Amazon and its native populations. At closer inspection, it becomes apparent that these representations are not about the Amazon, but about the Andes and, by extension, about Peru, insofar as these two entities are linked in a metonymical relation.

Rather than constructing the Amazon by contrast with the Andes, these images construct the Andes by opposition to the Amazon. The Andes are what they are in the Peruvian imaginary because it has an Amazon to consume and be compared with. Paraphrasing Root (1996: 157), we could assert that Peru—the Andes—constructed itself as a state system and nation through its conflicts with native Amazonian peoples. The process of othering and symbolic consumption of the Amazon and its people by the Andes hit a high point in the late eighteenth century, when the toponym *Anti* or *Andes*, which in Inka and early colonial times was used to denote the tropical lowlands east of Cuzco—the Inka imperial capital—began to be used systematically in official maps and texts to refer to the highlands. Another crucial moment in this process was reached in the late 1960s, when, through their political rhetoric, the reformist military government transformed the highland Quechua and Aymara “Indians” (*indios*) into “peasants” (*campesinos*), leaving the Amazonian “natives” (*nativos*) as the only indigenous peoples in Peru. Clearly, these two examples illustrate how state agents can institute otherness through discourse and practice.

If the politics of boundary-making consists in peripheralizing and othering the Amazon and its people—that is, in representing it over and over again in such a way as to justify the need for its incorporation—the magic of boundary-making resides in the discursive sleight of hand through which contemporary agents conceal the fact that the Amazon has long ago been incorporated, at least into the state symbolic system (cf. Coronil 1997: 5). In fact, when depicting Amazonia, state

agents and state opponents—such as the Shining Path—tend to omit that this region harbors Peru's third largest city, includes more than 30% of Peru's cultivated land, provides more than 50% of the country's agricultural exports, had the largest increase in Gross Domestic Product during the 1970–1995 period, contains some of the country's provinces ranking highest in standard and quality of life, has produced the country's most important regionalist movement, and holds one of the most powerful indigenous confederations within the Amazon basin (cf. Santos-Granero and Barclay 2000). To counter what Taussig (1991: 328) has called “the magic of ruling-class authority”—as well as, we could add, “the magic of revolutionary authority”—we should always keep in mind the warning that appears in some rear view mirrors: “Objects in mirror are closer than they appear.”

## NOTES

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